



# The Bridge

SEPTEMBER 2023



## From the Pastor

*Rev. Julie Sterling*

### A New Story

Indian American writer Deepak Chopra wrote in his book Life and Death: the Burden of Proof: “What keeps life fascinating is the constant creativity of the soul.” As we start up again this fall there is a longing to make this time special. In the coming month we will resume Sunday School, Bible Studies, and evening Choir practice. We also look forward to upcoming events such as Trunk or Treat and Lunch and Learn. So, how might these activities and events be used to create new life in our church and enrich our faith journey? Also, how can creative hearts and minds help us grow in faith?

As a small church minister, I believe creativity can make or break a congregation. Creativity allows us to look at our faith from new perspectives. I remember going to a convocation years ago where the speaker introduced the book “Wreck This Journal” by Keri Smith. Each page gives an activity to do to help in the destruction of the book. For instance:

***“Tie a string to the spine of this book. Swing wildly. Let it hit the walls.”***

***“Place sticky things here. (honey, gum, syrup, glue, sucker, marshmallow).”***

***“Tear this page out. Put it in your pocket and put it in the wash. Place it back.”***

These activities may seem silly but they make a point. How often have you in good faith started to write a journal and then quit or lost interest.

This book shifts the focus to experiencing a journal in a new way. Instead of feeling bad because you forgot to write a daily entry, throw it in the freezer and move on. It also encourages you to take new risks and to get used to being a bit uncomfortable from time to time. I personally found day two very nerve wracking. As a lover of books, I was unable to go through with “*cracking the spine*” of my journal.

When we are called to discipleship, we are called to get out of our comfort zone. In Joshua 1:9 it states ***“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”***

Creativity helps us to see God more clearly and experience God more deeply. Think of a Bible Study or a Sunday School class that has inspired you recently. How did it feel to see God in a new light? More importantly, what could it mean for us if we consider experiencing our story differently?

In the first Chapter of Genesis we are told that God is our creator and we are created in God’s image. We are also taught that God gives us different gifts to use in our ministry. Each of us has an important role to play in our collective story. We were built to use creativity to celebrate and honor God. Considering this, what chapter might you be willing to add to the story of Suffolk Presbyterian Church?

Our Mission — To be a bridge to Christ through faith and service • Our Vision — When SPC is faithful in accomplishing its mission, people will know that Christ is at work in their lives and follow Him. • We Value — Being accepting, caring, outreaching, Spirit-led, and willing to serve

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**



9/2 Miki Hayley  
 9/3 Ron Sobel  
 9/13 Tosh Copeland  
 9/27 Zach Super

† Susie Piland  
 † Faye Sobel  
 † Gary Williams  
 † Jeffery Birkey  
 † Randy Branham  
 † Richard Alan Goforth, Sr.  
 † Anton Johnston  
 † Jimmy Hope  
 † Joyce Milteer  
 † Charlie Powell  
 † Shirley Ries  
 † Ron Rimasse  
 † Sue Rimasse  
 † Jeff Snow

The *Suffolk Presbyterian Bridge* is a publication of Suffolk Presbyterian Church in Suffolk, VA.

The *Bridge* is published 12 times a year under the direction of the Administration/Communication Ministry Team of the SPC Session.

News items should be submitted to the newsletter editor in one of the following ways:

- email at [office@suffolkpresbyterian.org](mailto:office@suffolkpresbyterian.org)
- mail to the church address
- Laura Farmer's office mailbox

Editor: Laura Farmer,  
 Administrative Assistant

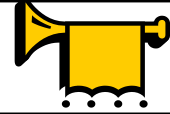
**PRAY FOR OUR**  
  
**MILITARY**

*Thank you for  
 your service!*

† Laura Dawson (relative of Maryanne Persons)  
 † Jarrett Hagwood  
 † Nick Meadors (US Navy deployment)  
 † JB Persons (Reserves)  
 † Glenn Smith (Betty Chapman's grandson)  
 † Hayden Spalding  
 † Greg Vernon (Joyce Jordan's grandson)



## News Briefs



### Adult Sunday School

Hello, everyone.

The adult Sunday School class will restart on Sept. 10. Join us for lively discussions drawn from lectionary based readings and other topics of interest. We use the Seasons of the Spirit curriculum, which has been enjoyed for a number of years. Our meeting time is 9:45 and you can find us across from the parlor. Feel free to bring your coffee with you. Join us!

- Jack Stoughton

### Information from Breena:

Below is a link to the list of needs for the ODU English students from Congo and Tanzania. The list should be updated occasionally as the needs are met. If you are trying to downsize and would like to donate items no longer on the list, the English Language Center will send them on to Catholic Charities to be given to other refugee individuals and/or families.

Thank you so much for your love, compassion and generosity.

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1RZz9G6o9ungSfVmPb\\_Z4uTfQGcBRvIrljM6bHu71IeFE/htmlview](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1RZz9G6o9ungSfVmPb_Z4uTfQGcBRvIrljM6bHu71IeFE/htmlview)

SPC is collecting food pantry donations for the **Suffolk Christian Fellowship Center**. The greatest needs are canned veggies/fruits/tuna/chicken, cold cereal, peanut butter, and jelly. Donations accepted via church website.

The Deacons have a **Gift Card Ministry**. \$25 restaurant gift cards will be collected during the offering to help congregation members in times of need. These will be used to assist with meals.

*Because of the uncertain climate, activities may be adjusted as we go. Be sure to read the weekly church announcements for any changes. If you attend an in-person event and later develop COVID-19 symptoms or test positive, please contact Nancy Cisco so that she can notify attendees in a confidential manner. In response to the new CDC guidelines, mask use at SPC is optional for all activities.*

### Administrative Office Hours



Laura Farmer's regular office hours are Wednesdays from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm, Thursdays from 9:30 am to 1:30 pm, and Fridays from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm. If you would like to contact her directly, please email [office@suffolkpresbyterian.org](mailto:office@suffolkpresbyterian.org) or call 757-539-3213.

### Directory Updates

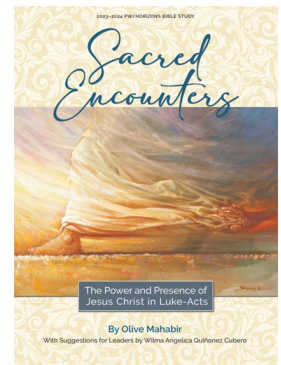
If you have a new address, phone number, or email, please contact **Laura Farmer**, Administrative Assistant, at [office@suffolkpresbyterian.org](mailto:office@suffolkpresbyterian.org) or 539-3213. If you are not in the directory, and would like to be added, please email your information. Thank you!

## Presbyterian Women Bible Study

**Welcome back! All are welcome to join in our PW study “Sacred Encounters: The Power and Presence of Jesus Christ in Luke-Acts. The studies are scheduled monthly on the second Monday at 7 pm in the church library. Our first gathering for the fall will be on Monday, September 11th. Please see the information below about this year’s study and author. Studies are available in the Narthex for \$10 but are not necessary for participation.**

The 2023–2024 PW/Horizons Bible study by author Olive Mahabir invites readers to consider Jesus, “the good shepherd” (Luke 10:15), who shared the Good News through sacred encounters with everyday people. The Gospel According to Luke and the book of the Acts of the Apostles, or Luke-Acts “one story in two parts,” demonstrate the unfolding of God’s redemptive purposes in human history and present a distinctive perspective on the person and work of Jesus Christ. Written by Luke, a physician and traveling companion of Paul, the message to the early Christian community (and to us) is radical, inclusive, and hope-filled.

Olive Mahabir is Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care and Adult Spiritual Growth at Northminster Presbyterian Church in Roswell, Georgia. She was born in Trinidad and Tobago and served in the Diaconal Ministry of the Presbyterian Church in Trinidad. In church ministry for more than 20 years she has pastored churches in Michigan, Atlanta, and Jonesboro, Georgia. She’s a graduate of St. Andrew’s Theological College in Trinidad, the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Drew University in Madison, New Jersey, and Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia. Olive enjoys visits to the beach, watching historical documentaries, and spending time with family.



## “Lift Every Voice and Sing” News from SPC’s Music Department

The choir has maintained a steady pace this summer with rehearsals on Sundays as we prepare anthems and special music for worship. September is fast approaching and the adult choir will resume Thursday night rehearsals starting September 7th . We are already busy learning new anthems and once regular practices start, the Advent and Christmas season will be ushered in as the choir prepares this year’s cantata, “O Holy Light” by Mary McDonald. She is one of my favorite modern composers. She blends scripture with familiar tunes as well as ties in new and interesting melodies and lyrics. Here is a link that gives an overview of the cantata (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-596k71-a5s>). While the date is not yet determined, the choir will be having a retreat in the fall to give time to work through our new music for upcoming holidays.

*Christopher R. Johnson*  
Music Director and Organist

## Living Waters Fall Plant Sale

First of all, a huge thank you to all who have brightened your fall gardens with mums and pansies over the past years in support of SPC's Living Waters for the World mission. This fall, we will begin the plant sale fundraiser on Sunday, Sept. 10. A notable change is that **Curt Mackenzie** has graciously agreed to lead the plant sale activities while Jack and Susie are away.

As reported before, our LWW team will not be traveling to Guatemala but will continue to keep up with our clean water partners through email, Zoom meetings and financial assistance. Indeed, we continue to see God's hand at work as our brothers and sisters in Guatemala faithfully keep providing clean water in their communities. One exciting development is the restoration of our second system, installed in 2010 at the middle school in Estancia de la Virgen. The new principal's goal is to restore the system to provide clean water for children at the school. Because of your help, the donations and funds raised through our spring and fall sales will go a long way to make that restoration possible.

Since our first installation in 2008, SPC and our in-country partners and in-country staff have been working together with communities in the departments of El Progreso and Chiquimula, both located northeast of Guatemala City. We are inspired to meet the challenges of upgrading their operating standards and equipment as they seek mandated government health licensing. Last year, because of your support, our team was able to send \$6,500 for sustaining this mission work. Our challenge is to match that again and keep more clean water flowing!

Concerning our fundraising deadlines and methods of ordering, please note the following:

Orders forms and information will be available in the narthex beginning Sunday, Sept. 10.

Orders and prepayments may be returned to the narthex; or

Mail your order and payment to: **Curt MacKenzie, 1008 Hillpoint Rd., Suffolk, VA, 23434**  
(please allow some extra time for the mail to be delivered); or

Payments and/or donations may be made through the church website at [http://Suffolk Presbyterian.org/ support-us/](http://SuffolkPresbyterian.org/support-us/).

Use the **LWW Plant Sale** option, and

email your order to Curt MacKenzie, [mackenziecm@yahoo.com](mailto:mackenziecm@yahoo.com); or  
or text him, (757) 338-0282.

Make your **check payable to Suffolk Presbyterian Church, memo: LWW plant sale.**

**All orders and payments must be received by 5 pm, Sunday Oct. 1.**

Plant pickup and local delivery will be **Saturday, Oct. 7 from 9 to 11 a.m.**

Thank you in advance for your continued and generous support of this ministry.

Your Living Waters for the World team:

*Nancy Cisco, Chris and Skip Irby, Mary Ann and Rob Saunders Susie and Jack Stoughton, and Curt Mackenzie*





**PEACE & GLOBAL WITNESS**  
 SPECIAL OFFERINGS  
 PEACEMAKING AND RECONCILIATION



BODY OF CHRIST - ART BY JULIE LONNEMAN

Help us, O God, to put our faith into action —  
 to not only talk about peace,  
 but to put peace into our daily practice.  
 In Christ, with Christ, we pray.  
**Amen.**

God's presence empowers us to bring peace to all people.

Through our gifts to the Peace & Global Witness Offering, we as a single congregation, participate in this larger work that we would not be able to do on our own. A gift to this Offering enables the church to promote the Peace of Christ by addressing systems of conflict and injustice across the world, as well as right here at home.

25% of this Offering stays with our congregation to support peacemaking and reconciliation in our own community.

25% of this Offering goes to our mid-council to join with other congregations to support peacemaking work in our region.

50% of this Offering supports the work being done by Presbyterians across the globe.

Peace begins with each of us.

**WHEN WE ALL DO A LITTLE, IT ADDS UP TO A LOT!**

Thank you for your participation in the Peace & Global Witness Offering

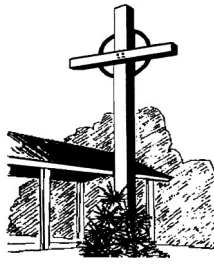
- Excerpt from the Special Offerings email: <https://mailchi.mp/pcusa.org/peace-global-witness-you-are-with-me?e=fbbb5e512b>. SPC will collect the offering on Sunday, October 1.



# September 2023

## Suffolk Presbyterian Church

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 <i>Communion Sunday</i> 10 AM Choir Practice 11 AM Worship	4 <b>Labor Day</b>	5	6	7 6 PM Spiritual Fellowship 7 PM Choir	8	9
10 9:45 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Choir Practice 11 AM Non-Traditional Worship (Narthex)	11 7 pm Presbyterian Women	12	13 7 pm Diaconate Meeting	14 6 PM Spiritual Fellowship 7 PM Choir	15	16
17 9:45 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Choir Practice 11 AM Worship	18	19	20 3 pm Session Meeting  Newsletter DEADLINE	21 6 PM Spiritual Fellowship 7 PM Choir	22	23
24 9:45 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Choir Practice 11 AM Worship	25	26	27	28 6 PM Spiritual Fellowship 7 PM Choir	29	30



Suffolk Presbyterian Church  
410 North Broad Street  
Suffolk, Virginia 23434



Visit our website!  
[suffolkpresbyterian.org](http://suffolkpresbyterian.org)

## **Suffolk Presbyterian Church**

**Reverend Julie Sterling  
Pastor**

**Church Office:  
757.539.3213**

**Office E-mail:  
[office@suffolkpresbyterian.org](mailto:office@suffolkpresbyterian.org)  
Pastor E-Mail:  
[pastor@suffolkpresbyterian.org](mailto:pastor@suffolkpresbyterian.org)**

### **SUNDAY SCHOOL**

**\*9:45 AM**

### **CHOIR PRACTICE**

**\*10:30 AM**

### **WORSHIP**

**11 AM**

## **Upcoming Events:**

September 11—Presbyterian Women

September 13—Diaconate Meeting

September 20—Session Meeting

Thursdays—Spiritual Fellowship & Choir



**Find us on Facebook**  
Search for *Suffolk Presbyterian  
Church*

\*updated schedule starting on Sept. 7