



# Seasons

of South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church

SUMMER 2017

## Called to Ministry at All Stages of Life

*Three members of our SMPC family are involved in intense study to become ministers of Word and Sacrament through seminary education. They will earn their Master of Divinity and become ordained as teaching elders in the Presbyterian Church, USA. Here are their stories.*

### ***Diane Giannola, Union Presbyterian Seminary – Charlotte Campus***

From the time she was a little girl pretending to baptize her baby dolls, Diane Giannola has felt a sense of call to ministry. She was raised in the Catholic Church and the only path toward ministry for a girl was to be a nun, which did not interest her. Instead, Diane chose another vocation devoted to the compassionate care of others – nursing. For 25 years she was involved in all facets of the nursing profession.

After moving to Charlotte in 1999 with her husband Rich, Diane's journey toward ministry continued when she took on the role of parish nurse at First Presbyterian Church. Often church members and staff alike would remark, "You should really consider going into ministry." During that time, Diane began seeking a new faith community to call home. The Giannolas were led to SMPC and soon Diane's gifts were instrumental in forming our first Board of Deacons, focusing on congregational care.



***Diane Giannola***

In 2011, these words in the *SMPC Weekly* leapt off the page at Diane: Open House at Union Presbyterian Seminary. "I poked Rich and pointed to the notice," said Diane. "On the Saturday morning I went to Union for Day for Discernment I told Rich, 'I should be back by lunch.' I remember looking at the clock and it was 4 p.m.! I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt this was where I was called to be.

"The next day as Matt Brown was about to go into worship, I said to him, 'Guess where I went yesterday.' His eyes lit up and he has been an amazing mentor, supporter and role model ever since. Our entire SMPC family has surrounded me and carried me. There are not enough words to express how grateful I am."

Diane Giannola embarked on her five-year seminary journey at the age of 60. In her fourth year, she fought an intense battle with breast cancer. "I was desperately ill and I remember praying, 'God, if I survive this, please allow me to give others the same compassionate care and loving support that I have received.'" Thanks be to God, Diane is now cancer-free. On Saturday, June 17, she will receive her Master of Divinity. "In seminary I was immersed in a breadth of experiences, but I always come back to pastoral care. That is where I believe God is calling me."

***All are invited to share in Diane's graduation celebration on Sunday, June 18, following the 10:00 a.m. worship service.***

### ***Cindy Fisher, Union Presbyterian Seminary – Charlotte Campus***



***Cindy Fisher***

SMPC charter member Cindy Fisher is nearing the end of her third year at Union Presbyterian Seminary in Charlotte. Even with a lifelong passion for bible study and curiosity about theology, Cindy never thought she would be led to seminary.

For 23 years, Cindy and her former husband Dave Fisher ran an amusement company providing inflatables, tents, tables and chairs for special events. "After Dave died, I could not run the company by myself," said Cindy. She was faced with difficult times and people who proved to be untrustworthy, but she did not lose hope. An awareness of God's presence and faith-filled people carried her through. "One day when I was talking to Matt Brown he said, 'Did you ever think of going to seminary? Why don't you talk to Diane Giannola?' She invited me to explore Union Seminary at their Day for Discernment event.

"When I finally let go of all the troubles and worry, I realized for the first time in my life that this is what God is calling me to do," said Cindy. In the spring of 2014, she was accepted into seminary and was also presented with another life-changing prospect – marriage to Jim Hickam. Cindy and Jim were married at SMPC on July 6, 2014, following worship in our Sanctuary, and she began the MDiv program at Union in the fall.

"Seminary fulfills my curiosity for learning and I am surrounded by incredibly smart people who never cease to amaze me," said Cindy. "I would not be here without Matt Brown and the people of SMPC at my back encouraging me. I am so grateful to the session and to the Presbytery of Charlotte for supporting me. And I give unending thanks and praise to God for the calling." Cindy says she is intrigued about the future of our denomination and new opportunities for serving humanity in the name of Jesus Christ.

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Continued from front page:

### **Sarah Godbey, Columbia Theological Seminary**



As the school year comes to a close, our youngest seminarian, 25-year-old Sarah Godbey, will complete her first year at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia. Daughter of Mandy and Nelson Godbey, Sarah came to SMPC as a one-year-old. "As far back as I can remember, church felt like a second home to me," she said.

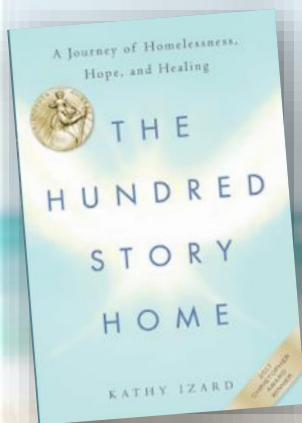
Sarah was confirmed as an eighth grader, was selected to serve on the Presbyterian Youth Council at age 16, and later became an intern for the Asheville Youth Mission. Along her faith journey, the love and support of many adults and youth leaders in our SMPC family was constant. "I was always encouraged to ask the hard questions. I was never shut down," said Sarah. "My church family and my parents have always been very affirming of my gifts of leadership and working with kids."

**Sarah Godbey**

One Sunday during worship in our new Sanctuary, a baby was baptized and Sarah felt the presence of the Holy Spirit. In that "aha moment" Sarah said she knew she was being called to ordained ministry.

"I am very grateful to SMPC for their support," said Sarah. "I have grown so much this first year and my faith has been pushed to new and exciting places." Sarah is currently serving as part-time youth director at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Atlanta and teaches swim lessons at the YMCA on Saturdays. She will graduate in 2019 with a Master of Divinity and we look forward to continuing this journey with Sarah!

## SUMMER ALL-CHURCH READ



Everyone is encouraged to add *The Hundred Story Home* to their summer reading list AND save the evening of Sunday, October 1 to hear the author, Kathy Izard, at South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church!

Kathy Izard's remarkable book describes her perseverance and success in building the homeless facility, Moore Place, in Charlotte. Despite the many obstacles that she encountered throughout her journey she never wavered from this daunting task. The story is powerful, so you won't want to miss reading this inspirational book.

*The Hundred Story Home* is available at Park Road Books. Questions? Contact Kathy Paquette at [khesspaquette@aol.com](mailto:khesspaquette@aol.com).



### **Weekly Youth Reminders**



**TEXT @SMPCYOUTH TO 81010**

#### **Mission Mondays**

Beginning June 12, students will have a chance to participate in a mission project on Monday afternoons.

#### **Taco Tuesdays**

Beginning June 13, meet Jessica for lunch at either Salsarita's in Blakeney OR Chipotle in Stonecrest! We'll enjoy a meal, do a devotional together, and catch up on life!

#### **The Bible Says WHAT?**

Beginning June 14, informal Bible study will be offered Wednesday nights. Hosts needed! Email Jessica, [jessica@smpchome.org](mailto:jessica@smpchome.org).

**SIGN UP FOR TEXT REMINDERS TO STAY IN THE LOOP!**

Questions? Contact Rev. Jessica Tidwell-Weinzierl, Director of Youth Ministry, [jessica@SMPChome.org](mailto:jessica@SMPChome.org).

## YOUTH MINISTRY

Need time to take a breath and relax out in God's beautiful creation as the end of the school year fast approaches? Come join us **Saturday, June 3** on our **Tubing Trip** on the New River! This day trip will leave SMPC at 7:30 a.m. to arrive in time for a leisurely, four-hour float. We'll grab lunch on the way back and maybe enjoy a scenic drive up Mt. Jefferson for the view! Cost is \$25/person; register and pay at MySMPC by May 28.

**Massanetta Springs Middle School Conference \***  
**Montreat Youth Conference \***

*\* Registration is full.*

**Looking ahead...**

**High School Retreat to Lake Junaluska**  
**September 15-17 \*\***

**Middle School Retreat to Bethelwoods**  
**September 22-23 \*\***

*\*\* Registration Coming Soon!*



# SPIRITUAL FORMATION MINISTRY

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL: JULY 31 - AUGUST 4

9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Ages 3 through rising 6th-graders, join with us for  
**Hero Central: Discover Your Strength in God.**

*Parents and Youth 7th grade and up, if you are able to volunteer for the full week, please do!  
Register at [www.SMPChome.org](http://www.SMPChome.org).*



**Children's Chapel** - Saturdays, May 20 and June 10, 10:00 a.m.

This popular service for preschoolers and their parents moves to Saturday mornings!  
*More dates may be added depending on participation.*

**NEW! Meet Us at the Park!** - Sundays June 25 and July 23, 3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

*Join other SMPC families for a simple playdate at William R. Davie Park.*

**Children's Worship** - Beginning May 28, all children ages 4 through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade are invited to Children's Worship at the 10:00 a.m. worship service.

*If you would like for your four- or five-year-old to be taken to Room 10 (nursery) following Children's Worship instead of returning to the Sanctuary, simply place a blue band on their wrist. Bands can be found at the Children's Worship Bags Station, the Connection Center, or by asking an Usher or Greeter. If you do not place a band on your child's wrist, they will return to the Sanctuary with the older children. We will begin our Children's Literature worship series on this day as well.*

## NEW! Church on Wheels

Going on vacation? If you'll be gone over a Sunday and will miss worship, check the website at [www.SMPChome.org/home/Summer-17](http://www.SMPChome.org/home/Summer-17) for a simple worship service template that you can use to create a brief service for all ages.

*Our 10:00 a.m. worship service will also be streamed live from the website, and available there for viewing later.*



**Questions? Contact Rebecca Guzman, Director of Spiritual Formation, [rebecca@SMPChome.org](mailto:rebecca@SMPChome.org).**

## MISSIONS-OUTREACH MINISTRY

### Why Haiti?

Clean water, abundant food, and public education are things that we take for granted. This is not the case in Haiti. Families have to pay for their children's education. People become violently ill from polluted water. Famine and starvation are common.

Most of us have enough money for our needs, and many of our desires. This is far from true in Bayonnais, Haiti. For \$40 per month, a child will receive an education and at least one nourishing meal a day.

Actionnel Fleurisma and his staff will be sure this happens. For us, \$40 is a portion of the bill at a good restaurant. For a child in Bayonnais it is food, education, and hope for the future.

*Want to help? Email David or Judy Nichols: [david5cents@aol.com](mailto:david5cents@aol.com) ; [judy5cents@aol.com](mailto:judy5cents@aol.com).*

**Baseball for Haiti, Friday, July 28, 7:00 p.m., BB&T Ballpark**

*Charlotte Knights vs Scranton/Wilkes-Barre RailRiders. Buy tickets NOW at MySMPC for a fun night at the ballpark. A portion of each ticket benefits OFCB Ministries in Bayonnais, Haiti.*

**American Red Cross Blood Drive, Saturday, July 15, Mecklenburg Hall**

*Register to give blood at [www.SMPChome.org/Serve](http://www.SMPChome.org/Serve).*

**Center of Hope, Meal Preparation**

Dinner-First Saturday of Each Month; Breakfast-Third Saturday of Each Month  
*Register to lend a hand at [www.SMPChome.org/Serve/Outreach](http://www.SMPChome.org/Serve/Outreach).*

**Spoon It Up!**

*This offering benefitting the Men's Shelter of Charlotte is collected the fourth Sunday of each month.*

***There are many opportunities for worship, study, and fellowship this summer!  
Visit [www.SMPChome.org](http://www.SMPChome.org) for a complete calendar listing.***



# South Mecklenburg PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

8601 Bryant Farms Road  
Charlotte, NC 28277

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## SMPC Summer Concert

### Chris Jones & The Night Drivers

Saturday, July 15

6:30 p.m., Sanctuary

*Admission is free; a love offering will be received.*

Chris Jones is a quadruple threat as a singer, a songwriter, a guitarist - and, thanks to his role hosting SiriusXM's Bluegrass Junction, as one of the most widely heard broadcasting voices in bluegrass music. His immediately recognizable voice, warm sense of humor and abundance of talent have combined to make him one of the music's most distinctive personalities, and one of its strongest artists.



Whether it's in the studio or on stage, Chris Jones & The Night Drivers are making some of the most distinctively elegant yet driving music to be heard anywhere today, and they're delivering it with a unique blend of dry wit, emotional authenticity and broad humor that's won the loyalty of a growing number of fans across the country, from MerleFest in North Carolina to California's Huck Finn Jubilee, and around the world.

Steve Martin referred to the Night Drivers as "... some of the best players in bluegrass! Chris Jones' voice is there with the great masters."

## Summer Worship Begins May 28

*Sunday School for all ages will resume September 10.*

**8:30 AM**  
CHAPEL



**10:00 AM**  
SANCTUARY