



Considering Our Ways: Reflections from the Officer Retreat

Over the past several days, the Diaconate and Session gathered for dinner, conversation, prayer, and a combined officer retreat. We wanted to slow down, listen carefully, and ask where God may be inviting Spring Hill Presbyterian Church to focus our attention in this season.

After two dinner gatherings, we began Saturday morning with a devotion from the book of Haggai and the prophet's repeated invitation: "Consider your ways."

We reflected on the idea that discernment begins with attention. Before the people in Haggai's day were told what to build, they were asked to consider the direction of their lives together. In the same way, our retreat began with the practice of paying attention to God, to one another, to our congregation, and to the spaces in which our ministry takes place.

A Mission Walk Through Our Building

Following the devotion, the officers took a "mission walk" through our facilities. We asked:

- Does this space communicate welcome and hospitality?
- Does it reflect beauty and care?
- Does it support the ministries God is calling us to offer?

We noticed a great deal.

Paint and carpet need updating in many areas. Some of our furniture is dated, mismatched, or cluttered. Our restrooms are in urgent need of improvement. We need clearer and more welcoming signage throughout the building. We need a nursery in the main building and an appropriate place for children during children's worship. We also recognized the need for a sanctuary piano that supports the quality and range of music offered in worship.

The mission walk was a practice of holy attention. Our building is one of the tools entrusted to us for ministry, and we want it to communicate welcome, vitality, beauty, accessibility, and hope.

Five Priorities for the Coming Year

After walking, listening, and discussing, we asked:

"Where is God inviting us to focus our attention in this season?"

Through prayerful conversation and discernment, the Diaconate and Session identified five major goals and began developing ministry action plans for each.

1. Associate Pastor and Staffing Plan

The officers believe that a clear and sustainable staffing plan is essential to Spring Hill's continued growth, discipleship, and effectiveness. We will explore creative ways to move toward calling an associate pastor, including possible budget options and opportunities to share ministry with another congregation or nonprofit organization.

2. Stewardship and a Culture of Generosity

We want to deepen a culture of generosity throughout the congregation. This includes greater attention to legacy giving, celebrating the ministries made possible by our shared resources, and telling the stories of members who faithfully serve. We will also consider whether a capital campaign may be necessary to address significant congregational and facility needs.

3. Building Use and Improvement Plan

Rather than addressing facility needs one at a time without a larger vision, we will work toward a comprehensive building-use plan. This will include drawings of the current facility and proposed changes based on ministry needs, opportunities for congregational input, and the development of priority tiers based on urgency, mission impact, and cost.

4. Congregational and Community Engagement

We want to encourage greater participation from a wider range of the congregation while also strengthening Spring Hill's engagement with the surrounding community. This work will begin by creating events that respond to the congregation's needs and interests, strengthening welcome and belonging for visitors and newer members, and evaluating each effort so we can continue learning and improving.

5. Children's Ministry

A thriving children's ministry requires more than occasional programs. We need appropriate curriculum for children's worship, clear leadership and accountability, and facilities that support children and families well. This includes developing a nursery in the main building and creating a suitable space for children's worship.

The Work Ahead

Our officers left the retreat with a shared conviction: the future of Spring Hill will not be secured merely by better programs, improved facilities, or more activity. Renewal grows as we cultivate a community of prayer, hospitality, listening, generosity, discipleship, courage, and trust. God is already present and active among us. Our calling is to pay attention, to join in that work, and to move forward faithfully together.

Rev. Brandon E. Miles



It is difficult to believe that it has already been a year! I started at SHPC on July 18 of 2025 and have now completed a full program year and a full orbit of the sun! It has been a marvelous time together and I am so pleased to be with you. Now it is time for that second orbit to take place.

The Chancel Choir is open to all people high school age and up. There is no audition and there are no requirements beyond a love of singing and an availability to fully participate in rehearsals and in leading worship. While it helps to have music reading ability, it isn't required. We have several members who joined with no or limited music reading skills who now are able to recognize much in the printed score.

The Chancel Choir resumes their Wednesday rehearsals on August 5 at 7 PM. They will also have their annual onsite retreat on Saturday, August 8 from 9 AM to Noon. We will be focusing on our Christmas Cantata and Lessons and Carols music that day. Our first Sunday to lead worship again will be August 9.

I look forward to Year 2 which will include more concerts (including a Halloween concert on November 1 at 2 PM in the Fellowship Hall) and more magnificent worship! Join us, won't you?

One final word: when the COVID pandemic took hold, I began making music videos for my previous congregation. They include piano, organ and vocal settings. Most are based on well-known hymn tunes. I'd love to share some of those with you. You can find them on my YouTube page @JohnMHutchinson. I hope you'll find some pieces there that you will enjoy.

John Hutchinson



SPECIAL CONCERT

The Religious Arts Committee is pleased to present Dr. Thomas Rowell, Professor of Music at the University of South Alabama, in concert on Sunday, August 16 at 2 PM in the sanctuary. Dr. Rowell is Graduate Coordinator in Music, Voice Area Coordinator, Opera Theater Director, and teaches vocal and opera literature.

He is also a well-known and loved presence on the stage and in church music in the Mobile area. Dr. Rowell's concert will include sacred favorites, and he will be joined by Dr. Patrick Jacobs for sacred duets. The concert is free.



Blessing of the School year

On **Sunday, August 16**, Spring Hill Presbyterian Church will dedicate our morning worship service to praying for and celebrating students, teachers, administrators, and school staff as a new school year begins.

During worship, we will offer a Blessing of the Backpacks, pray a special blessing over educators and school staff, and present supplies collected for our ministry partners at Mother's Day Out and Weekday School, Goodwill Child Development Center, and Mary B. Austin Elementary School.

We invite students of all ages to bring their backpacks, and we warmly welcome teachers, staff, students, and families from these schools to join us. To support our partner schools, we are collecting:

Mother's Day Out and Weekday School

paint (water colors & washable)
markers (Crayola)
crayons (Crayola)
Playdoh
colored construction paper
cardstock
white printer paper
baby wipes
Clorox wipes
Tissues
Paper towels

Mary B. Austin

Cleaning Supplies
Lysol wipes
Kleenex
hand soap
hand sanitizer,
Paper towels
etc.

Goodwill Child

Development Center

Curtains color dark green /
Olive greens size 52 width by
63 length (10)
Timers visually appealing to kids
(6)
Dress up clothes (any number)
Markers/Playdoh

*Please bring donations to the church by August 16th. Together, we can help these students and educators begin the year knowing they are seen, supported, and surrounded by prayer.

Memorials

Katherine Korb

Molly Lankford

James Martin

Jane Williamson

Ann Wilson

Hilda Gewin

Sam Strada

Hal & Lynn Daugherty

Presbyterian Women

Thomas Engineering

John & Nancy Galanos

Robison McLure Jr

Abram & Carolyn Philips

Southern Earth Science

Forrest & Katherine Latta

Brian & Caroline McCarthy

Doretha & Steve Gilmore

Amelia Gilmore Walker



Earth Care Congregation Recertification

Congratulations! SHPC has been recertified as an Earth Care Congregation through February 2027, one of 400 Earth Care Congregations in the PC(USA).

That's nice . . . but what does it mean? It means that we've been recognized within the PC(USA) as a congregation whose Session has pledged to foster actions and activities aimed to care for and restore God's creation. We do this by our work in four areas: education, facilities, outreach, and worship. So what have we done, and can continue to do?

We've had outdoor vespers and at Montreat and locally, taken walks to become more aware of God's creation. On Palm Sunday instead of buying palm fronds, we've used aspidistra fronds (free and locally sourced).

We've had environmentally oriented Sunday School classes, and VBS activities.

We've installed heat pumps, installed LED lighting, encouraged bluebirds and pollinators, and recycled paper and electronics.

We've had clean up days at Mary B. Austin, joined the interfaith Gulf Coast Creation Care group, run recycling announcements in the weekly newsletter, and encouraged members to take steps to get the coal ash upriver removed.

To learn more about our creation care efforts and join in, talk to any member of the Creation Care Team (Wes Baldwin, Susan Abrams, Linda Madsen). To learn more about the Earth Care Congregations program, visit www.pcusa.org/earthcarecongregations, or read the Summer 2026 issue of *Horizons* magazine in our library.

Statement as of June 30, 2026	
Total Annual Budgeted Revenue	\$ 781,160
Year-to-date Received	\$ 376,192
Other Receipts	\$ 64,003
Total Receipts	\$ 440,196
Benevolences	\$ -
Salaries and Services	\$ 198,712
Programs	\$ 27,009
Office Expenses	\$ 12,294
General and Plant Services	\$ 99,043
Other	\$ 34,431
Total Expenses	\$ 371,490
Excess Receipts over (under)Expenses	\$ 68,706

Attendance for July

	In person	Online
July 5	65	67
July 12	120	67
July 19	85	63
July 26	102	76



\$75 | Contact

Ann Magee (251) 232-2646

Newsletter Deadline August 16.



THE SYMPATHY and prayers of the congregation are with Carol Sumrall and Lynn Hennig upon the death of Ellen Sumrall, daughter and sister on July 20, 2026.

THE SYMPATHY and prayers of the congregation are with the family of Cammie Belue upon her death July 6, 2026.

Prayer List:

Margaret Armentrout, Trey Andrews, Ted Auttersson, Barbara Beach, Chester W. Brown, Frank Callahan, John Carr, Lanier Cauley, Mary Clark, Sally Cobb, Jamie Crawford, Cathi Dagley, Drew Delaney, Helen Delaney, Rosemary Delaney, Pat Edington, Ruth Fitzgerald, Mary Lee Franks, Ann Hafner, Perry Hand, Staci Hand, Tom Hand, Bill Harris, Marcy Harris, the Hensley Family, Mary Holley, Sue Jardine, Bill Layfield, Sara Long, Lynn Martin, Norman McCrummen, Ernestine McElroy, Zachary McMickens, Anne Meador, the Mosteller Family, Dianne Oveson, Jenny Oveson, Mary Owen, Buddy Porter, John Porter, Steve Reams, Christina Rives, Susan Schlichting, Pat Stoll, Carol Sumrall, Gayle Underwood, Johnny Walton, Babs Warren, Malcolm Warren, Calvin Weaver, Bruce Weinard, Andy Wharton, Ronnie Wright and our military members: Ashton Rubio, Stuart Rubio. Ashton Rubio and Stuart Rubio

Men's Breakfast

Thursday August 13

7:00 AM

Conference Room

Join us for breakfast and Bible study.

Rally Day – Coming on August 23rd!

We will all gather Sunday morning, August 23rd, for a delicious potluck breakfast buffet in the Bullard Building at 9:00. Fabulous food and fellowship will be first on the menu. Then we kick-off another year to share faith formation opportunities for all age groups, with an overview of the many offerings for our children, youth, and adults.

Whether you have been a long-time member of a particular Adult Sunday School Class, or would like to sample one or two options, time will be available after the general overview to ask questions and gather additional information.

Sunday School Classes meet from 9:00 – 10:00, unless otherwise indicated by teachers.

All are welcome! Back to School and back to Sunday School!



Bible Discovery

Do you enjoy delving into the scriptures and finding the meanings of God's work and Jesus' teachings? Do you want to understand how all of this relates to us today? Then come join Dr. Kent Robinson and Susan Tomlinson who lead a great group of people at 9:15 on Sundays in the Conference Room. The book that we are studying is "The Mighty Acts of God" written by Arnold Rhodes. This book has influenced many Presbyterians and Reformed church leaders.

Current Issues Sunday School Class for Fall, 2026

One of the main themes for our class from August – Nov. 1, leading up to our mid-term elections, will be reviewing issues of importance to our community and our church, undergirded by the question: "How do we respond to this as Christians?"

Current Issues meets during the Sunday School hour from 9:00-10:00 in Fellowship Hall.

Here is what's scheduled for August-September for Current Issues and church-wide:

August 16 – Report to the congregation from Brandon Miles on his experience as a delegate to the General Assembly 227 in Milwaukee in June. Overtures presented, decisions made, impact for our church. (NOTE: This is church-wide, not specifically for Current Issues.)

August 23 – Rally Day and potluck breakfast in the Bullard Building. Overview of all faith formation opportunities provided. (Church-wide)

August 30 -- Overview of our Fall Current Issues Class plans to-date, including some topics, themes, speakers. Also debrief/ follow-up discussion of anything deriving from Brandon's report from the General Assembly.

September 6 – Labor Day Weekend: No Sunday School

September 13 – Dale Pfeiffer, President and Director of Driftwood Housing, a group of concerned citizens who build tiny homes for our unsheltered neighbors. Mr. Pfeiffer says, "We are the Humane Society for People." Part of our "Who is your neighbor" theme from last year.

September 20 – Viewing of the film "Sallie's Ashes" – Two of the three producers of the film will provide the context for viewing; and offer some Q&A time afterwards. "Sallie's Ashes" is a documentary focused on the fight against coal ash storage in the Mobile River and Mobile Bay region—an issue that directly affects our area and the waters we all depend on. **We encourage participation from all who are interested in this issue, not just those involved with the Current Issues Class.**

September 27 – Freedom of Religion – Historical roots in the writing of the 1st Amendment. As we continue to Celebrate 250, America is still fighting over what freedom of religion means today. Class discussion around selected articles and our response.

2026 Vacation Bible School





RALLY DAY

August 23 | 9 AM

Fellowship Hall

Breakfast & Fall Schedule Introduction

See what's starting this Fall!

Youth & Children's
Choirs
Starting in
September



We're saving a place for YOU in our Circle!

Whether you're relatively 'new' to Spring Hill, or a long-time church member, you're invited!

Presbyterian Women offers you a monthly opportunity to engage with church women in small groups, in a loving and supportive environment. This is the perfect time to get involved as we begin the 2026-2027 year!



Bible Study Theme for this Year: United Through Christ, Bound to Each Other: Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians

This year's study seems especially relevant to our times! Paul's letter was to a diverse group of early Christians who were experiencing factionalism, and seeking answers to internal conflicts that they hoped Paul would adjudicate.

Paul's response is timely for all of us today!

A well-organized study guide with helpful, reflective questions, and a DVD accompany it.

Kick-off Event and Combined Business meeting for Current and Prospective Morning or Afternoon Circle Members – Wednesday, August 12th in Fellowship Hall

10:00 a.m. – Taking care of business: Pick up a PW Directory and a Study Book (\$15, cash or check payable to Presbyterian Women). In addition, we will be collecting our annual pledges (also payable to Presbyterian Women; and can be combined in a single check for Study Book and Pledge. Please note on the subject line, if payment includes both.)

10:30 a.m. – Getting-to-know-you fellowship, and welcome to all who are seeking more information on our circles. Hear an overview of the Horizons Bible Study theme and handle any other announcements and business. Regular Morning and Afternoon Circle meetings and Lesson One begins on Sept. 9th.

The Evening Circle will have their own special date and time to kick-off the Evening Circle for those who prefer a circle at a later time of day.

When do the circles regularly meet?

On the **second Wednesday** of the month:

Morning Circle meets at 10:00 in the morning.

Afternoon Circle meets at 2:00 in the afternoon.

Evening Circle meets on the **third Thursday** at 6:30 in homes or at church, as announced.

For additional information:

Morning Circle: Dianne Oveson (251) 455-6736

Afternoon Circle: Susan Tomlinson (251) 209-0792

Evening Circle: Sarah Miles (205) 427-2289

All Circles: Lynn Hennig (251) 605-5918

August 2026

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

						1
2 Bible Discovery Worship - Communion Meeting Vespers	3 Balance Group Outreach	4 Painting Pals Christian Ed. Mission Worship	5 Chancel Choir	6 Westminster Communion Service	7	8 Choir Retreat
9 Bible Discovery Worship - Ellen Sumrall Service	10 Balance Group PWCT Life Member	11 Painting Pals Communications Facilities	12 PWCT Congregational Care Chancel Choir	13 Men's Breakfast Bible Study	14	15
16 Church Wide Sunday School Worship - Vocal Concert	17 Balance Group	18 Painting Pals Session Diaconate	19 Chancel Choir	20 Newsletter Deadline	21	22
23 Church wide Breakfast Worship - Rally Day Children's Pool Party	24 Balance Group	25 Painting Pals	26 Chancel Choir	27	28	29
30 Bible Discovery Holy Grounds Worship -	31 Balance Group					