Second Life

March 2026

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

March into Fun and Fellowship with Your Second Family

Creative and thought-provoking events offer something for everyone

Not-So-Newlywed Game: For Better or Worse

Wednesday, March 4, 6 to 7:15 p.m., SPC fellowship hall

Gather with us as we eat together and then enjoy intergenerational fun, including the "Not-So-Newlywed Game." Three brave couples in our church will answer questions in a competition that results in no particular prize, but maybe a certificate if we remember to print one off. It promises to be a relaxing, fun, and even meaningful evening.

Green Things: A St. Patrick's Day Potluck

Sunday, March 15, noon, SPC fellowship hall

March is here, St. Patrick has returned, and spring is trying to happen, so let's eat green after worship March 15. For this month's potluck, we're inviting dishes that are all green, mostly green, or . . . you get the idea. Salads, pesto pasta, broccoli casseroles, guacamole, spinach dips, key lime desserts, or anything that feels like it's reaching toward spring. "Close enough" absolutely counts. If you're feeling Irish and want to bring a dish involving potatoes, that would be great as well.

Why LAUNCH Matters to Second Presbyterian

Wednesday, March 25, 6 to 7:15 p.m., SPC fellowship hall

You've seen the photos. You've read the emails. You've passed the posters on the doors. But why is LAUNCH such an important part of our ministry?

LAUNCH is an acronym for learning, access, unity, nutrition, career, and health. It was founded in 2016 with the vision of people of faith working together to serve others. After our Wednesday evening dinner, we'll explore more about what LAUNCH is, how it connects us to our community, and why it matters to who we are as a church.

We'll talk about mission beyond the walls of SPC, the power of hands-on involvement, and new ways each of us can participate. Come share a meal and join Pastor Joe McDaniel, engaged SPC members, and community partners as we consider not only what LAUNCH does, but who we are called to be.

Bring the Heat: It's Our Annual Chili Cook-Off

Sunday, March 29, noon, SPC fellowship hall

Things are about to get spicy. For SPC's annual chili cook-off, bring a crockpot of your favorite homemade chili (classic, vegetarian, experimental, or "this sounded like a good idea at the time"). Everyone gets to sample the entries and vote for two winners: Best Chili and Most Original (or Most Unexpected Ingredient). Whether you're cooking or just eating, come ready to taste, laugh, and enjoy each other.

From the Senior Pastor

We Say We Want Freedom

Amy Winehouse's voice was stunning. I still love listening to her even when the lyrics of some of her songs trouble me. In "Rehab," she sang, "They tried to make me go to rehab, I said no, no, no."

The chorus—"no, no, no"—feels like an anthem for defiant freedom, like a person reclaiming—or taking back—their life. Making their own choices. Not being controlled.

But after Amy died of alcohol poisoning, the song felt different. It no longer felt like a freedom anthem. It felt like someone insisting she was fine, even though something else was clearly in charge.

Alcohol and drugs no longer seemed like they had been restricting her freedom. They'd been running her life. "No, no, no" stopped sounding brave. It sounded like someone who was trapped.

That hits closer than we like to admit. A teenager who wants to be free to text or use their phone but can't stop watching TikTok videos even while driving. Someone who claims the freedom to "say whatever I want" even when anger seems to control every sentence. Frequently we use the language of freedom to defend unhealthy behavior and what is quietly mastering us.

The word "enslaved" may sound dramatic or like an overstatement. The Bible uses it anyway.

When Paul writes in Galatians, "For freedom Christ has set us free," he's speaking to people who believed they were already free. His point is that even though they may feel free, they are still being controlled.

Sometimes the control we experience is so normal we don't even see it, like algorithms encouraging you to a fixed number of options to watch or buy, even while you proclaim that you are making your own choices and that nobody is going to tell you what to do.

In our culture, freedom means different things to different people. For some, it's total personal choice. For others, it's protection from harm. For some, it's no interference. For still others, it's justice that protects the weak or vulnerable.

We use the same word, but we're not talking about the same thing.

When Jesus moves toward Jerusalem in Luke's Gospel, he challenges every version. If freedom is self-protection, power, or the avoidance of suffering, the cross makes no sense, looks weak, and indicates failure. But if freedom refers to being released from fear—of losing control, status, or comfort—then the cross looks different.

The freedom Christ offers isn't the right to do whatever we want. It's freedom from whatever controls us: our sin, our ego, the pressure to prove ourselves, or the need to stay in control.

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And that kind of freedom creates people who can live steady and meaningful lives. The gospel suggests something risky: Real freedom might require letting go.

In this season of letting go, may grace hold what you release,

Pastor Craig

Current Sermon Series

Breaking Free: The Road to the Cross

A Lenten sermon series through the Gospel of Luke

We live in a world that talks a lot about freedom—freedom to control, freedom to be whoever we want, First Amendment freedom, Second Amendment freedom. But why does the freedom that Jesus offers look like surrender, sacrifice, even loss? This Lent, we'll climb into stories that break open our assumptions about freedom, as we discover a freedom that no fear, failure, or death can steal.

March 1 **Chains You Can't See** (Luke 7:36-50)
March 8 **Free to Lose** (Luke 9:57-62) *FYI, Daylight Saving Time begins*
March 15 **Fear Is a Liar** (Luke 12:4-34)
March 22 **The Freedom of Surrender** (Luke 15:11-32)
March 29 (Palm Sunday) **When Kings Ride Donkeys** (Luke 19:28–44)
April 5 (Easter Sunday) **The Day Death Lost** (Luke 24:1–12)

Adult Education

A Peculiar Faith: Why Christianity Refuses to Behave Like Other Religions

Sundays, 10 a.m., SPC fellowship hall

Join Pastor Craig for a deep dive into a faith that matters to your life. This 20-week study focuses on the uniqueness of Christianity. In March we focus on "Salvation That Makes No Sense."

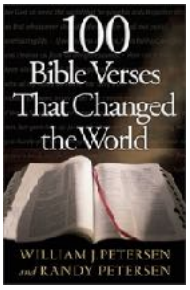
March 1 *A Religion Built on Execution: The Scandal of Crucifixion*
March 8 *Grace Is Not Karma*
March 15 *Faith That Doesn't Mean What You Think It Means*
March 22 *Forgiveness Before Repentance?*

Children's Sunday School

Kids' Travel Guide to the Lord's Prayer

For ages 5 to 14; 10 a.m.
Upstairs youth room

Join Ms. Jo and friends for fun interactive stories and activities, snacks, and games, as we see how the words of the Lord's Prayer shape us in meaningful ways. For details, contact Ms. Jo in the church office.



Lunch and Learn

100 Bible Verses That Changed the World

Wednesdays, noon
SPC fellowship hall

Take an hour out of your week, bring a bag lunch, and join Pastor Craig in the fellowship hall for a meal, conversation, and Bible study, as we focus on "100 Bible Verses That Changed the World."

Moving Toward Freedom That Matters: Lenten Devotions

This Lent, every Wednesday and Friday we're sending a brief devotion by email. Wednesday reflections center on a work of art that engages the upcoming Sunday's scripture; Friday reflections offer a poem or short reading that looks at the same text in a different way. Together, they invite us—twice each week—to anticipate the upcoming worship service and see the road to the cross with sharper eyes.

For centuries, Christians fasted on Wednesdays and Fridays, remembering the days Jesus was betrayed for 30 pieces of silver and then crucified. These devotions are not a call to skip meals but to interrupt the noise, stepping away from ordinary distractions and spending a few focused minutes in prayer, reflecting on the deeper freedom Christ offers.

From the Director of Music

Moving Forward: Exciting Organ Update

Quick Review of the Project

As you may know, over the past several months I've been researching options for a new digital organ to replace our Austin pipe instrument. I have outlined in the past the exorbitant maintenance costs that would face us if we were to keep our current instrument.

You may also be aware that Joe Adkins, previous long-time organist at SPC, left a generous gift to the church that we know as the Adkins Fund. His gift reflected his desire that music continue to be a vital part of the worship life at Second. The fact that he had 12 "prepared" stops (controls to eventually be connected to new ranks of pipes that do not presently exist) included in our console speaks to his desire that the instrument grow in its capacity to serve our worshiping community. And because of his generosity, we have the necessary funds to acquire an exciting new instrument.

A Direction Identified

During my research, I've considered and met with representatives or played the instruments of four different companies: Viscount, Rodgers, Allen, and Walker. I am happy to report that a clear choice emerged from these options, and that we will assemble an Organ Project Committee to work on acquisition and installation of a digital organ from the Walker Technical Company.

Several aspects separated Walker from its competitors:

- Its reputation is exceptional among organists with pipe instruments, citing it as the first choice for digital "additions" to actual pipe instruments
- Every instrument is custom designed and built for each client, so we will design an instrument specific to our church
- Walker stands alone in its portfolio of high-profile installations including the Mormon Tabernacle, U.S. Navy Chapel, David Geffen Hall at Lincoln Center in New York, the National Cathedral, and others.

A Personal Experience of Possibility

In mid-February I had the privilege of visiting Church of the Holy Comforter in Vienna, Virginia, where I was able to spend a couple of hours with their fully digital Walker organ. Because of the company's reputation, I went into that experience with high expectations. To my delight, every expectation was exceeded. Each individual stop on the instrument sounded with clarity and beauty; its combined sounds created atmospheres from the most intimate and delicate to the most exhilarating and forceful.

Perhaps the best part of the experience was speaking with the organist who designed the organ's specifications over 14 years ago. After nearly a decade and a half, his enthusiasm for playing this instrument was still palpable. I asked if he'd had any second thoughts about design decisions, and he had none. In addition, not a single repair has been needed for any component in that time. Walker's reputation for build quality and exceptional sound were absolutely evident in this instrument.

It's been rare that I have marveled at an instrument when sitting at an organ bench, but I was immersed in delight as I played each individual stop. My mind was alive with thoughts of ways our worship experiences would be impacted at SPC, and at the kinds of community-welcoming projects we might be able to offer with such an instrument.

Next Steps

I'm sure you will hear more in the months ahead as our new committee works through the details of the project. There may be opportunities for you to help as we address associated physical adjustments to the sanctuary as part of this effort.

Most importantly, we will journey together through a legacy moment, an opportunity to enrich the worship lives of SPC members for generations to come—and to come closer to God's presence as we worship in new and enriched ways.

Peace,
Bob

"Pick-a-Date" Fundraiser Supports St. Columba

SPC members and friends are invited to donate to St. Columba Ecumenical Ministries, which operates a food pantry for low-income families and a day center for unhoused people, through its new "Pick-a-Date Calendar Fundraiser."

Donors choose a date from now through March 15 and donate the amount of the date. For example, if you choose March 11, you donate $11. If you would like to donate or have any questions, contact Alice Allen-Grimes at *aallengrimes@gmail.com* or 757.535.0934. You can also donate at this link: https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/donation-form/donate-to-change-lives-7109.

Donations to food pantries always drop after Christmas. In January, St. Columba's food pantry provided bags of groceries to 219 families, but supplies remain low. Nonperishable items are desperately needed, including peanut butter, cereal, canned veggies, and canned fruit. Also needed are brown-paper grocery bags, as well as snacks and bottled water for the day center. Items can be left in the orange bin in the main SPC hallway.

From the Administration Committee

Finishing Touches Continue in Fellowship Hall

The final phase of SPC's fellowship hall renovation continues over the next few weeks with the placement of framed photos on the walls. These photos will enable us to share our community and events with each other and visitors. Also, a rug was added under the children's table for a pop of color and to help dampen sound.

The description of Lynn Ruehlmann's art piece is now in place next to her creation near the children's table. Lynn produced the piece last fall during "In the Presence of Creation," a unique program that also featured stirring improvisations by three musicians. The music and artwork were inspired by prompts submitted by SPC members and friends. Next time you're in the fellowship hall, stop by for a closer look at Lynn's striking work.

Tree Pruning Completed

Four large trees on the SPC grounds were professionally trimmed in February: two near North Shore Road, the oak next to the Robertson Family Deck, and the one on the playground.

Lunch, Laughs, and Logistics

Sunday, March 15, 12:20 p.m., upstairs game room

All children and youth and their parents/guardians are invited. Fill your plates with food from our St. Patrick's Day Potluck and then join us for lunch, games, planning, and connection.

We'll share upcoming plans, review a few expectations to help everyone thrive, and take care of those pesky but important permission slips and releases. This event is designed to be relaxed, upbeat, and helpful. Come hungry, bring a smile, and Pastor Craig, Pastor Catherine, and Ms. Jo will handle the rest.

We can't wait to see you! Contact Pastor Catherine with questions or to RSVP: *revcat@spcnorfolk.org* or 757.287.9897.

Save the Date!

Second's annual Spring Clean-up and Work Day is scheduled for Saturday, April 18, from 9 a.m. to noon. Rain date is April 25. Many hands make light work.

Triple S Circle: March Outreach Will Support CHKD NICU Store

Tuesday, March 10, 10:30 a.m., SPC fellowship hall

It might be hard to top our February meeting for audience participation and sheer joy, but come give it a try! This month's lesson, "The Woman Who Was Bent Over," is based on Luke 13:10-17 and will be presented by Sandy Simmermon. Our outreach is providing financial support for the NICU store at Children's Hospital of The King's Daughters.

Fellowship Dinners Planned for Ocean View Restaurants

Monday, March 23, 6 p.m., men: AJ Gators's; women: Jessy's Taqueria

The men and women of SPC will head toward the Chesapeake Bay for the March fellowship dinners. Women will meet at Jessy's Taqueria, 3201 East Ocean View Ave.; men will meet at AJ Gator's Sports Bar, 9575 Shore Drive. Come for the food; stay for the relationships.

Discover the Wonders of Watercolor

Saturday, March 21, 9:30 a.m. to noon, SPC fellowship hall

Learn the basics of painting with watercolor—along with some new and unusual techniques—from our friend, Kim Crutchfield. Regardless of your level of experience, you'll leave with a deeper appreciation of art, a sense of who you are as a creator, and your own artwork.

You need not know anything or bring any supplies. All materials are included— just show up! Reservations are limited to 17 participants. If you're interested, please register early with Jo Kolb in the church office.

Faithful Neighbors Blood Drive

Sunday, March 22, 8 a.m. to noon

Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd, across Hampton Blvd. from SPC

To sign up, go to RedCross.org and search for "Faithful Neighbors" or the zip code 23508.

Just for Men

Bible Study: 6:30 a.m. every Wednesday

Breakfast: 7 a.m. every Friday

Shrove Tuesday at Second

Dozens of friends and families enjoyed SPC's annual pancake supper on Shrove Tuesday, prepared as always by our dedicated volunteers.

Your Leaders at Second

Many thanks to those who are serving on our session. If you have questions about life at SPC, or if you have any hopes, frustrations, or suggestions, please feel free to reach out to the individuals on these three standing committees.

Discipleship
Emily Byrd, *Chair*
Aaron Hatten
Peggy Haile McPhillips
Meg McWhirter
Linda Parks

Mission
Jonathan Doyle, *Chair*
Alice Allen-Grimes
Rich Voter

Administration
Tom Baragona
Lori Crouch
Chris Siemering
Sam Stearns, *Chair*

ROBERT NUSBAUM CENTER
VIRGINIA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY
DIVERSITY | DIALOGUE | FAITH | FREEDOM

Events at Virginia Wesleyan University

Sponsored by the Robert Nusbaum Center; Dr. Craig Wansink, Director
All events are free and open to the public.

Carrying Freedom: The Hidden History of the Purse in America

Thursday, March 5, noon, Brock Commons, presented by Dr. Kathleen B. Casey

In her new book, "The Things She Carried," historian Kathleen B. Casey uncovers how something as ordinary as a purse became an extraordinary vessel of freedom across nearly two centuries. In this lecture, Casey focuses on how purses served as portable private spaces that became powerful symbols of autonomy, survival, and the enduring struggle for equality.

Liberty, Lies, and Lazarus: The Statue We Think We Know

Monday, March 9, 7 p.m., presented over Zoom by Dr. Craig Wansink, register at kjackson@vwu.edu

Joseph Pulitzer used the statue to support everyday Americans, embarrass the wealthy elite, and watch newspaper sales soar. Congressmen saw her as a French publicity stunt. Boats saw her as a terrible lighthouse. Black Americans saw her as a powerful symbol of American hypocrisy. Suffragists protested. Join Craig Wansink for new insights and discussion about one of America's favorite and greenest women.

Liberators or Occupiers: Rethinking America's First "Good War"

Thursday, March 12, noon, Brock Commons, presented by Joe Jackson

At the turn of the 20th century, America's understanding of it itself was undergoing a profound shift. In "Splendid Liberators: Heroism, Betrayal, Resistance, and the Birth of American Empire" (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2025), Joe Jackson examines the Spanish-American War as a formative moment when America's identity shifted from republic to empire. Focusing on the Philippines, Cuba, and Puerto Rico—as well as the United States itself—Jackson traces how the language of liberation was used to justify expansion, blurring the line between freedom and authority, independence, and occupation.

Unchained Waters: Freedom and Control in a Thirsty World

Thursday, March 26, noon, Brock Commons
Panelists: Elizabeth Malcolm, James Moskowitz, Andrew Reese, Levi Tenen

Access to clean water is more than a public health necessity—it is a question of freedom, power, and justice. This interdisciplinary panel examines water as both a source of liberation and a tool of control around the world. From communities transformed by the digging of a single well, to regions destabilized when water becomes weaponized, to the racial and social inequities exposed by crises like Flint, Michigan, this conversation asks: How can water be a pathway to freedom rather than a barrier to it?

SPC March Calendar

Sunday, March 1
The office is open 9:30AM to 12:30PM
Adult Sunday School: 10AM [FH]
Children's Sunday School: 10AM [Upstairs]
Worship: 11AM [Sanctuary/webcast]
Fellowship Time: Noon [FH]

Monday, March 2
Nathan Besso's Birthday
No activities

Tuesday, March 3
The office is open 10:30AM to 1:30PM
(No Essentrics Exercise)

Wednesday, March 4
Kathy Stark's Birthday
The office is open 10:30AM to 1:30PM
Men's Bible Study: 6:30AM [FH]
Lunch & Learn Bible Study: Noon [FH]
Dinner & Not-So-Newlywed Game: 6PM [FH]
Choir Rehearsal: 7:30PM [Sanctuary]

Thursday, March 5
The office is open 10:30AM to 1:30PM
(No Essentrics Exercise)
Carrying Freedom: The History of the Purse in America: Noon [VWU's Brock Commons]

Friday, March 6
Lucy Wright's Birthday
Men's Breakfast: 7AM [FH]

Saturday, March 7
No activities

Spring Forward Sunday, March 8
The office is open 9:30AM to 12:30PM
Choir Rehearsal: 9AM [Sanctuary]
Adult Sunday School: 10AM [FH]
Children's Sunday School: 10AM [Upstairs]
Worship: 11AM [Sanctuary/webcast]
Fellowship Time: Noon [FH]

Monday, March 9
Liberty, Lies & Lazarus: The Statue We Think We Know: 7PM [Zoom through VWU]

Tuesday, March 10
The office is open 10:30AM to 1:30PM
Triple S Circle Meeting: 10:30AM [FH]
Essentrics Exercise: 1PM [Zoom & upstairs]

Wednesday, March 11
The office is open 10:30AM to 1:30PM
Lunch & Learn Bible Study: Noon [FH]
Men's Bible Study: 6:30AM [FH]
Organ Project Committee Meeting: 6PM [FH]

Thursday, March 12
The office is open 10:30AM to 1:30PM
Liberators or Occupiers: Rethinking America's First "Good War": Noon [VWU's Brock Commons]
Essentrics Exercise: 1PM [Zoom & FH]

Friday, March 13
Judy Tressel's Birthday
Men's Breakfast: 7AM [FH]

Saturday, March 14
No activities

Sunday, March 15
The office is open 9:30AM to 12:30PM
Worship Band Rehearsal: 9:30AM [Sanctuary]
Adult Sunday School: 10AM [FH]
Children's Sunday School: 10AM [Upstairs]
Worship Service: 11AM [Sanctuary/webcast]
St. Patrick's Green Potluck: Noon [FH]
Lunch, Laughs, & Logistics: 12:20PM [Upstairs youth room]

Monday, March 16
No activities

Tuesday, March 17
Linda Norman's, Chris Voter's, & Jillian Todd's Birthdays
The office is open 10:30AM to 1:30PM
Essentrics Exercise:1PM [Zoom & FH]
Session Meeting: 6PM [FH]

Wednesday, March 18
Ireland Courtois' & Larry Hull's Birthdays
The office is open 10:30AM to 1:30PM
Men's Bible Study: 6:30AM [FH]
Lunch & Learn Bible Study: Noon [FH]
Choir Rehearsal: 7:30PM [Sanctuary]

Thursday, March 19
The office is open 10:30AM to 1:30PM
Essentrics Exercise:1PM [Zoom & FH]
LAUNCH Distribution: Various times and activities [See Joe Morgan]
Let's Talk About Music with Robert Shoup: 11AM [for SPC residents of Harbor's Edge]

Friday, March 20
Men's Breakfast: 7AM [FH]

Saturday, March 21
Wonders of Watercolor: 9AM-Noon [FH]

FH = SPC fellowship hall

Sunday, March 22
The office is open 9:30AM to 12:30PM
Faithful Neighbors Blood Drive: 8AM to Noon: Church of the Good Shepherd
Choir Rehearsal: 9AM [Sanctuary]
Adult Sunday School: 10AM [FH]
Children's Sunday School: 10AM [Upstairs]
Worship: 11AM [Sanctuary/webcast]
Fellowship Time: Noon [FH]

Monday, March 23
Fellowship Dinners: 6PM [Men: AJ Gator's Sports Bar, 9575 Shore Dr.; women: Jesse's Taqueria, 3201 E. Ocean View Ave.]

Tuesday, March 24
Wayne Parks' Birthday
The office is open 10:30AM to 1:30PM
Essentrics Exercise: 1PM [Zoom & FH]

Wednesday, March 25
Nancy Rowland & Nate Siemering's Birthdays
The office is open 10:30AM to 1:30PM
Men's Bible Study: 6:30AM [FH]
Lunch & Learn Bible Study: Noon [FH]
Dinner & Why LAUNCH Matters to SPC: 6PM [FH]

Thursday, March 26
Mark Erickson's & Sandy Simmermon's Birthdays
The office is open 10:30AM to 1:30PM
Unchained Waters: Freedom & Control in a Thirsty World: Noon [VWU's Brock Commons]
Essentrics Exercise:1PM [Zoom & FH]

Friday, March 27
Men's Breakfast: 7AM [FH]

Saturday, March 28
No activities

Sunday, March 29
The office is open 9:30AM to 12:30PM
Adult Sunday School: 10AM [FH]
Children's Sunday School: 10AM [Upstairs]
Worship: 11AM [Sanctuary/webcast]
SPC Chili Cookoff: Noon [FH]

Monday, March 30
Eliza Matheson's, Phillip Ndahi's, & Bill Reed's Birthdays
No activities

Tuesday, March 31
The office is open 10:30AM to 1:30PM
Essentrics Exercise: 1PM [Zoom & FH]

About Second Presbyterian Church

7305 Hampton Blvd., Norfolk, VA 23505 | 757.423.2822 | spcnorfolk.org | facebook.com/secondpresbyteriannorfolk
Office hours: Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. | Sundays 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m

- Dr. Craig Wansink, Senior Pastor: 757.412.7467, cwansink@vwu.edu
- Rev. Catherine Hart Monroe, Covenant Associate Pastor: 757.287.9897, revcat@spcnorfolk.org
- Rev. Nancy Rowland, Parish Associate: 302.354.5880, rowlandnancy73@gmail.com
- Robert Shoup, Director of Music: 757.739.9444, robertshoup@mac.com
- Jo Ridout Kolb, Director of Administration & Family Ministry: 757.406.0879, jokolb@spcnorfolk.org
- Tom Libbey, Facility Manager
- Joe Morgan, Maintenance Specialist
- Heather Libbey, Hostess