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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF GROVE PARK BAPTIST CHURCH | JULY 2026

I never wanted a dog. To be perfectly honest, I don't really like dogs. Yet, I had long ago promised Eliza that when our cat passed, we would get a dog. Eliza has always wanted a King Charles Cavalier Spaniel, and so two years ago, after George passed, I began looking for a dog for Eliza. I had several stipulations about what we would get, principally that it had to be a small, calm dog. Ultimately, after much searching, we did not get the promised spaniel. Instead, we rescued what we've since learned is a mini schnoodle, which we named Shelby Foote, or, as we more often refer to him, "Footer." Footer is 13 lbs of harmless ferocity. If you have seen the Scooby Doo cartoons, Footer is Scrappy Doo. He is also Eliza's dog. On Fridays, when I was in my home office working on school stuff, Footer sat at the front door and waited for Eliza to return home, seemingly oblivious to any amount of coaxing to join me downstairs. The crazy thing is that the longer we had Footer running around, despite my pronounced reservations about having a dog, the more I wanted a dog of my own.

And so, a year ago this month, after some more intense searching, we brought Howie home after a fellow Carolina alum decided to rehome their mini aussiedoodle following the birth of their second child. Howie is 30 lbs, ridden with anxiety, and extremely protective. He hates when I have a ball game on and loudly announces his disapproval of any war documentary. Howie is everything Shelby is not. Howie is not that smart, he hates to play with toys, and sort of lumbers through life. Howie is my dog, though. I find myself off somewhere, from time to time, wishing I had Howie with me. If I must run to the office on the weekend, I bring Howie, as he loves riding in a car, something Shelby loathes. I can sit in my chair at home and rub Howie for hours at a time. Most nights conclude with Howie lying beside me as I scratch his head and try to finish one more chapter in whatever I'm reading. Howie is about 8 years old, and occasionally, I catch myself worrying about what I'm going to do when it's time for him to cross the rainbow bridge and enter that eternal meadow. Howie has taught me a lot about God, and I thought I would take this chance to share some of that with you.

First, God knows what we need better than we do. In the long list of things I would have offered that I needed, at no point would I ever have named a dog. Yet, Howie has filled a void in me that I was oblivious to. It is a void that God was not ignorant of, though, and sent Howie our way. Secondly, God knows who we need in our lives at any given point. Howie came into our home at just the right time, and I would have been ill-prepared for him at any other point. We often worry about who will fill the places left by people who leave our lives for various reasons. I have felt this acutely over the last few years as I have stood at the grave of far too many friends. Nevertheless, God has always had the next person in the wings to step in and fill these recognizable voids. I have come to realize that I cannot be grateful for God's provision if I pine for those I have lost and fail to welcome those brought to me. Finally, God knows why things happen even when we don't. I am convinced that one reason Howie came into our lives when he did was to protect Footer and me on the day last winter when a neighborhood dog attacked us. Howie took the brunt of the attack, putting himself between the other dog and me after I was knocked to the ground. Footer is too small to do this and I would have faced serious injury without Howie. Yet, God made provision long before I needed it. Beloved, take a moment on one of these upcoming hot days, sit down in the shade, and reflect on the Howies God has brought into your life and offer a word of thanks, both to God and to them. It'll make a hot day go faster.

Grace Abounds,
Marc

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Sundays	5:00 p.m.	Family Night
Tuesday	11:30 a.m.	In Person Prayer Meeting
Wednesdays	6:30 p.m.	Facebook Prayer Meeting
	7:00 p.m.	Zoom Prayer Meeting
	7:00 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal (unless otherwise noted)
Wednesday, July 1	12:00 p.m.	ROMEOS
Thursday, July 2		Office Closed
Saturday, July 4		Happy 4th of July
Tuesday, July 7	10:00 a.m.	Nominating Committee Meeting
Friday, July 17	6:00 p.m.	VBS
Saturday, July 18	9:00 a.m.	VBS
Monday, July 20	6:00 p.m.	Finance Committee Meeting (Zoom)



HEAVENLY FATHER, POUR YOUR PERFECT PEACE OVER OUR NATION. HEAL BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS, RECONCILE DIVISIONS, AND UNITE OUR COMMUNITIES UNDER YOUR LOVE. TEACH US TO FORGIVE, SHOW COMPASSION, AND EMBRACE UNDERSTANDING IN ALL INTERACTIONS. LET YOUR PEACE REIGN IN HOMES, COMMUNITIES, AND GOVERNMENT OFFICES. STRENGTHEN LEADERS TO FOSTER HARMONY AND JUSTICE, AND HELP CITIZENS TO LIVE RESPECTFULLY WITH ONE ANOTHER. MAY YOUR UNITY GUIDE OUR NATION TOWARD LASTING PEACE THAT WE MAY REFLECT THE VALUES OF YOUR KINGDOM ON EARTH. AMEN.

Vacation Bible School

Gear Up for Adventure at Wonder Way National Park VBS!

Calling all explorers! This summer, we are transforming our church into Wonder Way National Park for an action-packed, fast-paced Weekend Vacation Bible School, and your family is invited to hit the trail with us!

Over two unforgettable days, kids will become official Junior Rangers as they explore the wonders of creation, tackle active team challenges, create rugged crafts, and learn what it means to navigate life with the ultimate Guide.

When: Friday Night, July 17th from 6-8:30 pm & Saturday, July 18th from 9 am- 1 pm
Who: Open to all kids ages 3-11
Ready to Explore? Sign up at church or online via the church’s Facebook page.

Join the Trail Crew (Volunteers Needed!)

An adventure this big requires an amazing team of Park Rangers, Camp Cooks, and Trail Guides! Because this is a single-weekend event, it’s the perfect, short-term commitment to make a massive impact. Whether you want to lead a pack of hikers, help out with wild games, or serve up camp-side snacks, we have a spot on the crew for you. Sign up at church or contact Eliza Sanders (elizasanders75@gmail.com)

Our Special Needs ministry will resume on Tuesday, August 3, as we welcome those served through Ralph Scott Life services to our campus for Sunday School. At present, we will host them on the first Tuesday of each month. This is an answer to prayer, as we have been working since COVID to resume this class, which we have hosted for several decades. If you have any questions or would like to volunteer to assist, please speak with Jan Bouldin.

Are you looking for a good read as you head off on your summer vacation? Try out one of these books from across the literary spectrum.

- Leave Only Footprints: My Acadia-to-Zion Journey Through Every National Park by Conor Knighton
- Travels with Charley: In Search of America by John Steinbeck
- Abundance by Ezra Klein and Derek Thompson
- Think Again: The Power of Knowing What You Don't Know by Adam Grant
- The Gales of November: The Untold Story of the Edmund Fitzgerald by John Bacon
- On Great Fields: The Life and Unlikely Heroism of Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain by Ronald White
- Theo of Golden by Allen Levi
- The Overstory by Richard Powers
- The Tears of Things: Prophetic Wisdom for an Age of Outrage by Richard Rohr
- Surrendered and Unafraid: The Flourishing of Faith During Seasons of Suffering by Mike Rakes

Ministers On Call for the Month of July

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| July 2-5 | Mr. David Stalls |
| July 9-12 | Mr. Bob Webster |
| July 16-19 | Mr. Bobby Andrews |
| July 23-26 | Mr. Mike Bouldin |
| July 30-Aug 2 | Mr. Eddie Canada |

July Birthdays

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|----------------|---------|
| Joshua Bogart | July 03 |
| Eddie Canada | July 04 |
| Ken Wood | July 04 |
| Gail Shepherd | July 07 |
| Jan Bouldin | July 08 |
| Pat Helms | July 08 |
| Kenna Davis | July 09 |
| John Moore | July 09 |
| Kathy Fujiwara | July 10 |
| Kim Cain | July 12 |
| Gary Parrish | July 12 |
| Jim Etheridge | July 13 |
| Ann Kidd | July 15 |
| Avery Miles | July 21 |
| Alex Johnson | July 23 |
| Matthew Byrd | July 24 |
| Chloe Dunn | July 26 |
| Brandon Kidd | July 28 |
| Tiffany Dunn | July 29 |
| Ken Davis | July 31 |

