



REPORT TO THE CONGREGATION

AUGUST 2015 – JULY 2016

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH MISSION STATEMENT

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul,
and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.”

As brothers and sisters in Christ, we are called to:

- WORSHIP** God faithfully and joyfully, prayerfully seeking God’s direction for our lives;
- NURTURE** our faith in Jesus Christ through education and fellowship, growing in wisdom,
and deepening our relationship with God and one another;
- SERVE** one another, our community, and the world with humility and love,
relying on the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to lead us in witnessing
to the love of God in Jesus Christ.

CHURCH STAFF

Rev. Dr. David G. Forney
Rev. Liz Forney
Rev. Kendall Pearson
Dr. Jeremy Thompson
Kathy Doby

Kathy Freer
Judy Blair
Susannah Fuller
Susan Lawson
Michael Joyce
Donna Buchanan
Cathy Dalton

Pastor
Covenant Pastor for Congregational Care
Covenant Pastor for Mid High Youth and Their Families
Director of Music
Director of Ministry with Children and Their Families
Member Involvement Coordinator
Parish Nurse
Business Manager
Communications Director
Office Administrator/Receptionist
Facilities Maintenance Manager
Preschool Director
Assistant Preschool Director

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

ELDERS OF THE SESSION

Class of 2016

Presley Thach
Jean Hudson
Jim Patterson
Caleb Pennock
Tom Phelps
Vicki Snead
David Bear

--Rev. David Forney, Moderator
--Kim Wells, Vice-Moderator (2015)
--Lois Baylor, Clerk of Session
--Judy Blair, Vice Clerk of Session

Class of 2017

Ashley Schauer
Bethany Carlson
Chris Kennedy
Derik Rice
John Meaney
Kendall Cox
Robin Halsey

Class of 2018

Betsy Critzer
Caitlin Dean
David Hamer
Bill Henderson
Jocelyn Kelley
Eleanor Maloney
Kirk Pilkington

BOARD OF DEACONS

Class of 2016

Wes Ammons
Susan Gianakos
Dirk Katstra
Megan Phillippe
Marta Ruggles
Heather Sieg
Jim Tiedeman
Ashley Walker

Class of 2017

Elias Awad
Jeanne Busse
Michael Kidd
Liza Sackson
Julie Sparks
Richard Stairhime
Jocelyn Thach
Joseph Warden

Class of 2018

Elizabeth Best
Leigh Critzer
Sam Haas
Jeannette Halpin
Joyce Katstra
Richard Lutz
Donna Nunley
Katherine Warren

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Christian Outreach – Chris Dean
Communications – Derik Rice
Discipleship – Jean Hudson
Endowment – Mac Walker
Evangelism – Vicki Snead
Finance and Administration – Presley Thach

Nominating – Presley Thach
Personnel – Elaine Knight
Preschool Council – Chris Kennedy
Property Management – John Meaney
Stewardship – Tom Phelps
Worship – Jim Patterson

MEMBERSHIP

1074

Active Members

35

New Members

IN MEMORIAM

Margaret Ann Beddow

Bob Bradley

Bob Carter

Duanne Carter

Sue Comey

Ron Critzer

Anna Day

Ron Firster

Mack Halsey

George Hamrick

Dick Herath

John Meggs

Jim Miller

Bill Otis

Jim Paton

Mildred Skove

Will Swygert

Audrey Vail

Don Walker

Bob Wessel



WHAT DOES THE LORD REQUIRE?

Welcome to the First Pres 2016 Annual Report! Now, I know an annual report can be a little bit of dry reading, but my hope is that this report serves as a mile marker about where we see God moving in our community and where we hope God will be leading us in 2017. This year's report is organized using wisdom from the prophet Micah, particularly Micah 6:8:

The LORD has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

This threefold prophetic wisdom – to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God – encourages us to consider our lifestyle, our total outlook on life, and our ethical values. In this passage, Micah helps us understand what God expects from us. Actually, it is stronger than just an expectation, it is what God requires of us. To be sure, we are not saved by our piety, our sacrifices, or the way we perform and participate in liturgy alone. Micah 6:8 calls into question whether we can save ourselves through proper understanding, the correct theological formulation, or a



correct reading of the Holy Scriptures. What does it take to be right in God's eyes? Simply living in the tension between justice and kindness. As a congregation, we have strived to do justice and love kindness and, on many occasions, these two go hand in hand, like hosting our PACEM guests. But sometimes justice feels like the opposite of loving kindness, and vice-a-versa. So how do we discern whether it is justice or acts of kindness that is being called for when the two are not in concert? God says, "Walk humbly with me." And this is the key to the tension between justice and kindness. We can't really do either one of these very well solo. We need each other to best walk humbly with God and, together, do justice and love kindness. So my hope is that this annual report will be an encouragement about how we at First Pres are striving to do justice and love kindness as we walk humbly with God.

**"He has told you,
O mortal,
what is good;
and what does the
LORD require of you
but to do justice,
and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly
with your God?"**

Micah 6:8



Do justice, Love kindness, Walk humbly with your God

DO JUSTICE

Old Testament scholar, Daniel Simundson, explains that Micah suggests God is more interested in the dedication of our everyday lives to do justice and righteousness than in our religious practices. Justice is something we do. We must work for fairness and equality for all, particularly the weak and powerless. First Pres members are actively fulfilling our mission to “serve one another, our community, and the world with humility and love, relying on the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to lead us in witnessing to the love of God in Jesus Christ.” Guiding our church in its path to do justice, the Christian Outreach Committee finalized an assessment form this year that assists in determining whether to pursue new efforts and requests for assistance based on newly adopted guiding principles developed from their study of the book *When Helping Hurts*. The overarching goal in this shift is to build relationships with organizations rather than simply distribute financial assistance. These newly adopted principles can be found on the First Pres website.

This year the shift in our mission focus was evident in our redesigned Christmas outreach effort, providing material gifts and hands-on assistance at the Christmas store at Charlottesville Abundant Life Ministries (CALM). Many First Pres members donated items from CALM children’s wish lists, and others spent time volunteering at the CALM store, wrapping presents with children, shepherding children through the store, and more.

First Pres’s impact in local organizations only increased over the past year, with the development of a “lunch buddy” program partnering Burnley Moran Elementary students and First Pres adults; the development of a local youth summer mission effort with the Haven, International Rescue Committee, and CALM; our participation in the annual CROP walk for hunger; our provision of a Thanksgiving meal to 75 local families in need; our expansion of the First Pres Soup Kitchen prep teams to allow working adults and families to participate on Tuesday nights in advance of Wednesday meals, which continued to provide approximately 100 meals each week in Fellowship Hall; and our partnership with Virginia Blood Services to continue to host two blood drives each year.

SERVING OUR NEIGHBORS

AA & NA meetings
Alliance for Interfaith Ministries
ARC of the Piedmont
Blue Ridge House
Boy Scouts
Building Goodness Foundation
CASA training
Charlottesville Abundant Life Ministries
Charlottesville Bar Association meetings
CMTA Competition Festival
Emergency Food Bank
Foothills Child Advocacy
Glee Club Performances
Habitat for Humanity
Hospice Memorial Illumination
Hospice/Music by the Bedside
IMPACT
Kiwanis Club Pancake breakfast
Love, INC
Meals on Wheels
Massanetta Conference Center
Needlepoint Guild meetings
Oratorio concerts
PACEM
Presbyterian Education Board
Ready Kids
Region Ten
Shelter for Help in Emergency
Soup Kitchen
Union Theological Seminary
Virginia Consort Performances
Wednesday Music Club



Do justice, Love kindness, Walk humbly with your God



Stuffing stockings for our PACEM guests



Putting the renovated kitchen to use at Wednesday Soup Kitchen

This year the Quilt Sowers were recognized in *The Spotlight*, an electronic newsletter from the Presbyterian Women of the James, for their \$4,500 donation from quilt sales to the Shelter for Help in Emergency, a local organization whose goal is to end domestic violence in our community. Combined together, the First Pres outreach is staggering.

This year's guest speakers help to highlight our effort to do justice beyond our own community. POJ missionary,



Youth help out at a Washington, D.C. soup kitchen

Cindy Corell, educated the congregation about her work in Haiti with farmers and farmer organizations so they can grow and produce the food they need, bringing transformation to their lives and enabling their children to go to school. Pam Cope joined the Presbyterian Women's Spring Gathering, discussing her work as co-founder of the Touch A Life Foundation, a non-profit organization devoted to rescuing and advocating for exploited children globally. Encouraging a passion for mission and compassion in a succeeding generation is of utmost importance. With this as its goal, the COC hosted an event for both First Pres youth and adults to hear Colleen Berger and Tyler McPhillips, two prior First

Pres youth, share their mission efforts in the Peace Corp and at Church Hill in Richmond. Emmanuel Tambe, M.D., Chief Ophthalmologist at Baptist Hospital in Mutengene, Cameroon, visited First Pres to discuss his work with the International Response to Improve Sight (IRIS). First Pres has supported IRIS, the Massanetta Springs Conference Center's building campaign, and the presentation of Dvorak's *Mass in D Major* and *Te Deum* through accumulated income from the Endowment Fund, which received over \$30,000 in contributions this year.

First Pres hosted and participated in Abraham's Table and Forum Discussion, part of the Rumi Forum. Guest speakers, including David Forney, presented their perspectives on the root causes of religious extremism. Dinner before the event in Fellowship Hall enabled a wonderful mix of people to spend time in fellowship with one another. Rumi Forum was founded in 1999 with the mission to foster interfaith and intercultural dialogue; it aims to stimulate thinking and exchange of opinions on supporting and fostering a culture of democracy, freedom of thought, human rights, and peace and tranquility for all human beings.

👋❤️👣 Do justice, Love kindness, Walk humbly with your God



Whether the actions are large or small, serving God requires outward expressions of our faith; what might seem a regular, menial task within our own walls in fact makes an impact. We volunteer to be Doorstep Visitors, providing information about our church and our programs; we welcome Sunday visitors with cookie bags; and we serve as greeters to the Sanctuary at Sunday services and other significant events. We promulgate our church in the community by increasing our presence on the web, on social media, and in local print publications like the *Daily Progress* and *Charlottesville Family Magazine*; we hand deliver invitations to our Advent and Lent services. During special events like Music on Park Street concerts, worship services where we expect many visitors, or preschool events, we ensure guests are greeted with brochures about our church and current programs or events that might pique their interest.

TOM PHELPS ON JUSTICE:



Our God is a just and loving God. This means that we will be treated fairly and with a caring hand.

When we do not follow the paths of righteousness, our family, our friends, our church family, our society, and God will let us know. We are held responsible and accountable for our actions and thoughts.

Being fair is not just for the blindfolded Lady Justice; we are also required to provide fair and equal opportunities for everyone in our society so that we each may use, to the best of our abilities, the talents that are provided to us by the Grace of God.

God calls us to participate in justice through the church and other organizations, and it may be expressed by our financial resources that are used to promote fairness and equality for all.

LOOKING FORWARD:

In the coming year, many programs at First Pres will continue with their current energy and impact, and new ones will begin. We understand our call to justice in providing meals to the hungry, shelter to those in need, and financial assistance for the impoverished. We will seek to develop stronger methods of connecting congregation members who desire to volunteer with opportunities that are of interest to them, and we will strive to energize First Pres interest and participation in local, regional, and international mission trips.



Do justice, Love kindness, Walk humbly with your God

LOVE KINDNESS



Margaret and Trey Hathaway greet visitors with cookie bags

Kindness conjures images of love, loyalty, and faithfulness, all of which can be found amongst our relationships with one another and with God. Participating in PACEM hosting is a vivid example of where doing justice and loving kindness meld together. When First Pres hosts PACEM, we are opening our doors, providing food, and spending time with 40 local community members who are in need of feeling God's love. Partnering with other congregations in our community, such as Congregation Beth Israel and Blue Ridge Church of Christ, to accomplish this support during the Advent season is significant.

PAT TIEDEMAN ON LOVING KINDNESS:



The Lord Almighty who spoke through the Old Testament prophets, such as Micah, hates sin and is our righteous Judge. God's love is also real, so real, that He sent His Son to teach and save us. Because His love is real, God inspired this seemingly simple statement we read in Micah, one easily absorbed and remembered. Yet don't let the simplicity of this prophetic wisdom fool you – living it takes deliberate effort every day. When I first thought about this passage in our Stewardship meeting, I thought we should actually be frightened by one word: *require*. Three times Micah says *require* so that we do not hear this as a request, suggestion, or a guideline, but as a requirement from God.

Personally, I have to constantly attempt to learn what "loving kindness" means because, frankly, it is difficult to identify. Each and every encounter we have in our days is unique, and loving kindness is, in part, about our attitude towards our neighbors and ourselves. Sometimes loving kindness is saying words of comfort, while other occasions require us to speak honestly, even if it means hurting the other's feelings. The only way I know to develop this loving-kindness attitude is by coming daily to God in quiet times of study and prayer and seek the transforming power of the Holy Spirit to guide and inform my words and actions. I think we each must do this; we each are required to do this.

While First Pres members are actively promoting justice and kindness locally and afar, we are also encouraging compassion to bloom within our own church. Through fellowship at First Pres activities like the Hanging of the Greens, the fall and spring annual picnics, the monthly men's lunch, Sunday morning Fellowship Time, and Presbyterian Women gatherings, we build relationships with one another as we grow in our relationship with God. Day in and day out, First Pres members can be found volunteering to serve others, whether it is through hosting Fellowship Time, serving at a funeral reception, visiting with a member who hasn't been able to make it to church for a while, or providing a meal to a family who has welcomed a baby, we see a spirit of loving empathy shared with members who are facing challenges or celebrating joys.



Do justice, Love kindness, Walk humbly with your God

This year, we said goodbye to our Associate Pastor who had been with the church for over 10 years, Kim Wells. Many congregation members lovingly contributed to Kim's wish for a "Family Album," which she was so grateful to take with her. So that we would not fall short in pastoral care for our congregation, we welcomed the support of Pastor Tom Leland during the spring.

Loving kindness is inclusive of everyone, and with a desire to include everyone who wishes to worship, our "30 Minutes of Care" program stages a volunteer at the north entrance to the Sanctuary to provide assistance for those who need it. In this same spirit, this year all bread offered at communion was gluten-free so that everyone could partake. Our reach to those who desire to participate in communion extends beyond our physical church as well; biannually, current and past officers volunteer to serve "Extended Communion" to those who are not able to participate regularly at the Lord's Table with the congregation.



Rob Freer serves at the north entrance to the Sanctuary during 30 Minutes of Care

The "Connect-Serve" program of connecting volunteers with significant needs in our church yielded wonderful results.

Congregation members stepped up in so many roles! Gardeners for the Memorial Garden, photographers for baptisms, chancel team members, attendance recorders, front office volunteers, helpers for special children's programs, Sunday morning teachers, flower deliverers...the list goes on, and the proof of our congregation's love for and devotion to First Pres, to one another, and to God is evident.



This summer over 30 First Pres youth attended Montreat Youth Conference to gain a deeper understanding of God and what it means to connect with one another and with neighbors.

LOOKING FORWARD:

In the coming year, we will continue in our current ways of supporting and sharing God's love with those in our congregation and in our community, and will look for creative ways to connect those who want to share kindness with those in need of kindness. We will continue to build the relationships with First Presbyterian Church Preschool families, and we will seek to create more opportunities for children and youth participation in evangelistic activities.



Do justice, Love kindness, Walk humbly with your God

WALK HUMBLY

Daniel Simundson writes that walking “humbly” might be better understood as *carefully* or *circumspectly*. We are to walk with God, *carefully* putting Christ first in all the moments of our lives. We are to consider our life’s journey with *circumspect* rather than with knee-jerk reactions. God is in fact a constant companion on our life pilgrimages, and when we walk humbly we best see all that God is doing in our midst. Like Christians throughout the ages, our worship of God epitomizes our humble walk with God. We need each other to understand humility. We need each other to sing praises and songs of lament. The journey of faith is not a journey alone, but a communal activity that makes us part of the Body of Christ.

Music and art are central to our gathering around God’s Word and hearing the Good News of the Gospel. Every week volunteer musicians from the congregation give their gifts in community to help lead the congregation in worship. This year saw growth and development of the full potential of our musicians, witnessed in challenging concerts by the Handbell Ensemble, the performance of complex choral masterworks by the Sanctuary Choir, and introduction of vocal harmonies by the Praise Team. This year the music program was bolstered by the addition of a Fazioli piano, giving our church the opportunity to have a world-class instrument in the Sanctuary that, due to the incredible workmanship in its construction, in 50 years will still be an elite instrument used for the worship of God and in service to the community. The Music on Park Street Concert Series offered eight concerts, some of which included Jeremy Thompson playing Beethoven, Brahms, and Liszt on the piano; Elise Pittenger playing Schumann, Stravinsky, and Poulenc on the cello; and Mireille Asselin and Andrew Garland presenting an evening

of song in partnership with the Ash Lawn Opera.

Additional dimensions to our experience at church like the displays of quilts, Bruce Herman’s paintings, and children’s artwork along the church office hallway show us art’s role in nurture and worship.



360

Average Worship Attendance

65

Services with Communion

11

Baptisms

7

Confirmands



Do justice, Love kindness, Walk humbly with your God

DAVID BEAR ON WALKING HUMBLY WITH GOD:



Humility is, in its simplest terms, a clear recognition of the honest truth - the truth about who and what you are, and who and what God is.

We, as a congregation need to understand that this is no easy task. We need to remind ourselves constantly...

Remember who's in charge—and praise Him!

Pray for a humble heart.

Pay more attention to our own faults than to the flaws of others.

Not to hide behind our dignity—it's pride's favorite hiding place.

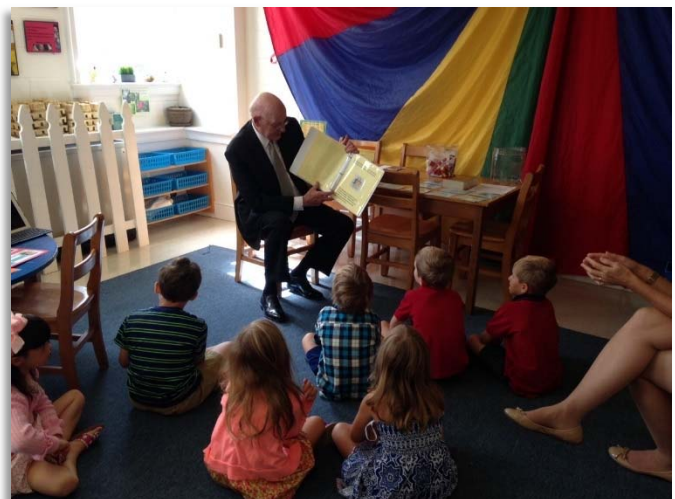
Try not to watch ourselves worship.

Serve others.

We walk humbly with God not only through worship on Sundays, but also by studying together during Sunday morning classes, deepening our faith in Bible studies, and more. Four adult Sunday morning classes were offered each semester, and this year we also offered summer classes as well. Two New Members classes provided a chance to learn more about our church and Presbyterians at large. This year added one extended afternoon New Members class instead of the typical Sunday morning weekly class to include opportunities for people with different schedules. First Pres grieved over a large number of deaths this year, and responded to that by offering a new adult Sunday morning class focused on how to best deal with our own grief or that of others and weekday workshops for small groups focused on learning and healing with a trained spiritual director and pastoral counselor.

We continued this year with three age-specific classes for youth and four age-specific classes for children. Seven youth were confirmed this past spring. Even down to the inclusion of simple Bible stories and songs read and sung by a volunteer in the nursery, we witness a mixture of education and love along our path in faith.

Throughout the year, three Bible studies, a youth group for both mid-high and senior-high students, a quilters group, a mission sewing group, three women's circles, and a men's lunch group offered myriad ways to encourage the growth of our faith and fellowship with one another. Children's Summer Storytime offered a chance for education and fun to children of both church and preschool families. Thirty-four children participated in this three-week long activity, and it was only possible with the dedication of church member volunteers.



Alton Taylor reads to kids during their Sunday morning class



Do justice, Love kindness, Walk humbly with your God



Blair Doby, dressed as Mary Magdalene, sits in front of the tomb during the Easter surprise walk

On Easter Sunday, children and families were able to come and celebrate the Good News of Easter, beginning with angels shouting, “Come meet some friends of Jesus on our Easter Surprise Walk.” As children entered the Chapel, you could see their excitement and sense their energy. Gathering in small groups, the angels led kids to the front lawn where they could hear the stories of Jesus’ friends. Mary reminded them that Jesus would always be a friend to them. Children tasted bread with the disciples huddled in the upper room. Meeting a bystander at the cross, they heard that Jesus never stops loving us! The walk ended with meeting Mary

Magdalene at the tomb, sharing her astonishment and shouting “He is not here – he is risen!”

LOOKING FORWARD:

In the coming year, the Worship Committee will continue to oversee our vibrant worship offerings, including facilitating the celebration of the sacraments. They will continue to explore new ways to enrich our worship experiences through liturgy and music. We are especially thrilled about the inclusion of Aram Bae’s worship leadership and celebrating her ordination and installation service on October 2, 2016.

Additional musical offerings will include another season of Music on Park Street as well as other concerts and special worship services throughout the year. Music on Park Street will continue with a performance by Mallarmé Chamber Players from Durham and an organ recital of the works of Eugene Gigout, among other offerings. On Good Friday, the Sanctuary Choir will perform Charles Wood’s dramatic *St. Mark’s Passion*. The Praise Team plans to work on a recording project, and the Handbell Ensemble hopes to perform several times during the year in various locations in the area.

2016 APNC

After being elected as the APNC on January 3, 2016, Anne Bear, Leigh Critzer, Jennifer Ferguson, David Maloney, Becca Meaney, David Schmidt, and Harrison Wehmann began developing a Ministry Information Form (MIF) for our church. With this MIF, the APNC was able to begin a nationwide search for candidates. They prayerfully read, evaluated, and discussed nearly 50 resumes over the course of ensuing months and narrowed their choices down to six candidates, who they interviewed “virtually” in early April. Two finalists visited Charlottesville in the latter part of April and participated in a number of in-person interviews and meetings. The APNC recommended calling Aram Bae as our new Associate Pastor for Youth and Mission, and the congregation agreed in their vote. Jennifer Ferguson reflects that “Aram’s genuine warmth and ability to be very present will be a gift to our congregation.”



Do justice, Love kindness, Walk humbly with your God

BEHIND THE SCENES WORK

Our efforts to worship, nurture, and serve wouldn't be effective without excellent work by the Property Management, Personnel, Stewardship, and Finance & Administration committees. This year saw a complete kitchen renovation, including the addition of the coffee bar and monitor in Fellowship Hall; a new retaining wall built in between the upper and lower parking lots; an extension of the brick wall providing better screening to the basement entry area; improvements to the landscaping; re-carpeting and repainting in the downstairs classrooms; and a Church Work Day to encourage the congregation's participation in the upkeep of our sacred space.

In an effort to allow future committees and leaders to learn from years past, we began the process of tasking committees to contribute to a "Continuity Binder," which will be modified, updated, and passed down with each succession. This will be a compilation of information about job descriptions, operating procedures, best practices, lessons learned, and reasoning behind significant decisions committees have made.

LOOKING FORWARD:

We will update our policies for the protection of children, youth, the elderly, and persons with disabilities; and complete the development of a three-year personnel planning tool.

We will conduct the triennial assessment of insurance coverage and evaluate the impact of reducing the number of leased parking spaces to provide more parking for weekday events hosted at our church.

Ensuring the solid foundation of our church building and grounds, we will repair and repaint the steeple; continue to assess maintenance of the parking lot and its embankment; develop a multi-year plan on facility maintenance and improvement; and evaluate alternative options for Church Work Day.

KITCHEN RENOVATION

Over the past year, First Pres concluded a total renovation of our kitchen, thanks to the generosity of many members, the Rathburn Foundation, and the building reserve. An industrial dishwasher, more prep space, new cabinets, a serving window and a five-pan hot food table, a warming oven, and a coffee bar with a wall-mounted monitor allow for more efficient and better service to our community, through our weekly Soup Kitchen attendance, and the myriad outside groups who depend on our space.

Our own events and programs are bolstered by the new kitchen as well – fellowship and communication with one another are fostered not only on Sundays, but also during the week at special events, lunches, and more. We are grateful to the time and monetary contributions many have made in order for the kitchen renovation to be accomplished.



Do justice, Love kindness, Walk humbly with your God



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Do justice, Love kindness, Walk humbly with your God