

First News



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The Number 7



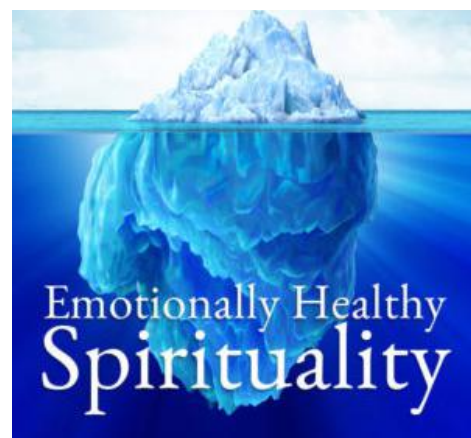
It's hard to believe it's been almost seven years since Pastor Lara and I arrived in Salisbury. Since that new beginning, much has changed. When we arrived, we had one dog and no kids. Seven years later, our beloved dog, Red, is no longer with us, but God has given us the gift of two hilarious, wild, silly, and beautiful girls, Joanna and Phoebe. They've grown up before your eyes just as much as before ours. The church has changed, too. There are new faces on Sunday mornings, new staff members, and we've said goodbye to several faithful saints. The church went through a global health crisis that threatened something we cherish—community. Even so, we arrive at our seventh year feeling that God's Spirit continues to work in our midst.

The Bible loves the number seven. The seventh day was imbued with something special by our creator. It is the only day blessed and declared “holy”— set apart. It is the only day that receives continued attention throughout the biblical witness. On the seventh day, God rested. The number seven means wholeness, means rest, means a pause, means blessing. This is why the Scriptural witness expands the meaning of seven in its mention of Sabbatical. Sabbatical is a “Sabbath of Sabbaths,” which occurs every seven years. In that year, farmers let their ground lie fallow with the implication that the ground and the workers are both given a period of rest and renewal. It is from this Scripture that denominations like our own have adopted Sabbaticals for their pastoral staff.

This summer, from June 16 - September 8, Pastor Lara and I are taking Sabbatical together. It's time to let the soil of our ministry lie fallow so that we can rest and renew our spirits for the next seven years to come. It is time for you, the congregation, to find renewal in this season. It is a time for you to rediscover that this church can survive without us. I imagine many of you are thinking, “Okay, so you're going away for 3 months. But what are you doing with that time?” It's a good question. Pastor Lara and I would like to each share one of the pieces of our Sabbatical that we're most looking forward to.

Pastor Josh: Emotionally Healthy Spirituality

The piece of Sabbatical I'm most looking forward to is called "The Emotionally Healthy Spirituality Course." A pastor, writer, and church leader named Pete Scazzero has spent the better part of the last twenty years helping leaders figure out how our being with God is connected to our doing for God. Wonders Scazzero, "How does our emotional and interior life affect our leadership?"



Believe it or not, this is a question I spend a lot of time thinking about. How does a pastor deal with carrying the grief and wounds they hear from parishioners on a weekly basis? How does a pastor lead with grace and yet also learn to have difficult conversations with staff or congregants? How does a pastor deal with conflict that happens in the context of ministry? As Scazzero says in his podcast, "There's the skills and aptitudes we bring to leadership, and then there's the person we are that we bring as well." For Scazzero, leadership is more than just acquired skills that can be applied in certain situations. Leadership is how one stays non-anxious and centered amid institutional challenges. Leadership is coming to terms with who one is, where one has been, so that the leader can bring who they truly are to their ministry.

The Emotionally Healthy Spirituality course is an 8-week course that involves scripture, prayer, psychological insights, devotions, and teaching. For me, Sabbatical is a perfect moment to go deeper. Sabbatical is a sabbath of sabbaths, a time to delight, to pause, and to contemplate the unique person God has uniquely called to this unique church. In other words, this course will help me continue down the path of becoming a healthier leader, person, and pastor. I'm excited to see what God will do during this course! Ask me about it when I get back. Hopefully, there will be much fruit to share.

Pastor Lara: Being Churchy

Growing up, I was the churchy girl. Obnoxiously churchy.

I discovered my call to ministry as a churchy kid who was

delighted by the sacred rhythms of worship, who encountered Christ in simple service, and had space for the unplanned interruptions of grace. During my Sabbatical, I want to reconnect with that churchy girl. In other words, I want to embrace the joys of discipleship outside of being a pastor in charge. As such, I'm most excited about attending worship, volunteering when I can, reading, and having space for holy interruptions.

I am soooooo excited to attend worship as a parishioner, not a pastor. I hope to worship at my childhood church in Illinois and a friend's PC(USA) church in Tacoma, WA. I love worshipping in different contexts, too. I hope to visit a wide range of churches: tiny and mega, white and black, English and Spanish, high church, low church, Presby, non-denom, AMEZ, Catholic, Pentecostal. I have 12 weeks to be another beggar in the pew, hungry for a meal of grace. I'll eat anything as long as Jesus is the main ingredient.





I also want to volunteer when I can. My soul needs a period of surrender of control and power. It will be good for me to show up and do what I'm told rather than be in charge. Plus, I discovered my calling through volunteer service. The least, last, lost, and lowly are Jesus in disguise, and I'd like to hang out with them or at least do a menial task to serve them.

Reading keeps my mind open and my heart soft. I can't wait to read a bunch this summer. I hope to read as much of the Bible as I can. I plan to read across a variety of disciples as the Spirit leads me.

Finally, I want to have lots of unplanned, empty time so that I needn't rush. The young-mom-pastor-life causes me to literally run from thing to thing more than I would like. I hope to recalibrate my sense of time from Chronos (get it done) time to Kairos (sacred slowness) time by wasting time with my kids, reading that extra chapter, lingering in conversation with a stranger, simply because I am remembering that God is the creator and master of all things, including time.

Who will be our pastors while you're gone?

Pastor Randy will serve as acting Head of Staff and moderator of Session. He will also have the support of two wonderful, retired clergy who have blessed First Pres by choosing to make First Pres their home—Revs. Bill Hoyle and Felicia Stewart Hoyle. Bill and Felicia will preach, lead liturgy, and offer pastoral care to our congregation. In addition to Bill and Felicia, we will have several other guest preachers, including Tony de la Rosa, the Executive Presbyter of Salem Presbytery, Daniel Heath, the Director of the Davidson Forum and the LCW pianist, and more. These ministers will bless you with their wisdom, warmth, and care.



What if we see you around town?

If you see us around town, please say hi! We are going to miss seeing your faces each week. Truly. We're a little worried about it. So please say hello, but please do not tell us anything about the church—good, bad, or ugly. We both are anticipating having a difficult time letting go of the day-to-day at First Pres. Hearing even a peep about it could easily suck us back in and defeat the purpose of Sabbatical.

How can we follow you?

Check Pastor Lara's Facebook page for updates from both Pastor Josh and Pastor Lara. We'll post about once a week so that you can get a snapshot of where we are, what we're up to, and what God is doing in us. When we return, we'll each lead a Sunday School lesson and write a newsletter article on our sabbaticals to share more with you.

We can't possibly thank you all enough for supporting this milestone in ministry. We trust that God will be faithful to us all in this season. We don't leave until June 16th. If you have any questions or concerns, come chat with us!

First Pres 2025 Concert Series Presents: Caroline Owen, Guest Musician

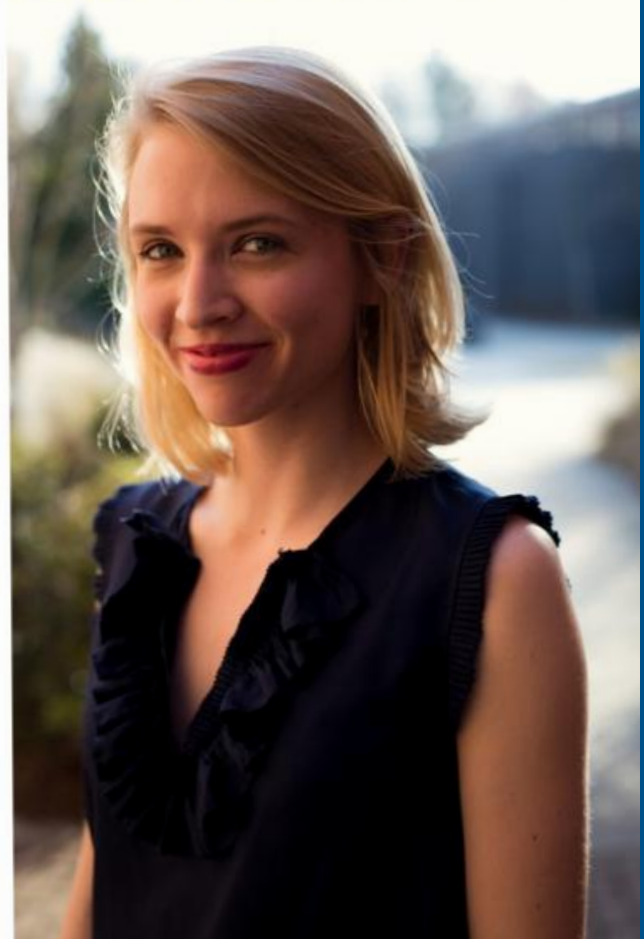
On Sunday, May 18
4pm in Sanctuary



Caroline is an award-winning
national and international
concert pianist!



Childcare is available!
Light refreshments will follow the concert.



Hello Dear Church Family,

It is hard to believe that I started working as First Pres Director of Music exactly one year ago! What a beautiful and blessed year this had been! I am grateful beyond measure, for all the new friendships, love, support, and opportunities to make music in worship with each of you.

At this time last year, we launched three new programs: relaunching one and starting two others:

(1) The Choral Scholars Program, relaunched last August, has been an enormous success. We are incredibly thankful for the high school and college students who faithfully contribute to our music ministry. While some have had to leave due to school or other job commitments, they have left a lasting impact. We also welcomed new members and hope to retain them for the long haul. A heartfelt thank you to Emma Blackwell,



Caroline Forrester, Victoria Glover, Rylan Lowe, Mia Mason, Corian Mincey, and Ashley Stine! We love you!

(2) The First Pres Concert Series began last summer with a delightful concert by pianist Elena Lyalina in July, followed by a chamber music concert featuring Eileen Young, Ryan Graebert, and myself in August. We also enjoyed performances by the Rowan Big Band in September and the Salisbury Swing Band in October. This year, we have some wonderful concerts already scheduled, and I'd like to highlight the three that are happening this summer:



May 18th, Sunday, at 4:00 pm

Join us for a concert featuring pianist Caroline Owen, followed by a reception. A native of Atlanta, Caroline frequently performs as a soloist and collaborator in venues across the United States, Canada, and Europe, including the DiMenna Center for Classical Music in New York and the Wiener Saal at the Mozarteum in Salzburg. Owen is a previous winner of the Florida MTNA Young Artist Competition and was a semifinalist in the 14th International Mozart Competition Salzburg and the International Keyboard Odyssiad. In 2018, she won the Pro-Mozart Society of Atlanta Competition, which provided her with a scholarship to study at the Salzburg Mozarteum. She has appeared as a soloist with the Furman University Symphony Orchestra and the Orlando Contemporary Chamber Orchestra. Her upcoming performances include a world premiere at the Midtown Arts & Theater Center Houston and multiple chamber music tours across Florida. You won't want to miss this concert!

June 20th, Friday, at 6:00 pm

We are honored to welcome The Elektra Winds, a woodwind quartet, to our First Pres Concert Series, celebrating 10 years as North Carolina's premier woodwind ensemble. Founded by professional musicians Dr. Laura Dangerfield Stevens (flute), Dr. Anna Lampidis (oboe), Dr. Eileen Young (clarinet), and Ms. Amber Ferenz (bassoon), the quartet's core members teach at several colleges and universities in the area, including Wake Forest University and UNC-Chapel Hill. Various members perform in regional orchestras, including the Greensboro, Winston-Salem, Salisbury, Western Piedmont, and Asheville symphonies. Elektra Winds specializes in 20th-century music and actively seeks to perform works by women composers, including Amber Ferenz. Their mission is to elevate the visibility of the woodwind quartet through professional performances and commissioned works.



August 15th, Friday, at 6:00 pm

We are excited to host the The Astralis Chamber Ensemble, an innovative and dynamic group acclaimed for their performances across the country. These award-winning musicians bring decades of experience from many of the world's major venues and concert series. With unique instrument pairings, the ensemble has been selected to premiere numerous new chamber works, expanding the repertoire through commissions and arrangements. Concert tours include a range of performances from leading concert series to underserved communities in order to reach audiences of all backgrounds through music.

(3) This summer, we are also excited to bring back our “Come As You Are” choir. We will meet on Sundays at 10:15 AM to practice hymns and an easy offertory to sing during the 11:00 AM service in the sanctuary. Starting in June, the dates are June 22nd, July 6th, July 20th, and August 3rd. Come sing with us! We are a family within our church family, and we hope you will enjoy worshipping the Lord with us from the sanctuary altar steps.

Thank you all for this incredible year. May God bless us with more beautiful and meaningful music this summer and in the years to come!

In Christ, Teresa



Bell Tower Ringers Handbell Festival Highlights!

What an incredible time we had at our Bell Tower Ringers Handbell Festival this past March! With the fabulous David Harris from the internationally acclaimed Raleigh Ringers leading the way, our day was filled with laughter, music, and a whole lot of ringing!

But wait, there's more! We're already gearing up for next year's festival. We are welcoming the amazing Brian Childers from Charlotte Bronze Ringers. We can't wait to see what musical magic he'll bring to our bells!

And speaking of bells, we're super excited to announce that our beloved instruments are getting a makeover! They have been refurbished and shined brightly during worship on Mother's Day Sunday!

Thank you for your support and stay tuned for more fun updates!



SAVE THE DATE AND PLEASE VOLUNTEER

First Pres will again host a site for Rowan Salisbury School System's Summer Meals Program. With the help of church members, we will open the doors of the Fellowship Hall each weekday from June 2 to July 25 (excluding July 4) to allow children of the community to eat lunch that is delivered by the school system. We need at least 2 people to sign up for each day to ensure the space is set up and the children and their parents feel welcome. Use the QR Code below to sign up.

RSS SUMMER MEALS

We need Volunteers!

11:15am - 12:15pm

Monday-Friday

June 2-July 25

PLEASE sign up NOW to help
before your calendar is too full!



VBS 2025

Monday, June 16 - Thursday, June 19
from 5-7:30pm, free supper included
WE NEED VOLUNTEER HELPERS



USE THIS QR CODE TO
DISCOVER HOW YOU CAN HELP



Join us for Baccalaureate Sunday on May 18

11am Worship in the Sanctuary
Reception following worship in Lewis Hall

Congrats!



Congratulations to our 2025 Graduates **HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES**

East Rowan High School: Emilee Potts (David and Nadine Potts's granddaughter)

Cannon School: James Fisher

Jesse C. Carson High School: Caroline Snow

Gray Stone Day School (Misenheimer): Nathan Wetmore

Freedom High School (Morganton): John Scott
(Dianne Scott's grandson) Summa Cum Laude

Broughton Magnet High School (Raleigh) : Andrew Rostick
(Dianne Scott's grandson) Summa Cum Laude

Salisbury High School: Drew Aron, Emma Blackwell, Sawyer Burton, Hines Busby,
Rachel Fisher Ava Morris (Summa Cum Laude)

Salisbury Academy: Ebbie Lescoe

Summitt Virtual Academy: Alex Robinette

West Rowan High School: Robert Coleman Grayson Smith



COLLEGE GRADUATES

George Mason University

Samantha Aiken (David and Nadine Potts's granddaughter) Master in Biodefense

Lenior Rhyne College

Sherry Bryan Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)

Summa Cum Laude

North Carolina State University

Zeb Scott (Dianne Scott's grandson)

BA in Arts/Business & Entrepreneurship, Magna Cum Laude

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Emma Nianouris, BA in Biology

Matthew Rostick (Dianne Scott's grandson)

BA in Economics & Public Policy, Minor in Data Science

CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!

Disciple 365 Award

Discipleship is our call 365 days a year. Each year, an anonymous church disciple provides funds to remind high school seniors that discipleship is a daily lifestyle. All high school seniors received a letter with an application for the "Disciple 365 Award," a gift of \$365. In addition, seniors were asked to give the names of two people who inspired them and encouraged them to be disciples of Christ. This year, five seniors applied for this award. Here are the seniors and the disciples they chose who have encouraged them on their faith journey:

- Drew Aron – Dyke & Deborah Messinger
- Sawyer Burton – Laura Zimmerman-Clark & Fran Lescoe
- Robert Coleman – Josh Musser Gritter & Troy Creamer
- Ava Morris – Josh Musser Gritter & Margaret Harris
- Alex Robinette – Troy Creamer & John Drye

Thank you to the anonymous benefactor for providing these funds and reminding us that discipleship is a daily call within our faith journeys. And a very special thank you to each person chosen for supporting, teaching, inspiring, and encouraging a high school senior in their daily walk of faith!

TWAM 2025

TEENS WITH A MISSION



TWAM: A Firm Foundation

Have you ever had that feeling of sheer satisfaction that comes from building something with your hands? Maybe it was a sandcastle on the beach with your kids, maybe it was a tree house in the backyard, maybe it was a raised garden bed in the side yard. I'm always amazed at the satisfaction and delight our young people have when they finish building homes on our Mexico Mission trip.

But this trip is more than just building physical homes. Providing shelter and generational wealth to an unhoused family is, of course, one of the main goals of the trip. However, I always push my students to turn the question toward their own lives. What, I ask them, is God building within you?

In 1 Corinthians, Paul uses the building of structures as a metaphor for what God does in us, the church. Christ, says Paul, is a firm foundation. If you're wondering what the building of that foundation looks like, come to worship on Sunday, June 15th. We'll have a unified worship service that day. You'll come and see a stage full of smiling, ebullient faces. There will be something sturdy, something lasting, in the words you hear these young people speak. Why? Because they have bore witness to the transformation of human lives, something they wrought with their very hands.

It's funny how that works, right? Build something for someone else, and you'll find yourself built up. So, here's my two asks of this congregation:

1) Pray for our Mission team as we travel and as we serve the week of June 7-14.

2) Come Sunday, June 15, and see and hear what God has done.

I promise you'll feel God has built something in you.

Pastor Josh

THANK YOU! THIS YEAR - WE GLOWED! Our 20th Annual TWAM 5K Run/Walk went so well! Lots of smiles, fellowship, and exercise! Again, thank you to all sponsors, runners, walkers, event volunteers, Salisbury Rowan Runners and Chair Delaine Fowler for **EVERYTHING** you did to make it a **BIG success!** **We were able to raise OVER \$35,000 for our TWAM mission trip in June 2025.** Congrats to Drew Adams who crossed the finish line first in our half mile fun run! Male overall went to Brad Mueller (1) and Sonny Ali (2). Female overall went to Katelyn Storey (1) and Pastor Lara Musser Gritter (2). Overall masters went to Kevin Settineri and Noel Adams.

KEEP POUNDING!
HAMMERS FOR RUNNERS,
HOUSES FOR FAMILIES IN NEED!







Vacation Bible School

Monday, June 16 - Thursday, June 19
5:00-7:30 pm, SUPPER INCLUDED
REGISTRATION & SUPPER ARE FREE

Ages: Preschool 3 & 4 years old
through 5th Graders

SIGN YOUR CHILD UP NOW



Don't Miss
VBS 2025!

That's A Wrap: Our Year In Youth

It's been a wild and wonderful year of youth ministry at First Pres. Here's the things I'm most thankful for and proud of:

****New faces, many unchurched, hanging out at Youth events**

****The level of "depth" in our "Porch Bible Study" conversations**

****A growing interest in the TWAM Mission trip:**

My first year we had 12 students, this year we have 36.

****A growing depth and intimacy in our Youth Ministry team. We spend a lot of time together—planning, praying, discussing, sharing, youth-leading, and eating burritos.**

God is growing us as a team.

****Thank God for my captain, Meredith Honeycutt. She's handled & juggled many small details so that I can focus on ministering and pastoring. What a gift! Don't you dare try to steal her!**

She's mine for two more years.

****Successful overnight retreats: Both our Confirmation retreat and HS retreat were occasions of great fun and great deepening in discipleship.**

****Orienting ourselves our God's grace: As always, every Sunday our students are reminded that God's grace is a gift for them no matter what, when, or how.**

This is the heartbeat of our ministry.

****Salem Flemings completion of her 2nd year as Youth intern. It's been so life-giving to teach and mentor a bright college student like her. Many years ago, I was her when I was in college, and it deeply impacted me.**

These are just some of the highlights. But I'd like to share one more. The graduation of this senior class marks a special moment for me as a Youth Pastor. When Pastor Lara and I arrived, these now burgeoning young adults were 6th graders. One of my youth ministry goals was always to see a group of students all the way through Middle School and onto graduation. I thank God for these Seniors. They mean so much to me. I hope this place and ministry of the gospel has marked them indelibly. I'm proud of the moment, and I thank God for giving our ministry the endurance to see these students through all the highs & lows of life in Middle and High School. I imagine our last moments together in Mexico will not be, for me, without tears.





GREAT YOUTH MEMORIES! #YOUTHMINISTRY

FIRST KIDS EOY

ANOTHER YEAR of incredible fellowship with the cutest, most energetic, crazy group of young disciples! Our Wednesday evenings are high energy and loud, but we are learning so much about Faith, Jesus, and the Church! Our First Kids program finished up their spring season on April 23 with a big evening...pizza, ice cream sundaes, a butterfly release, a BIG Smartie Quiz competition, and playground time. We even voted on our favorite First Kids meals! With over 45 children enrolled, we have been together since September, learning about the church, Advent, Lent, and the life of Jesus. Thank you to all our parents who entrust their little ones to us to help grow their faith. Please say thank you to all our First Pres parent volunteers who spend every Wednesday night teaching and shepherding these precious children: Robin Fisher, Allison Adams, Alex Paul, Susan Muth, Noel Adams, Delaine Fowler, Will Paul, John Muth, Maggie Behrooz, Bob Coleman, Alan Fowler, and Jessica Settineri.





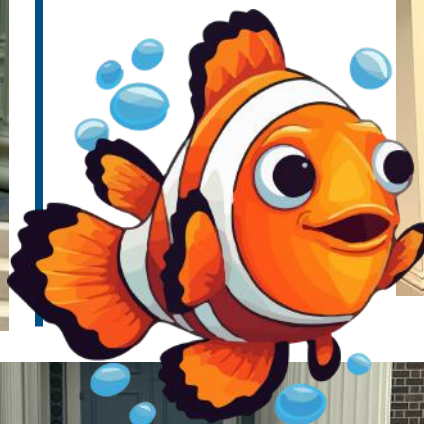
Confirmation Class of 2025
 Georgia Heilig Gabe Lee Camden Honeycutt
 Campbell Aron Charles Coleman
 Holly Whittington



Feed the Fish 2025

This year's campaign (Lenten offering) ended with great success! We reported on Easter Sunday that our church had raised \$4499.00, but with a late \$1.00 donation...we raised \$4500.00 for PCUSA's One Great Hour of Sharing! Thank you Mike Drinkard! Since we began our Annual Feed the Fish competition in 2012...this year's donations ranked in 2nd place overall!

Thank you to our First Kids, Day School, and all our Adult Sunday School classes who REALLY stepped up their giving THIS YEAR to help those in need.



First Pres Salisbury raised \$4,499.00 for One Great Hour of Sharing



Easter Memories



DAY SCHOOL GOOD NEWS



The Day School is finishing a stupendous 2024-2025 school year! We have watched all of the children grow and learn and have lots of fun while doing this! Just take a walk down our hallways and you can see all of the beautiful art they have made and hear all of the squeals. We had many friends come teach us fun life lessons such as Dr. Hudson, a dentist and even some four legged friends. Our last day is May 21st and we will have a schoolwide picnic at Dan Nicholas Park. We still have a few openings for the 2025-2026 school year which will start on August 18th, 2025, and if you know anyone interested just send them our way.

Dayschool@firstpressalisbury.org

DAY SCHOOL REGISTRATION



Our Enrollment Registration
for 2025-2026
is open for everyone!





Summer 2025 Newsletter

MOMCO FIRST PRES

"MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR YOU, MY POWER IS MADE PERFECT IN YOUR WEAKNESS. THEREFORE, I WILL BOAST MORE GLADLY ABOUT MY WEAKNESSES, SO THAT CHIRST'S POWER WILL REST ON ME."

2 CORINTHIANS 12:9-10

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

June 21st MomCo is partnering with The American Red Cross again for a babysitting course! This is a great opportunity for our youth to learn all the basics for babysitting! Please contact Susan Muth if you are interested in signing up! SusanDMuth@gmail.com

com



On May 12th we finished off our season with our last meeting, teach your kids to wildly hope, where we made end of year teacher gifts. Focusing on how to teach our kids to find hope in Jesus



Look for ways to sign up for next year coming late summer. We will return in September.

EASTER BASKETS FOR NAZARETH'S CHILDREN'S HOME



In April MomCo made and Donated 43 Easter Baskets to Nazareth's Childrens Home

PAST EVENTS

In the winter, our CPR trainings, where many moms, caregivers and church members gained invaluable skills. In fact, one mom used what she learned to successfully perform the Heimlich maneuver on her baby-an amazing reminder of how important these skills are!

Our February social was our Mom's Galentines Tea Party, where Yummy treats and loving conversations were had.

Our March social was a St. Patrick's Line Dancing Night at the Suwanee Theater. Lots of fun and laughter!

In April, we had a playgroup at Dan Nicholas park for Kids to play and moms to socialize.

Our Last Social in May was at Mac Tabby Cat Cafe!



Thank you to these gentlemen who shared their experience at our Dad Panel!

Carl Repsher, Will Paul, John Drye, Pastor Josh, Rip Collins

February, March & April Meetings

In preparation for Valentine's day we focused on intentional connections with our Dad Panel and Date Night Boxes.

Another February meeting focused on The power of community. We wrote letters to our Church homebound list. Also, Our Pediatric Q&A with Kendall Nagy provided parents with expert insights on their children's health.

In March, Pastor Lara spoke with us for our Digital Detox meeting. We discussed what moms can do to help our children and families live healthy in this fast pace digital world.

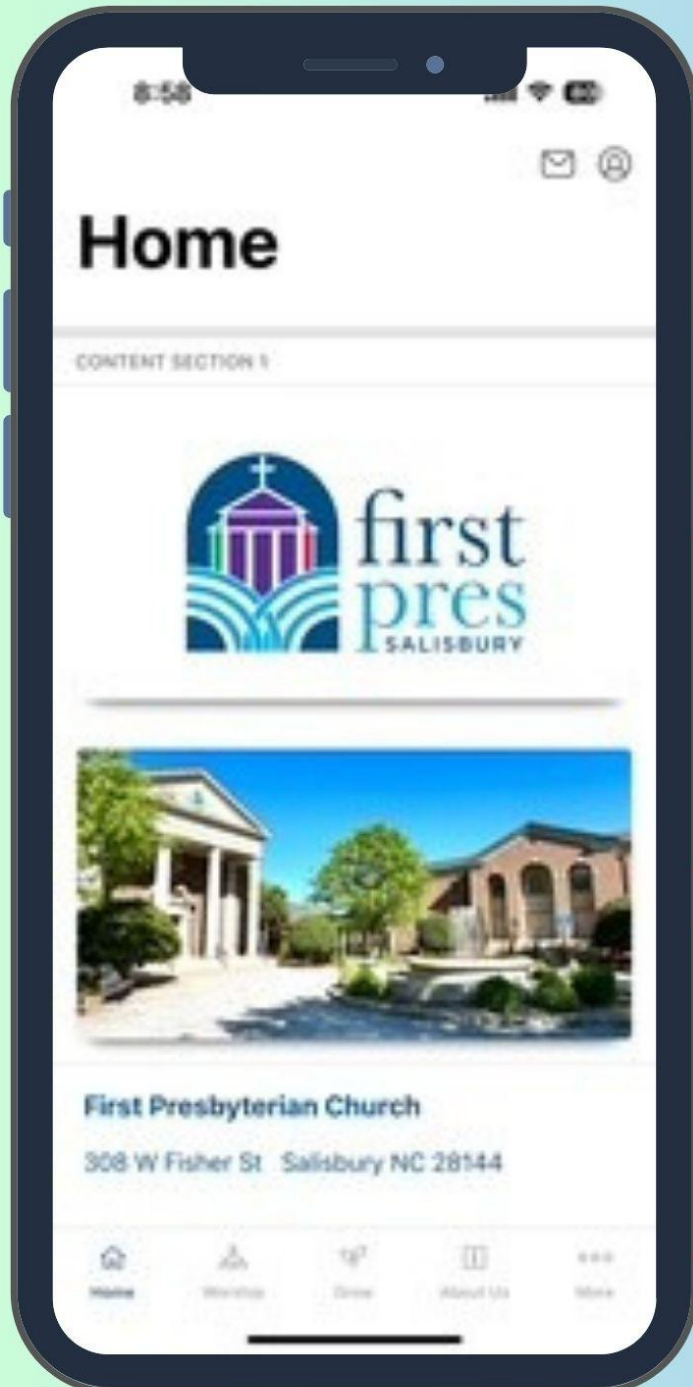
In April, our meeting was Streamline your decisions. Mom's have a lot of decisions to make daily! How do we make it easier? We came together to make 43 Easter baskets to donate to the Nazareth's Children's Home.

Our second April meeting was Get outside! We focused on the importance of being outside for ours and our children's health. We took a walk outside and were lead in a stretch by Bekah Summitt. We also placed our love and hope rocks we painted around the Bell Tower Green.

*Brand
New!*

THE FIRST PRES APP

Keep up with Events, Registrations, Giving, & more!



Simple to use

Quick access to
our calendar

Register for events
+ So much more!

Download it NOW!



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

March 31, 2025

OPERATING

YTD Income	358,322.40
YTD Expenses	<u>310,826.77</u>
Cash Flow - Positive	<u>47,495.63</u>

YTD Actual Income	358,322.40
YTD Budgeted Income	<u>326,412.50</u>
OVER	<u>31,909.90</u>

YTD Budgeted Expenses	349,434.50
YTD Actual Expenses	<u>310,826.77</u>
UNDER	<u>38,607.73</u>

DAY SCHOOL

YTD Gain	<u>11,084.77</u>
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GIVING

YTD Actual Giving	330,993.48
YTD Budgeted Giving	<u>312,162.50</u>
OVER	<u>18,830.98</u>

YTD Actual Pledges	304,507.58
YTD Budgeted Pledges	<u>283,912.50</u>
OVER	<u>20,595.08</u>



THIS SUMMER

STAY CONNECTED.
SET UP A RECURRING GIFT.



SCAN HERE
TO GIVE



Unified Summer Sunday Worship

June 15 – Lewis Hall

June 22 – Sanctuary

June 29 – Lewis Hall

July 6 – Sanctuary

July 13 – Lewis Hall

July 20 – Sanctuary

July 27 – Lewis Hall

All Services begin at 11am



Summer Sunday School

UNIFIED ADULT & YOUTH
Sunday School offering from
Sunday, June 15 - July 27
9:45-10:30am
Fellowship Hall

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL
Sunday, June 15 - August 31
9:45-10:45am

Nursery: Infant to 4 year olds together in Rm B30
Children: K - 5th together in Rm 206



S
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yoga class
FOR EVERYONE!

ARE YOU READY TO TRY SOMETHING NEW (OR OLD!)
FOR YOUR BODY AND SPIRIT?

Join us on Wednesdays in Lewis Hall
from 9-10:15 am,
for a practice that involves all of you-
Body, Mind, and Spirit!
It's more than a good stretch!

A flexible (or bendy) body is
not required for our Yoga
practice, but a willing heart is!
Everyone is welcome, any time--
-and first-timers and new
students are especially
encouraged to give it a try.
Registration is not required.
Dress comfortably. Yoga mats
are available. First class is free,
then \$10 suggested.



Taught by Rev. Felicia Stewart Hoyle
(RYT-500)
fshoyle@gmail.com for more information



Rowan County Public Health Seeks Community Input for Health Needs Assessment

Rowan County Public Health, in partnership with Healthy Rowan, Rowan County United Way, and Novant Health Rowan Medical Center are calling on ALL Rowan County residents to participate in the 2025 Community Health Survey.

Survey responses will help local health organizations and community leaders:

- Identify and prioritize key health concerns.
- Develop targeted strategies to address community health needs
- Secure funding and resources to implement programs that support better health outcomes.
- Strengthen partnerships among local organizations to improve health services.

All Rowan County residents are encouraged to complete the survey.

Contact: Courtney Meece (704) 216-8818
Courtney.Meece@rowancountync.gov



Member Updates

JOYS (January-April):

- ED and Beffie Cook on the birth of their granddaughter, Mary Elizabeth Turcotte on December 26. Her parents are Robert and Ginny Cook Turcotte.
- Dyke and Deborah Messinger on the marriage of their son, Trevor Messinger, to Nick Berning on December 23.
- Banks and Lauren Fisher on the birth of Paul Edward Fisher, III.
- Eva and Vaughn Nelson on the birth of their grandson, Watson Meador Schappell, on March 26.
- Bill and Felicia Hoyle, on the marriage of their daughter, Sarah, to Santiago Meneses.
- Mike and Gail Drinkard on the birth of their granddaughter, Emily, on April 20. Emily's parents are Susan and Senthil Shanmugham, and her sisters are Nivi and Addie.



DEATHS (January-April):

- Eva Nelson and family, on the death of her step-father, Ray Bowden.
- Carol and Acey Worthy on the death of her mother, Tootie Ross.
- Myrnie McLaughlin and family on the death of her husband, John McLaughlin.
- Tony Shaw and family on the death of his mother, Libby Shaw.
- Jay Whittington and family on the death of his brother, Bill Whittington.
- Steve and Diane Coggin on the death of their nephew, Landon Coggin.
- Jody Blackwell and family on the death of his mother, Geneva McFarland.
- Rosalie Laughlin and family on the death of her husband, John.
- Chris and James Mead and families on the death of their father, Robert 'Rocky' Mead.
- The family of Betty Fellows who died on March 8.
- Brandon Aron and family on the death of his sister-in-law, Talia Aron.
- The family of Joe Wilson, Jr., who died on March 13.
- Margaret Almeida and family on the death of her husband, Tony Almeida.
- Eleanor Sandifer on the death of her sister, Jane Turner.
- Glenn Hudson and family, on the death of his father, Bill Hudson.
- Jay and Scott Whittington and family on the death of Jay's wife (Scott's mother), Sharon Whittington, on April 20.





Thank you to all who supported our April American Red Cross Blood Drive! We collected 30 units of viable blood...SUCCESS! Save the date for our next Blood Drive on Tuesday, July 29, from 2:00-6:30 pm in Fellowship Hall.

Dear First Pres Staff and Congregation,
As we end another year, we are pausing to thank those who helped make this year a huge success. Thank you for letting us use your folding tables for our fall festival. It was a wonderful event for our students and families. We hope this can be a new tradition for many years! With love and thanks,
Isenberg PTA

First Pres Family,
Thank you for the many calls, texts, cards, blue cards and prayers during the recent loss of my mother, Libby. Every word was read, every thought was appreciated and every prayer was felt. Again, many thanks.
Tony Shaw

First Pres Church,
Jim and I would like to thank everyone for their kindness during our illnesses. Especially Randy for his visits and Josh for his calls. We want the ladies to know we love our prayer shawls and we use them every day. The flowers were welcome and so beautiful. The blue cards were a wonderful surprise and very much appreciated. Hope to be back soon.
Sincerely, Betty and Jim Carli

Embracing the Unchurched

Team is most grateful to those in our congregation who gave to the "Winter Coat Drive." We know that your generous donation benefited and kept a number of less fortunate people warmer this winter season.

All of the items donated below were given to Rowan Helping Ministries:

51 coats (for children & adults)

7 vests

2 infant sleepers

4 pairs of gloves

1 sweatsuit (pants & hoodie)

Thank you!



TOMATO DAY LUNCH!

Sunday, July 20

In Lewis Hall

(Following unified worship at 11am)



Menu Highlights:

Fresh tomatoes from local gardeners

BACON

Classic BLT sandwiches

PB&J alternative for kids

Sides and desserts

(see sign-up & volunteer list)

We will also have a photo booth!

Everyone: Please sign up to bring a side dish or dessert (sign-up sheet is in the narthex). Volunteers are also needed for setup, food prep, and cleanup.

Come hungry and bring a friend - this is a gathering you won't want to miss!

Please let the church office know you will be attending by July 14!



Rowan County United Way

Rowan County United Way's Day of Caring is a special all-day event in which company employees, civic groups, and individuals have an opportunity to combine volunteerism and skills to complete much-needed projects/activities for low-income Rowan County homeowners, local nonprofit organizations, and schools.

Eight of our church members **SHOWED UP** at Overton Elementary School to help! Thank you Bridget Brown, Anne Saunders, Bill Hoyle, Mark Grover, Keith Garner, Rip Collins, Barry Sang and Mike Drinkard.

It was a big job and a lot of mulch - but they got the job done! Later this summer (before school starts back in August), we will return to plant flowers in planter boxes built by the East Rowan High School carpentry class. West Rowan High also contributed to the beautification project by building and donating 3 wooden picnic tables. Many thanks to Godley's for all the mulch!!! #deeplyrootedbranchingout





Happy Spring from Meals on Wheels! Our church team is looking forward to warmer days ahead after a cold and rainy winter. We are sad that we will soon be losing one of our long-time regular volunteers. Helen Kichefski has delivered meals for 10 years. She and her husband, Jan, have decided to move to Hendersonville to be closer to their children and grandchildren. Thank you, Helen, for your faithful service to seniors in our community. You will be missed! We are grateful to Susan Sember, who has enthusiastically agreed to take Helen's place on Route 9.

We are very grateful to the following church members and friends of our church who have delivered meals during the past several months: Tony Shaw, Carol and Del Denny, Wayne Hayworth, Tracy Smith, Beffie and ED Cook, Paula and Bill Troxler, Randy Lassiter, Dianne Scott and Tony Blackwell, Lyn Beaver and Tricia Johnson, Bob Cook, Mary Greene, Teresa and Bobby Williams, Jim Mitchell, Missy and Henry Brown, Kim Johnson, Lawana Ford and Dave McGaha, Linda Jones and Buddy Farnan, Eleanor Sandifer, Helen Kichefski and Joan Horner, Ed Lewis, Dean Cunningham, Don Carrigan, Sarah Proctor, Nancy and Frank Eason, and Bob Steele. All ten of our routes are currently filled, and we are grateful for that. Our loyal substitutes are always faithful when they are called.

If you would like to be added to our substitute list, please call Mary Greene at 704 633-4164.

We want to extend a very warm "Thank You" to all the Overton Tutors from the 2024-2025

school year! We had 24 volunteer tutors and 6 substitutes this past school year, serving 25 students in grades one through five. (Each student is seen twice a week). It was a very successful year, and we have you all to thank for helping our students!

Thank you for supporting our Overton teachers & staff all year with special gifts and refreshments. We just celebrated Teachers Appreciation Week with a brunch and personalized tumblers for all.

We will be continuing our tutoring program this fall & would love for everyone to return. We also want to invite all church members who have not tutored in the past to consider this rewarding experience. Just call Lynn Hales or Mike Drinkard for details. We would love to have you! (We usually begin tutoring sometime in mid-October, after the children have been tested.)

FYI: We will NOT be gathering bookbags this summer for Overton students, as there was a surplus of bookbags from last year that we will be able to use in the fall. We will, however, be collecting school supplies to fill the bookbags. Needed: folders, composition books, pencils, pencil sharpeners, colored pencils, crayons, glue sticks, scissors, and pencil pouches.

Thank you for all your help with this valuable program! Lynn Hales, Showing Up Ministry



Race & Justice MINISTRY TEAM

As part of the Juneteenth Celebration at Bell Tower Green on June 21, the Race and Justice Ministry Team is partnering with Salisbury-Rowan NAACP and Livingstone College to provide trolley tours of the African American Heritage Trail in downtown Salisbury and at Livingstone College. These tours coincide in celebration of Juneteenth and the Emancipation Proclamation, officially titled Proclamation 95, a presidential proclamation and executive order issued by United States President Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863. Livingstone's faculty and staff (Gregory Hill, Dr D'Tarvia Parrish and Deborah Johnson) are expected to be tour guides. The trolley tours will leave from the Jackson Street side of Bell Tower Green two times during the afternoon of June 21. The tour will follow the downtown Salisbury and Livingstone landmarks outlined in the African American Heritage Trail brochure, as well as the lynching marker from the Equal Justice Initiative, placed outside of Oak Grove-Freedman's Cemetery. Please join us to learn about our history.

Get Ready for Second Sunday Cinema!!

Taking a break from books, the Race & Justice Ministry Team's discussion groups invite you to join us this summer for the Second Sunday Cinema. Tentative plans are to view movies at 7:00 pm on July 13 and August 10. The location and other details are TBD. Films under consideration are "Hidden Figures" and "The Six Triple Eight." Look for details in Thankful Thursday emails and the church bulletin.

Legacy 200



Would you take a few minutes to learn about the Legacy 200 Endowment Fund?

The Session approved the establishment of this fund two years ago as an investment in First Presbyterian's future. The "200" in the fund's name comes from the fact that First Pres has been in Salisbury for 200-plus years, and we (prayerfully) intend for it to be here many more.

Our congregation is blessed with inspiring leaders, devoted disciples, warm fellowship and committed missions. We have a legacy of service to the community. To maintain that vitality for generations to come, the Legacy 200 committee is asking you and other First Pres disciples to consider remembering the church in your estate plans.

Twenty-two disciples have already committed just shy of \$2,500,000 toward insuring that the Legacy of First Presbyterian Church endures for another 200 years.

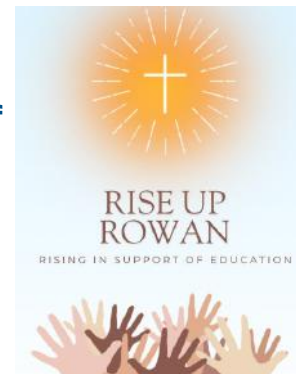
Committee members have facts and data to more fully explain the reasons behind this request. It's a compelling story, and one that they'd like to share. Please let us know a convenient time to sit down together to talk about Legacy 200 and the future of First Presbyterian Church.

To learn more contact any member of the Legacy 200 Committee: Stephen Bullock, Beffie Cook, Frank Eason, Jennifer Flynn, John Grubb, Tricia Johnson, David Jordan, Dyke Messinger, Pastor Josh Musser Gritter, Tracy Smith, Bob Steele, and Dan Williams.

You are never too young to plan.

Rise Up Rowan: Pilot Program Reaches Out to Young Learners

Letters, numbers, colors, and shapes are the simplest of concepts. Yet, hundreds of local children start kindergarten each year not knowing these basics. With the help of First Presbyterian and other churches, a group called Rise Up Rowan is working to improve local kindergarten readiness and create better possibilities for Salisbury children. Rise Up Rowan grew out of a workshop that First Pres helped sponsor in January 2024, organized by Racial Equity Rowan. Our pastors and several Race Task Force members took part, as did leaders from about a dozen area churches. The participants soon initiated a push for more widespread access to early childhood education. Additional individuals, churches, and organizations have joined Rise's drive to give 3 and 4-year-olds of all races an equal opportunity to learn. Recently, in Rowan County, only 22 percent of entering students were kindergarten-ready in literacy skills. Rise believes we can and must give children a better start.



Leading the effort from our church are Debbie Collins, Pastor Lara, and Beffie Cook, along with Monica Green of Trinity Presbyterian and the Rev. Ethel Bamberg-Revis of Soldiers Memorial AME Zion Church. Several more First Pres members are involved, and everyone's input is welcome.

Working with Greg Alcorn's ApSeed program and a generous ApSeed grant, volunteers are conducting a pilot project at Zion Hills Apartments off Brenner Avenue. Ten families have agreed to let their children take part in weekly on-site tutoring that includes books, games, activities, and ApSeed's Seedling touchpads. The touchpads introduce children to letters, numbers, colors, and shapes. Celia Jarrett and Kathy Roberson from St. John's Lutheran Church and Shirley Holt and Dorothy Gill-Smith from Moore's Chapel AME Zion Church have been instrumental in the pilot. The program has opened the door to help families identify other needs and find resources. Each child goes home with a Food for Thought bag. If all goes well, Rise will launch more tutoring sites, possibly at the Brookview Apartments on MLK Avenue and the Lafayette Street Apartments. More than 30 churches have supported and encouraged Rise's work.

Rise Up Rowan is taking an advocacy role as well. Childcare is in a state of crisis in North Carolina due to teacher shortages, low wages and high costs. Parents who can't afford to send their children to a licensed program often stay out of the workforce. A report released last summer estimates that insufficient childcare availability costs the state \$5.65 billion in lost economic activity each year.

Rise Up Rowan members have met with N.C. Rep. Harry Warren and Sen. Carl Ford to talk about the issue. The NC Chamber of Commerce Foundation is focused on finding childcare solutions. Rise also wants to raise awareness about the importance of early learning. The majority of human brain development occurs in the first three years of life. There's not a moment to lose in nurturing young learners.

Rise Up Rowan meets monthly at various churches. To join the effort and/or get on the email list, contact Debbie Collins at dgristcollins@gmail.com. For tax-deductible donations, make checks payable to ApSeed, with Rise Up Rowan in the subject line.

Upcoming Events! Don't Miss! #deeplyrootedbranchingout

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**First Pres 2025
Concert Series Presents:
The Electra Woodwind Quartet**

**On Friday, June 20
6pm in Sanctuary**

A North Carolina premier
woodwind ensemble!




Childcare is available!
Light refreshments will follow the concert.




**Babysitters Training provides
youth, who are planning to babysit,
with the knowledge and skills
necessary to safely and responsibly
give care for children and infants.**

**Hosted by MOMCO
at First Presbyterian Church Salisbury
on Saturday, June 21
from 10:00am - 3:00pm
in Fellowship Hall**



Must be at least 11 yrs old!
To register contact Susan Muth @ susandmuth@gmail.com
Class Fee \$45
Scholarships are available




Tomato Day!

**Sunday, July 20
in Lewis Hall
after 11am Unified Worship
in the Sanctuary**






Sign up to bring a side dish or dessert!



**First Pres 2025
Concert Series Presents:
The Astralis Chamber Ensemble**

**On Friday, August 15
6pm in Sanctuary**

An acclaimed award-winning
innovative and dynamic group
that has performed world-wide!




Childcare is available!
Light refreshments will follow the concert.



Staff Emails

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First News

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