

First News



Spring 2026



From Pastor Lara

Life at First Pres!

I'm writing this on one of those first truly warm spring days in North Carolina. Daffodils have snuck their way up from the newly thawed soil and are beginning to peel open their sunny blooms. Bare trees bear swollen buds soon to explode into pastel confetti. Kids play at the Bell Tower Green until sunset. Spring is here. **Life!**

I look around First Presbyterian Church and see life dawning daily. Monday mornings of community and care among moms. A new Tuesday morning Men's group with 20+ reading the Gospel of Mark. Wednesday mornings of breakfast and friendship with our African American friends. New signage, paint, and furnishings around campus. Pastor Hannah's Installation service bursting with the joy of gratitude for God's faithfulness to us once again. **Life!**

I think ahead to what's coming up at First Pres. The Leader Retreat on May 2, where we'll explore our Mission Priorities more deeply. The TWAM 5K, where youth raise money to share in God's work in Mexico. Hurricane Helene Mission trip to rebuild homes in early April. Incredible music in worship. A summer sermon series on Genesis. **Life!**

This Lent, we have been exploring the themes of Life and Death in the Old Testament characters that anticipate Jesus. Adam and Eve eat fruit, and death stalks our whole human family. Abraham mourns the life that was when he leaves the house of his recently deceased father. Moses and the people of Israel feel like they're dying in the wilderness. The list goes on. Death is a veritable enemy throughout the pages of scripture. And yet, in early April, we will celebrate that though death is our end, God is the end of our death. Christ will arise from the grave. And so will we. **Life!**



Introducing our New Parish Nurse - Susan Church

"The Word took on flesh and moved into the neighborhood" (John 1:15). God's method for healing the hurts of the world was to draw close to them. Jesus is close to the broken-hearted and saves those crushed in spirit (Ps 34:18). Incarnation literally means in flesh. Incarnation ministry, then, is the ministry of being present with other people in the flesh, grieving with them, celebrating with them, caring for them. You could sum it up even more quickly by emphasizing one word, "with." Jesus is Emmanuel after all, God with us. The Care Ministry of First Pres Salisbury seeks to follow Jesus' model of incarnation ministry. To do just that, we want to introduce you to our new volunteer Parish Nurse, Susan Church!



Parish Nurses can provide all kinds of care to a congregation, from home safety checks and CPR training to home communion and visitation with the homebound. Susan will focus her efforts on visiting with the homebound and building up our home communion ministry. Susan will embody Jesus' method of ministry. She will be present in our congregation in grief, celebration, and more.

Let's hear from Susan..First, I want to thank you for the privilege of serving this community of faith. I have been a Registered Nurse for almost fifty years. My background is varied, but the majority of my nursing has been centered around psychiatric and mental health nursing. I have worked for the state in outpatient mental health in Troy and Pinehurst, NC, and in Georgetown, SC.

My journey of eighteen years in Parish nursing began with an introduction to Project Compassion, working with a Faith Community Nurse in Pinehurst. We moved to Georgetown, and God led me to a

course in Faith Community Nursing at the College of Nursing at the Medical University of South Carolina. I have worked as a parish nurse at Duncan Memorial Methodist Church and also became a Stephens Ministry Leader and trained groups for the care of the homebound. My most recent calling was at the First Presbyterian Church in New Smyrna Beach, FL, where I visited the homebound, the sick in the hospitals and in hospice care, and provided communion to the homebound. I was also trained for the "Caring Congregation," a lighter version of Stephen's Ministry. My greatest gift is being a wife, mother of three children, grandmother of six, and a great-grandmother of two.

Blessings,
Susan Church, Parish Nurse

From Pastor Hannah

Over the last four years, I have had the great honor of spending time in the Blantyre region of southern Malawi, once in 2022 and again in 2025. Malawi is a small country in southeastern Africa known to many as the "Warm Heart of Africa." The Warm Heart describes well their propensity to welcome the stranger, share the good news, be formed together in Christ, and give more than they may have.

Each time I have visited the Warm Heart, the seeds of faith planted in my life were watered and fertilized. Through conversations, home stays, meals, Sunday School classes, and worship services, the Holy Spirit continued to remind me of the power of faith and how God is the gardener who plants the seeds in each of us all across the world, but it is up to us to tend them well.

The Parable of the Sower, as told in Mark 4, says this, "Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew, and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times."

I wonder, what sort of soil surrounds the seeds of faith in your life? Do you feel the need to dig a deeper well so your faith does not wither or fade? Are there ways you can better tend to the garden of your life to make room for the growth God has planned? How might others in this community and around the world encourage you and you them?

If you feel like the garden of your faith needs tending this spring, you are not alone! Here at First Presbyterian Church, we invite you to consider joining with other gardeners seeking growth and renewal through Sunday School classes, in service to our community, and in worship together as we encounter the living God! Join us in the dirt!



ALL ARE WELCOME!

**COMMUNITY EASTER
SUNRISE SERVICE**

**SUNDAY, APRIL 5 AT
6:30 AM**

BELL TOWER GREEN

BRING YOUR OWN CHAIR!

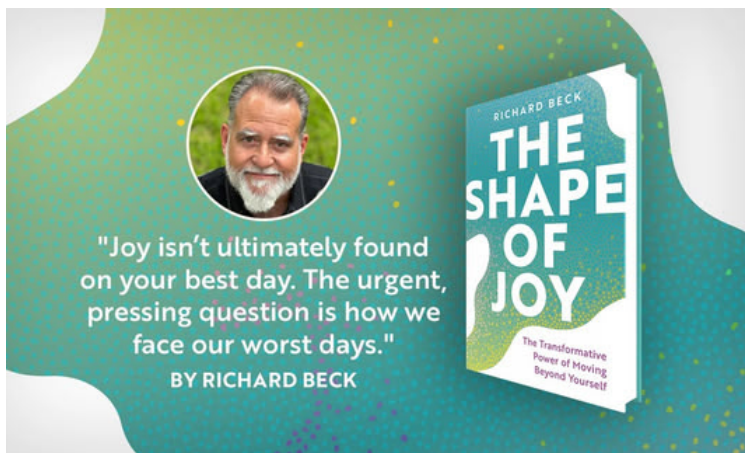
Introducing our First Edition of Pastor's Pick

Nonfiction and inspirational books help us grow by providing practical, real-world tools for self and community improvement, fostering deep emotional resilience through true stories, thought provoking authors, and boosting cognitive focus. These books offer actionable insights—covering psychology, philosophy, and memoirs—that help us rewire thought processes, boost motivation, and build better habits, leading to growth and deeper awareness of ourselves, our neighbors, and our world.

Pastor Josh's Pick

“The Shape of Joy”—Richard Beck

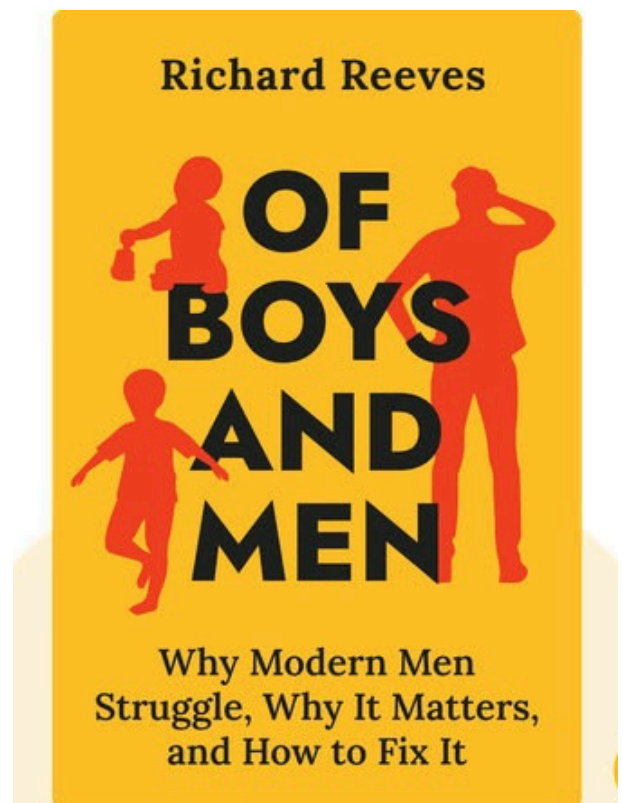
Beck is a theologian, an ordained ministry, a prison minister, and an avid substacker (online writing blog). What makes this book so helpful is its diagnosis of our age—an age Beck thinks is without joy. He wonders whether joy might be something that we cannot achieve through our efforts. Maybe, he wonders, joy is something that comes from outside of us—from a loving God. What does a joyful life look like? What's the shape of that life? I found this book to be compelling and interesting. For anyone who is wondering about how we got to where we are as a culture, and who is looking for some answers and direction, this book is a great start.



“Of Boys and Men”—Richard Reeves

Something is happening to men in the United States. Young men are floundering. Men commit more deaths of despair (alcohol and drug-related deaths, suicide, and mass shootings). There seems to be a lack of purpose and commitment sweeping men up like a tidal wave. The far right

offers an answer to the question of “what is a man,” but Reeves wonders if that answer lacks compassion and praises violence. The far left, observes Reeves, doesn't seem to offer an answer to the question. Might there be a third way forward? This is a detailed and profound study of how men are doing in all aspects of life—religion, economics, education, interpersonal relationships. What's sad is that Reeves suggest that in all these areas men are underperforming. But the first step toward finding a solution to a problem is knowing the problem exists. This book was part of my inspiration for starting the men's Bible study. We need more mentoring, more examples of Christ-like men, and more spaces for sharing and care together.



Happy Reading!!



Holy Week Calendar

Palm Sunday, March 29

8:30am Contemporary Service in Lewis Hall
11am Traditional Worship in Sanctuary
Palm Processional at both services

Holy Wednesday, April 1

7am Lenten Prayer Breakfast in Lewis Hall

Maundy Thursday, April 2

5:45 Dinner in Lewis Hall for everyone
7pm Maundy Thursday Worship Service in Sanctuary

Good Friday, April 3

7pm Good Friday Worship Service in Lewis Hall

Resurrection Sunday, April 5

Easter Sunday
6:30am Sunrise Service @ Bell Tower Green
(Bring a chair)
8:30am Contemporary Worship in Lewis Hall
9:45am Easter Celebration
Feed the Fish, Flowering of the Cross,
Butterfly Release, Refreshments
Outside Courtyard (weather permitting)
11am Traditional Worship Service
in the Sanctuary

Palm Sunday, March 29

8:30am Contemporary Worship in Lewis Hall

11am Traditional Worship in Sanctuary

Our Children/Youth will process in waving palm branches
at both services!

Hosannah in the highest!

On Palm Sunday, we remember Jesus's triumphant entry into Jerusalem. The crowds are thrilled that a king has come to fight for them against Roman oppression. So holy and venerated is He that the crowds lay down palm leaves and coats to pave his way. But Jesus is not the Messiah they want. His steed is a lowly donkey, his army is a dozen pathetic backcountry fishermen, and within a week's time, the crowd's jubilant cheer will turn to dooming jeers. In both worship services, we will remember the crowd's celebration and condemnation. Remember, bring your children early to worship to participate in the palm procession at the beginning.



Maundy Thursday, April 2

Join us for a complimentary fellowship dinner catered by Mykonos at 5:45pm in Lewis Hall, followed by Worship at 7:00pm in the Sanctuary

On Holy Thursday, or "Maundy Thursday," we bear witness to the Last Supper. Christ's body broken, Christ's blood poured out—for us. But the word "Maundy" asks us to remember another moment that happened on that Thursday. Maundy comes from the Latin "Mandatum," meaning "commandment." Holy Thursday is "Commandment Thursday." We remember the "new commandment" to love one another as Christ loved his disciples that dark evening. And how did he love them? Well, by doing something no one in their right mind would ever do—he washed their feet.

The Maundy Thursday service at First Pres is one of the most powerful and moving services of the entire year. There's a temptation to attend church on Palm Sunday and to come back on Easter Sunday. We invite you this year, not to hop, skip, and jump over Holy Week. Come to them all! Childcare is available.



Good Friday, April 3

Join us for Worship at 7:00pm in Lewis Hall

At the lowest point in human experience and in world history, what does Jesus do? As Jesus was suffering and dying on the cross, with the little strength he could muster, he spoke seven times. On Good Friday, these words remind us of the utter devastation of the cross and the lengths God will go to save us.

Join us for worship on Good Friday at 7:00pm in Lewis Hall for a powerful service where seven different pastors and speakers will proclaim the gospel through Jesus's seven last words. Childcare is available.



Easter Sunday, April 5

6:30am Community Easter Sunrise Service at Bell Tower Green (bring your own chair)

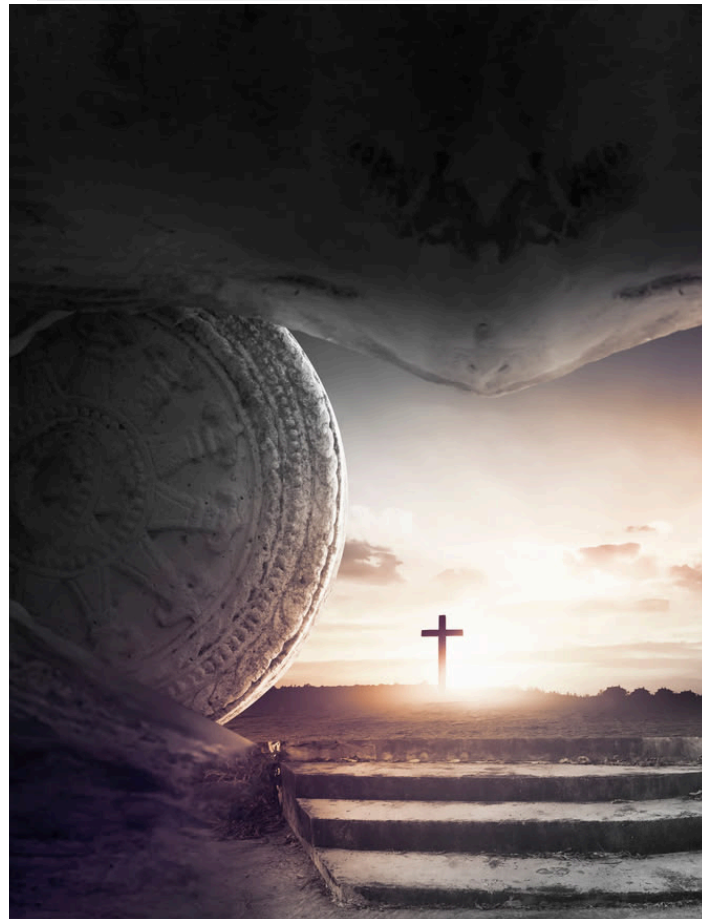
8:30am Contemporary Worship in Lewis Hall

9:45am Easter Celebration: Feed the Fish 2025, Flowering of the Cross,

Butterfly Release, & Refreshments

11am Traditional Worship in Sanctuary

Shout to the Lord, "He is risen. He is risen indeed!" On Easter Sunday, we celebrate the destruction of the powers of sin and death and the eternal promise of new life and abundant joy. Join us for a huge celebration of Christian fellowship with butterflies, One Great Hour of Sharing announcements (Feed the Fish), Flowering of the Cross, and refreshments. The LCW band, Sanctuary choir, and Handbell ringers have beautiful new music planned. May this sacred day fill your heart with love, peace, and the blessings of the risen Savior. Happy Easter!!



From Teresa di Freitas & Our Music Ministry Team



Dear Beloved Church Family,
March is drawing to a close, and with it, the sacred beauty of Lent is coming to its end — drawing us closer to the cross and leaning into the promise of Easter morning. If your Music Ministry Team has anything to say about it, this is also a season absolutely bursting with music, community, and joy.

We have so very much to celebrate...Remarkable guests, extraordinary concerts, and brand new voices joining our family. A Holy Week that will take your breath away with an Easter Sunday that will shake the rafters with glory. Buckle up — here we go!

PLEASE WELCOME OUR CHORAL SCHOLARS!

A New and Wonderful Blessing for Our Congregation

We are overflowing with gratitude and excitement as we welcome our newest Choral Scholars to our music family. These gifted, dedicated, and wonderfully talented students are bringing their voices — and so much more — to our music and worship, and we could not be more blessed. Please give a warm and loving First Pres welcome to:

Deion Walker — Bass & Trumpet, Deion brings the powerful, grounding richness of a bass voice AND the brilliance of the trumpet to our ministry. A double threat of the very best kind, Deion's gifts are sure to move and inspire us in the weeks ahead!

Benedict Barbuco — Tenor with the soaring clarity of a tenor voice, Benedict joins us with passion and artistry that will lift our worship to new heights. We are so glad he is here!

Sophia Harris — Alto & Flute, Sophia blesses us with the warm, beautiful depth of her alto voice, and when she picks up her flute? Pure heaven. Her musical versatility is a true gift to this congregation.

Madison Gause — Mezzo-Soprano, Madison's luminous voice is nothing short of breathtaking. Her presence among us is already a blessing, and we know her singing will touch hearts Sunday after Sunday.

Deion, Benedict, Sophia, and Madison — we see your gifts, we celebrate your calling, and we are so grateful God brought you to First Pres. This congregation will be cheering you on every single step of the way. Welcome!

*Walking Through the Wilderness -
With Music Leading the Way!*

Upcoming Music at Worship Holy Week



Palm Sunday Worship, March 29, 11am in the Sanctuary

Our Palm Sunday service will be a feast for the spirit! The Bell Tower Ringers will lead us in the festive palm procession as we relive Jesus's triumphant entry into Jerusalem. The children and youth will join their voices with the full choir in joyful, jubilant song. Also, we have a very special musical gift in store: the wonderful Wendy Weant will bless us with her radiant voice, performing the soaring "Rejoice Greatly" from Handel's glorious Messiah. It will be a moment to remember.

Maundy Thursday Worship, April 2, 7pm in the Sanctuary

Our Maundy Thursday service will be a deeply meaningful evening of reflection, remembrance, and beauty. The choir will offer music that carries us into the upper room and to the foot of the cross. In a moment that is sure to move every heart in the sanctuary, our beloved Barry Sang will close the service with the timeless spiritual "Were You There," his voice a tender and sacred witness to the love poured out for us all. Come with your heart wide open for this one.

Good Friday Worship, April 3, 7pm in Lewis Hall

Our Good Friday service will be a profound time of entering into the depth of Christ's sacrifice. Our LCW Singers will join us, helping the entire congregation draw near to the sacred and solemn meaning of the Crucifixion through music, prayer, and reflection.

Easter Sunday, April 5, 11am in the Sanctuary

Get ready — Easter Sunday at First Pres will be a celebration unlike any other! We will pour out every note of joy we have to fully and exuberantly proclaim the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Our Easter brass ensemble will sound the triumph of the morning:

Blaine Smith — Trumpet
Deion Walker — Trumpet
Barry Sang — French Horn
Carter Hinton — Trombone
Doug Lawrence — Timpani

And alongside the brass, our glorious Sanctuary Choir will raise their voices in full-throated resurrection praise! Brass fanfares soaring, timpani thundering, voices ringing to the rafters — this is what Easter morning is supposed to sound like! Our magnificent Bell Tower Ringers will also lift their bells in praise! Come prepared to shout, sing, and rejoice — because HE IS RISEN!

Hallelujah!!





First Pres Concert Series Spring 2026

Our First Pres Concert Series continues to bring world-class musical experiences right here to Salisbury, and this spring, we have some truly wonderful concerts lined up. Please save these dates and spread the word!

Sunday, April 19 at 2pm in Lewis Hall

Lake Norman Orchestra performs Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue"

with Teresa de Freitas as soloist

One of the most beloved and exhilarating piano concertos ever written: George Gershwin's iconic Rhapsody in Blue, performed by the full Lake Norman Orchestra — and me on the piano! From its famous clarinet glissando opening to its sweeping, jazz-drenched finale, "Rhapsody in Blue" is a piece that takes your breath away every single time. This concert also features the wonderful soprano Vanessa Corrigan in two stunning selections with the orchestra, along with many more extraordinary pieces. It promises to be an unforgettable afternoon of music at the very highest level. Here's a glimpse of the program:

Orchestra Rhapsody

Title with Composer/Arranger

"The Star-Spangled Banner" Key/Danyew

"The Rites of Tamburo" Robert W. Smith

"The Magnificent Seven" Strauss

"Fly Me to the Moon" (LKNO Saxophone Quartet) Bart/Kyzer

"Latin Celebration" Tatgenhorst

"Por Una Cabeza" (LKNO Chamber Strings) Gardel

"Mars: Bringer of War" Holst/Leidig

"A Moment Like This" Porter/Lewis

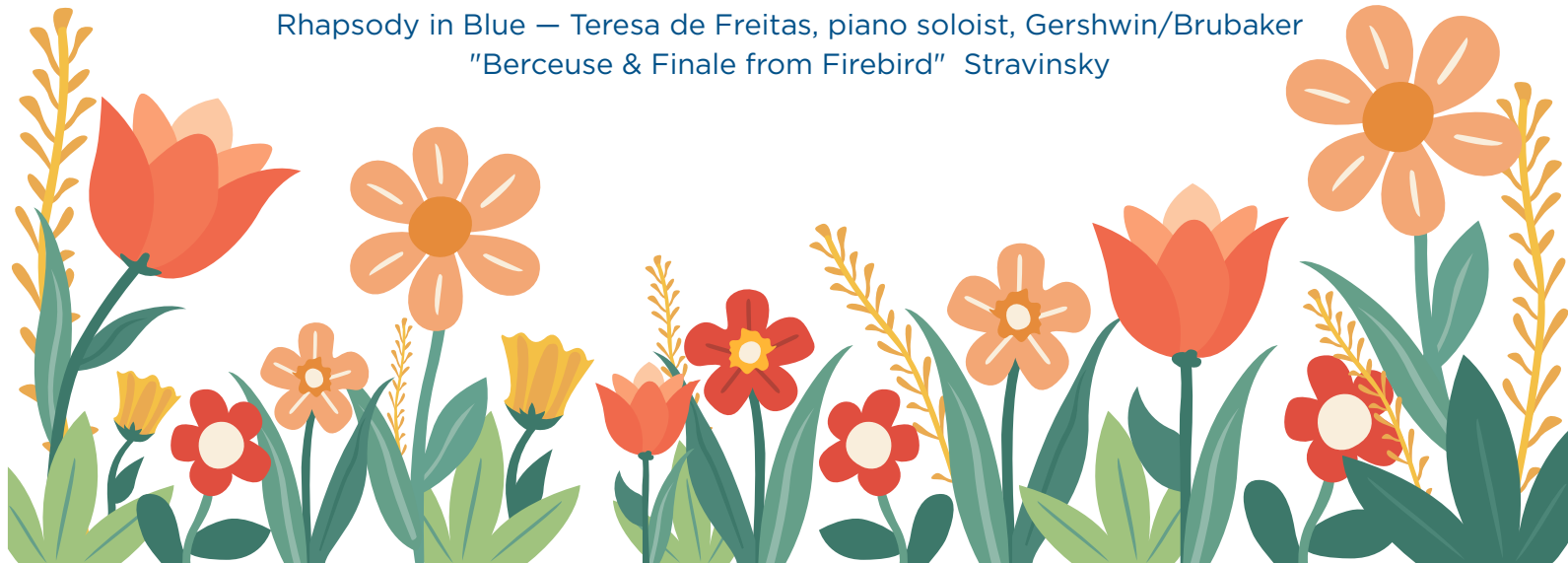
"Starman" (LKNO Woodwind Quintet) John/Smith

"What's Up with the Symphony?" Arr. Brubaker

"Highlights from Wicked" Schwartz

Rhapsody in Blue — Teresa de Freitas, piano soloist, Gershwin/Brubaker

"Berceuse & Finale from Firebird" Stravinsky



Friday, April 24 at 7pm in the Sanctuary

The Livingston College Choir Spring Concert

Outside of our Spring Concert Series, we have the joy of hosting the Livingstone College Concert Choir in concert. It will be amazing. We are thrilled to have them with us!

Saturday, May 7 at 4pm in Lewis Hall

The Charlotte Bronze Ringers

The well-known ringers bring their masterful handbell artistry to First Pres for an afternoon of beautiful, uplifting music. Another musical gift not to be missed! Bring your family and friends.

Sunday, May 10 at 11am in the Sanctuary

Mother's Day - A Moment for the Heart

On Mother's Day, we will be treated to a performance that is sure to bring out the tissues! Our wonderful Jessica Holman Settineri and her brother Matthew Holman will sing the beloved "The Prayer" at 11am worship service. Two siblings, one of the most beautiful songs ever written, on the Sunday we celebrate the gift of love and family. Consider yourself warned: bring your tissues!

THE WILDERNESS IS ALMOST BEHIND US

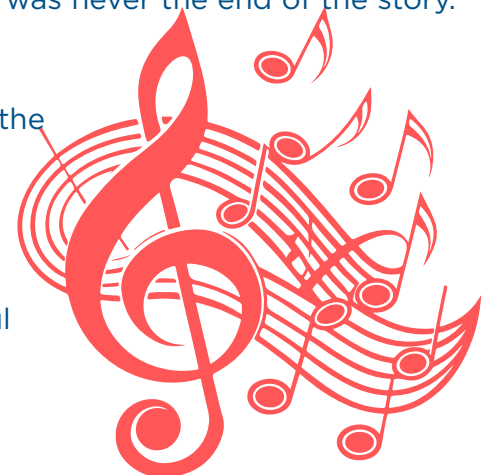
We are nearly there, beloved. Lent has been long — beautifully, purposefully long. We have walked through the wilderness together, through days of quiet reflection and solemn worship, through music that carried our prayers when words alone could not. And now, at last, we can see the horizon beginning to change. The shadow of the cross is before us, and just beyond it — the light of Easter morning is already beginning to break through.

Your Music Ministry has been honored to walk every step of this sacred road beside you — through contemplative anthems that speak to the weary soul, through rich choral harmonies that lift our prayers heavenward, and through the glorious bells that remind us that beauty and praise belong even in the wilderness. Music is not merely a warm-up for worship. Music IS worship. It is the voice of the heart when ordinary words simply are not enough. And in a season as sacred and searching as this one, we have needed that voice more than ever.

As these final days of Lent unfold, let the music meet you where you are. Let it comfort you in the solemnity of Good Friday. Let it carry you through the quiet of Holy Saturday. And then — oh, then — let it absolutely explode with joy on Easter morning, when we proclaim together what we have been journeying toward all along: He is risen. He is risen indeed. The wilderness was never the end of the story. It never is.

Does your heart stir when the choir sings? Do you find yourself moved by the sound of the bells? Is there a gift inside you quietly waiting to be offered in worship? We want to hear from you. Our music ministry is a community of faith first — and a musical ensemble second. There is room here for you. Reach out to us: tfreitas@firstpressalisbury.org or text Teresa (706) 461-9966, and let's talk about where your gifts might find a beautiful home.

With full hearts, grateful praise, and eyes fixed on Easter morning, Teresa!





Notes from LCW Praise Team

**Pardon the pun but...“the halls are alive with the sound of music!”
Well, at least Lewis Hall is alive with the sounds of music!**

There’s a lot in store in the coming weeks from Life Center Worship. We mark the beginning of Holy Week on Palm Sunday, starting with the children’s palm processional. The story of Jesus’ journey down the Jerusalem road to the cross will be told in song by Mia Mason as she sings “Via Dolorosa.”

According to our pastors, you can’t just skip from Maundy Thursday and the Last Supper to Easter and the Cross without Good Friday and the crucifixion and death of Jesus. You’re invited to join us for a Good Friday service on Friday, April 3, at 7pm in Lewis Hall. This service, known as Tenebrae, from the Latin word for darkness, is a time of quiet reflection. Light came into the world in the person of Jesus Christ, only to be scorned, rejected, and crucified. And so, the service is marked using candles, which are gradually extinguished as the story of Christ’s final day and final words are retold. In the darkness, you will hear The Seven Last Words of Jesus, reflections on each word, and the plaintive lament of “Were You There.”

On Easter, we celebrate Jesus’ resurrection in song beginning with “Glorious Day (Living He Loved Me)”. Jessica Settineri continues the celebration with “Resurrection Song (Thank Jesus).” Following Pastor Josh’s Easter message, we’ll celebrate communion together and close with a resounding “Alive Forever Amen!” He’s Alive, Alive, Alive Hallelujah! Jesus is alive!

If you haven’t yet experienced a 5 Senses of Worship service, you have one more opportunity on Sunday, April 19, at 8:30am in Lewis Hall. If you’re wondering what that is...the 5 Senses of Worship service “invites worshippers to experience God through sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch—deepening our connection with God and one another through creative, sensory-rich expressions of faith.” Come check it out!

The Five Senses of Worship

Rev. Daniel Heath, J.D.

Associate Chaplain and Director of the Davidson Forum
Davidson College



Don't miss Sunday 4/19

Bell Tower Ringers Handbell Festival Highlights!



We had a full house for our 2026 Bell Tower Ringers Festival...and hosted almost 80 handbell ringers from multiple area churches—including the new choir of our former music director, John Stafford. Led by Brian Childers of Charlotte Bronze, the concert included music for all parts of the church year. Shoutouts to Eleanor Sandifer, Joyce Durkee, Doug Glasgow, Pastor Hannah, and the BTR spouses for helping with food service and resetting Lewis Hall for Sunday worship. We are looking forward to the 2027 event with clinician, Brenda Austin! Enjoy these amazing pictures! Our own Bell Tower Ringers will perform on Palm Sunday, Easter Sunday and Mother's Day at 11am Sanctuary Worship.





Spotlight on our AV Team

Spotlight on our Audio-Visual Team

Every week, a group of volunteers, along with our AV Tech staff members, is hard at work making sure you can hear the music and the message and see our pastors, musicians, and others. Whether they work behind the scenes or during services and special events, they are dedicated to delivering the best worship experience for you. Whether you're in church or at home, without these dedicated people, none of that would be possible. In case you don't know who's in the "Crow's Nest" in Lewis Hall or the sound booth in the Sanctuary, here's a short bio for the members of the AV Team.

Mike Drinkard, AV Team leader. After retirement in 2017, Mike and Gail decided to move back to Salisbury, where they previously lived, to be closer to family, plus they liked the pace of life here compared to Atlanta. In his spare time, in addition to heading up the AV volunteer team, Mike enjoys doing handyman projects and has found an outlet with The Shepherd Center, a senior services ministry in Winston-Salem, where he joins a former work colleague to do repairs and small building projects for seniors in need.

David Beaver, videographer. Before retiring, David taught high school History in Davidson County for 35 years and still subs now. He has also worked as an independent contractor for WBTV. He's a self-proclaimed weather geek and storm chaser, and once chased a tornado in Albemarle live on TV. He and his wife, Donna, moved from Mooresville to Salisbury after their marriage in 1987.

Bridget Brown, ProPresenter lyric producer. Bridget and her husband, Tyler, recently participated in the great migration, moving from Ohio to North Carolina in 2023 with their son, Mylo, and their two dogs. She works part-time at their dental practice, but before that, she worked in animal behavior, studying bats in Ohio and the

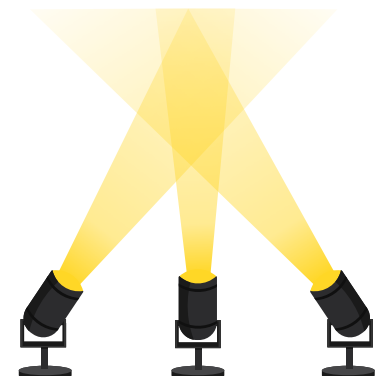
tropics and helping animals in shelters with difficult behaviors. She joined the AV team because Gail asked, but also because detail-oriented tasks are right up her alley, and she loves to give back to this community that has welcomed her family so warmly.

Andrea Bullock, ProPresenter lyric producer. Outside of First Pres, Andrea is a mental health therapist, an avid reader, and a birder. She also sings Alto in the Sanctuary choir. She is married to Stephen and has two lovely daughters, Katie and Laura. Andrea was "drafted" by our previous music director, John Stafford, because she understood music, which comes in handy when entering songs into ProPresenter.

Gail Drinkard, ProPresenter guru and lyric producer. In addition to her AV role, you'll see Gail singing in the choir, ringing bells, or playing the dulcimer. Before moving to Salisbury, she worked for a printer in Georgia doing computer graphics and typesetting, so when John asked her to "help do input," it was an easy fit. Gail is married to Mike, the AV team leader, and shares his passion for their grandchildren and travel - especially to Aruba!

Nan Eason, soundboard, lightboard, AND ProPresenter operator. Nan has been with the team for over 10 years. One day, Jan Kichefski, our former AV team leader, mentioned he was having shoulder surgery and had no one to run AV while he was out.

Nan responded, "If you teach me quickly, I'll do it." She says, "God made those words



come right out of my mouth! That is all anyone needs to say in church! There is always someone to guide you and help you serve"! Nan and her husband Frank have been members at First Pres since 1976.

Mark Grover, sound-board operator. Mark is a lover of music and plays guitar, mandolin, and dulcimer. He is artistic and creative and loves to paint. His wife, Ellie, says he went from "city boy" to "gardener extraordinaire" when they moved to Salisbury, where their daughter lives. Mark prefers to work behind the scenes and joined the AV Team when Pastor Lara asked him to serve in that capacity.

Bill Lee, aka "Coach," ProPresenter operator. Following his retirement from Salisbury High School as a teacher and coach, Bill worked for Rowan Helping Ministries for 11 years as their IT & Facilities Lead. Bill is now very happily retired and enjoys traveling, especially his annual trip to Florida with the Reynolds crew.

Kathy Sang, ProPresenter lyric producer. Working as an AV volunteer is just one of the many roles Kathy has held at First Pres. She worked as the Administrative Assistant for 9 years before going to work for Rowan Helping Ministries as the Office Manager, where she worked for almost 6 years before retiring. She sings with the choir and occasionally with the Praise Team, plays handbells and piano, both in the Sanctuary and in Lewis Hall. She and her husband, Barry, enjoy spending time with their two grandchildren - Maddox, age 12, and Syana, age 7. Kathy and Barry also enjoy traveling and hiking. One of her favorite hikes was a recent trip to Massanutten, Virginia.

Joseph Shaw, ProPresenter operator. Outside of his volunteer work at First Pres, Joseph works for G Fiber, formerly Google Fiber, as a field supervisor for the crews who lay fiber cable for faster internet. He is an avid gamer. He and his wife, Megan, our Director of Children's Ministries, have two sons - Thomas, age 9, and Lucas, age 8. Together, they love taking cruises both with and without the boys. Once Judy Mabe, the team captain for Worship Music, heard Joseph was an IT specialist, she invited him to join the team.

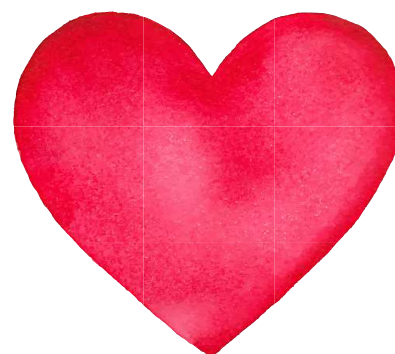
Grayson Smith, ProPresenter operator and occasional camera assistant. Grayson is a 2025 graduate of West Rowan High School and an Eagle Scout. He loves being outdoors and can't imagine doing a desk job where he would have to be inside all the time. He has worked for Derby Down Landscaping for almost 4 years and is currently attending Rowan-Cabarrus Community College, where he is working toward degrees in Construction Management and Business. Outside of work and school, Grayson volunteers with Rowan Helping Ministries and his family's oatmeal cookie business, The Smith Cookie Factory. Thanks to Cindy Coleman's urging, Grayson joined the AV Team while still in high school.

Hanna Buck, AV Tech staff member. Hanna is a May 2025 Catawba graduate with a double major in Digital Media Production and Communications. She was hired as our part-time AV Tech in July 2025.

Josh Page, AV team member. Josh is a 2024 Catawba graduate with a major in Business and a minor in Music Business. He started working with First Pres in February 2024 as an AV Tech contractor. Now, he volunteers his time when needed. Some Sundays, you may see him in the drum cage instead of the Crow's Nest.

The next time you see one of these unsung heroes, please take a moment to thank them for their service or take a few minutes to write a blue card of appreciation to them.

"Appreciation is the quiet magic that makes hearts shine."



SUNDAY School

Do you want to grow in your faith?

A great way to do that is to join an adult Sunday School class! Classes begin at 9:45 on Sunday mornings (right between the 8:30am & the 11:00am service.) If you have children aged 3 and up, there are Sunday school classes for them at the same time, and a nursery for our littlest ones. There are 7 different adult classes that offer a variety of curricula as described below. Hopefully, you will find one that is just right for you on your journey to grow in faith. They all welcome and enjoy new members!!

Contemporary Christians Class meets in our Welcome Center, which is Room 113. They are doing an in-depth study of the Holy Spirit. Emphasis is on the effect it has on contemporary lives with references from the Holy Bible, theologians, and Biblical scholars.

The Discovery Class meets in Room 215. They like to keep things fresh, studying a wide variety of topics. "Lenten Questions Jesus Asks Us" will lead discussion leading up to Easter.

Every Man's Bible Class meets in Room 107. They are a men's class with members ranging in age from their 20's to their 80's. They use "The Present Word" (a scripture-based curriculum.) We start every Sunday by singing 3 hymns, followed by a lesson. They have a varied group of teachers that are well-known for their Bible knowledge.

The Mary and Martha Class meets in Room 101. They are a women's class studying the Gospel of Luke. All women are welcome and are encouraged to participate in discussions about how the Scriptures speak to us today. Denise Fink and Carole Simmons guide the discussions.

The Open Horizons Class meets in Room 201. They like to use "The Wired Word", a thought-provoking Bible study with lessons that inspire faith-filled discussions. Everyone is welcome!

The Outlook Class meets in Room 213. They use the Presbyterian Outlook magazine and website for topics of discussion. There are articles and commentary around current events that keep the discussions relevant and engaging for Christians in today's world.

The Sisters in Christ Class meets in Room 202. They are a ladies' class that is journeying through the Bible. It is theme-oriented, so the focus changes from week to week. (The Creation, God's Love, Faithfulness, Salvation, Patience, Marriage, etc.) These topics keep us moving and current. And No Homework!!

TWAM 2026

TEENS WITH A MISSION



TWAM: BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING

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 15. 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 26 - July 3.
- 2) Come Sunday, July 12, to see and hear what God has done.

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



WHEN

Friday, May 1, 2026

6:30pm: 1/2 mile Fun Glow Walk/Run
7pm: 5K Glow Run or Glow Walk (all ages)

We will provide the "GLOW"!!!

WHERE

Meet at Overton Elementary School
1825 W. Park Road, Salisbury 28144

RACE COURSE

The race will be held on the Salisbury Greenway and parts of the Eagle Heights neighborhood.

REGISTRATION

Registration through Friday, May 1, 2026

Three ways to register:
Online with QR code, Fill out
brochure w/check to church office,
or Register onsite on race day
from 5:30-6:15pm



First Kids News

We have had a fantastic year in First Kids! The children have been learning all about Jesus's miracles and what we do as a church for the Lenten season. Our last Wednesday will be a Big dance and pizza party on Wednesday, May 6. Thanks for letting us be a part of your family!

First Kids is a mid-week program for children ages PK3 & 4 through 5th grade. We have a great time eating supper together, learning Bible lessons, singing Bible songs, working on Advent & Lenten crafts, and recreation. We meet from 5:30-7pm on Wednesdays.

To find out more, contact our church office. Have a great summer!

We start back next fall on Wednesday, September 9.

**SAVE THE DATE!
PLEASE VOLUNTEER**

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

**SAVE THE DATE
MON/JUNE 15 - THURS/JUNE 18
5PM - 7:30PM**



DAY SCHOOL REGISTRATION



Our Enrollment Registration
for 2026-2027
is open for everyone!





They say it takes a village, and the MomCo group at First Presbyterian is continuing to work to build that village for mothers in our community. What started as a handful of women looking for connection has grown into a supportive cohort where friendships can flourish and support is offered. That way, no one has to navigate motherhood alone. To paraphrase Ecclesiastes 9, two people are better than one because when one falls, they can help lift each other up. Every day, we work to help lift each other up. We do this with a simple formula: providing a no-judgement zone for moms to consistently connect and care for one another.

Our meetings are a time for moms to fill their cup, both literally and metaphorically. Each meeting provides childcare, coffee, confections, and connection through conversation to every mother who attends. We now have 25 members, and we regularly see 20-30 people at our meetings.

The theme for this year is “Make it Awkward.” Does the idea make you a little uncomfortable? It did for a lot of us, too. What we have learned through this curriculum, though, is that allowing yourself to be vulnerable and genuine can feel and

look awkward, but the reward is more sincere, authentic connections with one another.

In the fall, we focused on ways that we can step out of our comfort zones to build friendships and be there for each other. Moms got a little awkward with each other as they talked about how to initiate uncomfortable conversations and how awkward moments can open the door for opportunity. We had the opportunity to learn from Dr. Randy Kirby about how to be with each other in moments of grief, even when it is hard to know what to say or do.

At the beginning of January, we had one of our most attended meetings, and it covered a fantastic topic. We discussed ways that we can be kinder to ourselves, especially about our physical appearance, and got to hear an exceptional talk by Dr. Katrina Heath about pelvic floor health and how to take care of our bodies after pregnancy. Our first meeting in February focused on authentic intimacy, and we learned practical methods to help with communication and intimacy in our relationships in the midst of raising children. On February 23, the focus of our meeting was spiritual health with a focus on prayer. One of the greatest gifts a mom can give their child is both to pray for them and the knowledge of prayer (maybe instead say, “and to teach them how to pray.” We all know that prayer is important, but we don’t always know where to start. Moms were given practical tools to help teach their families about prayer. We also got to hear a scintillating presentation by our very own Kia Creamer about enneagrams. Kia covered how we are all made in the image of God, but as humans, we are not perfect. By knowing ourselves better, we can be more gracious towards ourselves and others, as well as face challenges with more ease.

We have learned a lot so far this year, but the year is not over yet! Before the end of the year, we will have the chance to put together Easter Baskets of goodies for Nazareth Children’s Home and learn about their initiatives from the director. Moms can also look forward to a chance to ask true experts in our field (seasoned moms) about motherhood at our Experienced Mom Panel in May.



MomCo also tries to extend our fellowship beyond our regular meetings. Once a month, the moms in our group get together at various social events to create greater ties between members. We started strong this year with our September MomCo Kick-Off Event. The event was open to the public and allowed people interested in MomCo to get to know a little more about the organization in a casual setting. It was a hit! Who knew that free food and a bouncy house would be so appealing to families with young children? Many of those moms are still attending our meetings! In October, a large group of moms gathered with their kids at Patterson Farms to enjoy a beautiful sunny day filled with slides, games, hayrides, and, of course, ice cream. We stretched our legs before it got too cold in November with a hike through the woods at the Fred and Alice Stanback Educational Forest, a small gem of protected land just outside of downtown Spencer. We also joined in on the frivolities in December by attending the Christmas in the Village at Gold Hill. Not even the scary appearance of the Grinch could cause the smiles on the kids' faces to wane. MomCo also had its second-ever Galentine's Tea, and we were able to offer childcare this year because of the support of this congregation, which allowed moms to really connect in a fun and carefree setting.

In the spring, we'll have to watch out for the sugar rush! Moms will have the chance to be amazed by their kids' ability to move at near Olympic speeds and sudden development of eagle eyes as we attend a local Easter Egg Hunt. We will also have an ice cream social with Nazareth Children's Home as a way to wrap up our service year with them. The final organized social of the year, before we take a summer break, will be a women's self-defense class held with local trainer Scott Clawson. This is one of the more anticipated social events this year. The snowpocalypse of 2026 forced us to postpone the event, but we are excited that our members will still get the chance to participate in this class. MomCo has offered a space of comfort and connection for so many moms, and that feeling is inspiring. So it is not a wonder that those moms want to give back some comfort to the community. We have been working closely with Nazareth Children's Home, an organization



that provides treatment for substance abuse and a foster care center for children whose parents are afflicted by addiction. At our last meeting of 2025, we gathered like elves in Santa's workshop with gifts. We carefully wrapped each gift with hope and love and delivered them to Nazareth so that on Christmas morning, the kids in the foster care could feel seen and cared for.

I want to take this chance to thank the church and congregation for their continued support, encouragement, and belief in our group. Because of each of you, we can take that simple recipe of gathering with open hearts and turn it into something much bigger. Together, we are creating a community that will have a lasting impact on families and beyond. The journey may be awkward at times, but it's all the more beautiful because of it. Together we're growing, and that growth is worth celebrating. Fondly, Bridget Brown





**American
Red Cross
Blood
Drive**

Save a Life, Give Blood

Our next blood drive is Tuesday, April 21

We need your help! Last time we fell just short of our goal. We had your favorite cookies, but we didn't make our goal. Please consider donating this time, marking your calendar and visiting RedCrossBlood.org to make an appointment (or use the QR code below).

Our blood drives are in the Fellowship Hall, so please use the West Fisher Street entrance. Appointments are from 2-6:15pm, and walk-in donors are always welcome.

First Presbyterian has collected 255 units of blood in the past two years, and you can help us help more neighbors on April 21.

There is no substitute for human blood for a patient in need. You may know a cancer patient, someone who had or will have surgery, or may have been in a critical accident - you can be a neighbor to that person in need by donating

If you have questions, speak with or email Bill Hoyle at DrPuttsWell@gmail.com.



**All
Blood
Types
Needed!**



Showing Up Ministry - Overton Elementary

We want to extend a very warm "Thank You" to all our Overton Tutors who have been so dedicated this year to provide such a needed service to the children in our community! With cancellations, absences, and changes in schedules, this can sometimes be challenging, and we appreciate your patience with all of this!

We try to do additional "appreciation activities" for the Overton Teachers and Staff over the school year, usually at the beginning and end of the school year, and also at Christmas. If you are interested in helping to plan and carry out these activities, please contact Lynn Hales at 704-640-7156. You do not have to be an Overton tutor in order to help with this. This will not involve a huge commitment, but any help, behind the scenes or at the school, would be greatly appreciated. We need you!! Thank you for all your help with this valuable program!

Lynn Hales, Showing Up Ministry



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

February 28, 2026

OPERATING FUNDS

YTD Income 194,258.16
YTD Expenses 252,218.02
Cash Flow **-NEGATIVE** -57,959.86

YTD **Budgeted** Income 213,744.33
YTD **Actual** Income 194,258.16
UNDER 19,486.17

YTD **Budgeted** Expenses 246,140.67
YTD **Actual** Expenses 252,218.02
OVER -6,077.35

DAY SCHOOL

YTD Gain 6,139.21

GIVING

YTD **Budgeted** Giving 203,994.33
YTD **Actual** Giving 179,161.61
UNDER 24,832.72

YTD **Budgeted** Pledges 192,077.67
YTD **Actual** Pledges 160,809.02
UNDER 31,268.65



Member Updates

JOYS:

*Carley Drye and Matt Robinson on their marriage on January 24.

DEATHS:

*Bob Steele on the death of his brother, Richard Steele.

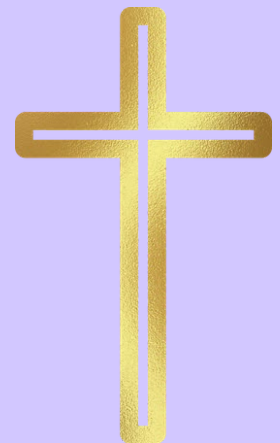
*Teresa Williams and family on the death of her mother, Frieda Vick.

*Elizabeth Calvert on the death of her cousin, Walter Broadwell.

*Susan and Joe Sember on the death of their uncle, Richard Tillman Fountain.

*Ed Muire and family on the death of his mother, Ellen Muire, on March 4.

*Steve Fisher and family on the death of his mother, Sue Fisher, on March 4.



“Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.” Romans 12:10

First Presbyterian Church
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Permit No. 62



Our Staff

Church Office Hours:

M-Th (8-5), F (8-1)

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Buildings & Grounds

Mike Mangum

Buildings & Grounds

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