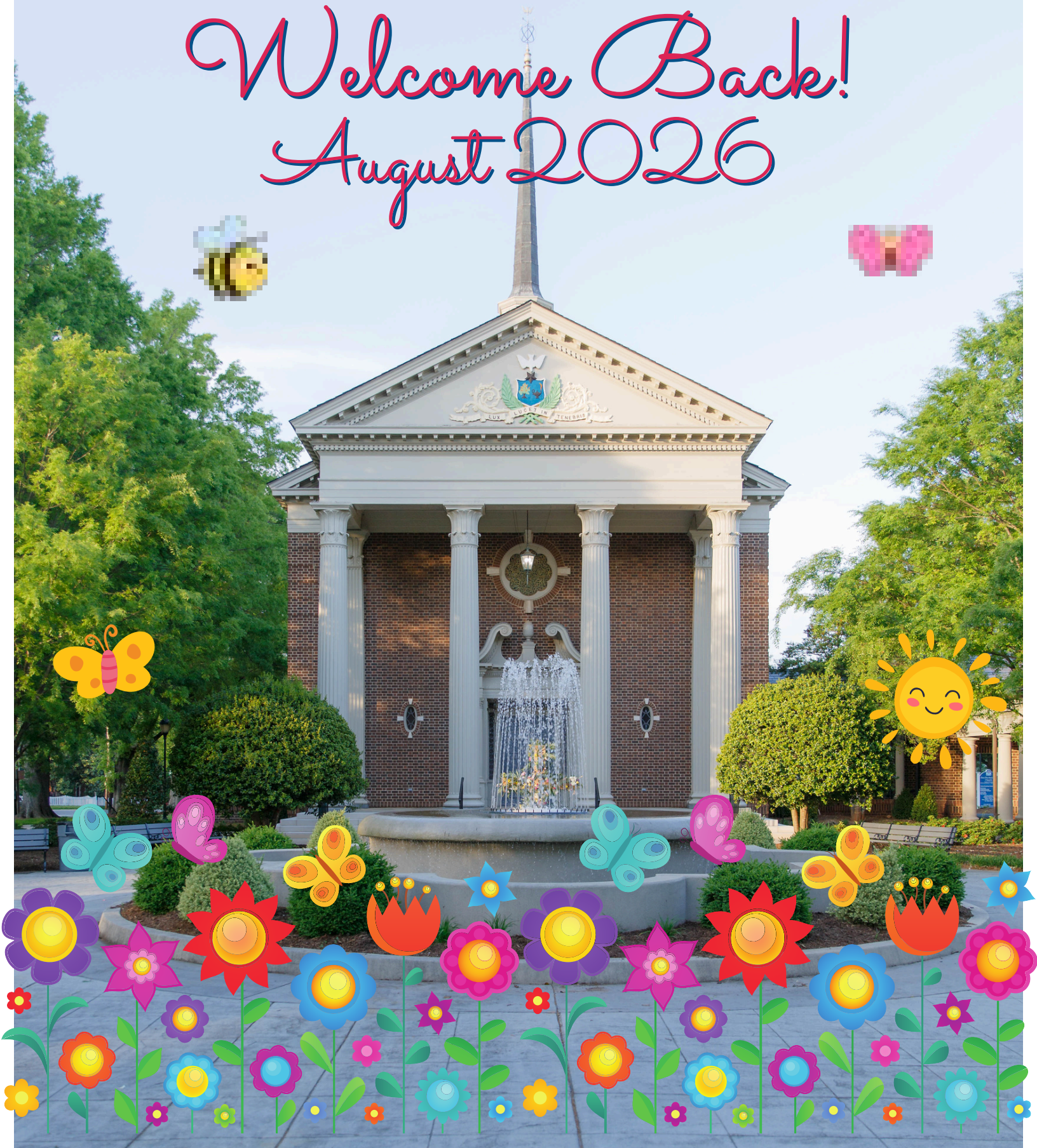


First News

Welcome Back!
August 2026



From Pastor Lara

A Fall to Grow...



Introducing: First Parents

Do you ever drop your kids off at First Kids and think, “Wahoo! An hour and a half just for us!” Or is it just me? That time during First Kids is a wonderful little window to go on a date with your spouse, to catch up on chores, or to just eat your dinner in blessed silence. It could also be a wonderful time for connecting with other parents. That’s why we’re introducing First Parents! Once a month, on the 1st Wednesday, First Kids parents are invited out to dinner at Crafty Buffalo. This is a chance to hang out with others in your life stage, to talk about the ups and downs of life, and to have a good meal. Of course, First Kids still needs parents to volunteer, so make sure you sign up to support this ministry, but once a month, join us for fun, food, and fellowship with other First Parents! We will begin on Wednesday, Sept 2 at 5:45pm at Crafty Buffalo!



Introducing: Parents Sunday School

Have you ever planned on dropping your kid off at Sunday School and thought, “What am I going to do for an hour?” We have wonderful Sunday School classes at First Pres. From Open Horizons and Outlook to Sisters and Everyman’s—there are already classes that would love for you to join them. But if you’re longing to connect with other parents and start out with a class that is as new as you, come to Parents Sunday School in the Kirby Library (across from the bathrooms near Lewis Hall) 9:45-10:45am. This class is going to be a casual gathering of parents over coffee, doughnuts, and the shared experience of being in this phase of life. In the fall, we’ll start out spending some time each week reading the scripture for worship. Come join us! Get on the ground floor of building a new class and a new community of friendship and support. We will begin on August 16!

From Pastor Josh

What Does God Think?



There’s this great scene in Wendell Berry’s novel “Jaybor Crow.” A young student’s mind is full of questions. Where did this world come from? Why do I exist? What does God look like? Each day, his professor hears and expects his urgent knock on the door. For some of the questions, there are answers. But upon one visit, the professor offers a thought that hasn’t left me since I read it. “Some questions are too big. Some questions, you must live.”

It’s hard to live questions with ChatGPT in your pocket. But I suppose this kind of earnest questioning, this yearning for understanding is, in part, what Youth ministry is for. And so, this year we’re going to be tackling some profound and yet practical questions.

In confirmation, we’ll lift the heaviest questions Christianity has to offer. Who is God? Who are we? What is the Bible for? How do I read it? At youth group, we’ll be diving down to the ground floor of our young people’s existence. Each youth group, I will raise a practical question and attempt to offer thoughts from both Scripture and theology. Here are a few examples: How do I figure out what to do with my life? What do I do when I’m anxious and depressed? Why do bad things happen to good people? What does God think about AI? My grandma died last year, where is she right now? My parents make me come to



church, but I think it's boring—why does it even matter? Lots of my friends drink, sometimes I do, too. What's the big deal?

As far as the youth calendar goes, we're kicking things off a month earlier this year. See our 2026 fall calendar on the for those dates. 30,000 foot view: On Saturday, Aug 8, we hope to go to the Whitewater Center (if we get enough interest). Porch B-stud kicks off Wednesday, Aug 12 at 7:30pm at 117 Maupin Ave. Youth Group starts Sunday, Aug 16, at 5pm at First Pres.

Finally, at the risk of putting too fine a point on it, I'd like to make an elevator pitch for why kids should participate in Youth activities:

1. Studies show that kids who participate in youth activities struggle less with depression, anxiety, and loneliness. Even if your child isn't sure what they believe about God, or even if you're not sure what you believe, send them because it will make their life better.
2. All is grace: Our kids live in a world soaked in merit, performance, and reward. In school, in sports, and online, our young people receive the message that their worth is rooted in what they accomplish. Youth group is one place where they will hear the opposite. God's grace, God's forgiveness, God's life, is already and always there as a gift.
3. Mentors: Kids who grow up with other adults mentoring and loving them live more robust lives. That can and does happen at school and in sports—all to the good. Let the youth group be another one of those places. Let me (Pastor Josh) and our other youth leaders care about and love your kids.
4. What life is really about: During youth group, we talk about ultimate things. What is life really about? What is it really for? We have lots of fun, but we also dive into those questions, too.

From Pastor Hannah

We had a great time at Theology on Tap this summer at New Sarum Brewing! Looking for more fellowship and fun? Join us on Wed, Aug 26 from 6-8pm as we kick off a new program year in the courtyard with a "Young Adult Dip Off!" Young adult can be college students, young couple, parents with young children, etc. Bring your favorite dip or appetizer to share... We will have a friendly competition to crown the winner of best overall dip, most unique flavor, and the most awesome presentation



Grow in Faith: Adult Edition

We enjoyed our summer of unified Sunday School as we explored the Bible from cover to cover. Are you looking for more ways to continue exploring Scripture in community with others? Here are our Adult Sunday School classes and where they meet!

Mary and Martha (Room 101)
Everyman's Bible Class (Room 109)
Outlook Class (Room 213)
Sisters in Christ (Room 202)
Open Horizons (Room 201)
Discovery Class (Room 215)

Contemporary Christians (Welcome Center Rm 113)
Young Parents Sunday School (The Kirby Library)

Stay tuned for our fall newsletter, where we will share what these classes will be studying this fall!

Confirmation This Year

This year is a Confirmation year! We are so excited to journey with young people (8th grade and above) as they dive into their faith and explore what it means to be a follower of Christ in all they do. Please pray for them, their families, and their mentors and leaders this year, and join us on September 20 at the 8:30 service as we present them with new Bibles and pray over their year of learning.

If you are a family member of a student in 8th grade or above who is interested in being a part of this year's class, please let Pastor Josh and Pastor Hannah know as soon as possible... or call the church office (704)636-1321.



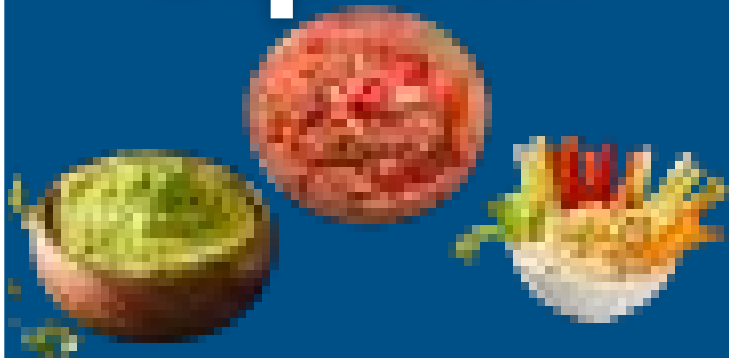
God's Table

Looking for another way to serve our neighbors in need of a good word and a hearty meal? Join us on Sunday, August 23 for God's Table from 11:15am to 1pm at Jeannie's Kitchen of Rowan Helping Ministries. We will lead worship and help serve lunch to visitors. Sign up using this QR code or find the sign-up on our bulletin boards outside of Lewis Hall!



Young Adults: Save the Date

Dip Off!



Wednesday, August 26
6-8pm @ First Pres Courtyard



Fall Sermon Series: The Big One

The Sermon on the Mount is part of the Mount Rushmore of scriptures. It's Jesus's biggest sermon to a public audience. It has highlights such as:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:3)

"You are the salt of the earth." (Matt 5:13)

"If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also." (Matt 5:39)

"Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." (Matt 5:44)

"Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matt 6:21)

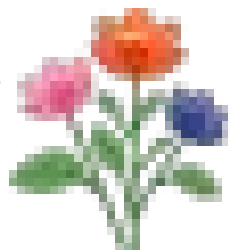
"Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?" (Matt 6:27)

"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself." (Matt 6:34)

"Do not judge, or you too will be judged." (Matt 7:1)
"Enter through the narrow gate." (Matt 7:13)

This three-chapter sermon in the gospel of Matthew shapes much of the Christian life and tradition. We want to dive deeply into what Jesus' big sermon might have to teach us about living as Christians, but even more importantly, about God's character of mercy and grace for us all. It's a big one, so it's going to take big time. We'll be exploring the Sermon on the Mount from Sunday, Aug 16 until Thanksgiving in a sermon series titled "Follow: 15 Weeks with Jesus' Sermon on the Mount."

We encourage you to begin reading now. Sit down and read Matthew 5-7. It won't take long to read the words, but it will take your whole life to understand them. Join us this fall in worship as we seek to do just that!



From Teresa de Freitas & Our Music Ministry Team



Dear First Pres Family,

August is shaping up to be a beautiful month, and I am so excited about what's ahead for us.

"Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands... come before His presence with singing" (Psalm 100:1-2). That's really what our whole music ministry is all about, isn't it? Making music together, out loud, as an offering of joy. I can't think of a better way to kick off the fall.

Before anything else, let me invite you again to our last "Come as You Are" choir this summer on Sunday, August 2. Join us at 9:30am to rehearse and then sing together at our last Unified Worship Service at 10:30am. We'll have a beautiful offertory and some well-known hymns that we'll rehearse quickly that morning, no pre-preparation needed. Just come with your voice and your heart... and be part of it.

On Sunday August 16 at 2pm, we are thrilled to welcome The Astralis Chamber Ensemble to our sanctuary for an "Evening in France," the next concert in our First Presbyterian Concert Summer Series. Flutist Angela Massey, Cellist Edward Luengo, and Harpist Li Shan Tan have been praised as "scary good" and "truly riveting." They'll bring us an afternoon of Fauré, a challenging trio by Ibert, and expressive works by two wonderful female composers, Boulanger and Renié. This is a rare chance to hear this combination of instruments performed at such a high level, right here in our Sanctuary in Salisbury. Come, bring a friend, and let your soul be fed for an afternoon. Save that date!

And there's even more reason to be joyful: our music ministry is gearing up for a wonderful fall and winter, and I would love for you to be part of it. Our Sanctuary Choir resumes Wednesday evening rehearsals on Wednesday, August 5, from 7-8:30pm. Whether you've sung in choirs your whole life or have never sung a note outside the shower, you are welcome here, just as you are. There is something so special about lifting our voices together each week, and I would love to have you with us.

The Bell Tower Ringers, our handbell choir, will resume rehearsals on a new day, Thursdays. Join us beginning on Thursday, August 27 from 5:30-7:pm. There is real joy in this kind of music-making, where each person's part matters, and we create something beautiful together. No previous experience needed, just a willing heart.

The month of August is when we will set the tone for a fall filled with music, beauty, and praise. I hope you'll come be part of it, whether that's in the choir loft, behind a handbell table, or in the pew on Sunday, August 16 at 2pm with friends, making and appreciating a joyful noise with the rest of us.

With so much gratitude, Teresa





First KIDS

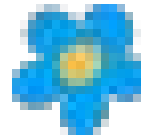
First Kids Kick Off Is Wednesday, August 19 from 5:30-7pm
Parent Meeting is August 19 too - Join us for dinner!

We cannot wait to be back with all our young friends...so we are coming back early this year! We have a great year of fun, food, fellowship, Bible lessons, music, crafts, and MORE fun! Our First Kids program is open to all children PreSchool 3 and 4 years olds (they must be potty trained) through 5th grade. We do divide our children into age appropriate lessons, crafts, and music - but we love fellowship and dinner time as a group.

This year, we are introducing First Parents! Once a month, on the 1st Wednesday, First Kids parents are invited out to dinner at Crafty Buffalo. This is a chance to hang out with others in your life stage, to talk about the ups and downs of life, and to have a good meal. Of course, First Kids still needs parents to volunteer, so make sure you sign up to support this ministry, but once a month, join us for fun, food, and fellowship with other First Parents! We will begin on Wed, Sept 2 at 5:45pm at Crafty Buffalo!

NOW IS THE TIME TO REGISTER!

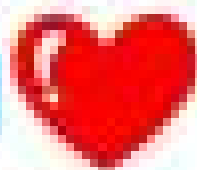
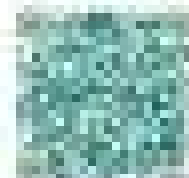
Use this QR code and get your child(ren) signed up ASAP!!



DAY SCHOOL GOOD NEWS

School starts August 17th and we are so excited! We have increased our enrollment to add a second 2 year old class this year. We still have a couple openings in our 4 year old class that we would love to fill. The Day School has an Amazon Wish List this year, too. We are trying to increase and update our library and would love any help with that. Everyday our teachers read to the children and keep with our weekly themes. Also, the children love visitors! Any special talents, new ideas or if you just want to read to the children would be appreciated.

Please contact Christy Godbold if you want to help out. dayschool@firstprescolla.org



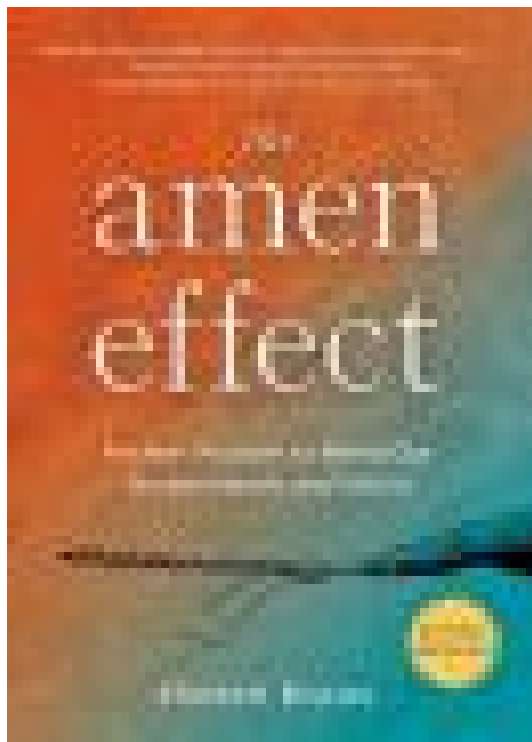
Introducing our Third Edition of Pastor's Pick

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. For August, Pastor Hannah gives us two more good picks!!

Pastor Hannah's Pick

"The Amen Effect: Ancient Wisdom to Mend Our Broken Hearts and World" by Rabbi Sharon Brous

Rabbi Sharon Brous is the founding and senior rabbi of IKAR, a Jewish community in Los Angeles. In addition to her daily work in ministry, Rabbi Brous is a phenomenal writer. In her book, *The Amen Effect*, she approaches the growing epidemic of isolation and division with wisdom from ancient Jewish literature and Scripture and examples from the life of her congregation. This book is a bit of a heavier read with a lot of refreshing wisdom. I found Rabbi Brous' call for all people to strive for more compassion, curiosity, and presence to be inspiring for this day and time.



"A Rhythm of Prayer"

edited by Sarah Bessey,
a collection of writings
from various authors
This collection of writings
put together by Sarah

Bessey is a great read to take on any last minute summer road trips! This book includes prayers, poems, and psalms in three parts: orientation, disorientation, and reorientation. Sarah organizes them in this way to mark the various crossroads that often come up in one's faith journey where we are oriented to God, face a moment (or two) of shakey ground leaving us disoriented, and the hopefully a return through reorientation. This collection is an invitation to design our own prayers but also provides a beautiful array of language and prayers when the words seem to fail us.





Our Moms' Group

The mom group at First Presbyterian Church is shaking it up this year! We have grown so much, from an idea to a group of 30 members with a consistent presence at each meeting. We have learned about self-care, building resilience in our kids, pelvic floor health, grief management, how to pray with our kids, and so much more. We have built a community where moms can reach out to each other with hand-me-downs to pass off, play dates to set up, and news to share (both good and bad). For the past two years, we have been able to establish ourselves as an organization that unites moms around the county. We have turned into a supportive community that strives to learn together and grow in our relationship with each other, our kids, and God.

After reaching out to the members of our group, along with much prayer and contemplation, we have decided to modify our operations a little. The goal: to better meet the needs of our community. In all that we do, we want this group to be a safe harbor that welcomes all moms to its shores. The first step to that goal is to accommodate the schedules of the working moms in our community. In the past, we have met on Monday mornings, but we have heard from several moms that they are unavailable at that time because of their jobs. Therefore, we are moving our meetings to the 2nd and 4th Wednesday evenings of each month from 5:30 to 7:00 PM. This is intentionally during First Kids so that moms with school-aged children can also bring their kids. Families participating in church activities together can increase both familial bonds and community connection.

Our group has also decided to transition away from MomCo International. MomCo International provided a wonderful scaffold for our group while we were getting our feet wet. However, when we sent out a survey to our members, they expressed

interest in topics that are not addressed by the MomCo curriculum. This summer, the leadership team has been working to establish a curriculum that more aptly covers our members' areas of interest. In building this curriculum, we have been able to tap into resources right in our community that our moms could actually use if they needed them, such as access to counseling and therapy for kids and estate planning. We are also building in more time for conversation and connections. We are so excited to launch our refocused mom group in August and to share with all that we learn and do in the new year. With our relaunch, we are going to be advertising at local day care centers under a new name. So, keep an eye out for an announcement of our new name along with an invitation for families to attend our kick-off event!

Yours fondly, Bridget Brown



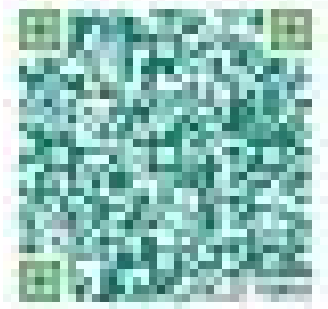
Our next blood drive is Tuesday, July 28

Blood Drive Exceeds Goal! Thanks to First Pres Salisbury for supporting the American Red Cross blood program by hosting a very successful blood drive in April. Thirty units of blood were collected at our blood drive in Fellowship Hall. YEAH!

Thank you to our Showing Up Ministry team members and Pastor Hannah for all your volunteer help.

Our next drive will be Tuesday, July 28. Go ahead and schedule your appointment today at redcrossblood.org.

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



Member Updates August

JOYS:

Marianna Swaim on the birth of her granddaughter, Maddie Gray Swaim, on May 6. Maddie's parents are Ian and Brooke Swaim, and her older brother is HL.

Guy and LeeAnna Hoskins on the birth of their granddaughter, Anna June Gansz, on May 25. Anna's parents are Austin and Madeline Gansz.

Barbara and Steve Safrit on the birth of their granddaughter, Millie Mae Embler. Millie's parents are Sydney and Cameron Embler, and her siblings are Layla and Brody.

DEATHS:

Lincoln Holman and family on the death of his father.

Joyce Ann Spiceland and family on the death of her husband, Jim Spiceland, on May 15.

Jim Mitchell and family on the death of his wife, Bev, on May 31.



Barbara and Steve Safrit on the death of her mother, Joan Horner, on June 30.

Dear First Presbyterian Family,

I do not have words to express the appreciation and thanks that I hold for you all. These past 4-5 months have been very difficult for my family and me. And through this time, you all taught me something that I did not know I needed to learn - just how much I need my church family. I have always known that I "need to go to church," but I never realized how very much I need the church. Somehow, God turned a painful and grueling experience into a blessing that I would not trade for anything.

A letter feels inadequate to convey the impact you have all had on my healing and on my family, but I want to thank each and every one of you. Thank you for the prayers spoken by so many of you, and while private and invisible, they were palpable to me. Thank you for the blue cards that kept coming, serving as reminders that I was not alone. A huge thank you to the AV Team, who made it possible for me to join in worship when I could not leave my couch. Thank you all for feeding my family, and thank you to Charlotte for organizing it all. I had no idea how very much I needed that help, but you all did. Thank you to the flower team and to those who lovingly craft prayer shawls. Those brought me unexpected joy and warmth when I most needed it. And to our pastors - a tremendous thank you for the visits, the prayers, the support, and the constant outreach. We are truly a blessed congregation to have these three people among us.

And perhaps most of all, I want to say thank you to the "V Team." These seven ladies, several of whom I did not even know, drove my daughter 40 minutes each way to and from school, to sports, and anywhere else she needed to go, for over 3 months. These women have become family, and I love them more than they may ever realize. We had no one to help, and out of nowhere, the V Team showed up, day after day. Dear Judy, Margaret, Karen, Beffie, Debbie, Tricia, and Trish - thank you for sharing Christ's love in this way. And thank you for creating new relationships for Vivian within our church; that is a gift that I do not take for granted.

I am healing well, although I will admit I was not prepared for this to be on God's time and not my own. I have learned patience, have spent more time in prayer than I ever have, and have come to look back on all of this with a tremendous amount of joy and thankfulness. I still have a way to go, but thanks to God working through you all, I have no doubt that I will end up in a better place than where I began. Thank you for teaching me how very much I need and love First Presbyterian Church.

Much love in Christ,
Jenn Gardner Selby



Dear Friends of First Pres, Pastor Lara, Pastor Josh, and Pastor Hannah,

You have prayed with us and for us, and we are so very grateful! I have kept every blue card. One does not realize how important each one is until one is on the receiving end. Special thanks to Pastor Lara for her visits, prayers, text messages, and phone calls. Special thanks to Pastor Hannah for her prayers and visit. Special thanks to Susan Church for giving us communion. The Flower Committee ladies brought us beautiful flowers. The Blessing Bunch sent several cards. Presbyterian Women prayed and sent cards. The Discovery Sunday School Class has prayed and sent cards. Thanks to those who brought us food! "Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow."

Deborah and Wayne Alexander



Rossini County

The Showing Up Team is looking for volunteers to join as a church group to help with United Way's Day of Caring on Thursday, Aug 27. The work done that day will be a variety of landscaping activities at one of our local schools.

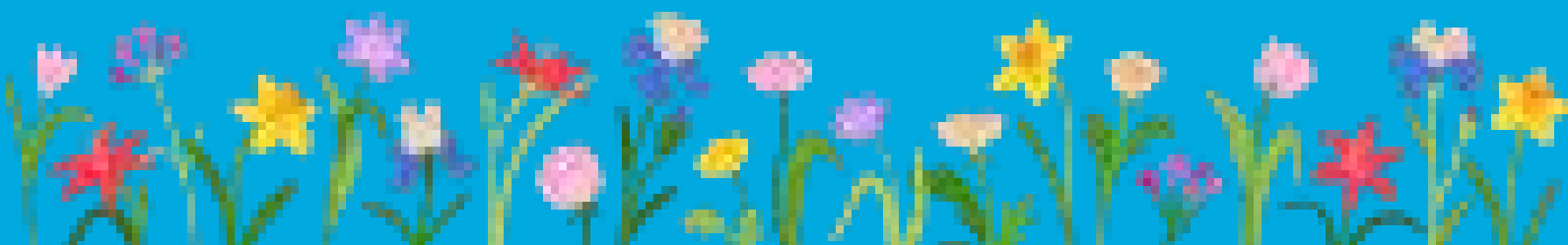
Please contact Mike Drinkard (770-283-9046) or [mikedrinkard@gmail.com](mailto:mikedrunkard@gmail.com)...if you would like to join this mission outreach of our church.

VOLUNTEER



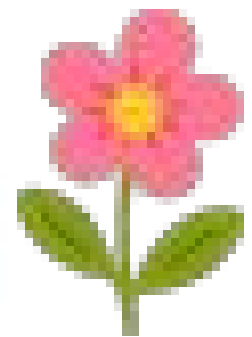
**THEOLOGY ON
TAP**
Young Adults!

Join the Theology Tap team and
Share Your Faith
Wednesday, August 22 - July 18th
August 18
6:30-8:00pm





First Kids 2026 Calendar



August

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November

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Calendar Notes:

First Kids: 5:30-7:00 pm, dinner included

Young Parents Sunday School Sunday mornings, 9:45-10:45 a.m. First Free Kidz Library led by Pastor Lora

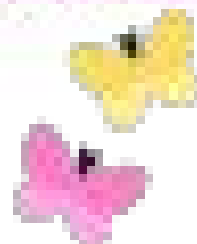
1st, 3rd meetings

Calendar Square:

Parent Meetings Dinner with the kids first, then the meeting at 5:45 pm in Extension's Classroom Room 110

First Parents: 8:00-9:00 pm at Crafty Buffalo each 1st Wednesday - Fellowship and food

First Home or First Village: 9:30-10:00 pm, dinner included at First Free Youth Room 200



Notes:

Family Meeting: Will not sing twice this semester. October 4, at 8:30 and 10:00 and December 4 at 8:30 and 10:00.

December 18: Family Dinner and our Christmas Pageant

December 24: 4:00 pm in Lewis Hall - Christmas Eve Family Worship w/Children's Pageant

We hope you and your children will be here to participate and enjoy this special service.

New this year, First Parents: A time of fellowship and food at Crafty Buffalo, while your kids are at church. Hang out with others in your life stage along with Pastor Lora. Each 1st Wednesday of the month.

New this year, Young Parents: A new weekly Sunday School class for parents led by Pastor Lora.



First Pres Youth Calendar

August							September						
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2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
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October							November							December						
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8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31																		

KEY:

LTO - Living Through Obedience Church School 9:00-10:00 in the Youth Room

Youth Service at 6:00 pm

Fourth Bible Study in Pastor Jack's home - 7:00 Monday Ave 20144

1st, 3rd months

Notes:

November 22 at 6:00 pm in Living Room for African Soul Supper & worship. All high school youth going on the 2021 Thrive mission. They are expected to help set up, serve, participate in worship, and clean up as part of the trip requirements. Youth leaders will be at 6:00 pm. A food sign up for the supper, snacks, and desserts will be sent closer to the date.

EVENTS FOR AUGUST

CHECK THE CHURCH CALENDAR FOR A LISTING OF
ALL SUMMER DATES & MEETINGS



first
pres
CHURCH

5

August

SANCTUARY CHOIR REHEARSAL IS BACK

Wed
7-8:30 pm

After a short summer break, our Sanctuary choir will be back to normal Wednesday evening rehearsals. They are a fun group and always are looking for new choir members. Come join them!

9

August

NORMAL SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE RETURNS

Sunday
8:30/11 am

After several weeks of Unified Worship services, our church returns to their normal 8:30 am Contemporary Worship service in Lewis Hall. Then, our Traditional Worship service is at 11am in our Sanctuary.

16

August

FIRST PRES KICK OFF

Sunday
9:45 am

Youth and Children's Sunday School classes kick off at 9:45 am. We have many offerings for all ages, 3 - 12th grade, and a nursery for our littlest ones. LTD for youth is back @9:45am.

16

August

EVENING YOUTH GROUP IS BACK

Sunday
5-6:30 pm

Pastor Josh and his Youth Ministry team are excited about another great year with their youth (6-12 grades). Pastor Josh will be sending out more info this summer, so for now just SAVE THE DATE! Porch B-Stud is returning too!

16

August

FIRST PRES CONCERT SERIES WITH THE ASTRALIS ENSEMBLE

Sunday
2 pm

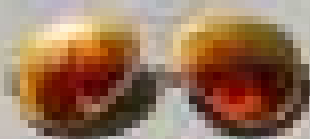
Flute, Harp, and Cello — this promises to be an unforgettable afternoon. This uniquely beautiful instrumental combination creates a sound unlike anything else: delicate, luminous, and soul-stirring.



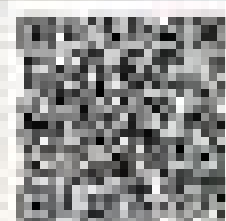
THIS SUMMER



STAY CONNECTED.
SET UP A RECURRING GIFT.



SCAN HERE
TO GIVE



Fall 2026

Newsletter Deadline

Please turn your items to Christine by Aug 12!

This newsletter will cover Sept-Nov.





Our Staff

Church Office Hours
9:00-10:00 a.m.

www.firstpresssalisbury.org, 704-636-1321
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Rev. Christopher Wilson (July - August), **Rev. David Wright** (August - October), **Rev. David Wright** (October - December), **Rev. David Wright** (December - February), **Rev. David Wright** (February - April), **Rev. David Wright** (April - June), **Rev. David Wright** (June - August)

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