

The REMINDER

Growing UPWARD Growing INWARD Growing OUTWARD
building character becoming a Christian sharing the good news



JULY 2021

5K/
COMB



SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

Greetings in the name of the Lord!

And a special greeting and welcome to our newest Covenant Partners. We are hopeful that you will become involved and enjoy doing worship and outreach with us!

This includes our confirmands who became Covenant Partners recently, as well. We were so encouraged by your faith statements at the Confirmand Banquet and we look forward to serving God with you! You are the future leaders of our church, and God has prepared a work in advance for you to do. Continue to draw close to the Lord, and be ready to answer His call when it comes.

We should all heed to God's prompting to use our talents and strengths. Before COVID, we were beginning to talk about how to empower more covenant partners to become a part of what God is doing here. Which of our Units sounds like a good spot for you ...Outreach, Fellowship, Worship, Enabling, Discipleship? Let me know, and we will help you find your place.

I would encourage more covenant partners to consider getting involved in church leadership! We have a great group of elders and deacons but we are looking for a new class every year. It has been amazing watching God use different gifts and personalities in unique ways at just the right time.

As my term as Clerk comes to an end, I am really looking forward to seeing what God has in store for me next! I have learned so much this year, and I am grateful to Darryl and the Session for this opportunity.

I want to particularly thank Jim Dameron and Chris Scott, who have both been steadfast in helping the Session and me to navigate through a precarious year.

God is on the move and He has his hand on this church. As I was discussing with Ann Rodgers Chandler a while back, either you trust God or you don't ... and we do.

I enjoyed sharing some of my favorite hymns with you in my testimony and previous articles. It was fun hearing back from you on some of yours. Keep in touch!

What a friend we have in Jesus
All our sins and griefs to bear.
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer
Are we weak and heavy laden
Cumbered with a load of care
Precious Savior, still our refuge.
Thou wilt find a solace there.

In Christ,
Debbie Jackson
Clerk of Session

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ON THE COVER: Kathy Griffin leads children in reciting a verse.

Summer Update

Dear Church Family,

Life entails change; the only thing that never changes is that which is already dead. And so, we continue to have change. As you may know, this month we welcome and celebrate Wynde Edwards as she joins us as our Children's Director. Welcome Wynde! However, our incoming youth director had a change of plans due to personal circumstances, so I am pleased to say that Taiter Garrett has agreed to be our Interim Youth Director. Taiter was already on staff part-time working with Palmer with a focus on discipling our young ladies. She is very familiar with our ministry and will move into the interim position seamlessly. Once again, the Lord has been so good to us and we will not skip a beat.

The session has examined and approved the next class of elders and deacons. We had a powerful night of hearing the new officers' testimony and how the Lord has surprised them with His grace, steady presence, and taken away their guilt and shame. Hearing how Jesus has worked – and is working – in someone else's life is always life-giving. I am looking forward to working with the new officers, and I thank those who have worked so hard to serve the Lord who are now rotating off. I would like you to know that our church officers are acutely aware that while a term of active service may be three years, ordination is for life – as is our life of discipleship. Elders who are “inactive” (i.e. meaning not currently on session) are increasingly remaining involved in the work and mission of the church through the session's units. This is a healthy and intentional decision on their part that is good for the church, and one for which I am grateful.

Among the good work that has been done recently, the Outreach Unit has labored faithfully to be good stewards of our finances while being relationally connected with those whom we support and partner in ministry. To this end, we want to share with you that our friends in Haiti – and I know many of you have travelled there – are in a state of emergency. Covid has made life exceptionally difficult. Their supporters in the U.S. are prohibited from travelling to Haiti to work



Wynde Edwards



Christina 'Taiter' Garrett

and pray alongside them. They have also seen a drastic drop in their monthly support. The situation is so alarming that we are going to send Actionnel and his team a special gift to support them – in particular so that they can feed the children at their school. We will announce more information this month of July. If you would like to join in this special offering, please write a check to the church with “Haiti” in the memo line. We have spoken with Actionnel via Zoom; we wish the law allowed us to go visit in person.

Finally, I would like to personally thank Caroline Genoble for directing our incredible Vacation Bible School! She and the whole team are a true gift. How beautiful it was to see so many children playing and rejoicing in the Lord all around us. The whole experience felt particularly joyful and full of light.

That's a brief update. I hope you enjoy the summer, the Olympics and take delight in God's sunny creation!

Peace,

A Thought or Two Challenging You Toward Discipleship

Bringing the gospels to life

Recently, Dottie and I watched the sixth episode of *The Chosen*. It is a series that brings the gospels to life as it depicts the lives of each disciple, their families and the encounters they have as they follow Jesus!

Angel Studios and writer Dallas Jenkins envision a seven-season run (the second season is complete). You can find the website online. Each season has eight episodes that run about 50 minutes each. I highly recommend them to you and your children!! Certainly, any dramatization of the gospels is fraught with possible missteps. But my experience thus far is this work is ground-breaking.

I was impressed by the way they handled the healing of a leper and the paralytic that was lowered through the roof in the sixth episode! It made me feel the wonder of following the Son of God around the countryside. Simon Peter is depicted as a brash rough-and-ready fisherman. They had him embroiled in tax evasion scheme that almost landed him in Roman prison. But Jesus rescues him through the miraculous catch of fish. All of this continues to make me ponder the call to follow the Lord Jesus. In some sense these episodes put flesh on what it means to be a growing, even mature disciple.

I am moving through some summer reading that challenges church leaders to think deeply about the goal of ministry in a church. I am currently reading two books by Bill Hull. One is *Choose the Life*, which is meant to be read in a group. The group interactions and the material covered help move a disciple toward maturity. The other book by Hull is *Conversion and Discipleship*. In it he references the work of Dallas Willard by whom Hull was discipled and greatly impacted. Hull writes this in response to some of Willard's material that he is interacting with:

“Dallas Willard suggests that our best hope of reaching those who don't know Jesus is not attracting them to our church services. (My mind thought how provocative that is!) It is teaching those who already know Jesus how to follow him as mature disciples.

I recognize the tension here and that the pendulum of discipleship and evangelism swings back and forth. But in light of recent history, I argue that our American churches need to recover the work of discipleship before we can be effective in the work of evangelism. In other words, we must start by growing people we already have.

Regardless, the biblical expectation is clear; disciples are to make other disciples. (Mt 28:19) This expectation of Christ applies to every follower of Christ. Paul worked to bring every one of his disciples to maturity. (Col 1:28-29) Additionally, Paul expected Timothy to pass on what Paul had taught him to other trustworthy people, and he expected those trustworthy people to “be able to pass them on to others” (2 Tim. 2:2 NLT). A mature disciple both makes disciples and teaches their students how to teach others.”

This second paragraph is astounding. The goal of a healthy disciple making church is to count the people involved in the ministry who are actually intentionally working with others to make them into disciples that make disciples.

If this strikes a cord with you, let me hear from you. I would love to have a conversation with you. Also, I intend to do a reading club in August (date TBD) for the book *Surrender to Love* by David Benner. Pick up a copy and let's plan to get together to chat about it. Let me know again if you would be up for coming to lunch to talk about the book!

Let's challenge each other toward maturity as we grow as disciples of Jesus!

Chris

Toward a Healthier Church

Stewardship principles

What does stewardship look like in our lives today?

Unfortunately, many Christians today only associate the idea of stewardship with sermons they have heard about church budgets and building programs. Biblical stewardship is much more expansive. Recently, I read a summary of an essay by Bill Peel titled “*Stewardship Is Leadership*”. Peel suggests that there are four principles of biblical stewardship that every Christian must understand. There is the principle of ownership, the principle of responsibility, the principle of accountability and finally the principle of reward. Allow me to share some of the things that caught my attention:

Regarding the **principle of ownership** – Psalm 24 begins “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world and all who love in it.” (Psalm 24:1). In Genesis, God created everything and “placed Adam in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.” (Genesis 2:15). Peel states the “work is the stewardship of all of the creation that God has given him.” This is the fundamental principle of biblical stewardship. God owns everything and, we are called to be managers or administrators acting on God’s behalf. Stewardship is the commitment of one’s self and possessions to God’s service, recognizing that we do not have the right of control over our property or ourselves.

On the **principle of responsibility** – Peel writes: *Although God gives us “all things richly to enjoy,” nothing is ours. Nothing really belongs to us. God owns everything; we’re responsible for how we treat it and what we do with it. While we complain about our rights here on earth, the Bible constantly asks, What about your responsibilities? Owners have rights; stewards have responsibilities.*

We are called as God’s stewards to manage that which belongs to God. While God has graciously entrusted us with the care, development, and enjoyment of everything he owns as his stewards, we are responsible to manage his holdings well and according to his desires and purposes.

And finally, the **principle of accountability**. Peek

reminds us that “we are all stewards of the resources, abilities and opportunities that God has entrusted to our care, and one day each one of us will be called to give an account for how we have managed what the Master has given us.” God has entrusted authority over the creation to us and we are not allowed to rule over it as we see fit. We are called to exercise our dominion under the watchful eye of the Creator managing his creation in accord with the principles he has established.

Like the servants in the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30), we will be called to give an account of how we have administered everything we have been given. This is not limited to our finances but, includes our time, talent, knowledge and relationships as well. Peek concludes with the reminder that “we will all give account to the rightful owner (GOD) as to how well we managed the things he has entrusted to us.”

With that in mind, let me ask you: ***What does stewardship look like in your life and in the life of First Presbyterian Church?*** Think about it.

Quarterly Contribution Statements

In the coming weeks, covenant partners will receive quarterly contribution statements for the second quarter of 2021 (April-June). Your contribution statements are intended to serve as a reminder of your commitment to faithfully support the ministries of First Presbyterian Church. If you have questions or need additional information please contact Gwen DuRant, 843-662-2583 or email gdurant@florencefirst.org. Thank you for your faithful support of the mission and ministry of First Presbyterian Church, both financially and with your time and talent.



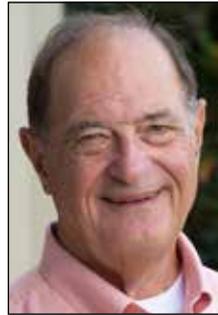
The Gift of Knowing Jesus

PHILIPPIANS 3:1b-4:2

This section of Philippians sounds much like Paul's letter to the Galatians. Some scholars believe this is a portion of a separate letter Paul wrote to the Philippian church. Paul is deeply personal and defends his Jewish religion but also casts it aside as rubbish or waste when compared with the gift of knowing Jesus Christ.

Jesus has appeared to Paul in a revelation and calls Paul to be prophet and missionary to tell the truth about The LORD'S intention to include all people in the Church as God's family and people.

One aspect of studying the literature of the New Testament is to understand the conflict between traditional Judaism and the faith of the early Christian Church. The Jewish faith had a missionary movement in the first century. Paul could have been a zealous missionary of this movement. When Jesus appeared to him and called him to be a missionary to all people witnessing to the truth that Jesus is the Messiah and the One sent from God, Paul began to preach the way to God was through believing Jesus is the Messiah. Paul is a missionary of the Church of Antioch who has had a revelation that Jesus is the Christ and preaches that Jesus as the Messiah or Christ is the only religious truth. The Jewish Religious Leaders sent their own missionaries to refute Paul, and this conflict caused Paul to write to the churches to avoid these false missionaries. These false missionaries speak harshly about Paul. He warns the Philippians about their untruth. They insisted that the Gentile Christians maintain the traditional obedience to the Mosaic Law. Paul calls them "dogs." This is a derogatory use of the term. They are like wild dogs who claim all Gentile men must be circumcised and follow the Pharisaic Law. In Paul's evaluation, they are only people who mutilate and defy the meaning of the true freedom to be in Christ. The circumcision to be desired is a circumcision of the heart, which means to follow Christ with commitment. These leaders who seek to discredit Paul and the Gospel are claiming to be superior with regard to having human credentials.

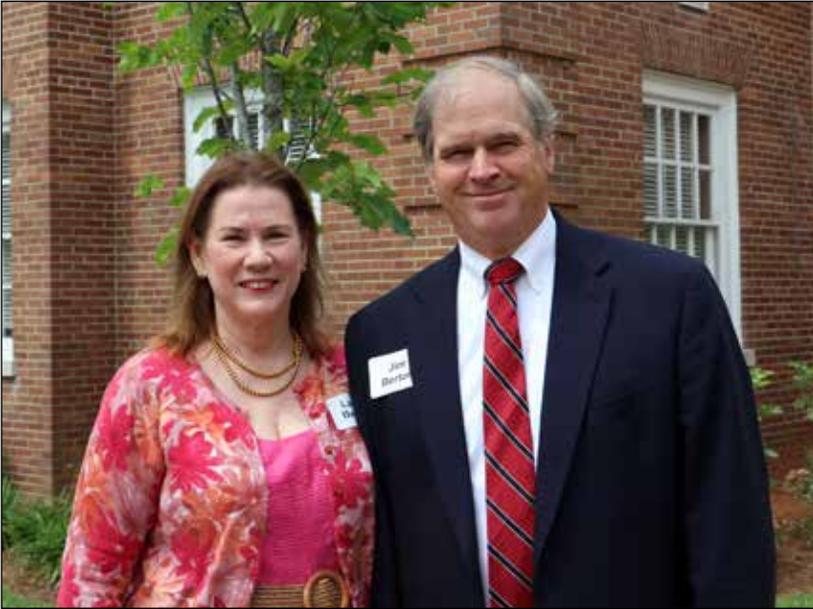


**REV. MIKE
FLEENOR'S BLOG**
<https://onepastorsponderings.wordpress.com/>

Paul lists his Jewish Pharisaic credentials: "For it is we who are the circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh— even though I, too, have reason for confidence in the flesh. If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless (Philippians 3:3-6)."

It may seem that Paul is bragging but human (fleshly) accomplishments are no more than rubbish when compared to being in Christ. Righteousness is found in the faith of Christ. Righteousness is the goal of any person following God. Paul's enemies sought righteousness in human accomplishments, but true righteousness is found in following Jesus. Righteousness is the right relationship with God. Paul has discovered that a right relationship with God is based not on Law but on faith in Jesus Christ. He seeks to draw all into this truth. Righteousness is found in Christ.

Welcome our new Covenant Partners



Jim and Laura Berton moved to Florence in November after being away from South Carolina for 40 years. They met in college when he was at The Citadel and she was at the College of Charleston. They have lived in Nebraska and Ashland, Kentucky, where they were members of Christ Presbyterian Church in Huntington, West Virginia.



Sally King is a lifelong Florentine. She started coming to First Presbyterian Church in January 2019. She was uplifted by the friendliness of the Covenant Partners. She said she felt the Holy Spirit that day and decided she wanted to become a member.



Eliza Spencer was raised in Hartsville and is a graduate of Presbyterian College. She has worked at ADP in Florence for eight years, but has only lived in Florence for two. After postponing their wedding due to COVID-19, Eliza and Rhett Spencer III were married in April 2020 in Rhett's parents' backyard. Having attended many services with the Spencers at First Presbyterian, Eliza is excited to officially join as a Covenant Partner.



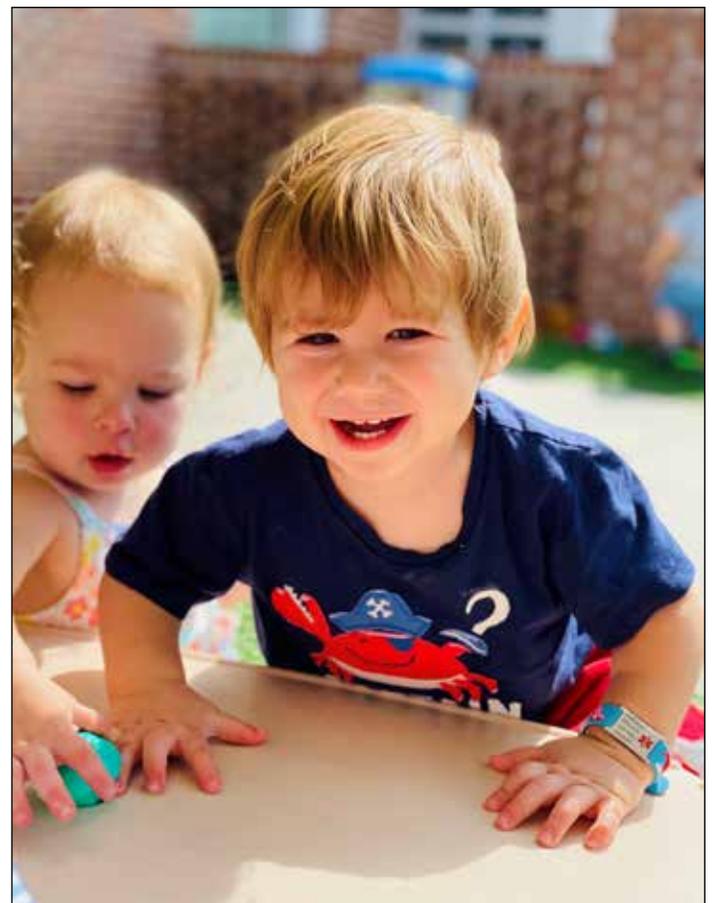
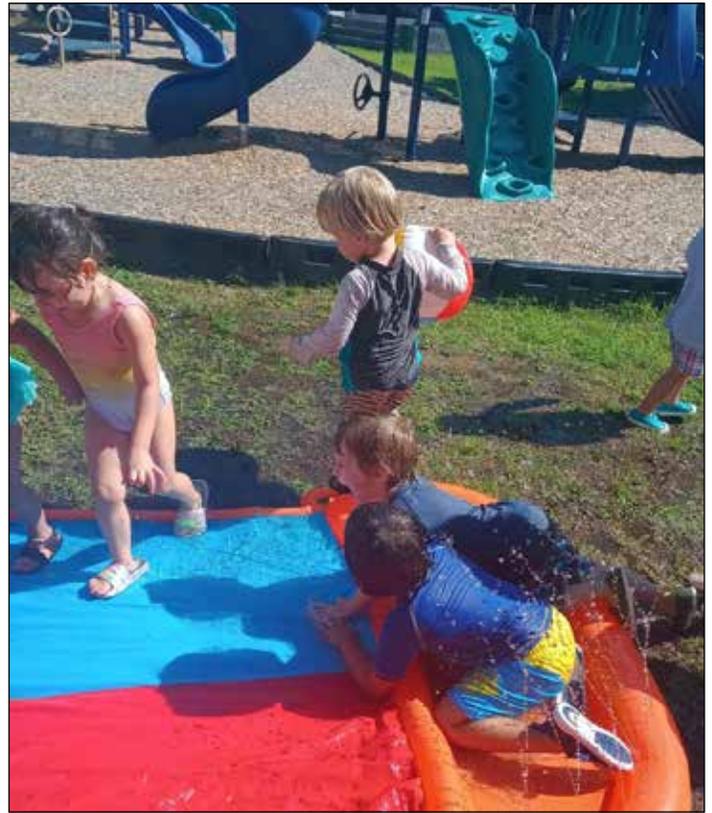
Registration open for ultimate day camp

Registration is open for the summer of a lifetime close to home! WinShape Camps for Communities brings the ultimate day camp right to First Presbyterian Church the week of July 26, combining fun, faith and friendship into an action-packed week. Campers completing grades K5-8 cultivate their God-given skills and talents in a mix of indoor and outdoor moments. Register today at <https://camps.winshape.org/day-camps/1091>



Summer of fun

Summer is in full swing here at The First Presbyterian Child Development Center! Toddler classes and older are busy each week with various camping themes. The children and staff enjoy “water” days with the help of sprinklers and water activities being held outside.





THURSDAY, JULY 1

Leader Trek Camp
7:00 AM Men's Bible Study: Room 202
10:30 AM Prayer Group: Lawson-Rain Chapel
1:00 PM Bible Study: Zoom

SUNDAY, JULY 4 FOURTH OF JULY

10:00 AM Combined Worship Service
Communion Sunday



MONDAY, JULY 5

Church office closed / July Fourth holiday
5:30 PM Stretch Your Faith
6:30 PM Summer Bible Study: JFH
7:00 PM Men's Bible Study: Welcome Center

TUESDAY, JULY 6

7:00 AM Men's Prayer Breakfast: Bazen's

WEDNESDAY, JULY 7

6:00 PM Youth
6:30 PM Praise Team Rehearsal

THURSDAY, JULY 8

7:00 AM Men's Bible Study: Room 202
10:30 AM Prayer Group: LR
1:00 PM Bible Study: Zoom

SATURDAY, JULY 10

6:00 AM Parking Lot Mission: Hope Health parking lot

SUNDAY, JULY 11

Leader Trek Camp
9:30 AM Called Session Meeting: Parlor
10:00 AM Combined Worship Service

MONDAY, JULY 12

Leader Trek Camp
11:00 AM Enabling Unit Meeting: Women's Only
12:30 PM Worship Unit Meeting: Lawson-Rain
5:30 PM Stretch Your Faith
6:30 PM Summer Bible Study: JFH
7:00 PM Men's Bible Study: Welcome Center

TUESDAY, JULY 13

Leader Trek Camp
7:00 AM Men's Prayer Breakfast: Bazen's
12:00 PM Discipleship Unit Meeting: Women's Only Class
2:00 PM Fellowship Unit Meeting: Chris Handley's Office

WEDNESDAY, JULY 14

Leader Trek Camp
7:00 PM RedWolves Game: Sparrow Stadium



THURSDAY, JULY 15

Leader Trek Camp
7:00 AM Men's Bible Study: Room 202
10:30 AM Prayer Group: LR
1:00 PM Bible Study: Zoom

FRIDAY, JULY 16

Leader Trek Camp

SATURDAY, JULY 17

Leader Trek Camp

SUNDAY, JULY 18

10:00 AM Combined Worship Service

**MONDAY, JULY 19**

5:30 PM Stretch Your Faith
 6:30 PM Summer Bible Study: JFH
 7:00 PM Men's Bible Study: Welcome Center

TUESDAY, JULY 20

7:00 AM Men's Prayer Breakfast: Bazen's
 6:30 PM Board of Deacons: JFH

WEDNESDAY, JULY 21

12:00 PM Outreach Unit Meeting: Pilgrim
 6:30 PM Praise Team Rehearsal

THURSDAY, JULY 22

7:00 AM Men's Bible Study: Room 202
 10:30 AM Prayer Group: LR
 1:00 PM Bible Study: Zoom

SUNDAY, JULY 25

10:00 AM Combined Worship Service

MONDAY, JULY 26

7:45 AM WinShape Camps for Communities
 5:30 PM Stretch Your Faith
 6:30 PM Summer Bible Study: JFH
 7:00 PM Men's Bible Study: Welcome Center

TUESDAY, JULY 27

7:00 AM Men's Prayer Breakfast: Bazen's
 7:45 AM WinShape Camps for Communities
 6:30 PM Session: Lawson-Rain

WEDNESDAY, JULY 28

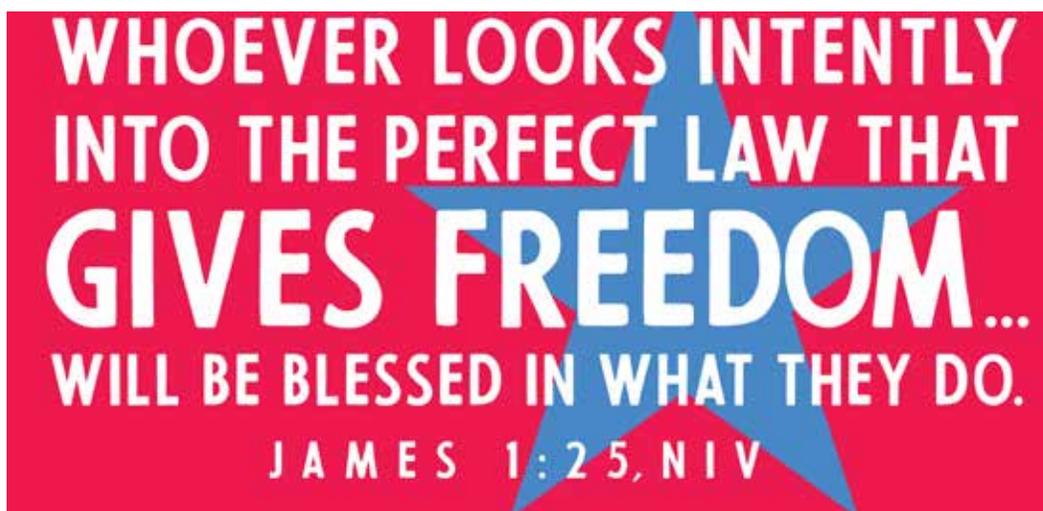
7:45 AM WinShape Camps for Communities

THURSDAY, JULY 29

7:00 AM Men's Bible Study: Room 202
 7:45 AM WinShape Camps for Communities
 10:30 AM Prayer Group: LR
 1:00 PM Bible Study: Zoom

FRIDAY, JULY 30

7:45 AM WinShape Camps for Communities



Remember in Prayer

Extended Care

Commander Nursing Center

Jessie Moss

Home

Adele Kassab

Glenn Odom

Lowman Home

Mac King

Methodist Manor

Joyce Floyd

Marie Jordan

Maria Whitehead

Presbyterian Community

Ann Cash

Helen Foster

Aaron Leland

Clariann Kellam

Memorials

Robbie Bankston

Richard Brown

Joyce Haizlip

Ernest B. Hunter, Jr.

Mary Sherer

Honorariums

Matt Marechal

Households

FLOCK 1: Stuart and Susan Snow

FLOCK 2: Jim Frederick

FLOCK 3: George and Victoria Harrington

FLOCK 4: Charlie and Kathy Grace

FLOCK 5: Carey and Liz Andrews

FLOCK 6: Jim and Sally Dameron

FLOCK 7: Cindy Coward, Elizabeth

FLOCK 8: Charlie and Cathy Bazen

Sympathy

Bobbie Sue Bratton, loss of her mother

Gwen Misurella, loss of her son-in-law

Alexis Morris, loss of her sister

Kathy Hatfield and Debbie Wilson,
loss of their father

Christy Wallace, loss of her father

Lord, Hear
Our Prayer

Sick & Recovering

Butch Carroll

Kent Caudle

Aubrey Crawford

Kit Fulmer

Sherrill Fussell

Debbie Harwell

Linda Lawson

Isla Louise McCoy

Mary Ann Nash

Richard Nash

Fred Swearingen

Martha Tyson

Shannon Watt

Jack Williams

Elders

Janet Brand

Jack Hofler

Deacons

Michele Lewis

David Spivey

Mission

Manna House

Entrust

Women in Ministry

Marlene Pantos

Lyn Ortiz

Sunday School Teachers

Carol Fleenor

Heather Taylor

Staff

Wynde Edwards

Mike Fleenor

July BIRTHDAYS

JULY 1

Randy Cranford
Julia Watkins

JULY 2

William Bratton
Addie Evans
Derek Hemmingsen
Pessy Losah

JULY 3

Harriett Gilpin
Avery Hucks
Harper Suggs
Frances Welch

JULY 4

Natalie Hall
Louise King

JULY 5

Ken Jackson
Erik Marechal

JULY 6

Amelia Carter
Emma Carter
Kate Carter
Bobby Garris
Mary Kirkpatrick
Benjamin Lewis
Weston Lewis

JULY 7

Wanda Granger
Richard Hopkins
Renee McRae
Wendy Singletary
Guy Slagle
Stirling Temple

JULY 8

Emily Jordan
Maggie Reece

JULY 11

Frank Hodges
Rob Lewis
David Spearman

JULY 12

John Hofler
Sammie Kennedy
Luke Poston
Susan Rhea

JULY 13

Jan Bray
Nabil Cotran
Ann Houck

JULY 14

Gregg Jones
Barbara Maffett

JULY 15

Robbie Suggs
Eiley Foxworth

JULY 16

Pat Conyers

JULY 17

Mac Gandy
Jessica Garris
Margaret Lee
Mitchell Green
Jim Moseley

JULY 18

Robert Miles
Pam Morgan

JULY 19

Jane Moss
Landon Turner

JULY 20

Isla Louise McCoy
Nancy Harwell
Marty Taylor

JULY 21

Alice Bankson
Denise King
Weber Mimms
Mike Porter
Freeman Williams

JULY 22

Jimmy Green
Rob Molnar
Martha Nance

JULY 23

Martha Blanton
Walt Burch
Alice Caldwell
Tenny Moss

JULY 24

Beth Player
Kim Ryan
Ford Scott
Christy Wallace

JULY 25

Shawn Bulliner
Alicia Truman
Elizabeth Tuttle

JULY 27

Troy Mbunu
Michael Miles

JULY 28

Margaret Jones
Caleb King
Eddie McRae
Hannah Moree

JULY 29

Bruce Crawford
David DuBose
Thomas Hardee

JULY 30

Thomas Davis
Vicki Hebert
David Sanderson

JULY 30

Seth Crawford
Palmer Jones
Marie Jordan





Church News

Fellowship night at RedWolves game

Join us for a night of RedWolves baseball Wednesday, July 14! Come to the ballpark with your church family! The RedWolves, Florence's Coastal Plain League team, will be playing Macon Bacon starting at 7 p.m. Gates open at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$10, which includes ticket to game, meal voucher and a RedWolves hat! RSVP to Brandon Hylton by July 5 (843-319-1937 or bhylton76@gmail.com). Money is also due to the church office by July 5.

Donations sought for school supplies

School Supplies Drive: Donations are being accepted for those in need of school supplies in Florence School District 1 and Cross Cultural Workforce Impact. Supplies in need include: book bags, notebooks, pencils, crayons, markers, erasers, folders, rulers, loose-leaf paper, binders, pens, etc. Drop off donations in the Welcome Center. For more information, please contact Jayne Boswell at 843-229-7790.

Blood drive yields 22 units donated

Thank you to all who supported the Red Cross Blood Drive. The team collected 22 units. For every collection, three lives can be saved. Our drive made it possible for 66 lives to be saved. The next drive will be November 4.

Women's Summer Bible Study

Kathy Griffin leads a summer Bible study for women on campus. The study is on Jude will go through July 26. Time is Monday night from 6:30 to 8 p.m. in one of the Sunday school classrooms. Come with your Bible as we discuss this wonderful book. Text or call Kathy at 843-229-3589 with questions or if you are planning to attend.

— To submit a brief for the newsletter or bulletin, please email Kim Brauss at kbrauss@florencfirst.org.



Congrats to Scouts on medals, merit badges

Lucas Morgan was awarded scouting's highest rank — the Eagle Scout award — at an outdoor Court of Honor on May 23.

Lucas, a rising Junior at Trinity Collegiate School, is the 16-year-old son of Hunter and Kara Morgan.

He has two brothers, Hunter Morgan Jr., an Eagle Scout in Troop 477, and Patrick Morgan, who was also involved with our scouting ministry. Lucas will be joining his dad and a group of 20 Scouts and leaders on a backpacking trip to the High Sierras and Yosemite National Park in California later this month.

In addition to our western trip lead by Hunter Morgan, our First Presbyterian scouting ministry also has 20 Scouts and leaders going to Camp Barstow summer Scout camp on Lake Murray in mid-July.

The Wonder of Him



“... We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done.” Psalm 78:4

Well done, Caroline Genoble! With your leadership our Vacation Bible School volunteers did just that ... and had fun doing it! We had wonderful fellowship FOCUSing on Jesus as we passed our faith onto the next generation.

So many thanks to those many, many volunteers who made VBS 2021 a success! From our newest covenant partners fresh from this year's 2021 Confirmation class to our youth, to our young mothers, all the way to our more seasoned parents, partners, and grandparents — you all served Him so beautifully!

“Let us keep looking to Jesus. He is the one who started this journey of faith. And He is the one who completes the journey of faith.” Hebrews 12:2a

It is my joy to serve in ministry beside you. *Susan*





An Encouraging Season

As I reflect on this past year, I believe that the youth group has developed a deep, strong sense of community and togetherness. Even amid the pandemic, online classes, isolation, anxiety, stress of the unknown, and fear — it seems that the Spirit has moved in small, simple ways to foster unity and friendship among our students. It has been a pleasure to lead alongside Taiter, and work with many dedicated adults and parents in our church to serve and minister to these students.

Some of the most consistent themes throughout our Bible studies and lessons this year have been perseverance, endurance, suffering, and holding onto faith. As we look at Job, the Psalms, Lamentations, the Gospels & Epistles we cannot escape the reality that we will face pain, discomfort, loss, and disappointment. At the same time, we must not ignore the truths of redemption, reconciliation, and restoration. If we focus only on that which we have lost or suffered, we become bitter and cynical but if we refuse to acknowledge those things and focus exclusively on whatever is fun or easy, we become untethered from reality — incapable of truly meeting others in their pain and offering the hope of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus himself was “a man of sorrows” and yet he healed, restored, resurrected, empowered, and embraced so many people. As Paul writes, “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.” (1 Cor. 11:1). We can go through hardship, receive healing, and offer hope to others. By God’s Spirit we can be strong in ways the world does not understand. We can weep because Jesus wept, and we can be courageous because he was full of courage. That is my hope for these students.

As sobering as that might be, we’ve also had a lot of fun this year! Dodgeball, volleyball, shooting guns, drawing, painting, fishing, basketball, coffee at F.E. Pops, breakfast at Bazen’s, ice cream from Sundae House — we’ve tried to be both consistent and creative. Thanks to the support of church leadership, staff, parents, and volunteers we’ve been able to update the youth spaces in the church: new floors, fresh paint, new countertop bar space, new furniture. As strange as this year has been, I think we’ve made the best of it! Thank you to everyone who has supported, encouraged, and helped with the youth ministry this year!

Blessings,
Palmer



And a Season of Blessings



The youth and I are so thankful for Palmer Jones. He has been a blessing and a gift to us over the past year. Palmer never wants to be the center of attention or receive praise, but he deserves to be acknowledged for all he has done in his time as the interim youth director.

Palmer has loved and led the youth and myself so well. He is a wonderful leader and gifted teacher. He is encouraging and challenges you to be better. He is relational and intentional, always seeking to make sure everyone feels included. Palmer is a man of integrity. He is wise, kind, patient and loving. He makes you laugh and is fun to be around. He is considerate, thoughtful, consistent and humble. It is never about him. He is trustworthy, communicates well and solves a problem before you even know there is one.

Palmer has worked so hard to make the youth rooms look their best, creating spaces that are warm, cozy & inviting. So many good things have happened this year that would not have been possible without him. He is one of the most servant minded people you will ever meet.

On a personal note, I have had the pleasure of knowing Palmer for 15 years, as he is one of my former youth kids. And it has been one of the greatest joys of my life to serve beside him. A full circle moment that is truly a gift from the Lord.



Palmer Jones, you have impacted our lives and the life of the Kingdom. Thank you for everything. You are loved and will be greatly missed.

Love,
Taiter & the #soblessedgang (aka - fpc besties)



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Associate Pastor	Rev. Chris Handley
Congregational Care Assistant	Rev. Mike Fleenor
Director of Music/Organist	Mrs. Ann Rodgers Chandler
Praise Team Leader	Mr. Vic Rockhill
Interim Director of Youth and NextGen Ministries	Ms. Christina "Taiter" Garrett
Children's Ministry Director	Mrs. Wynde Edwards
Child Development Center Director	Mrs. Beth Hepler
Church Administrator	Rev. Don Hebert
Ministry Assistant	Ms. Teresa Stewart
Financial Assistant	Mrs. Gwen DuRant
Ministry Assistant	Ms. Kimberly Brauss
Head Custodian	Mr. Ron Echols
Custodian	Mr. Sidney Ruff
Housekeeping	Ms. Wanda LaSane