

The REMINDER



DECEMBER 2023



Women in Ministry decorate the Sanctuary and church campus for Advent.

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Submit news briefs, pictures, or announcements by Dec. 21 to Kim Brauss at kbrauss@florencefirst.org. To be added to the mailing list, call the church office at 843-662-2583.



MOMENT FOR MISSION

Resurrection Restoration Center for the Homeless

Resurrection Restoration Center for the Homeless is one of the local homeless ministries supported by our church. The Outreach Unit enjoyed sitting down with Executive Director Modestine Brody at our last meeting. Her love for the Lord and joy and energy in serving Him were apparent and uplifting.

The RRCFH mission started in 2004. They provide stable housing, connections to resources, and Christian love and guidance to members of our homeless population, with an emphasis on the more difficult and challenging cases.

Their services also include emergency lodging, transition of families, and prayerful direction to resources for mental health and addiction related problems. RRCFH also provides food, clothing, career counseling, and transportation. We are blessed to partner with Modestine and support this much needed ministry in our community.

Missions Highlights

My Brother's Keeper: The Second Annual Gala was held and raised \$25,000. My Brother's Keeper (MBK) serves about 275 meals/day in Florence and it's looking to expand to Timmonsville.

MBK is a ministry partner of First Presbyterian and we have several in our congregation who cook and serve/deliver meals every Tuesday to those in need. If you'd like to volunteer, please contact Laura Marechal, 843-319-4564.

Thornwell: Walker McKenzie with Thornwell joined the Outreach Unit for its monthly meeting on Wednesday, November 15. Walker provided update on the many ministries going on at Thornwell, including The "Read/Write" virtual program; Foster Home Village; Transitional Living for "graduated residents" 18+ years of age; their "Lush Farms" 350-acre working farm; and the Building Families Program, which offers "in-home" family therapy. We are thankful to our children in 2K-sixth grade who helped raise money for Thornwell during November by filling "turkey banks." These donations will benefit many at Thornwell.



Advent

Dear Church Family,

Advent is a four-week period in the church calendar in which we wait and wonder. We take time to listen to what God is doing as we wait for Jesus' "advent" or "coming." The events that we remember during this Season are so monumental that we require these weeks to sit with and rejoice in the mystery. This year, we will journey through Luke's Gospel together and listen with Zechariah, Mary, and Elizabeth as they respond to angelic announcements. We will digest their messages as we wonder to ourselves: and what is the Lord speaking to my heart today?



In terms of our calendar this Advent, on December 10, there will be a 9 a.m. contemporary service with a sermon, and the 11 a.m. service will feature Lessons and Carols. Also, Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday this year. On that day we will have four services: the 9 and 11 a.m. services in the morning for the fourth Sunday in Advent, and then in the evening there will be a 4 and 6 p.m. Christmas Eve service. Naturally, the message in the morning will be different from the message in the evening.

Secondly, I want to encourage you once again to take a day and travel to First Presbyterian Church of Greenville during the National Gathering. This annual meeting rotates between the West Coast, East Coast, and Midwest, and we are fortunate to have it nearby this year. On Jan. 29 and 30, there will be refreshing worship and many breakout sessions to learn from fantastic teachers. (Jan. 31 is a business meeting only.) Each day, one breakout session is before lunch at 11 a.m., and one is after lunch (1:30 or 2:30 p.m.). Whether you are interested in church leadership, finances, youth ministry, worship, discipleship or many other areas, there is something for you. Come experience what a wonderful gift we have in our home denomination of ECO that we helped form. For more details, visit www.econationalgathering.org.

If you attend the Gathering, you will be refreshed and encouraged by our leadership and the direction of ECO. Our national leaders are exceptionally gifted,

passionate and grace-filled people. Our chief ECO officer, Dana Allin, who is called the Synod Executive, is inspiring.

As I wrote a couple months ago, I highly recommend his book *Simple Discipleship* to you. In it, Dana defines discipleship simply – it is someone who follows Jesus' two great commands: To love God with all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength and to love our neighbor as ourselves. One part of the book that I appreciate is that it has a mechanism by which to receive feedback from close friends to help you discern a practical, concrete step to grow as a disciple. This simple tool shows you – quite simply – how to write a brief, concrete personalized plan that is tailored to your life in Christ. Admittedly, at first glance I was not "sold" on the book as I wondered if it had too much organization built in to something that should feel organic, but I am a huge fan of it now! Everyone that I know who has lived out a plan has benefitted from it. I know I have! Many of the deacons and elders are putting together their own plan now. I trust it will be a blessing to you.

I hope that you have a Merry Christmas, and are blessed by the worship this Season. I am grateful for you.

Peace,

Set Your Eyes Upon the Lord

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. *Proverbs 9:10*

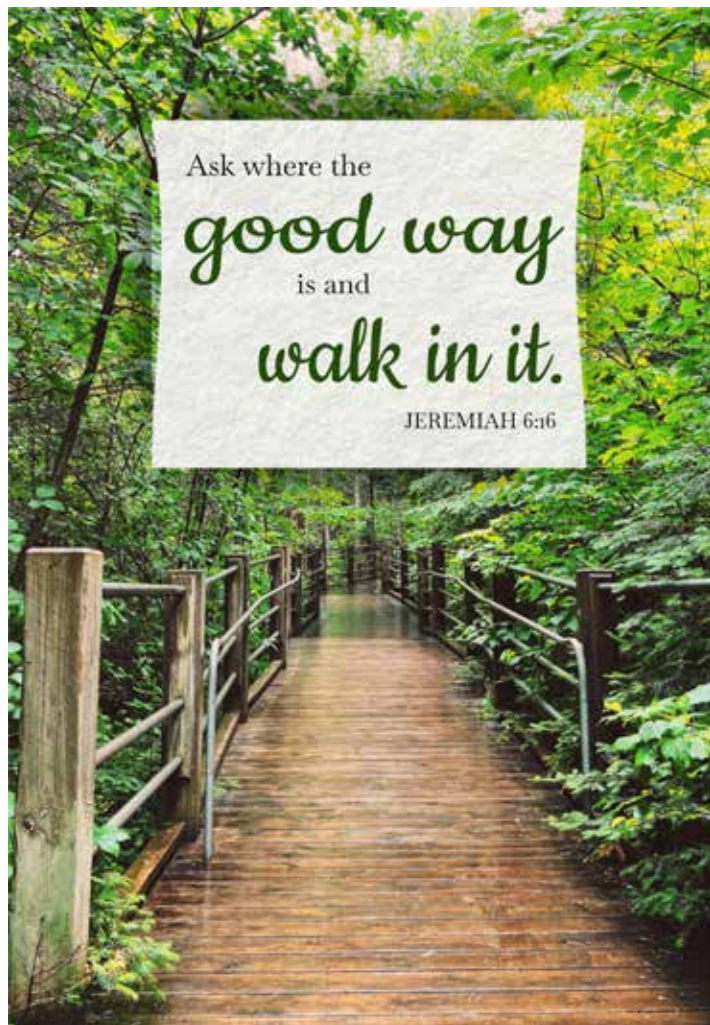
On my desk is an article I cut out of the Wall Street Journal over a year ago. In big, bold letters the title is “THE MAN WHO TRIED TO STOP THE SPACE SHUTTLE CHALLENGER’S LAUNCH.” As some of you remember, the Challenger exploded on a cold January 28, 1986 morning soon after liftoff.

What you may not know is that two engineers, Roger Boisjoly and Arnold Thompson, who worked on the space shuttle, warned that under cold conditions the “O Rings” would not function correctly. Repeatedly, these men raised warnings. But their voices went unheard and executives fired Boisjoly. The result was devastating and tragic. An inquiry would validate the warnings and state the craft failed because of the “O Rings.”

So in the midst of December, I want you to think about January and 2024 and even beyond. My warning is couched in a “Promise.” If you will honor the Lord, listen to the words of the Lord, and revere the Lord above all, you will be wise.

Warning — there will be lots of “voices” competing for your attention and adoration. You will be inundated with “buy me, wear me, use me, work for me” messages. They are lies. Only the Lord is worthy of your life. Set your eyes upon the Lord. Open your mind to the depths of God’s wisdom. When hard times hit (and they will), when temptations assault (and they will), when you are enamored by things that glitter and won’t last, you will walk on a different path.

Psalm 1 reminds us, “Blessed is the man who walks not in step with the wicked, or stand in the way that sinners take, or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on His law day and night.” (vv1-2)



My challenge to you in 2024 is from Jeremiah 6:16, “Ask where the good way is and walk in it.”

Let this be the year that you ask God to speak to you through the truth of His Word and by the power of the Holy Spirit to walk in His ways.

Jill and I pray God’s blessings upon you as you celebrate the birth of a Child who continues to make all the difference in the world. We love you. Merry Christmas.

Love in Christ Jesus,

Bill

Stewardship Campaign Update

Thank you to all who participated in our Commitment Sunday by turning in a pledge card for the 2024 Ministry Action Plan. As of 11/27/2023, we have received 124 pledges totaling approximately \$ 934,990.00. This is an increase for the same period last year, what a GREAT start! If you have not already done so, let me encourage you to submit your pledge in one of several ways. The simplest way to make a pledge is by visiting our church website <https://www.florencefirst.org/>. Look for the **Make a Pledge** link in the blue bar at the top of our home page. You may also make your pledge using **REALM**. It's easy! *Login to your profile. Locate and click the **GIVING** icon. On the **GIVING** screen, locate and click the grey box [**PLEDGES**]. Click **MAKE A PLEDGE** to enter the amount you wish to pledge and the frequency (as can, weekly, monthly, quarterly, etc.) Once you've entered your pledge information click [Save Pledge] and you're finished!* As always, pledge cards are in the pew racks in the sanctuary and may be placed in the offering plate when attending worship. Additionally, feel free to stop by the office and deliver it in person. Finally, pledge cards may be mailed to the church. Over the past months, the church leadership (staff, elders, deacons, and others) has been working to develop plans for ministry to our members, our community and around the world. Those ministries have a cost associated with them. The 2023 Ministry Action Plan was approximately \$1.7 million dollars. The **2024 Ministry Action Plan** is expected to be in the same range. Funding for the ministries comes from the contributions of our covenant partners and others who support the ministries of the church. We are grateful to those who have stepped up and made their commitment to support the ministry of First Presbyterian Church. Thank you for the positive response to our **2024 Stewardship campaign**.

11 Month Contribution Statements

In early December, all covenant partners and regular contributors will receive a statement from First Presbyterian Church that will provide an update of your year to date giving (as of 11/30/2023). Traditionally, some of our covenant partners make year-end contributions. This information is being provided to assist you as you plan your year-end giving. The statement will contain contribution information regarding our General Fund and any other contributions to the ministries of First

Presbyterian Church. If you are planning to make a year-end contribution, please note that checks must be **received or postmarked** no later than December 31, 2023, in order to receive contribution credit for 2023.

Christmas Eve Benevolence Offering

We will collect an offering at both of our Christmas Eve services (4 and 6 p.m.) that will be used to assist the underserved population of our community. Traditionally this offering brings in between \$8,000 and \$10,000. These gifts are used throughout the year to assist those in our community who come to our church seeking assistance meeting the basic needs of life (rent, utilities, and food). Your generosity is appreciated.

Toward a Healthier Church

Numbers can tell us a great deal about the overall health of an organization. The table below provides a snapshot of where First Presbyterian Church is financially as we approach the end of 2022.

2023 Ministry Action Plan Budget Needs	\$1,847,088
Average Weekly Need	\$35,520.00
Average Weekly Giving through 11/27	\$31,612.00

Our staff and leaders have done well throughout the course of the year in being good stewards of the financial resources contributed by our Covenant Partners. We are current in our support of our missionaries both national and international. Additionally, we have continued our support to the local agencies that serve our community and are current in our support. Agencies like Lighthouse Ministry, Mercy Medicine, House of Hope, My Brother's Keeper have been stressed by increased demand due to the lingering economic impact of the pandemic. In these last weeks of 2023, let me challenge everyone to evaluate the commitment you made to support the ministry and mission of our church and "finish strong" in your support of First Presbyterian Church.

Vicki and I pray that each of you experience God's presence and peace as you celebrate Christ's birth. Merry Christmas!





Church News

Keenagers Christmas Luncheon

The Christmas Luncheon will be held at noon Tuesday, December 5, in the Jenkins Fellowship Hall. The church staff will present the program. Meal will be prepared by Philip Baugh: barbecue, ham, slaw, baked sweet potatoes, mac and cheese, green beans, mixed fruit, yeast rolls and dessert. Anyone 55 and older is invited to attend. Please join us for food, fun, and fellowship. Cost is \$6. Decorations by Joyce Fincannon and Emily McLean.

Bay Street Brass to assist in worship

Bay Street Brass will assist in leading us in worship on Sunday, December 17, at the 11 a.m. service. We welcome our friends from Ohio to First Presbyterian Church during this Advent season.

Staff Recognitions

First Presbyterian is fortunate to have a talented and dedicated church staff. This month we recognize Christina "Taiter" Garrett on her employment anniversary. Christina is our Director of Youth Ministry. She first joined our staff as an intern in 2006 and has served as a youth ministry assistant at various times through the years. Christina was hired as full-time Director of Youth Ministry in November 2020. We also recognize Shurrie Marks on her employment anniversary as the Assistant Director of our Child Development Center. Shurrie joined our staff in December 2016. Thank you, Taiter and Shurrie, we are grateful for your contribution to the ministry of FPC.

Boy Scouts News

Honoring Tim Fisher: A Legacy of Leadership

On November 13, we honored the longtime leadership of Tim Fisher to Troop 477, which included naming the Scout Room in his honor.

Scout Advancements: A Month of Achievements

Over the past month, Troop 477 has witnessed numerous Scouts advancing in rank, exemplifying their dedication to personal growth and the scouting principles. We applaud these young individuals for their hard work, perseverance, and commitment to the values that scouting instills. A Court of Honor Ceremony will be held on January 29.

Upcoming Events: Save the Dates!

- **December 4: Troop Christmas Party @ CiCi's Pizza (6:30 p.m.)**

All are invited to join us in spreading holiday cheer at CiCi's Pizza. While the cost of dinner is not included, Scouts have the opportunity to participate in a blind gift exchange by bringing a gift valued at approximately \$10.

- **December 11: Troop Meeting (Winter Camp Preparation)**

Exclusive to Scouts participating in Winter Camp,

this meeting will cover essential topics such as gear lists, transportation details, camp activities, and assigned duties. Please ensure you complete and bring the attached BSA medical forms for review.

- **December 20-23: Winter Camp at Camp Barstow**

An exciting adventure awaits our scouts at Camp Barstow. Winter Camp promises memorable experiences, camaraderie, and opportunities for personal growth.

As we step into the new year, mark your calendars for the following January events:

- **January 8: Troop Meeting**

- **January 20-21: Snow Skiing Trip at Sugar Mountain (North Carolina)**

Prepare for an exhilarating weekend of snow skiing at Sugar Mountain. Details regarding the trip will be discussed in the troop meeting.

- **January 22: Troop Meeting**

- **January 29: Court of Honor Ceremony**

Join us in celebrating the achievements of our Scouts at the Court of Honor Ceremony. This event is a testament to their hard work and dedication.

Advent Handbell Concert to perform sounds of season



Ring in the Advent season at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, December 6, in the Sanctuary with our talented Chancel Handbell Choir! The First Presbyterian tradition is rich with Christmas melodies from around the globe. Dinner will be held at 5:30 p.m. ahead of the concert in the Sanctuary. The meal will be ham, mac and cheese, green beans, and dessert. Please RSVP for the dinner to the church office, 843-662-2583.

Women in Ministry December events

- **Wednesday, December 6:** Bible Moderators, 4 p.m.
- **Change for December:** Prayer Warriors will meet at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 5, at the home of Amy Williams.
- **Wednesday, December 13:** Christmas Party at Presbyterian Community, 3-4:30 p.m. in the Hood Dining room. Enter the doors by the fountain. A hostess is needed from each circle at 2:45 p.m. Please bring food items to the church kitchen by 11 a.m. on a disposable plate marked for Presbyterian Community Party. Send Ashley Scott the name of the person bringing the food.
- **Wednesday, December 27:** 5:30 p.m., "Un"Hanging of the Greens. We'd love any help to take down Christmas decorations in church.
- **December Lesson:** Lesson 3, Titus 1:5-9, pages 29-37
- **December/January Circle Meetings:** Some circles plan different activities for December.

SAVE THE DATE

January 30, 2024: Mid-Winter Gathering, 6 p.m.

WIM is praying for and wishes you all a wonderful holiday season for you and your family. We pray that The Word stays with you during this Advent season. We hope the Titus Study has given you tools to cling to Him more.

Bread and Fish	December 9	9 a.m.	Room 100
Joyful Hearts	December 12	10 a.m.	Room 100
Prayer Warriors	December 5	6 p.m.	Home of Amy Williams
Serenity	December 12	3 p.m.	Lawson-Rain Chapel
SonFlowers	December 12	10 a.m.	Lawson-Rain Chapel
Soul Sisters	December 12	noon	Price Classroom
Sunday Salty Sisters	December 17	4 p.m.	FPC Church Parlor
Women of Grace	December 11	6:30 p.m.	3002 Japonica Lane

God's Timing

Once again, I stand amazed at what our Father God has done in this place.

As my retirement date grew closer, I dreaded the thought of leaving before a new CDC director was found. Yet there was a tug in my heart to beckon me onward.

My patience was growing thin, waiting. I questioned my decision to retire but I knew it was time. I asked myself, was there something in me that was blocking the right person from coming forward? I sought counsel and read scripture and prayed.

Then a few weeks ago there was what seemed to be a whisper.... and as it grew louder, it made me and others stop and listen. Something was happening.

It never ceases to amaze me how our Father God works behind the scenes to bring about his will for each of our lives. He remains faithful, even when we are faithless.

My time as CDC Director has come to an end. It has been a wonderful journey. It is with a thankful heart that I step down from this position and hand the baton to Mrs. Kelly Hickey. Kelly, along with Assistant Director Mrs. Shurrie Marks, will be serving together to bring the CDC through the next chapter of childcare ministry. To God be All the Glory. He Alone is Worthy. Blessings,

Beth





HOLIDAY MARKET





Gifts for everyone on your list, including a raffle!

Proceeds benefit Youth summer trips









**5 TO 7 PM DEC. 6 IN THE CLC
NOON TO 1 PM DEC. 10 IN THE CHAPEL**

700 Park Avenue, Florence



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
26	27	28	29
<p>3</p> <p>Worship, 9 and 11 a.m. Angel Choir, 10 a.m. Sunday School, 10 a.m. Youth: Small Groups</p> <p>Living Nativity Rehearsal, 3 p.m.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Girl Scout Brownie Meeting, 4:30 p.m.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Keenagers, noon JFH Prayer Warriors, 6 pm (Williams' home)</p> 	<p>6</p> <p>Bible Moderators, 4 p.m. Wednesday Night Dinner Chancel Handbell Advent Concert, 6:30 p.m. Holiday Market, 5 p.m.</p>
<p>10</p> <p>Lessons & Carols, 11 a.m. Living Nativity Dress Rehearsal, 4:30 p.m. Holiday Market, noon LR Youth: Small Groups, 5 p.m.</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Worship Unit, 12:30 p.m. Enabling Unit, 5:30 p.m. Fellowship Unit, 6 p.m. WiM Women of Grace, 6:30 p.m. Girl Scouts, 7 p.m.</p>	<p>12</p> <p>WiM Sonflowers, 10 a.m. Joyful Hearts, 10 a.m. Soul Sisters, noon Serenity, 1 p.m. Living Nativity, 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Veterans Brunch, 8 a.m. Personnel Unit, 8:15 a.m. Outreach Unit, 12:15 p.m. Children's Ministry, 5 p.m. Living Nativity, 6:30 p.m.</p> 
<p>17</p> <p>New Officers Ordination, 11 a.m. worship service WiM Salty Sisters, 4 p.m. EGW Christmas Gathering, 5 p.m. JFH</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Discipleship Meeting, 4:30 p.m. WOC</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Have a game night in your PJs</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Caroling, 3 p.m. Youth Group, 5:30 p.m.</p> 
<p>24</p> <p>Christmas Eve 9 a.m., 11 a.m. worship 4 and 6 p.m. services</p> <p>31</p> <p>New Year's Eve 10 a.m. Worship Service</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Christmas Day</p> 	<p>26</p> <p>Church Office, CDC closed</p> 	<p>27</p> <p>CDC closed</p> <p>Have a coloring contest</p>

THURSDAY**FRIDAY****SATURDAY**

<p>30</p> 	<p>1</p> <p>Children: Parents' Night Out, 5:30 to 10 p.m. Youth: Christmas Party, 5:30 p.m.</p> 	<p>2</p> 
<p>7</p> <p>Youth: Coffee @ F.E. Pop's Youth Help 4 Kids service project, 5:30 p.m.</p> 	<p>8</p> <p>Perform a random act of kindness</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Parking Lot Mission WiM Bread & Fish, Room 100</p>
<p>14</p> <p>Youth: Coffee @ F.E. Pop's Evangelism Team, 11:30 CDC Celebration, 6:30 p.m.</p> 	<p>15</p> <p>Piano Recital, 6 p.m. JFH</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Piano Recital, 9 a.m. JFH Girl Scout Cookie Rally, 10 a.m.</p>
<p>21</p> <p>Youth: Coffee @ F.E. Pop's with cookie swap</p> 	<p>22</p> <p>Leave a happy note for someone to find</p>	<p>23</p> <p>Buy socks for a homeless shelter</p>
<p>28</p> <p>Youth: Coffee @ F.E. Pop's</p> 	<p>29</p> <p>Build a snowman out of cotton balls</p>	<p>30</p> 

WEEKLY**SUNDAYS**

- 9 a.m. Contemporary Worship
- 10 a.m. Sunday School
- 11 a.m. Traditional Worship

MONDAYS

- Prayer Group, 2:30 p.m. LR
- Selah Yoga, 5:30 p.m.
- Boy Scouts, 6:30 p.m.
- GriefShare, 6:30 p.m.
- Men's Bible Study, 7 p.m. (203)

TUESDAYS

- Ladies' Ensemble, 1:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAYS

- Small Group Bible Study, 10 a.m.
- Handbells Rehearsal, 5 p.m.
- Youth Group, 5:30 p.m.
- Chancel Choir Rehearsal, 7:30

THURSDAYS

- Men's Bible Study, 7 a.m.
- Youth Coffee, 7 a.m.
- Bible Study, Room 202

WEDNESDAY NIGHT DINNER

Dec. 6: Ham, Mac and Cheese,
Green Beans, Dessert
(RSVP to church office)

SAVE THE DATES

Jan. 7: Confirmants and Mentors
Breakfast
Jan. 10: Wednesday Nights
resume

Sympathy

Christina "Taiter" Garrett, loss of her stepfather
Brett and Donna Green and family, loss of his father

Extended Care

Lowman Home
Mac King

The Manor
Joyce Floyd
Julie Hughes
Marie Jordan
Maria Whitehead

Presbyterian Community
Clariann Kellam

Memorials

Ann Cash
Edith Hicks
Gregory Wood, Christina "Taiter" Garrett's stepfather

Households

FLOCK 1: John Ivey, Beth, Amelia Anne and Bradford Brown
FLOCK 2: Kent and Carolyn Caudle
FLOCK 3: Peggy Swearingen
FLOCK 4: Marian Howard
FLOCK 5: Rufus, Ashley, Sims and William Bratton
FLOCK 6: Duncan and Genia Tyson
FLOCK 7: Betsy Johnson
FLOCK 8: Bill and Carol Duncan

Flowers in the Sanctuary

December: Advent poinsettias

Lord, Hear
Our Prayer



Sick & Recovering

Aubrey Crawford
Todd Moseley
Jay Pearson

Elders

Allen Griffin
John Scott

Deacons

Frances Rogers
Mary Lynn Williamson

Missions

Resurrection Restoration
Center for the Homeless

Women in Ministry

Kathryn Scott
Ashley Scott

Teachers

Hunter Burch
Lisa Dozier

Staff

Bill Cain
Don Hebert

Do you have a friend or relative you would like to honor?
Sign up to place memorial flowers in the Sanctuary.
Please contact Genia Tyson (genia_tyson@hotmail.com or
843-992-8904). Please leave your name, number, and date
you wish to reserve.

December BIRTHDAYS

DECEMBER 1

William Jones
Allen McCall

DECEMBER 2

Claudia Ervin
David Porter
Liza Commander
Mary Lynn Williamson

DECEMBER 3

Bobbie Sue Bratton
Emma Eason

DECEMBER 4

Annette Eason
Vicky McCall
Joey McMillan
Frank Stephens

DECEMBER 5

Gracyn Alexander
Campbell Frost
Michele Lewis
Linda Westbrook
Emily Whitehead
Amelia Whitehead

DECEMBER 6

William Hemmingsen
Matt Tyler

DECEMBER 7

Will McMillan

DECEMBER 9

Powers Rogers

DECEMBER 11

Marie O'Harra

DECEMBER 12

John Wyatt Temple

DECEMBER 14

Isam Zakhour
DeAnn Tiller

DECEMBER 15

Ellis Howell
Meg Temple
Nancy Thompson

DECEMBER 16

Chris Alexander
Caroline Genoble
Cory Swearingen
Kyle Swearingen
Jackie Williams

DECEMBER 17

Nik Casstevens
Melanie Neal
Brittany Mimms

DECEMBER 18

George Harrington
Rebecca Haynes
David Banner
Dave O'Harra
Jacqueline Clancy

DECEMBER 19

Meredith Banner
Olivia Emert
Palmer Kirkpatrick
Darby Moore
Cille Scott

DECEMBER 20

Haley Davis

DECEMBER 21

Elizabeth Coward
Sam Dozier
Kara Morgan
Hughes Page
Carolyn Vaught

DECEMBER 22

Sarah Nell Harwell

DECEMBER 23

Ashley Rockhill

DECEMBER 24

Hannah Welch

DECEMBER 25

Amy Wood

DECEMBER 26

Laurel Casstevens
Bridge Jernigan
Caroline Toniolo

DECEMBER 27

Melissa Bush
Allen Griffin
Mike Lavespere
Milton Morris

DECEMBER 28

Kendall Babb
Laura Marechal

DECEMBER 29

Hayns Harris
Ian Johnson
Melba Whitesides

DECEMBER 30

Paulina Halus
Jack Halus
Melanie Hemmingsen
Kate Moore
Tara Newton
Teresa Stewart
Brent Tiller

DECEMBER 31

Cynthia Knudsen
Mary Catherine
Rawlinson
Nigel Watt



Church League Basketball Games



Below are First Presbyterian Basketball Teams' Game Schedule for church league basketball season. Games are played at Ebenezer Baptist Church, 524 S. Ebenezer Road. Coaches include: Matt Dowdell (8U-A), Rick Ryan (8U-B), Daniel Jordan (10U-A), Rufus Bratton (10U-B and 12U), Chris Scott (14U-A), Chris Warner (14U-B) and Hunter Morgan Jr. (17U). Thank you for your time and coaching.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2

9:00 AM 8U-A vs Central C
11:00 AM 8U-B vs Calvary B
2:00 PM 10U-A vs Ebenezer

MONDAY, DECEMBER 4

8:00 PM 14U-A vs. Central
9:00 PM 17U vs Palmetto Street

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5

7:00 PM 12U vs St. John's
8:00 PM 14U-B vs Central

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7

7:00 PM 12U vs Ebenezer

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9

12:00 PM 8U-A vs Ebenezer B
3:00 PM 10U-A vs Central C
4:00 PM 10U-B vs St. John's

MONDAY, DECEMBER 11

6:00 PM 8U-B vs Ebenezer A
8:00 PM 14U-B vs. Ebenezer

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12

8:00 PM 14U-A vs. Central
9:00 PM 17U vs Central B

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14

8:00 PM 14U-B vs. Calvary

TUESDAY, JANUARY 2

7:00 PM 12U vs Calvary
9:00 PM 17U vs Central A

THURSDAY, JANUARY 4

8:00 PM 14U-B vs Ebenezer

SATURDAY, JANUARY 6

9:00 AM 8U-A vs St. John's B
12:00 PM 8U-B vs Lake Swamp
2:00 PM 10U-B vs Ebenezer
3:00 PM 10U-A vs Central B

THURSDAY, JANUARY 11

6:00 PM 8U-B vs Central A
7:00 PM 12U vs Ebenezer
8:00 PM 14U-A vs. Ebenezer
9:00 PM 17U vs Ebenezer

SATURDAY, JANUARY 13

9:00 AM 8U-A vs Central A
3:00 PM 10U-B vs Central C
4:00 PM 10U-A vs Calvary

MONDAY, JANUARY 15

6:00 PM 8U-A vs Lake Swamp
7:00 PM 12U vs FBT
8:00 PM 14U-B vs 14U-A
9:00 PM 17U vs Calvary

SATURDAY, JANUARY 20

11:00 AM 8U-B vs Central B
12:00 PM 8U-A vs Calvary B
2:00 PM 10U-A vs 10U-B

TUESDAY, JANUARY 23

7:00 PM 12U vs Central
8:00 PM 14U-A vs Calvary

THURSDAY, JANUARY 25

8:00 PM 14U-B vs Central
9:00 PM 17U vs Calvary

SATURDAY, JANUARY 27

9:00 AM 8U-B v 8U-A
2:00 PM 10U-A vs Central A
4:00 PM 10U-B vs Calvary

MONDAY, JANUARY 29

6:00 PM 12U vs Central

TUESDAY, JANUARY 30

8:00 PM 14U-B vs. Calvary
9:00 PM 17U vs Central B

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1

8:00 PM 14U-A vs Calvary

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 3

11:00 AM 8U-B vs St. John's A
3:00 PM 10U-A vs St. John's
4:00 PM 10U-B vs Central B

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10

10:00 AM 8U-A vs Central A
12:00 PM 8U-B vs Central C
3:00 PM 10U-B vs Central A
4:00 PM 10U-A vs Ebenezer

Attention Parents! Children's Ministry Check-In System

One of the most important duties we have at FPC is to make sure our children are safe. To achieve this goal, we are implementing a check-in system for children in second grade and under. This system will strengthen our ability to know each child by name, to know special needs or allergies, and to know who may pick up children. Below are the details to help you prepare for the implementation of this system on Sunday, December 3:

1. Parents with children in the nursery through second grade:

- Download the Kidmin App onto your smartphone. Creating an account and adding your children is a quick process. We have included an image to help you identify the correct app.
- When one parent creates an account, they can look under "Settings" for a "Guardian Referral Code." The second parent will enter this code into the app on their own phone, allowing for either parent to check the children in and out.
- Any time you drop your child at a church activity (Sunday school, children's church, Wednesday night, and special activities), check your child in first. Check-in opens 30 minutes prior to start time. The easiest way is using the app before you arrive at church. Another option is to use the desktop computer at the check-in kiosk.



- For all children's activities, enter through the Tower and stop by the check-in kiosk. After checking in on the app or the desktop, a tag will print for each child to wear, along with a tag for you to show teachers at pickup.
- Show your printed tag or the digital version in the app when you pick your child up.

2. **Visitors** also will bring their children in through the Tower and fill out a paper tag for their child to wear that day with an affixed sticker for pickup. **Grandparents** who regularly have grandchildren visit may either fill out a paper tag each time or download the Kidmin App and follow the directions for parents. We also will have visitor paper tags available in the pews.

3. **Teachers** of children's Sunday School, Children in Worship, and Wednesday night should download the app. You will be able to see a roster of who is checked into your class and any allergies. You can also check the children out and page the parent if needed.

4. If you check a child in, who at the last minute will not be attending, please be sure to check them out before the ministry begins.

We anticipate that the new system will be efficient and effective; however, we appreciate your patience as we work through any kinks. Our volunteers look forward to helping you in the Tower.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas!



Kelly's Corner



Dear Church Family,

I want to share a story someone shared with me many years ago. I am not sure if it's true; however, it certainly spoke to my heart, and I hope it speaks to yours.

This is a story about a 9-year-old boy who lived in a rural town in Tennessee. His house was in a poor area of the community. One day a church bus ministry came knocking on his door. The child came to answer the door and greeted the pastor.

The bus pastor asked if his parents were home and the small boy told him that his parents take off every weekend and leave him at home to take care of his little brother.

The pastor couldn't believe what the child said and asked him to repeat it. The youngster gave the same answer and the pastor asked to come in and talk with him. They went into the living room and sat down on an old couch with the foam and springs exposed. The pastor asked the child, "Where do you go to church?" The young boy surprised the visitor by replying, "I've never been to church in my whole life."

The pastor said, "Well, son, more important than going to church, have you ever heard the greatest love story ever told?" and then he proceeded to share the Gospel with this little 9-year-old boy.

The young lad's heart began to be tenderized and at the end of the pastor's story, the pastor asked if the boy wanted to receive this free gift from God.

The youngster exclaimed, "You bet!" The boy and the pastor got on their knees and the lad invited Jesus into his little heart and received the free gift of salvation.

They both stood up and the pastor asked if he could pick the child up for church the next morning. "Sure," the 9-year-old replied.

The pastor got to the house early the next morning and found the lights off. He let himself in and snaked his way through the house and found the little boy asleep in his bed. He woke up the little boy and his brother and helped get them dressed.

They got on the bus and ate donuts for breakfast on their way to church. Keep in mind that this boy had never been to church before, and the church was big. The little child just sat there, clueless of what was going

on. A few minutes into the service these tall unhappy guys walked down to the front and picked up some wooden plates. One of them prayed and the boy with utter fascination watched them walk up and down the aisles. He still didn't know what was going on. Suddenly like a bolt of lightning it hit the boy what was taking place. These people must be giving money to Jesus. He then reflected on the free gift of life he had received just 24 hours earlier. He immediately searched his pockets, front and back, and couldn't find a thing to give Jesus. By this time the offering plate was being passed down his aisle and with a broken heart he just grabbed the plate and held on to it. He finally let go and watched it pass on down the aisle. He turned around to see it pass down the aisle behind him. And then his eyes remained glued on the plate as it was passed back and forth, and back and forth all the way to the rear of the sanctuary. Then he had an idea. This little 9-year-old boy, in front of God and everybody, got up out of his seat, walked about eight rows back, grabbed the usher by his coat and asked to hold the plate one more time. Then he did the most astounding thing I have ever heard. He took the plate, sat it on the carpeted church floor and stepped into the center of it.

As he stood there, he lifted his little head up and said, "Jesus, I don't have anything to give you today, but just me. I give you me!"

May we give Jesus all that we have – Jesus, I give you me!

Much love,

Kelly

SAVE THE DATES!



Christmas Caroling Wednesday, December 20

Children (5K– 6th Grade) & Youth are invited to join Mrs. Kelly, Taiter and friends to go Christmas Caroling. We will meet at 3 p.m. in the Church Office parking lot and return at 5 p.m. This is a wonderful way to share Christ's hope, peace, joy, and love. We hope many will join us. Please contact Kelly Hickey by Sunday, December 17, to sign up or if you have any questions.

Confirmation Breakfast

Mentor, Confirmands and Parents
Session 1 "Getting Acquainted"
Sunday, January 7, 2024
10 a.m. in the CLC



ATTENTION PARENTS!!!

Parent's Night Out

For all who signed up, children are encouraged to wear their pajamas and bring their pillow and blanket for the movie. Drop-off and pick up will be in Tower (the CDC entrance). Please contact Kelly Hickey with any questions.



LIVING NATIVITY

The Living Nativity will be held Tuesday, December 12, and Wednesday, December 13 at 6:30 pm. The Nativity is performed by FPC's sixth-graders along with the angel choir, which includes the 3K – fifth-grade classes.

The remaining practice schedule is as follows:

Angel Choir Rehearsal (3K – 5th grade)	Sunday, December 3	10 – 10:15 a.m.	In the CLC (Gym)
Practice Angel Choir, Cast & Crew	Sunday, December 3	3 – 4 p.m.	
Angel Choir Rehearsal (3K – 5th grade)	Sunday, December 3	10 – 10:15 a.m.	In the CLC (Gym)
Dress Rehearsal Angel Choir, Cast & Crew	Sunday, December 10	4:30 – 6 p.m.	

Should you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Kelly Hickey.

Wednesday Night dinner, programs to resume

Wednesday Night dinner and programs will resume January 10.

We are looking forward with great excitement to our Wednesday nights children's programs.

All 3K – fifth-grade children are invited to join us.

The schedule is as follows:

3K – 5K Schedule

5:30 – 6 p.m. Dinner

6 – 6:30 p.m. Playground/Games

6:30 – 6:50 p.m. Preschool Music

6:50 – 7:15 p.m. Preschool Class Lesson

1st - 5th Grade Schedule

5:30 – 6 p.m. Dinner

6 – 6:20 p.m. Children's Choir

6:25 – 7:15 p.m. Class

More information will be coming soon.

Questions, please call Kelly Hickey (843) 662-2583.



Children pause for a picture during Wednesday Night class years ago. Wednesday Night dinners and programs for all ages will resume January 10. Dinner service starts at 5:30 p.m. Classes begin at 6 p.m. and activities run until 7:15 p.m.



Children's Church Volunteer Schedule

Children's Church for children 3K-5K meets in the Children's Chapel for *Children in Worship*. This program, held after the Message for Young Disciples, is designed to teach children about worship and allow children to experience Bible stories while learning in their own special worship center.

Date	Time	Teacher	Assistant/Helper
December 3	9:00 am	Caroline Toniolo	Hannah Lane
	11:00 am	Tabatha Davis	Allyson Pittman
December 10	9:00 am	Caroline Toniolo	Connie Stewart
	11:00 am	Tabatha Davis	Kelly Hickey
December 17	9:00 am	Caroline Toniolo	Taiter Garrett
	11:00 am	Tabatha Davis	Kathryn Scott
December 24	9:00 am	Caroline Toniolo	Peggy Swearingen
	11:00 am	Tabatha Davis	Haley Jackson
December 31	10:00 am	Caroline Toniolo	JoDee Etheridge

Fall fun helps wind down the year

November was a fun month. The youth participated in Reformation Sunday and Trunk or Treat. We enjoyed our annual pumpkin carving and costume contest.

We traveled back to Montreat, North Carolina, for our Fall retreat and had a wonderful weekend. The weather was beautiful. We enjoyed our annual hike up Lookout Mountain, time in downtown Black Mountain, and traveled to Asheville for biking and rock climbing.

As the year winds down, we are learning to be more thankful for our family, friends, and God. We are learning more about the Holy Spirit and the importance of spending time in God's word daily. And we are looking forward to all that God has for us in 2024.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Christmas Party / Defy After Dark (1) 5:30 – 10 p.m.
We will have a progressive dinner ugly sweater Christmas party. We will head over to Defy by 8:15 p.m. to jump until 10 p.m. Cost of Defy is \$25. Bring a friend!

Sunday School (3, 10 & 17) 10 – 10:50 a.m.
Light breakfast served.

Small Groups (3 & 10) 5 – 7 p.m.
Dinner provided. All groups meet at the church, except Junior & Senior girls will meet at Amy Williams house (511 Pine St).

Holiday Market Fundraiser (6) 5-7 p.m. & (10)
Noon-1 p.m.
Please join us as we sell Christmas gifts and other items, as well as a raffle to raise money for our summer trips. All proceeds will go toward Fun in the Son & The Great Escape. Donations accepted.

Wednesday Night Youth Group (6 & 20) 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Food, games, Bible study & fun! Dinner provided.

Coffee at F.E. Pops (7, 17, 21* & 28) 7 a.m. – Until
21 - Cookie Swap! Bring a dozen cookies to share



Help 4 Kids Service Project (7) 5:30-6:30 p.m.
The mission of Help 4 Kids is to fill the weekend hunger gap for the children in Florence County public schools receiving free or reduced breakfast/lunch during the week and who are identified as being “food insecure” on the weekend. Please meet at Help for Kids (2420 Hoffmeyer Road) to help pack lunches for the children of Florence.



700 PARK AVE., FLORENCE, SC 29501

PHONE: 843-662-2583

FAX: 843-662-1726

www.florencefirst.org

CHURCH STAFF

Senior Pastor and Head of Staff

Assistant Pastor

Director of Music/Organist

Praise Team Leader

Music Assistant

Director of Youth Ministry

Children's Ministry Director

Child Development Center Director

CDC Assistant Director/Church Nursery Coordinator

Church Administrator

Financial Assistant

Communications Assistant

Ministry Assistant

Lead Custodian

Housekeeping

Custodian

Dr. Darryl Evans

Dr. Bill Cain

Mrs. Ann Rodgers Chandler

Mr. Vic Rockhill

Ms. Betsy Johnson

Ms. Christina "Taiter" Garrett

Mrs. Kelly Hickey

Mrs. Beth Hepler

Mrs. Shurrie Marks

Rev. Don Hebert

Mrs. Gwen DuRant

Ms. Kimberly Brauss

Mrs. Emily Reed

Mr. Leroy Williams

Ms. Wanda LaSane

Mr. Rayshon Woodard



A *Living* NATIVITY

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

6:30 p.m.
December 12 & 13
Live Animals
Hot Chocolate
Cookies
& Fellowship

Now let us go to
Bethlehem and see
this thing that has
come to pass;
which the lord
has made known
to us. Luke 2:15