

The REMINDER



JULY 2025



ON THE COVER: During Vacation Bible School, Joseph, played by Elder Steve Grady, talked to the children about forgiveness and family and how he forgave his brothers for selling him into slavery. For more pictures from VBS, visit page 18 and Realm.

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Missions Opportunities

Many from First Presbyterian serve as volunteers in these ministries both as board members and laborers. Weekly volunteers from First Presbyterian are making a difference as they provide medical care, food service, and spiritual guidance in these local ministries. Here are opportunities for involvement:

- **House of Hope** – Volunteers are needed to help run the cooling station at Whosoever Church from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily during extreme heat. For more information, email jedwards@hofh.org or call 843-667-9000.
- **Lighthouse Ministries** – Ongoing volunteer needs include: front office help (answering phones and door, greeting participants), conducting interviews for people in need of services, assisting with data entry, clerical assistance (help with letters and mailings, database management), building maintenance, donation pick-up, Working Mother Education & Support Program volunteers, Strengthening Families Program volunteers, building ramps and handrails, First Friday Services Connect volunteers. Visit lighthouseflorence.org/get-involved to submit a volunteer application.
- **Manna House** – Ongoing volunteer needs include kitchen volunteers and pantry shoppers from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Kitchen Volunteers will help prepare, plate, distribute meals, and help with clean up. Pantry Shopper will guide clients through the pantry and assist them in making healthy food choices. For more information, visit flomannahouse.com/volunteer/.
- **My Brother's Keeper** – Volunteers needed: drivers and riders, 2-4 p.m. Saturdays; riders, 2-4 p.m. Wednesdays; Cook team members and packers on Fridays. Contact Janet Brand, 843-615-6969.
- **Parking Lot Ministry** – Second Saturday every month – three opportunities to serve: 6 a.m. prep and cook; 7:45 a.m. serve food; and 8:30/8:45 a.m. clean-up and wash dishes. Contact Donnie Wheeler, jwheeler007@sc.rr.com.
- **Whosoever Community Outreach** – prepare and deliver lunches, contact Laura Marechal, 843-319-4564.



Thank You for Your Many Kindnesses

Normally, I use this space to talk about upcoming sermons and events. But this month, I want to write with a different purpose. Thank you so much for your many kindnesses to me and Cindy as we navigate the loss of my father. All the messages and the support are appreciated.

I look forward to joining you this coming Sunday. I have it on good report that Barry Jenkins did a wonderful job and that Bill Enns was excellent in

communicating the direction and sense of the PNC process. He speaks glowingly of our team both in their effectiveness and their spiritual depth. They are a good reflection of this entire church.

God's best to you all. Again, thank you.

In Christ,



Celebrating Growth While Addressing Our Financial Stewardship

Dear Covenant Partners of First Presbyterian Church, Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I am blessed to share with you the many ways God continues to work in and through our church family. We have much to celebrate! New Covenant Partners are joining our fellowship regularly, our weekly attendance remains strong, and our youth and children's programs are thriving. These are clear signs of God's favor and the faithful work of our congregation in building His kingdom here in Florence.

However, I must also address a financial challenge that requires our prayerful attention and faithful response. Currently, we are running approximately \$5,000 per week behind our budgeted needs. This shortfall has been occurring for a while now, and it affects our ability to fully support the ministries and agencies that depend on our partnership.

In response to this situation, Session approved two important motions during the June 24, 2025, Stated Meeting that I want to share with you clearly:

Motion 1: Session voted unanimously to temporarily suspend setting aside \$5,000 per month to the Capital Reserve Fund until the church's financial position stabilizes.

Motion 2: Session voted unanimously to temporarily reduce financial support of local and international benevolence agencies (including Lighthouse Ministries, Mercy Medicine, and Helping Florence Flourish) by 50 percent beginning August 1 and continuing until the church's financial position stabilizes. These agencies will be notified by mail of this temporary adjustment. I want to emphasize that our funding to missionaries on

the field (Carol Crom, Gray Scott, the Emerts, and Actionnel Fleurisma in Haiti) will continue at full budgeted levels.

Our hope and prayer is that by no later than the end of this year, we will be in a position to restore full funding to all affected agencies and resume our capital fund contributions.

As we navigate this challenge together, I am asking each covenant partner to prayerfully consider your current giving and the amount you feel called to contribute to God's work through our church. If you have not already done so, would you please prayerfully consider adjusting your giving accordingly? Your faithful stewardship has always been a cornerstone of our ministry, and I trust in your continued commitment to our shared mission.

I want to emphasize that this request comes not from a place of desperation, but from a position of faith.

We believe that God will provide for His church through the generous hearts of His people. Our strong attendance, growing membership, and vibrant programs are testimony to the fact that God is moving powerfully among us.

Thank you for your continued prayers, presence, and giving. Together, we will meet this challenge and be faithful stewards of all that God has entrusted to our care.

In Christian fellowship,

Brandon Hylton, Clerk, on behalf of Session

First Presbyterian Church - Florence, South Carolina
Please join us in prayer for our church's financial needs and for wisdom as we move forward together in faithful stewardship.

*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord,
“plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.
Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.
You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”*

Jeremiah 29:11-13

PNC seeks church harmony, to honor God in search

Dear Covenant Partners,

The congregational Pastor Nominating Committee has been working diligently together with our Presbytery liaison, Blake Taylor, and our Knot Navigators consultants, Bill Enns and Dorrington Little, as we have moved from posting on the ECO denomination “Job Board” to our season of receipt of responses and the collective discernment thereof. Our Church Information Form, as was posted, allowed a window of 90 days for responses from interested potential candidates. We are still within that 90 day period of time for the allowance of responses. Of course, the details of what specifically is happening must remain confidential for now but, again, we are working together to handle this responsibility as efficiently and effectively as possible within our own sense of calling as we continue, truly, to honor God’s will in all aspects of this process, celebrating His sovereignty over the affairs of our work.

Since my last letter in the June issue of the Reminder, by the time of your having read this message, we scheduled and hosted the “townhall” meeting following the worship service on June 22, followed on June 24 by our having a combined dinner with the Session, Diaconate, members of the Officer Nominating Committee, members of the church staff, and members of the PNC, together with Blake Taylor and Bill Enns. Afterward, the PNC met with the Session at its regularly scheduled meeting that evening. All of these steps have been taken to keep covenant partners, the church officers, the church staff, and the congregational committee tasked with recruiting officer candidates fully informed of our search process. Of course, there is purpose to all of this.

We purposefully seek church harmony within a context of transparency and communications with you. We seek to honor God throughout this search process, and we want you to be informed so that you, too, can participate with us through your prayers in that context of harmony, with the sense of peace that comes with it.

Please continue to pray for the PNC and its work.

Please pray for the Officer Nominating Committee. Those candidates nominated to the congregation and called by its covenant partners later this year will be serving, within their tenures as officers, with the new pastor.

Please pray for our transitional pastor, Stuart Bond, the Session, the Diaconate, the Women in Ministry, and the ministry teams as they all seek God’s will for our church and its missions and act to facilitate plans intended to honor, execute, and discharge those tasks and callings responsibilities.

Please pray for our church staff that they may be strengthened by our Lord as they work with us in our church with care and professionalism.

Please pray for our covenant partners that everyone may sense joy in our time of focus upon the search for the new pastor, and not be weary, not be impatient, but experience this as a time for reflection, hope for the future, and growth in Christian witness.

And, finally, I ask that you pray to our Lord for His provision in developing a winsome sense of call in that special person to whom He shall direct us to issue an invitation for candidacy to serve as our next pastor.




As we all shall be faithful in these, our responsibilities, we can count on our Lord to richly bless our works, our fellowship, and First Presbyterian Church.

Yours in Christ,
Porter Stewart

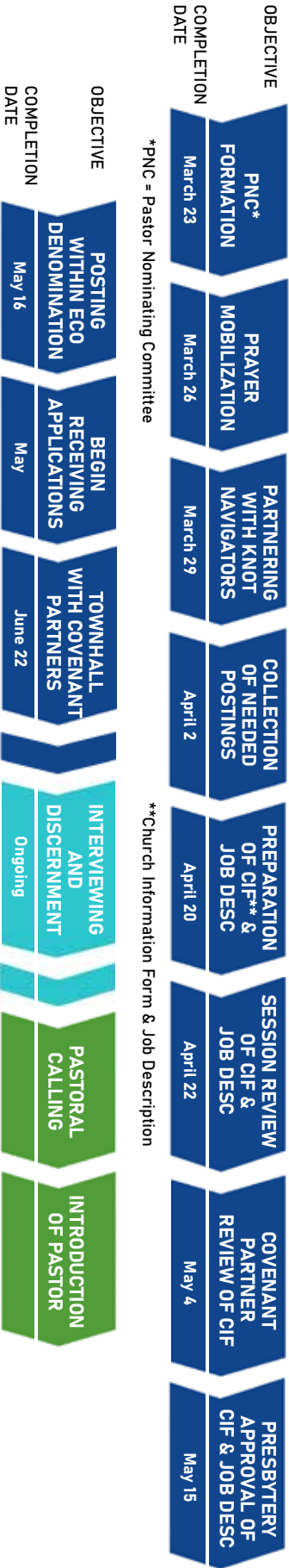


First Presbyterian Church

Pastor Nominating Committee Timeline

 Completed  Planned  Timing To Be Determined

Organizational Activities



Spiritual Activities



Toward a Healthier Church

Stewardship is about more than money. But clearly monetary giving is the starting point. In the Old Testament we read: *"Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the LORD your God has blessed you."* (Deuteronomy 16:17)

Each year First Presbyterian Church asks our covenant partners to make a pledge to financially support the ministry and mission of the church in our community and around the world through our Ministry Action Plan. During our fall stewardship emphasis, 163 of our covenant partners made pledges supporting our **2025 Ministry Action Plan**. The Ministry Action Plan, approved by the Session totaled \$1.93 million. That translates to a weekly need of \$ 37,320.00 to fully fund the ministries of First Presbyterian Church for 2025. In addition to various church ministry programs (pre-school, children, youth, adults, and an extensive music ministry) the Ministry Action Plan includes support to our missionaries (Emerts, Carol Crom, Gray Scott, and others), as well as providing support to the local agencies (House of Hope, Light House, Mercy Medicine, Tenacious Grace, A Choice to Make, etc.) As of publication, our *actual* weekly receipts are averaging \$32,000, which is less than the weekly need. This is not unique to our church. Many churches and non-profit organizations dependent on charitable giving from donors are experiencing similar financial challenges. There are numerous factors that are affecting giving trends. The recent uncertainty in the financial markets and continued increases in the cost of goods and services all have had an impact on people's pocketbooks. Consequently, people are evaluating how and where to give.

The good news is that, despite this deficit, First Presbyterian Church is current in our support of our missionaries. Additionally, our staff and ministry leaders are to be commended for being good stewards of what has been given as they continue to plan and implement ministry activities. Examples of the health of our church are all around. Our worship attendance this summer has been higher than last year. We see new families visiting weekly and becoming involved in the life of our church. Elsewhere in the newsletter, you'll see pictures from our recent Vacation Bible School. When you look at things from that perspective, "life is good!"



You will be enriched
in every way to be
generous in every way.
which through us will
produce thanksgiving
to God.

2 Corinthians 9:11

With that said, if the current trend in giving continues, we may be faced with the difficult task of finding ways to reduce expenses. Contribution statements for January – June will be sent via email in early July. These statements are intended to serve as a reminder of the commitments made to support the mission and ministry of First Presbyterian Church. Our church has faced financial challenges in the past and has always responded to the challenge. The Enabling Unit of the Session is confident that our covenant partners will rise to meet this challenge, as well. When you receive your statement, I encourage you to reflect on what you see and respond as God prompts your heart.

In Memoriam Panel

The Columbarium Memory Garden adjacent to the Sanctuary is a beautiful addition to our campus. In addition to niches for inurnment of cremains, the columbarium features an "In Memoriam" section. At Easter and Advent covenant partners place flowers in honor/memory of loved ones in the Sanctuary. The In Memoriam section provides an opportunity to permanently remember covenant partners, their spouses, children, as well as the parents of covenant partners, who are deceased and interred elsewhere. Brochures about the Columbarium Memory Garden are available in the Welcome Center. Please contact me or George Beshere if you are interested in reserving a niche or would like more information about the "In Memoriam" section.

The Conduct of a Christian

EPHESIANS 4:17-32 AND EPHESIANS 5:1-2

This month's article builds on the theme began last month of "leading a worthy life." Ephesians 4:17-Ephesians 5:2 explains how a Christian is to lead a worthy life. Christians are to "be imitators of God, as beloved children (Ephesians 5:1)." Gifts are given to Christians to follow the example of Jesus. The Christian belongs in the family of God by believing in him as the anointed one sent by God. Christians are called to be different while living in the culture of the world around them.

Early in my academic career (Grades 1-6), my teacher marked "lack of self-control" on my social skills analysis. This is the last gift listed in Galatians 5:22, which describes the fruit of the Spirit. Each time I read or hear these characteristics of the Spirit, I am humbled. Reflecting on Ephesians 4 and my history from ages 6-12, I realize I was reacting to family problems at home and acting them out at school. I still can be angry at injustice.

Ephesians 4:26 states: "Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger." I believe this section of Ephesians outlines how a person moves from life without Christ to a life "in Christ." God's people must "learn Christ (Ephesians 4:20)!"

There is a contrast between life without Christ and life with Christ. This follows the pattern "once-now." Once the Ephesians lived in a pagan Roman world, but now live as a child of God. This is coupled with the metaphor of "put off and put on" which is used as putting on clothes and taking them off. Conversion from an old nature to a new nature is the process of becoming Spiritually mature (sanctification is the theological concept). Christians are "to put off the old nature ... and put on the new nature (Ephesians 4:22-24)."

In the process of maturing in the Spirit, God and the human being are in partnership. Humans cannot mature alone because God in Christ and the Spirit leads the human into maturity. The human must however make the correct choice to resist evil and "do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God. ...(Ephesians 4:30)."



The way of idolatrous culture must be avoided. The categories used are "futility of their minds"(Ephesians 4:17), "hardness of heart" (Ephesians 4:18) and greed (Ephesians 4:19). Once people were not aware of how these things corrupt life but now the light of Christ exposes our sinful attitudes. Once forgiveness and healing is experienced, those "in Christ" are ready to make the right ethical choices.

The final advice of this section is an example of forgiveness; "be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you (Ephesians 4:32)." I still show anger and have to watch my words and behavior, but I believe God in Christ enables me to put on Christ and put off the evil intentions of my heart. God is faithful and will give us strength and Spiritual maturity to make right decisions and enable Christ's love and light to show through our behavior.

Mike

Summer Fun

June was filled with tons of fun! We kicked off the summer with a pirate adventure and safari quest. The 3K and 4K classes enjoyed FPC's Vacation Bible school, where they met Joseph and learned how God gives us hope, special abilities, wisdom, forgiveness, and a family. In addition, the children enjoyed "Giddy Up" week with horses and horse rides, a visit from the book mobile, water days, ice cream, fresh vegetables from the CDC garden and more. It is amazing to see all God is doing in and through the children, the staff, and the parents. It's an honor to be a part of such a special ministry!





MEET THE CDC TEAM

**Ms. Antonisha Dorsey,
AKA Ms. Nini**



ABOUT MS. NINI

Ms. Nini is our fun-loving, beautifully smiling, 2K teacher assistant who loves all of the children. Nini, who joined the staff in June 2023, is a native of Florence and enjoys road trips. She especially enjoys turning on the radio and listening to old school jams. She also likes to draw and sing. What Nini likes the most about working at the CDC is the children. They bring her joy when she walks in every morning calling, "Ms. Nini help!" She loves each and every one of them.

HER FAVORITES

FOOD: Soul Food
COLORS: Pink
FLOWER: Sunflower
PLACE: Her bed
SEASON: Winter



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
29 Sunday School, 9 a.m. Worship Service, 10 a.m. Lemonade & Cookies, 11 a.m.	30 WinShape, 8 a.m.	1 WinShape, 8 a.m. Worship Team, 5 p.m. 	2 WinShape, 8 a.m.
6 Praise Team Rehearsal, 9 a.m. Sunday School, 9 a.m. Worship Service, 10 a.m. Lemonade & Cookies, 11 a.m. 	7 Weekly Prayer, noon Sanctuary PNC Meeting, 5:30 p.m. Youth: Shark Wake Park, 8:30 a.m. Sign up ASAP 	8 SPIT Meeting, noon Treasured Tuesdays: Neptune Island, 9 a.m.	9 Wonderful Wednesdays: Riverbanks Zoo, 7:30 a.m. Veterans Brunch, 8 a.m. Youth: Brunch, Tie-Dye Party, 10 a.m. RSVP by July 8 Missions Team, 12:15 p.m. PNC Meeting, 5:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal, 7 p.m.
13 Sunday School, 9 a.m. Worship Service, 10 a.m. Lemonade & Cookies, 11 a.m. Youth: Prayer Retreat	14 Weekly Prayer, noon Sanctuary Enabling Team, 5:30 p.m. PNC Meeting, 5:30 p.m.	15 Youth: The Great Escape (July 15-20) Evangelism and Discipleship, 1:30 p.m. WOC Fellowship Team, 5:30 p.m.	16 Personnel Team, 8:15 a.m. CDC Popsicles in the Park 
20 Praise Team Rehearsal, 9 a.m. Worship Service, 10 a.m. Lemonade & Cookies, 11 a.m.	21 Weekly Prayer, noon Sanctuary 	22 Youth: Neptune Island, 9 a.m. Diaconate, 5:30 p.m. Session, 6:30 p.m.	23 Youth: Lunch at Moe's and thrift-shopping, 1 p.m. 
27 Sunday School, 9 a.m. Worship Service, 10 a.m. Lemonade & Cookies, 11 a.m.	28 Weekly Prayer, noon Sanctuary PNC Meeting, 5:30 p.m. 	29 30  <p>Walk in kindness, shine with courage, go with God. Ephesians 4:32</p> 	

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

JULY

WEEKLY

SUNDAYS

- Adult Sunday School, 9 a.m.
- Worship Service, 10 a.m.
- Lemonade and Cookies, 11 a.m.

MONDAYS

- Weekly Prayer, noon Sanctuary
- Prayer Group, 2:30 p.m.
- Selah Yoga, 5:30 p.m.
- Men's Bible Study, 7 p.m. (203)

WEDNESDAYS

- Small Group Bible Study, 10 a.m.

THURSDAYS

- Men's Bible Study, 7 a.m.
- Youth Coffee, 9 a.m. F.E. Pop's
- Women's Bible Study, 10:30 a.m.

3

WinShape, 8 a.m.
Youth: F. E. Pop's, 9 a.m.
CDC Fourth of July Parade,
10:30 a.m.



4

CDC and church office closed
WinShape, 8 a.m.



5



10

Youth: F. E. Pop's, 9 a.m.
Thundering Thursday:
Frankie's Fun Park, 9:30 a.m.
Youth: Prayer Retreat **RSVP by**
July 2



11

Youth: Prayer Retreat



12

Parking Lot Mission, 6 a.m.
Youth: Prayer Retreat



17

Youth: F.E. Pop's, 9 a.m.
CDC Water Day



18

19

24

Youth: F.E. Pop's, 9 a.m.



25

Youth: Float Little Pee Dee River



26

31

Youth: F.E. Pop's, 7 a.m.

Lord, Hear Our Prayer

HEAR MY CRY, O GOD; LISTEN TO MY PRAYER. PSALM 61:1

SYMPATHY

Mary Lou Arnold, loss of her brother
Stuart Bond, loss of his father
Michelle Gaskins and daughter Kendra,
loss of Michelle's brother
Christa Godwin, loss of her father

SICK & RECOVERING

Nancy Collins
Aubrey Crawford
Bobby Henegar
Andy Jeffords
Joyce Kirven, Bonnie Stuber's sister
Bob McLean

EXTENDED CARE

Lowman Home	The Manor
Mac King	Glenn and Betty Bell
Presbyterian Community	Joyce Floyd
Clariann Kellam	Marie Jordan
Nell Oliver	Maria Whitehead

HOUSEHOLDS

Flock 1: Grayson Jones
Flock 2: Houlton Losah and Yvette Mbangowah,
Pessy, Troy, Mya-Rose
Flock 3: David, Emily, Stanton, Crosland,
and Susanna Lake
Flock 4: Danny and Susie Jackson
Flock 5: Rhett, Farrah, Rylie, and Liam Hughes
Flock 6: Stan, Lynette, and Eli Gaddy
Flock 7: Keith Jones
Flock 8: Melissa Bush and Gary Pletan

BIRTHS

Jones Henry Evans, son of Sloan and Chris Evans
Emelia Jean Snow, daughter of
Wesley and Mackenzie Snow

BAPTISMS

Watson Anson Tolson II and Whitt Andrew Tolson,
sons of Andrew and Hannah Tolson
Brewer Tolson, son of Gracie and Alex Tolson

MEMORIALS

Peggy Taylor

ELDERS

Jayne Boswell and Rocky Pearce

DEACONS

Meredith Banner and Cille Scott

MISSIONS

House of Hope
One Challenge International

WOMEN IN MINISTRY

Tenacious Grace
Chandan Sah, Empower Believers Connections

TEACHERS

Jennifer Foxworth
Emily Lake

STAFF

Stuart Bond
Sonya Hunter

CDC STAFF

Ms. Tyrin
Ms. Ge'Lissa
Ms. Miranda

FLOWERS IN THE SANCTUARY

July 6: Communion
July 13: Open
July 20: Barbara Meeks
July 27: Marian Howard

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 at genia_tyson@hotmail.com or 843-992-8904. Please leave your name, number, and date you wish to reserve.

July BIRTHDAYS

JULY 1

Belle Rockhill
Julia Watkins

JULY 2

William Bratton
Derek Hemmingsen
Pessy Losah
Weber Mimms

JULY 3

Tate Allison
Harriett Gilpin
Avery Hucks
Harper Suggs
Frances Welch

JULY 4

Natalie Hall
Louise King

JULY 5

Lucy Hubbs
Ken Jackson
Erik Marechal

JULY 6

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

JULY 7

Wanda Granger
Richard Hopkins
Susie Jackson
Wendy Singletary
Guy Slagle
Stirling Temple

JULY 8

Leslie Brodie
Emily Jordan
Maggie Reece

JULY 11

Frank Hodges
Rob Lewis
David Spearman

JULY 12

John Hofler
Sammie Kennedy
Luke Poston
Susan Rhea

JULY 13

Nabil Cotran
Ann Houck

JULY 14

Marty Coates
Gregg Jones
Barbara Maffett
Hunter Moore

JULY 15

Eiley Foxworth
Robbie Suggs

JULY 16

Pat Conyers
Emily Witt

JULY 17

Mac Gandy
Jessica Garris
Mitchell Green
Margaret Lee
Jim Moseley

JULY 18

Robert Miles
Pam Morgan

JULY 19

Landen Turner
Blakely Witt

JULY 20

Nancy Harwell
Marty Taylor

JULY 21

John Boulware
Marsha Fincher
Denise King
Mike Porter
Freeman Williams

JULY 22

Jimmy Green
Martha Nance
Rob Molnar

JULY 23

Martha Blanton
Walt Burch
Alice Caldwell
Andrew Tolson

JULY 24

Erin DuRant
Beth Player
Ford Scott
Kim Ryan
Christy Wallace

JULY 25

Shawn Bulliner
Emily Davidson
Alicia Truman
Elizabeth Tuttle

JULY 27

Troy Mbunu
Michael Miles
Duncan Williams

JULY 28

Margaret Jones
Caleb King

JULY 29

Bruce Crawford
David DuBose
Thomas Hardee
Laura Outz

JULY 30

Thomas Davis
Vicki Hebert
Jill McQuillan
David Sanderson

JULY 31

Joshua Courtney
Seth Crawford
Palmer Jones
Marie Jordan



MEN'S RETREAT

MARK YOUR CALENDAR
APRIL 17-19, 2026
HICKORY KNOB STATE PARK

Promise: Your relationship to God
and other men will be CHANGED!
For more information,
contact Bill Cain, 407-473-0912.

Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Ephesians 6:10



Dear Church Family,

During the week of Vacation Bible School, the children learned the song, *You Forgive Me* by Jay Stocker.

As I stood in the sanctuary singing this song, meditating on the lyrics, I knew in my heart this song was for me and maybe for you.

*You take all the pieces of my life,
Put 'em back together, make it all, all right.
Oh you forgive me.*

*Only you can heal my broken heart,
Make all things new with a brand new start.
Oh you forgive me.*

*You forgive me.
I try so hard to do things right,
But I make the wrong choice sometimes,
And you forgive me.
No one knows me, God, like you.
You see who I am, not what I do.
And you forgive me.*

As a parent, I try so hard to do things right, yet there have been times when one of my daughters tend to get the best of me. Times when my response is not pleasing to God. Or times when I try my hardest to do what's right, yet, choose the wrong thing. Have you ever been there?

Well, regardless of where you have been, I hope this song encourages you. I hope you find solace in knowing God forgives when we ask. Peace in knowing God sees us for who we are and not for what we do. And gratitude in knowing God sees our heart and loves us unconditionally.

Be encouraged and keep striving toward doing what's right!

Much love,
Kelly

Dear Church Family,

What a joyful and faith-filled June it has been here at First Presbyterian Church! Our children and families have been busy exploring, learning, and growing together through this summer's special programs.

From Treasured Tuesdays at the Aquarium, to Wonderful Wednesdays at EdVenture, and Thundering Thursdays with RiverRats (even though weather made us reschedule), this summer already is full of new experiences and memories. And of course, we can't forget Vacation Bible School — Egypt: Joseph's Journey from Prison to Palace! What an incredible week watching our children step into the story of Joseph, discover new ways to trust God, and bring joy and energy to every corner of the church. Through Marketplace adventures, mission projects, storytelling, music, and worship, the love of Christ was shining in and through our kids all week long. None of this would have been possible without our amazing team of volunteers — those who donated supplies, led groups, served snacks, ran shops, built tents, worked behind the scenes, and prayed for these children. Thank you for being a part of this ministry and for helping create such meaningful experiences for our families.

As we move through these summer months, my prayer is that we all continue to nurture these connections with God and one another. May each day remind us of God's faithfulness and love — the same love that carried Joseph through his journey and carries us through ours.

In Christ's love,
Kaiti

Mission Focus Update: Thank you to our generous church family! Through our Blessing Bags and Snack Pack collection, we provided items for Whosoever Community Center and My Brother's Keeper. Our fourth- and fifth-graders spent mornings in the community — delivering cookies to fire departments and assisted living homes, visiting and helping at My Brother's Keeper, and spending time with residents at Pee Dee Gardens and other assisted living communities. We appreciate your support in helping our children not only learn about God's love but also live in service to our neighbors!

Summertime, Summertime, Sum, Sum, Summertime

Please note: For your child to participate, you will be required to complete an FPC Medical/Liability Form. Forms will be emailed to you once you have signed up. Contact Kaiti Bryant with questions or for more information.

Treasured Tuesdays (Completed 3K – 5K)

On **Tuesday, July 8**, we will meet at the church at 9 a.m. to travel to **Neptune Island** in Hartsville. We will return to the church at 3 p.m. Everyone needs to wear their bathing suit (no bikinis) under their clothes and bring:

- a towel
- water shoes
- dry clothes
- a bag for wet clothes
- sunscreen



Cost of the trip is \$35 per child. Lunch is included in the cost. All children must sign up by July 5. Use the QR code or link to register:

<https://onrealm.org/florencefirst/PublicRegistrations/Event?linkString=MTg0MDNmMTUtZmMy-NC00ZWY4LWJmNGMtYjJlNDAwZmE4Y2Nh>



Wonderful Wednesdays (Completed 1st – 2nd)

On **Wednesday, July 9**, we will meet at the church at 7:30 a.m. to travel to **Riverbanks Zoo** in Columbia. We will return at 4 p.m. We also will enjoy Waterfall Junction at the Botanical Gardens. Everyone needs to wear their bathing suit (no bikinis) under their clothes and bring:

- a towel
- water shoes
- dry clothes
- bag for wet clothes
- sunscreen



Cost of the trip is \$30 per child. Lunch is included in the cost. All children must sign up by July 5. Use the QR code or link to register: <https://onrealm.org/florencefirst/PublicRegistrations/Event?linkString=Z-TU2YmMzNTItN2JlZi00OTg3LThiNTMtYjJlNDAw-ZmNiNmM3>

Thundering Thursdays (Completed 3rd – 5th Grade)

On **Thursday, July 10**, we will meet at the church at 9:30 a.m. to travel to **Frankie's Fun Park** in Columbia. We will enjoy go-carts, laser tag, the Drop Zone, the arcade and more. We will return at 4 p.m.

The cost of the trip is \$65 per child. Lunch is included in the cost. All children must sign up by July 5.

Use the QR code or link to register: <https://onrealm.org/florencefirst/PublicRegistrations/Event?linkString=N-jU2ODg4YWUtN2MwYS00MjNkLTh-mODUtYjJlNDAwZmQ3NjZi>



Calling Rising Sixth-Graders: Confirmation is Coming

Our 2025-2026 Confirmation journey officially will kick off in August at our Confirmation Retreat (details below). Registration forms have been mailed out to all sixth-graders. Please complete and return them by August 1.

If you have a rising sixth-grader who would like to participate but did not receive a registration packet, please contact Kaiti Bryant, kbryant@florencefirst.org, to receive the information.



Confirmation Kickoff Retreat

August 15–17, 2025

Camp Longridge, Ridgeway

Cost: \$150

Registration Deadline: August 10

Parent & Confirmand Meeting
Sunday, August 10, 2025
11:15 a.m. in the Lawson-Rain Chapel
Following Lemonade & Cookies

We will walk through the full Confirmation process for the year. Parents will receive the schedule, important details, and have an opportunity to ask questions.

We will depart on Friday, August 15, for a weekend of fun, fellowship, and faith-building as we prepare for the year ahead. The retreat will include swimming, team-building activities, and learning about Catechism, Confirmation, and the Gospel.

We look forward to this meaningful journey with our confirmands and their families.



Sunday School resumes in September

Please note there will be no Sunday School during July and August. We look forward to welcoming everyone back in the fall for a new year of learning and growing in faith together!

Children in Worship Leader Schedule

Children in Worship is held after the Message for Young Disciples for children in 3K-5K. It 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
July 6	10 a.m.	Kaiti Bryant
July 13	10 a.m.	Kaiti Bryant
July 20	10 a.m.	Kaiti Bryant
July 27	10 a.m.	Kaiti Bryant





VBS: *Joseph's Journey from Prison to Palace*

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who volunteered their time, donated supplies, shared tents, and supported our Vacation Bible School in so many ways this year! Your contributions truly helped bring VBS: Egypt — Joseph's Journey from Prison to Palace to life for our children. Because of your generosity and encouragement, our kids experienced a joyful and faith-filled week they won't soon forget. We are so grateful for your dedication and heart for this ministry!



Pool Party, Big Apple kick off Summer Events

June kicked off with a pool party and our annual brunch at Buc-ee's. Big thanks to the Dowdells for letting us invade their home and to Amy, Lilly, and Freeman Williams for helping.

The juniors and seniors traveled to New York City for a week filled with lots of sightseeing and mission work with a local church, where we helped them set up for their visual arts camp. We took in a Broadway show, ate lots of yummy food, went to *The Today Show*, and conquered the subway. It was such a wonderful trip. Shout out to Kimberly Packard for driving us up there.

We have a lot of events this month, so please sign up for trips and events ASAP. Please let Taiter know if you would like to drive or chaperone a trip.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Coffee at F.E. Pop's: 9 a.m. Thursdays July 10, 17, and 24; 7 a.m. Thursday, July 31

Shark Wake Park: 8:30 a.m. Monday, July 7

We will travel to North Myrtle Beach and spend the day playing in the water on their obstacle course, wake and knee boarding, water skiing, and more! Cost is \$65 plus money for one meal on the road. Please sign up ASAP.

Brunch at Venus & Tie-Dye Party:

10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Wednesday, July 9

We will meet at Venus for brunch and then go to the church afterward. Please bring the item(s) you would like to tie-dye. Youth will need to bring money for their meal.

Please RSVP by Tuesday, July 8.

Prayer Retreat: 10 a.m. July 10-13

We will travel back to Blowing Rock, N.C. Youth will learn to pray by themselves, in pairs, and in groups. It will be a wonderful time together as we study God's word by reading it, journaling it, and praying it. Cost is \$85.

Please sign up by Wednesday, July 2.

Neptune Island: 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. July 22

Cost is \$30. Bring a friend & money for lunch. Please sign up and pay by Wednesday, July 16.



Lunch at Moe's & Thrifting: 1 p.m. July 23

Join us for lunch and thrifting around Florence. Youth will need to bring money for their meal and any they will need to thrift.

FLOAT: 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. July 25

We will canoe and kayak down the Little Pee Dee River! Cost is \$10 per person.

Please sign up and pay by Monday, July 21.

SAVE THE DATE

Senior High White Water Rafting Trip on Chattooga River (August 15-17)

We will be staying in Sky Valley, Georgia. Cost to be determined. More details to follow.



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CHURCH STAFF

TRANSITIONAL PASTOR
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC/ORGANIST
PRAISE TEAM LEADER
MUSIC ASSISTANT
CONGREGATIONAL CARE ASSISTANT
DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MINISTRY
DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES
PROGRAM DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRY
CDC ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/CHURCH NURSERY COORDINATOR
CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR
COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR
FINANCIAL ASSISTANT
MINISTRY ASSISTANT
LEAD CUSTODIAN
HOUSEKEEPING
CUSTODIAN

DR. STUART BOND
MRS. ANN RODGERS CHANDLER
MR. VIC ROCKHILL
MS. BETSY JOHNSON
REV. MIKE FLEENOR
MS. CHRISTINA "TAITER" GARRETT
MS. KELLY HICKEY
MS. KAITI BRYANT
MRS. SHURRIE MARKS
REV. DON HEBERT
MS. KIMBERLY BRAUSS
MS. SONYA HUNTER
MRS. EMILY REED
MR. LEROY WILLIAMS
MS. WANDA LASANE
MR. RAYSHON WOODARD

Chancel Choir members sing at St. Andrew's



Members of the Chancel Choir sing with the Masterworks Choir at St. Andrew's Cathedral in Inverness, Scotland. Some also visited the Kelpies, two giant steel horse heads designed by Andy Scott, located in a recreational park called The Helix.