

The REMINDER



SEPTEMBER 2025



ON THE COVER: The Youth Group finish the summer strong with outdoor activities, including, kayaking, whitewater rafting, pool party, and a prayer retreat. For more pictures from the youth's summer, see pages 22 and 23.

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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:

- Lighthouse Ministries – The Good Neighbor Gala.**
 Tickets are now available for the 8th annual fundraising gala to be held Thursday, September 4, at the Florence Country Club. Be a part of an unforgettable evening filled with dinner, drinks, and uplifting stories from our neighbors whose lives have been impacted by Lighthouse Ministries. Good Neighbor of the Year also will be honored and Good Neighbor Gifts will be presented. For tickets and more information, visit lighthouseflorence.org/events.
- House of Hope – Hope Invitational** will be held September 11 at Darlington Country Club with best local golfers playing 18 holes to win the jacket. Contact Ella G. Ward for sponsorship or golfing opportunities, eward@hofh.org.
- Naomi Project:** Lunch fundraiser will be held at St. John's on Thursday, September 18.
- Actionnel Fleurisma:** Sunday School Classes will combine to meet at 10 a.m. in the CLC with our missionary from Haiti.
- Manna House** – Save the Date for **Singing for Suppers** to be held at 6 p.m. September 25 at James Allen Plaza in downtown Florence. 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 shoppers guide clients through the pantry and assist them in making healthy food choices. For more information, visit flomannahouse.com/volunteer/.
- ServeFLO opportunity:** Lunch for **Church of Whosoever** on Sunday, October 12. Contact Laura Marechal for more information.
- The Care House's Party with a P(o)urpose:** Thursday, October 16, at Florence Country Club, thecarehouse.com/party-with-a-purpose
- 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.

Congregational Meeting, New Class in September

A Congregational Meeting will be held at 10:45 a.m. Sunday, September 28, for the purpose of electing new classes of Deacons and Elders.

There will be child care, and we do not anticipate it being a long meeting. You will see bios on the candidates in the weeks prior to our meeting.

Wednesday Night Class

Starting September 24 on Wednesdays, Pastor Stuart will be leading a study of the book *Becoming a Healthy Disciple: 10 Traits of a Vital Christian*.

In *Becoming a Healthy Disciple*, author Stephen Macchia explores the 10 traits of a healthy disciple, including a vital prayer life, evangelistic outreach, worship, servanthood, and stewardship.

Discipleship is a lifelong apprenticeship to Jesus Christ, the master teacher. Using the Book of John, Macchia looks to the beloved disciple (John) as an example of a life lived close to Christ.

Becoming a Healthy Disciple is excellent for anyone who wants to grow in discipleship.

SESSION *notes*

Session had a report on the recent good news for our finances. The general sense was, we are back on track but continued vigilance is required. We then moved into a discussion of how we can upgrade our contacts to those who are not well or simply need more support. One idea was to consider a revival of the Healing and Wholeness Service. We "rated" the church along these axes:

- A sense of unity
- A desire to help
- A willingness to support the church financially
- A feeling of warmth towards one another
- A sense of God speaking to us
- A desire to grow spiritually/learn more
- An awe for the Lord
- An ache to serve our community and/or our world



- A concern for those who have no church home
- A concern for those who don't know the Lord

Like you, we saw some values that were stronger than others. We invite each of our Covenant Partners to measure yourselves along these same lines. Are we growing in these areas? Is the Lord more and more part of who you are today as opposed to five years ago? We pray so. Our general consensus was this is a powerful and growthful time for our church and the Lord is moving.

One last thing: Elder David Spivey is heading up a church Safety Team. There are a number of members who are part of this effort to provide the best possible environment for our kids and youth, as well as the entire church body.



MEN'S RETREAT

APRIL 17-19, 2026

HICKORY KNOB STATE PARK

Promise: Your relationship to God and others will be CHANGED! For info, contact Bill Cain, 407-473-0912.

Season of Discernment

**Unless the Lord builds the house,
the builders labor in vain. Psalm 127:1a**

Dear Church Family,

Now we move into the traditional fall season as Labor Day passes and we return to regular church schedules and the prospects of our holiday observances are, really, just around the corner.

The PNC has had an amazingly effective process to date. We have hit all the “markers” asked of us, on time, with unanimity, and in harmony of approach and of purpose. But, of course, this is God’s church and operates according to His perfect plan, not those wishes that we might want to impose upon it. In other words, even as we come together to discern His will and reach out in faith, in unanimity, in harmony, to communicate with persons that we believe can meet our published qualifications, even as we perceive that we have a person whom we believe could come among us to be our pastor, we find, of course, that such person must equally come to a discernment that we shall become that person’s people to live among us, to pastor us, and to love us. Perhaps a good analogy is that of the marriage proposal. Two sides must come to the same conclusion.

We have found that we cannot put the mystery of the process of discernment and of calling to First Presbyterian Church on our timelines or schedules. The Holy Spirit moves as it will, perfectly. So, we are being shaped more perfectly, too, in conformity to His will. As we pray each week, “[Father] Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

In this season of discernment, as we wait upon the Lord, we must learn patience, practice grace, keep the faith, and rest in the assurance that God will answer our prayers according to His plan. Meanwhile, the PNC continues to work, as we also know is His will.

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Romans 15:13

Personally, I am so very moved by the spirit of our church that I see among you, our Covenant Partners. I believe that our personal growth, our communions, and our commitments to service, are all demonstrating that we need not defer those works that God puts before us while we await a senior pastor. Ours is to get on with our Kingdom work. We already have been richly blessed and are quite capable of knitting ourselves ever more tightly together as God’s church. We’re doing great! May God continue to equip us to do more.

“But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.” Isaiah 40:31

And we do continue earnestly to pray for God’s guidance. Our house will indeed be built according to His plan. Please continue to pray with us and for our work as your PNC.

Blessings and thank you!
Porter

Pastor Nominating Committee



David Banner

Laura Marechal

Porter Stewart

David Lake

Jim Dameron

Alice Caldwell

Charissa Canfield



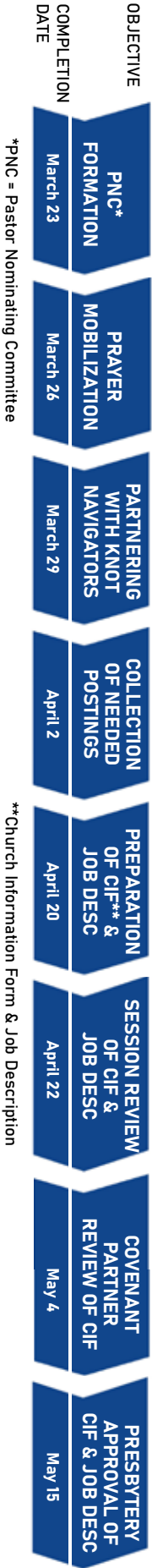
First Presbyterian Church Pastor Nominating Committee Timeline

Completed

Planned

Timing To Be Determined

Organizational Activities



*PNC = Pastor Nominating Committee

**Church Information Form & Job Description



Spiritual Activities



Seeking God at Work

I have enjoyed Pastor Stuart's recent messages from the book of Nehemiah. His sermon series is especially applicable as we continue through a season of transition at First Presbyterian Church. The focus has been on how Nehemiah marshalled the people of Jerusalem to take on the important task of rebuilding the city wall. When our oldest grandson was just learning to talk, he would often look at a pile of clothes or toys or some food that had been spilled and just say "mess." He understood that something wasn't right and that something needed to be done to correct the problem. Nehemiah saw that his beloved city of Jerusalem was in a "mess and that something needed to be done," and he acted.

For several months, our giving has not kept pace with our expenses. By now, you have probably heard that during the month of August, we saw a significant outpouring of generosity by our covenant partners to help offset the deficit. Thanks to your generosity, our giving closer to where it should be at this time in the church year. Nehemiah 3 lists all of the people and groups that were involved in rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem. Each group had responsibility for certain sections of the wall and everyone from perfume makers to goldsmiths to the priest contributed to the project. The point of Nehemiah 3 is that everyone came together and did their part in rebuilding the city wall. The same is true for our congregation.

During the month of August, the covenant partners of First Presbyterian Church came together to accomplish the task of reducing a deficit that was beginning to impact our ministry. Whether it was a weekly gift of \$30 or one of the large gifts that Pastor Stuart mentioned in his sermon on August 24, it is important to remember that it took each person doing their part to accomplish the task. It is equally important that each covenant partner continue to do their part and continue your support as we move through the remainder of 2025. Stewardship is not just about financial support. Stewardships includes giving of our time and talent, as well. In his book *Experiencing God*, Henry Blackaby says that we should "find where God is at work and join Him there." Our church is a vibrant active church with many opportunities for service. During September you will have two opportunities to learn more and sign up to be involved in the ministry of First Pres. On Sunday,

Staff Recognitions

First Presbyterian is fortunate to have a talented and dedicated church staff. This month, we recognize two of our staff on their employment anniversaries. We recognize Kimberly Brauss, our Director of Communications. Kim joined our staff in September 2017. We also recognize Sonya Hunter, our Financial Assistant, who joined our staff in September 2024. Thank you, Kim and Sonya, we are grateful for your contributions to the ministry of First Presbyterian Church.



Kim Brauss



Sonya Hunter

September 7, following the 11 a.m. service we will have a **Ministry Fair** and church-wide picnic in our Christian Life Center. Tables will be set up around the CLC staffed by representatives from the various ministries offered by our church. Covenant partners will have the opportunity to learn about and sign up to be involved in various areas of church life. On Wednesday, September 17, we will have a **Mission Fair** as part of our Wednesday Family program. Representatives from some of the local agencies supported by First Presbyterian Church will be on hand to explain what they do and how you can get involved.

As we continue through this time of transition and looking to the future, remember that God uses all manner of people in all manner of places doing all manner of work. Be encouraged; He is not limited by your vocation. In fact, God has placed you where you are for a purpose. The words of Paul are an important reminder:

"Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father" (Colossians 3:17)

I am grateful to be in ministry with you at this time in the life of First Presbyterian Church.

Wives, Husbands, Children and Slaves

EPHESIANS 5:21-6:9

All of us are one of these categories, wives, husbands, children or slaves. Some of us are two of them. Thankfully none of us are slaves. I interpret Ephesians 5:21-6:9 as a husband, father, and child.

The word for mystery is used twice in Ephesians. Mystery is used in Ephesians 3:4 to denote the inclusion of non-Jews into the Church. They are entitled to all the benefits of Jewish Christians. The second time mystery is used is in Ephesians 5:32 to describe the analogy of marriage to the relationship between Christ and the Church. Our choice in interpreting this passage is to decide which one part of this analogy is primary and which one is secondary. I choose the relationship between Christ and the Church to be primary, and this analogy is used to explain marriage as secondary. In a marriage neither husband and wife can love perfectly submitting one to another. In the relationship between Christ and the Church, Christ loves the Church perfectly but the Church cannot love God in Christ perfectly. Marriage is simply an illustration to describe the mysterious relationship between Christ and the Church.

The choosing of the analogy of Christ and Church as primary determines how I interpret the meaning of Ephesians 5:21: "be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ." The word for "be subject to" is sometimes translated submit. The best way to transmit the meaning of this word, hupotasso, is "a voluntary yielding in love to another." The concept of wives submitting to the authority of a husband has been misused for centuries in the marriage relationship. I would never deny that the Church should submit to Christ because Christ loves the Church perfectly. Husbands that use their authority to abuse their wife do not love them as Christ loved the Church. Christians submit to one another when love is communicated. Christ is the Head of the Church. By choosing this as a primary analogy of earthly life then three truths are made evident. First, Christ requires obedience from those who agree to submit to him. Second, Christ has redeemed the Church through his example and willing submission to dying to the wishes of evil people. This paradox is Christ redeems those who love him but also all the rest of the world who do not love him and even those

who crucified him. Those who love themselves more than Christ commit idolatry. They have been redeemed but do not know it or choose to reject Christ's love. Third, Christ loves the Church as Christ loves himself. The Church are those who know they have been redeemed. The Church returns Christ's love by loving Christ and the people God has created. The love of God as expressed in the Bible is a noble love. Rarely defined in human terms, one definition is steadfast love. Other definitions are mercy, grace, and a Greek word, agape. Humans can only approximate God's love and always fall short of expressing it.

The human ideal of the joining of wife and husband in marriage can only be understood as the relationship of Christ and Church is defined and contemplated. As a husband, father, and son, I can only seek to love my wife, my children, and my parents in an imperfect way because I am in the process of being redeemed. Theologically, the process is called sanctification, which means becoming more loving like Christ.

On slaves and masters, the Church is born into a social world in which slavery was an accepted institution. Ephesians fails to say slavery should be abolished. As modern people in the Church who believe all humans are created in the image of God and are equal, holding other humans as slaves is wrong. Slavery exists in unlawful ways in our societies. It must be abolished. I have interpreted the relationship between master and slave as Ephesians described it as the relationship between employee and employer. I have not been an employer except for short jobs such as moving or paying for repairs on house or car. As an employee I am required by my Christian faith to work as if I am working for the LORD and Christ. I am required to do my best. All employers have God as their master. The word translated master is the same word used for God and Christ. God is LORD, and Jesus is LORD. The way humans live in relationships should be controlled by mercy, kindness, and compassion. This is the way Ephesians challenges Christians to live. Jesus challenges Christians to love one another.

Mike

Bible stories and Crafts

During the month of August, we enjoyed learning the stories of Jonah and the Whale, Daniel in the Lion's Den, Noah's Ark and David and Goliath.

We also enjoyed making crafts to go along with each Bible story, Kona Ice, playing with our friends, eating fresh vegetables from our garden, a Parent Meeting and Open House and much, much more. We are excited about the future and love watching how God provides each and every day.





MEET THE CDC TEAM

Zaria Davis

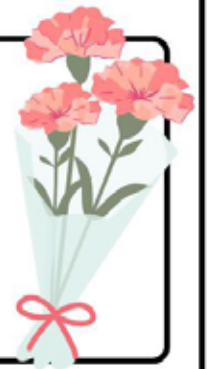


ABOUT MS. ZARIA

Ms. Zaria is our very quiet, soft-spoken, willing to step in wherever needed, child loving, big hearted and beautiful smile infant 2 teacher. Ms. Zaria is a native of Darlington and joined the staff in December 2023. She enjoys spending time with her family and friends and going out of town. What she likes most about working at the CDC is seeing all the smiling faces when walking through the door in the morning.

HER FAVORITES

FOOD: Seafood
 COLORS: Blue
 FLOWER: Carnation
 PLACE: Georgia
 SEASON: Winter



Women's Ministry starts season with ice cream social

Women's Ministry began its new year with an Ice Cream Social on August 24 in the CLC. Guest speaker Beth Behling provided "a good lesson on studying truth and speaking truth to others," wrote Mary Lynn Williamson.

The social also included information on a few community Bible studies available, two of which also meet on First Presbyterian's campus.

Rolled out during the social also included the book the Women's Ministry Circles are studying this year: *1 and 2 Peter* by Dr. David Jeremiah.

Circle meetings begin the second week of September. If you are looking for a circle home, please contact Janet Brand or Kimberly Packard to get plugged in. These circles provide a wonderful opportunity for women to connect, study God's word, and support missionaries



and each other through prayer, fellowship, and community service. The aim for Women's Ministry is to strengthen our relationship with God and with

each other. Through prayer, Bible study, and fellowship, let us be nurtured and empowered to be His light to our families, our church, and in this world.

Women's Circles

Find a group that fits your schedule and commit to meeting regularly throughout the year. All circles gather the second full week of each month.

Salty Sunday Sisters

Meeting: 2 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 14, off campus

Chairwoman: Alexis Morris

Women of Grace

Meeting: 6:30 p.m. Monday, Sept. 8, Room 100

Chairwoman: Betsey Moore

Bible Moderator: Charissa Canfield

Joyful Hearts and Sunflowers

Meeting: 10 a.m. Tuesday, Sept. 9, Room 100

Chairwomen: Alice Caldwell and Nancy Thompson

Bible Moderator: Betsy Olsen

Soul Sisters

Meeting: Noon Tuesday, Sept. 9, Price Classroom

Chairwoman: Carolyn Holland

Bible Moderator: Patti Hubbs

Serenity

Meeting: 3 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 9, Lawson-Rain Chapel

Chairwoman: Linda Smiley

Bible Moderator: Tabatha Davis

Prayer Warriors

Meeting: 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 10, church campus

Chairwoman: Amy Williams

Wednesday Night Women

Meeting: 6:15 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 10, church campus

Chairwoman: Laura Marecal

Bible Moderator: Emily Whitehead

Disciples

Meeting: Noon Thursday, Sept. 11, off campus

Chairwoman: Janet Brand

Bible Moderator: Kimberly Packard

Bread and Fish

Meeting: 9 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 13, Room 100

Chairwoman: Peggy Swearingen

Echoes of Her Voice: A Celebration of Women Composers



Solomon, Gualdi in Concert — 7:30 p.m. September 30

Violinist Qiao Chen Solomon and pianist Paolo Andre Gualdi will present a captivating program at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, September 30, in the Sanctuary dedicated to women composers whose voices have profoundly shaped the landscape of classical music.

The recital features works by Amy Beach, the pioneering American composer whose lush Romanticism and lyrical voice broke new ground; Florence Price, a trailblazer in American music whose deeply expressive style combines European traditions with African

American spirituals; Amanda Maier, a Swedish composer and violinist whose passionate works reflect both intimacy and brilliance; and Poldowski (Irène Régine Wieniawska), the gifted Polish-Belgian composer whose refined harmonies and poetic elegance captivated early 20th-century audiences.

This recital shines a light on the brilliance and resilience of women in music — composers who overcame societal limitations to create works of profound beauty and emotional depth.

Get involved in Music Ministry

Musically gifted? Be part of the ministry that lifts up, encourages, and leads the body of Christ through song in worship. Rehearsal times listed below:

Tuesdays

1:30 p.m. Ladies' Ensemble

Wednesdays

5 p.m. Chancel Handbell Choir

6:15 p.m. Children's Choir

7:30 p.m. Chancel Choir

Praise Team: Schedule to be determined



If you're interested in joining the music ministry, please call Ann Rodgers Chandler, Director of Music, at the church office, 843-662-2583, or Vic Rockhill, Praise Team Leader, vicrockhill@gmail.com.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
31	1 Labor Day CDC and church office closed for holiday Selah Yoga, 5:30 p.m. CLC	2 Worship Team, 5 p.m.	3 SPIT Meeting, noon Bible Moderators, 5 p.m. WM Coordinating Team, 6 p.m.
7 9 a.m. Contemporary Service 10 a.m. Sunday School 11 a.m. Traditional Service Noon Ministry Fair & Picnic Bible How-To for First Graders and Parents, 12:45 p.m. Youth: Messy Games, 4 p.m. Wednesday Night Women, 4 p.m.	8 Florence Garden Club, 10 a.m. Enabling Team Meeting, 5:30 p.m. Women of Grace, 6:30 p.m. offsite Men's Bible Study, 7:30 p.m.	9 WM Joyful Hearts & Sonflowers, 10 a.m. Room 100 WM Soul Sisters, noon Price Class WM Serenity, 3 p.m. Lawson-Rain	10 Veterans Brunch, 8 a.m. Missions Team Meeting, 12:15 p.m. Wednesday Night Kickoff Cookout, 5:30 p.m. (menu on right rail) WM Prayer Warriors, 6:30 p.m.
14 Missions Week Women's Retreat: Georgetown 9 a.m. Contemporary Service 10 a.m. Sunday School 11 a.m. Traditional Service Confirmand lunch Youth: Small Groups, 5 p.m.	15 CDC Bookmobile, 9 a.m. 	16 Evangelism & Discipleship Team Meeting, 1:30 p.m. WOC Fellowship Team Meeting, 5:30 p.m.	17 Personnel Team Meeting, 8:15 a.m. Mission Fair and Dinner, 5:30 p.m. 
21 9 a.m. Contemporary Service 10 a.m. Combined Sunday School with Actionnel Fleurisma 11 a.m. Traditional Service First Connections, 10 a.m. JFH 	22 CDC Staff Meeting, 6 p.m.	23 Diaconate, 5:30 p.m. Session, 6:30 p.m.	24 Church Directory Photography Sessions Semi-annual Calendar Meeting, 2 p.m. JFH Wednesday Night Dinner, 5:30 p.m. Youth Group, 5:30 p.m. Wednesday Night Programs, 6 p.m.
28 9 a.m. Contemporary Service 10 a.m. Sunday School 11 a.m. Traditional Service First Connections, 10 a.m. JFH	29	30 Violinist Qiao Solomon, Pianist Paolo Gualdi in concert, 7:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary 	

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

4

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



5



6

SEPTEMBER

WEEKLY

SUNDAYS

- Contemporary Worship Service, 9 a.m.
- Sunday School, 10 a.m.
- Traditional Worship Service, 11 a.m.
- Embracing God's Word, 5:30 p.m.

11

Patriot Day

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



12

Women's Retreat: Georgetown

13

Women's Retreat: Georgetown
Parking Lot Mission, 6 a.m.
Bread & Fish, 9 a.m. Room 100



WOMEN'S RETREAT

MONDAYS

- CDC Chapel, 9:30 a.m.
- Weekly Prayer, Noon in Sanctuary
- CDC Bible Study, 12:15 p.m.
- Prayer Group, 2:30 p.m.
- CDC Bible Study, 5:15 p.m.
- Selah Yoga, 5:30 p.m.
- Men's Bible Study, 7 p.m. Room 203

18

Youth: Coffee, F.E. Pop's, 9 a.m.
CDC Grandparents Day,
10:45 a.m.
United Way set up in CLC, 2 p.m.



19

United Way Day of Caring, 8 a.m.

20

TUESDAYS

- Men's Prayer Meeting, 7 a.m.
- Just for Women Bible Study, 11 a.m.

WEDNESDAYS

- Small Group Bible Study, 10 a.m.
- Just for Women Bible Study, 11 a.m. in CLC
- Staff Meeting, 2 p.m. WOC
- Youth Group, 5:30 p.m.
- Chancel Choir Rehearsal, 7 p.m.

25

Youth: Coffee, F.E. Pop's, 9 a.m.
Church Directory Photography
Sessions



26

Church Directory Photography Sessions



We're Updating
Our Church Directory

27

Church Directory Photography Sessions

THURSDAYS

- Men's Bible Study, 7 a.m.
- Youth Coffee, 9 a.m.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT DINNERS

- Sept. 10: Cookout: hamburgers, hot dogs, baked beans, lettuce, tomato, cheese, dessert
- Sept. 17: Missions Fair: fried chicken, green beans, bread, dessert
- Sept. 24: Salisbury steak, cowboy veggies, rice, brownies





Lord, Hear Our Prayer

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



SYMPATHY

Mike and Jean Lavespere, loss of his mother,
Maria Helena (Marlene) Vankorb Highsmith
Duncan and Genia Tyson, loss of his mother,
Martha Tyson

SICK & RECOVERING

Aubrey Crawford	Mary Ann Nash
Steve Edwards	Maggie Reece
Keith Jones	Ginger Sullivan
Dave and Linda Lawson	Ronnie Welch
Bob McLean	

EXTENDED CARE

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

HOUSEHOLDS

Flock 1: Cordie, Mary Frances, and Ellis Jones
Flock 2: John and Mary McMillian
Flock 3: Frank and Margaret Lee
Flock 4: Palmer and Mary Kirkpatrick
Flock 5: Andy, Christina, Carson and Coleman
Jeffords
Flock 6: Christina "Taiter" Garrett
Flock 7: Landis, Hannah, Eleanor, Wallace, and
Alden Lane
Flock 8: Mary Courtney Rogers

BAPTISM

Jude Charles Anderson, born December 17, 2024,
son of Blue and Cait Anderson

BIRTH

Brandon Owamba Losah, born July 10, 2025,
to Yvette Mbangowah and Houlton Losah

MEMORIALS

Judy Henegar
Martha Tyson

ELDERS

Rocky Pearce and Johnny Stoupenos

DEACONS

Jason Coker and Merrette Dowdell

MISSIONS

Actionnel Fleurisma, OCFB
Lighthouse Ministries

WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Ashley Scott
Emily Whitehead

TEACHERS

Patti Hubbs
Linda Smiley

STAFF

Emily Reed
Leroy Williams

CDC STAFF

Mrs. Becca
Mrs. Stephany
Ms. Sarah
Ms. Annette

FLOWERS IN THE SANCTUARY

September 7: Communion
September 14: Joyce Dalsbo
September 21: Elizabeth McLean, Betsy Olsen,
and Karen Jordan
September 28: Barbara Maffett

Do you have a friend or relative you would like
to honor? Sign up to place flowers in the Sanctu-
ary. Please contact Genia Tyson at 843-992-8904.

September BIRTHDAYS

SEPTEMBER 1

William Blayton
Barbara Copeland
Emily Lake
Jimmy McLellan

SEPTEMBER 2

Tyler Jackson
Reese Williams

SEPTEMBER 3

Tara Allison
Devon Bowen
Lisa Dozier
Karen Jordan

SEPTEMBER 4

Stan Bergstrom
Blaine Carter
Chad Hayes
Clariann Kellam
Bob Whitesides

SEPTEMBER 5

Elizabeth Blanton
Peggy Cagle
Kathryn Hopkins
Michelle Jones
Cathy Patrick

SEPTEMBER 6

Jeff Everton
Betty Gandy
Sarah Porter

SEPTEMBER 7

David Douglas
Kathy Hatfield

SEPTEMBER 8

Morgan Banner
Alex Cotran
Paul Davis
Lee Nunn
John Scott

SEPTEMBER 9

Anne Floyd
Hunter Morgan
Pearce Scott
Don Watts

SEPTEMBER 10

Carol Fleenor
Caroline Garris
Ken Knudsen

SEPTEMBER 11

Betty Bell
Debbie Harwell
Jason Newton

SEPTEMBER 12

Mac King
Jo Ann Patton

SEPTEMBER 13

Danny Jackson
Alex Tolson
Mary Watts

SEPTEMBER 14

Bradford Brown
Stanton Lake
Christopher Langmo

SEPTEMBER 15

Chuck Collins
Mark Hanna
Carly Lewis

SEPTEMBER 16

Matt Dowdell
Chris Evans
Thomas Hemmingsen
Jeanne Watts

SEPTEMBER 17

Mason Slaughter

SEPTEMBER 19

Joyce Floyd
Edward Henderson
Sara Watts

SEPTEMBER 20

Marilyn Bays
Jason Coker
Aubrey Page
Milly Slaughter

SEPTEMBER 21

Jessica Carmichael
Greg Cleveland
Kate Genoble
Richard Genoble
Brandon Matthews
Richard Ryan

SEPTEMBER 22

Rebecca Clancy
Sadie Sims

SEPTEMBER 23

Owen Adams
John Ivey Brown
Mary Lachlan Campbell
Caroline Westbrook

SEPTEMBER 24

John Joseph Alexander
Stan Gaddy
Zane Miles

SEPTEMBER 25

Annie Abernathy
Jill Cain
Beverly Davis
Al Gilpin
Grayson Jones

SEPTEMBER 26

Tamanjong Akongnui
Ben Carter
Avery Etheridge
Hudson Kennedy
Brady Matthews

SEPTEMBER 27

Grace Cleveland
Jack Cleveland
Collins Coker
Graham Rabon

SEPTEMBER 28

Lendi Watkins

SEPTEMBER 29

Furman Brodie
Jeff Collins
Franklin Emerson
Dottie Hail
Linley Hyman
Laura Purvis
Jeremy Straus

SEPTEMBER 30

Ella Hylton
Sara King
Ginger Owen
Luke Scott
Chuck van Witzenburg



Dear Church Family,

Is anyone else blown away that September is here? I feel like we just rang in the New Year. Oh time, please slow down! In the blink of an eye, I have a 31-year-old, a freshman in college, a 10th grader and 7th grader.

As time continues to fly by, our children continue to grow up, and this crazy world keeps getting crazier. One of the most important gifts we should and need to give our children is the gift of FAITH! I don't know where I would be without it. Therefore, I want to encourage parents to join The Rev. Dr. Bill Cain for a six-week study on Wednesday nights called Leaving a Legacy: The Most Important Gift You Can Give Your Children. Bill's spoiler alert: "If the only legacy you're planning on leaving is money ... it won't be ENOUGH!"

It is so important for our children to know Jesus! To have a personal relationship with Him! To know that no matter what, He is all that matters. God created us, and we are His. When these seeds are planted, the harvest will be plentiful! I would like to share a personal example with you. The other day I was struggling with something personal when my oldest daughter, Amanda, called to check on me. During our conversation, she spoke truth to me. Truth that I raised her on! She told me, "Do not live in FEAR. Fear is false evidence appearing real. The enemy will distract you and make you worry about things that you can't control in order to steal your happiness. Live in the moment, Mama!" Wow! What wisdom my baby girl shared with me. I asked her how she became so wise? Her response, "You taught me." All I can say is THANK YOU, LORD! I know it was not me. It was Him working through me.

The legacy I want to leave behind, is that of Jesus. When my family, friends, or anyone who knows me, thinks of me, I want them to think about Jesus! For to me He's all that matters.

How about you? What legacy do you want to leave?

I hope you will join Bill Cain beginning on September 24 to learn more about the most important gift you can give your children. I promise it will be time well spent!

Much love,
Kelly Hickey

Dear Church Family,

As we begin this new program year, I am reminded once again of the joy it is to walk alongside our children as they grow in faith. Promotion Sunday is always such a special time — a visible sign of how God is shaping and guiding our youngest disciples. These milestones remind us of the important role our whole church family plays in surrounding children with love and encouragement.

Last month, our confirmands gathered for their Kickoff Retreat at Camp Longridge. Together we studied **Genesis 2:18**, where God said it was *not good for man to be alone*. From the very beginning, God has called us into community, and I can't think of a better reminder of why we gather as a church family. It is in community that we worship, learn, and grow — and I am so deeply grateful for every covenant partner who helps make that possible here at First Pres.

Thank you to each of you who has stepped forward to volunteer this year. Whether teaching, greeting, serving, or quietly praying for our children, your presence is a gift. I am excited to see how God will use us together in the months ahead.

In Christ's love,
Kaiti

CHILDREN
are not
a distraction
from more
important work.

THEY ARE
the most
important work.

-John Trainer

Confirmation season kicks off with retreat

Our Confirmation Class of 2026 began their journey with an exciting retreat at Camp Longridge the weekend of August 15–17. This year, we are blessed with 17 confirmands! During the retreat, we introduced the concept of confirmation, discussed what lies ahead, and began exploring some initial questions in Catechism.

The weekend was filled with fun and fellowship, including games, swimming, and ziplining into the lake. We enjoyed an ice cream treat together and spent meaningful time creating prayer journals that we hope will guide our confirmands throughout this journey and beyond.

We are excited to see how God will work in and through these young people as they grow in faith this year!



As the Confirmands and Mentors begin meeting, please pray for them as they begin this amazing journey growing in their relationship with the Lord.

Confirmands

Braelyn Brand
Will Bratton
Bradford Brown
Eleanor Early
Jule Eldridge
Graham Emerson
Masters Emerson
Anna Parsons Fast
Benjamin Floyd
Thatcher Jordan
Grace Migliore
Oliver Page
Liam Scott
Sadie Sims
Turner Swink
Stirling Temple
Charlotte Tuttle

Mentors

Jan Green
Jeremy Emert
Billy McBride
Ellen Wilhoit
Brian Fast
Jim Dameron
Jim Dameron
Margaret Jones
Richie Wilhoit
Pat Tuttle
Kathryn Scott
Matt Dowdell
Pack Packard
Charissa Canfield
Robert Moore
Stuart Snow
Alexis Morris

Children in Worship Leader and Volunteer Schedule

During Sunday worship, following the Message for Young Disciples, our 3K–5K children are invited to *Children in Worship*. This program is designed to help young children engage with worship and experience Bible stories in an age-appropriate way, all within their own special worship space.

Date	Time	Teacher	Assistant
September 7	9 a.m.	Laura Anne Hofler	Eliza Spencer
	11 a.m.	Ashton Pennstrom	Gracie Tolson
September 14	9 a.m.	Laura Anne Hofler	Peggy Swearingen
	11 a.m.	Ashton Pennstrom	Marla Slaughter
September 21	9 a.m.	Laura Anne Hofler	Allyson Pittman
	11 a.m.	Ashton Pennstrom	Jill Cain
September 28	9 a.m.	Laura Anne Hofler	Abby Ansley
	11 a.m.	Ashton Pennstrom	Becka Tuttle



Sunday School resumes with Promotion Sunday

The new church school year begins on Sunday, September 7 — Promotion Sunday!

On this special day, children will move into their new Sunday School classes. Most classes have been combined this year (with the exception of 2K), so please be sure to check the updated class locations listed below. We're excited to kick off another wonderful year of growing and learning together!

Downstairs Classes

2K Room 124 C

Upstairs Classes

3K & 4K Room 204 A

5K & 1st Grade Room 204 B

2nd & 3rd Grade Room 204 C

4th & 5th Grade Room 204 D

6th Grade Room 205

Bible Presentations

During the 11 a.m. worship service, we will present Bibles to our first graders and the sixth-grade Confirmation Class. We are excited to celebrate our children's milestones within our church community together!

'Learning How to Use My Bible' Workshop

First graders and their parents are invited to a special Bible workshop from 12:40 to 1:40 p.m. September 7 in the Jenkins Fellowship Hall designed just for them! This hands-on time of learning will help children explore how to use their new Bible and why it's such an important part of their faith journey.

Please note the timing: the workshop will begin at 12:40 p.m., giving families time to visit the Ministry Fair and enjoy the church picnic after worship before heading to the Fellowship Hall.

Children's Ministry Check-In Reminder

As we begin a new program year, we want to remind all parents that children in second grade and younger must be checked in through our Children's Ministry Check-In system. This step is especially important as we welcome new teachers on rotating schedules who may not know each child, their allergies, or their parents yet.

Please remember to keep your Parent Pick-Up Sticker, as teachers will collect these when your child is picked up. This helps us ensure your child's safety and that each child goes home with the right grown-up.

How Check-In Works:

- Download the Kidmin App on your smartphone (QR code provided).
- Create an account and add your children (a quick and easy process).
- Check-in opens 30 minutes before the start of each program.
- The easiest way is checking in on the app before you arrive.
- Or you can use the desktop computer at the check-in kiosk in the Tower.



Thank you for helping us keep every child known, safe, and cared for!

If you have any questions, contact Kaiti Bryant.

Increased Safety Presence, Protocols

First Presbyterian Church has proactively formed a Safety Team to enhance security measures during worship services and the Sunday School hour. Beginning September 7 a Safety Team member will monitor the Welcome Center and Nursery/Preschool classroom areas to ensure only parents or guardians of children in those classes have access to those areas. This will free up the Florence County Sheriff's Deputy to focus more on the outside areas of the campus. In order to assist the Safety Team in this effort, you are asked to:

1. Register your children at the tower entrance when you arrive or online before campus arrival.
2. Retain the proper matching credential provided at KidsMin Check-in to facilitate a smooth pick up of your child.
3. Advise your relatives that without identification and matching credentials for each child they will not be allowed access to the Nursery/Preschool area.
4. Cooperate with the Safety Team member(s) if asked for credentials and or identification.

The Safety Team will strive to provide a protective church environment for your children in the most unintrusive manner possible. Should you have any questions, contact Elder David Spivey at 704-604-3644.

Wednesday Nights Children's Program

Beginning September 17, we launch another year of Wednesday night fun and learning for children! Each week, children in **3K–5th grade** are invited to grow in their faith through age-appropriate lessons, worship, and fellowship.

- **3K–5K: Beginning Catechism**

Our youngest group will explore the Beginning Catechism for Younger Children — simple questions and answers that teach big truths about God. Through songs, stories, and hands-on activities, they'll learn who God is, what He has done, and how much He loves them.

- **First–Third Grade: Children's Choir**

This group will be part of our new Children's Choir, where kids will learn songs that help them memorize Bible verses and grow in worship. They'll also have opportunities to share their voices in Sunday worship services throughout the year, helping them see how their gifts can serve the whole church.

- **Fourth–Fifth Grade: Bible Drill**

Our oldest group will dive deeper into Scripture through an engaging and interactive Bible Drill class. With games, challenges, and activities, they'll learn how to navigate the Bible, memorize key passages, and grow confident in using God's Word as a guide for their daily lives.



Save the Date: Trunk or Treat on October 29

Mark your calendars for our annual Trunk or Treat — a fun evening with candy, costumes, dinner, and fellowship for the whole church family!

Starting October 1, you can:

- Donate candy and non-candy items (bins will be in the Narthex on Sundays and in the CLC on Wednesday afternoons).
- Sign up to host a decorated trunk! Our goal is to have 20 trunks, each with a Christ-centered theme. Look for more details coming in October — but for now, save the date and start thinking about how you might join in the fun!



MINISTRY FAIR & PICNIC

GET CONNECTED
BE INSPIRED



LEARN ABOUT
OUR MINISTRIES

NOON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7 IN THE CLC

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY • YOUTH MINISTRY • WOMEN'S MINISTRY • WELCOME TEAM
MISSIONS TEAM • FELLOWSHIP TEAM • MUSIC MINISTRY • SUNDAY SCHOOLS
PARKING LOT MINISTRY • HELPING FLORENCE FLOURISH • MY BROTHER'S KEEPER • AND MORE

THE CHURCH WILL PROVIDE MEAT AND DRINKS;
PLEASE BRING YOUR FAVORITE SALAD, VEGGIE, STARCH, OR DESSERT.

First Presbyterian Church Mission Week

HIS MISSION. *Go where God leads* MY HEART

LOVE LIKE
JESUS DOES

MISSIONS FAIR

5:30 p.m. Wednesday, September 17, in the CLC

- Come out to see our local missions and find out more about our international missionaries. Get involved serving on a local or global level
- Dinner: Fried Chicken, mac and cheese, green beans, bread, and dessert

COMBINED SUNDAY SCHOOL



10 a.m. Sunday, September 21, in the CLC

- Actionnel Fleurisma, founder and pastor of Operation Force for Christ Bayonnais, will be here for a Combined Sunday School at 10 a.m.



Wednesday Night Class 'Leaving a Legacy'

What is the MOST IMPORTANT GIFT you can give to your child(ren)? It's a question that deserves our full attention. We can do many things wrong as parents and survive. But this is an issue essential to our child's well-being throughout their life. Their sense of IDENTITY and PURPOSE is wrapped around this issue. On Wednesday evening, September 24, we begin a 6-week class on "Leaving a Legacy." This class is open to all parents, regardless of the age of your child(ren). If you have questions, contact Bill Cain, 407-473-0912 or email wvcain50@gmail.com. Spoiler: If the only legacy you plan to leave is money ... it won't be ENOUGH!

Two worship services to resume in September

Two Sunday worship services resume September 7. The Contemporary Worship Service will be at 9 a.m. with the Praise Team, and the Traditional Worship Service will be held at 11 a.m. with the Chancel Choir. Sunday School will be held between services at 10 a.m.

First Connections class to be held

Pastor Stuart Bond will be leading First Connections, a new members, AKA covenant partners, class starting at 10 a.m. Sunday, September 21, in the Jenkins Fellowship Hall. Class will meet for four consecutive weeks. Lessons will be clear and relatable. We will discuss what it means to be a Christian, to be a Presbyterian, and what it means to be a member of First Presbyterian. On Sunday, October 19, new covenant partners will be acknowledged in front of the congregation as you affirm the questions of membership. Please contact Pastor Stuart with any questions and RSVP to Emily Reed in the church office, 843-662-2583 or ereed@florencefirst.org.

Covenant Partners' Mission Trip

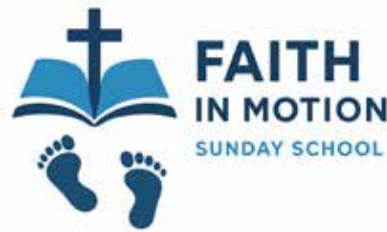
Covenant Partners Sasha Hall and Kimberly Packard have the opportunity to go to Southwest Asia. If you would like to contribute to the mission, please use the QR code at right and select *Southwest Asia Mission Trip* in the drop down.



Sunday Schools start new season

- The **Women's Only Class** welcomes women of any age, married or single, to their 10 a.m. class that meets in the Women's Only Classroom near the church office. For more information, contact Patti Hubbs, 843-230-5657, or Linda Smiley, 843-618-0324.

- **Faith in Motion:** A newly formed class, Faith in Motion Sunday School Class, is for young adults (parents with children, or those without children, married or single) who believe faith isn't meant to sit on a shelf, it's meant to be put into practice. Each week, we'll dive into Scripture together to learn more about how being a



follower of Jesus transforms us. We'll explore how God's Word speaks to the real issues we face: building strong relationships, making important decisions, finding purpose in our work, and growing in our calling to serve others. Through honest, practical discussions grounded in biblical truth, we'll discover what it means to be formed in Christ's image. Join us at 10 a.m. Sunday, September 7, in the former Children in Worship room close to Lawson-Rain Chapel to learn more and to meet others who are interested in this new class. We'll share our vision, answer questions, and give you a chance to connect with future classmates. For more information, contact Mike Lavespere at 843-618-5567 or Kelly Hickey 843-662-2583.

Fellowship of Elders dinner meeting

A Message to Elders — You should have each received a "Save The Date" for our Dinner Meeting at 6 p.m. Monday, September 29. We will meet in the Jenkins Fellowship Hall to enjoy a nice meal and time together. Please plan to be there! Even though we have "rolled off" of the Session, we are all still Elders. It is encouraging to see how so many of you have stayed involved in our church and the community. Thank you for your service! Let's come together for food and fellowship with our current Session and our Pastor. Let us consider how we may spur one another on ... encouraging one another. Hebrews 10:23-25. Contact Debbie Jackson or Janet Brand with any questions or suggestions. We look forward to seeing you on September 29!

Youth Summer



Service projects start new Wednesday Night season

August got us back into our normal routine, including Wednesday nights and our early morning Thursday coffee at F. E. Pop's. We also spent time at the White-Water Center in Charlotte for a full day on the water, zip-lining, and rock-climbing. We wrapped up the month with a pool party at The Williams' house.

Wednesday nights this school year will be dedicated to service projects. Youth will pair up in teams to decide what service project they would like to plan and execute. We will focus on ways to help the church and our community. Let us know if you have any ideas for us.

Our parent meeting was held on August 24. If you were unable to attend, the year-round calendar and other information will be mailed to you. The Google calendar and the BAND app will be updated with all the information, as well. Please let Taiter know if you have any questions.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday Night Youth Group (Sept. 3, 10, 17, and 24) 5:30 – 7:15 p.m.

Food, raffles, and service projects! \$7 dinner provided by the church.

9/10: *KICK-OFF CARNIVAL*

9/17: *MISSIONS FAIR*

Coffee at F.E. Pop's (Sept. 4, 11, 18, and 25) 7 a.m. – Until

Sunday School (Sept. 7, 14, 21, and 28) 10 – 10:50 a.m.

Light breakfast served.

Messy Games (Sept. 7) 4 – 6 p.m.

Get ready to be soapy, muddy — and maybe even ketchupy — as we meet up with our friends over at St. John's Church. Please wear clothes that can get dirty and messed up. Bring a towel and a change of clothes. Pizza for dinner. Bring a friend!

Small Groups (Sept. 14 and 28) 5 – 7 p.m.

We will watch and study The Chosen (season 5). Dinner provided.



Wheeldateens! (Sept. 21) 5 – 7 p.m.

Come ride bikes with us! Water and snacks provided. Bring a friend!

Paintball (Sept. 27) 1:30 – 6 p.m.

We will go to Pee Dee Paintball. Cost is \$45. Water and snacks provided. Bring a friend!

Please sign up and pay by Wednesday, September 24.

SAVE THE DATE!

Apple Picking Trip (Oct. 17-19) 3 p.m.

We will travel to Jeter Mountain Farm in Hendersonville, N.C., to go apple picking. We will be staying in Landrum and camping on private property. Attractions include a hayride, playground, coffee shop, apple slushes, and apple cider donuts. Youth will need to bring money for one meal on the road. Cost will be \$65. Bring a friend!

Please sign up and pay by Wednesday, October 1.



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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



CHURCH PICTORIAL DIRECTORY



PHOTOGRAPHY SESSIONS

We're growing, and we'd like to capture our growth.

SEPTEMBER 24-27

OUR DIRECTORY WON'T BE COMPLETE WITHOUT YOU

Schedule your photography session online at www.ucdir.com.

Log in after clicking Photography Session Sign-Up

by using username sc311 and photos as the password.

You can call Kimberly Brauss or Emily Reed in the church office
to set up an appointment or provide other assistance, as well, 843-662-2583.

