

# The REMINDER



MARCH 2026

# Missions Opportunities



**ON THE COVER: Reese Witt looks up as her father, Stephen, receives ashes from Pastor Stuart Bond during the Ash Wednesday service.**

## IN THIS ISSUE

2	Index/Missions
3	Pastor's Reflections/Session
4	Church Administration Matters
5	Congregational Care Assistant
6	Women in Ministry
7	Music Ministry
8, 9	Child Development Center
10, 11	Calendar
12	Remember in Prayer
13	Birthdays
14-17	Children's Ministry
17	Church News
18	Scouts
19	Youth Ministry
20	Contact Information



## Lighthouse Ministries 26th Annual BBQ Fundraiser

The weeklong event will be held at Holt Brothers BBQ in Florence. This annual event raises vital funds to help individuals and families across Florence County meet their basic needs and find stability during times of crisis.

Each \$12 plate includes barbecue, mac and cheese, rice and gravy, green beans, and Texas toast. Proceeds directly support Lighthouse Ministries' programs and services, making a meaningful impact for our neighbors. Tickets available for purchase at [lighthouseflorence.org/events](http://lighthouseflorence.org/events).



## UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Mission Trip:** Deacon Brandon Blankenship and Covenant Partners Kimberly and Pack Packard, and Jeremy Emert have the opportunity to go to Southwest Asia, where they will be working with professors and students at a university in the region. They will be part of a team leading an interactive English camp. If you would like to contribute to the mission, please use the QR code at right and select **Southweat Asia Mission Trip** in the Fund drop down.



*For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat;  
I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink;  
I was a stranger and you took me in; I was naked and  
you clothed me; I was sick and you took care of me;  
I was in prison and you visited me. - Matthew 25:35-36*



## Blessing Bag Ministry

**SUPPORT THIS MINISTRY!**

The Faith in Motion Sunday School Class is assembling Blessing Bags, gallon-sized plastic bags filled with personal hygiene products, nonperishable foods, and other items such as socks and Band-Aids, to make them available to our church. Covenant Partners can keep the Blessing Bags in their car so they can bless someone in need.



You can contribute to the purchase of the items in the bags using the Venmo QR code:



# Goal Setting with Intentions

Dear Church Family,  
What are your goals for this year? It is one of those lofty questions, as if life will bend itself to the plans we make. However, it is also true, as the saying goes, that if you aim at nothing you are sure to hit it. With that in mind, I have shared a few goals with the Session.

My first goal has to do with Evangelism and Discipleship. Think about all the things we do here: the classes, the retreats, the events, the seminars. All of them fit under the heading of helping us begin to know Christ (evangelism) or getting to know him better and follow him more closely (discipleship).

There is no one way to accomplish either of these. Furthermore, exactly how would you know if you had done so? Is it people saying, "I know the Bible better" or "I pray more often"? It could be.

So my first goal is to join with Evangelism and Discipleship in developing a strong framework for providing you with the best route for growth we can envision by June of this year.

How can you help? I'm glad you asked! You can be intentional. In the educational process, there is a lot of work put into how a course is taught, which subjects come first, etc. But there is no substitute for a student who is eager to learn.

I think the same is true in spiritual matters. Whether you have time to attend classes or you are more immersed in diaper changing than Bible study, we can all set goals for our own growth. We can seek out mentors. And we can ask the Lord to help us take that next step of faith, whatever that may be.

There are not many churches with as vigorous a body of believers as we have here at First. I think you are doing a terrific job of seeking out the Lord and being eager to know him. But there is always room for improvement!

That's goal one for me. I'll tell you about the others next month.

In Christ,




---

## SESSION *notes*

This month we approved a Ministry Action Plan. In other words, our budget. There are two things you should know about this budget: First, it is a balanced budget. If everyone does their part, we should be able to meet the ministry commitments that we have set for our year. Second, we have paid off all debts. After some years where we were challenged by circumstances, we are now clear of all debt and are freer to look forward to what the Lord is doing at First.

We have a couple of initiatives in the works right now. One is exploring how we might offer higher level theological courses to interested members while remaining right here in Florence. Updates to come.

As a group, we are going to explore Carey Nieuwhof's book *Lasting Impact: Seven Powerful Conversations that will Help Your Church Grow*. You are invited to think through those same ideas with us. We'll do a chapter a month, starting in April.

Finally, we are thinking through how we might reach out to those who came to our church last year but whom we have missed seeing this year. If that is you, we miss you! Please let us know how we can help you to connect with us once again.



# 'You will be my witness ... to the ends of the earth'

## Where does my contribution to FPC go?

That's a good question, and one I'm happy to answer. First Presbyterian Church depends on the generosity of our covenant partners to carry out the ministry and mission of the church. In 2025, our covenant partners gave a little over \$2 million in support of the work of FPC. Your gifts provide funding for our music/worship ministry (Chancel Choir, Praise Team, Chancel Handbell, and various ensembles). Additionally, your giving enables us to provide quality ministry activities for preschool, children, youth and adults. Before His ascension to heaven, Jesus told His followers, "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). In 2025, your gifts to First Presbyterian Church were sent out to 10 international missionaries, including those serving in Moscow, Haiti, and India. Funds also went out to approximately 18 local benevolence agencies (Lighthouse Ministries, Mercy Medicine, Tenacious Grace, A Choice to Make). These agencies serve our neighbors in Florence County. Your contributions also provide salaries for our pastoral, program, and support staff who work diligently to make the ministries of our church possible. Finally, your gifts are used to take care of the fixed costs associated with maintaining our campus (utilities, supplies, etc.). Thank you for your generosity in 2025 and for your continued financial support in 2026.

## Welcome Cris Baker

Cris Baker joined our custodial staff in February. He is a Florence native. He has extensive experience in the custodial field. He was most recently on the housekeeping staff of McLeod Regional Medical Center. Cris will be our part-time evening custodian, working Monday through Thursday evenings and rotating every third Sunday with other members of our custodial staff. Please take a moment to speak with Cris and give him a warm FPC Florence welcome!



## Campus Parking

You've probably noticed, attendance in worship and other church activities is increasing. We have plenty of on-campus parking and ample handicap accessible

parking in the lot behind the Sanctuary adjacent to the Jenkins Fellowship Hall. We are looking for ways to make a good first impression on our guests, and I think this is a good time for a "hospitality reminder" as it relates to parking on campus.

- ▶ **Park only in designated spaces** – This is a safety issue. Drivers and pedestrians need to be able to see and be seen in the church parking lots. Please avoid parking in a manner that blocks or restricts the traffic lanes in the parking lot. Also, please avoid blocking sidewalk access points. Parking under the portico at the entrance of the CLC is not permitted. This area is for loading and unloading only.
- ▶ **Do not block driveway entrances** – This is a particular concern on Park Avenue. When parking, please be sure your vehicle does not extend into the driveway entrance. This is a safety concern for people attempting to enter from or exit onto Park Avenue. It could also present an obstacle to first responders (fire, medic, police) in the event of an emergency.
- ▶ **Observe Handicap parking** – We have a number of parking spaces marked for use by our members and guests who have significant mobility impairments. Please observe these signs.
- ▶ **Practice "Sacrificial Parking"** – As a show of hospitality, I encourage all able-bodied covenant partners to begin or continue the practice of "sacrificial parking" and reserve the closer parking spaces for our guests and for those with mobility issues.

## 2025 Contribution Statements

In late January, statements were emailed to covenant partners and others who contributed to the ministry of First Presbyterian Church during 2025. Please contact me or Sonya Hunter if you did not receive a contribution statement or if you have questions about your statement. Thank you for your continued financial support of First Presbyterian Church.

## Winter Weather Financial Impact

Keep in mind that we missed two Sundays in a row due to snow and ice. Even though we didn't gather, expenses and our commitments continued. Please consider how you can help us "catch up" from the missed weeks!

# Adopting the Mind of Christ

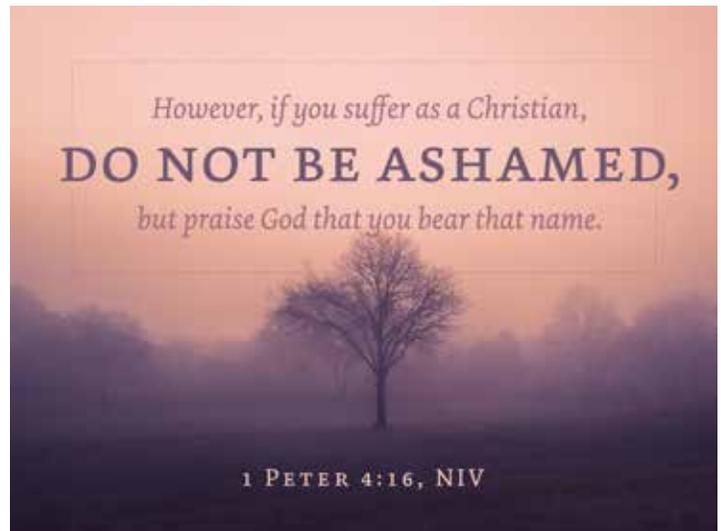
## 1 PETER 4

Author David Jeremiah in his book on 1 & 2 Peter asks: “How do you prepare yourself mentally for times of trial and adversity?” We are Christians in the midst of a culture which is apathetic to being disciples of Jesus. The recipients of the letter of 1 Peter are Christians in the midst of a Roman culture in the first century. I believe the trials Peter refers to in chapter four are the unfair disagreements the Christians have with Roman citizens. These disagreements led to abuse and persecution for the Christians who did not agree to pledge allegiance to the Roman emperor. This may have been one of the persecutions the Christians in the church of Northern Galatia were facing. These Christians were being persecuted — even murdered — because of Roman opposition to the Church. Being a Christian in the Roman empire who would not pledge allegiance to the emperor was seen as a form of treason.

Jesus suffered and was rejected by the Jewish Religious Leaders as he taught them the truth of Scripture. Peter tells the Christians that they are to understand their persecution as the rejection of Jesus. He received his persecution without retaliation. Peter says: “Arm yourselves also with the same mind (I Peter 4:1).” This verb is only used by Peter, and it can also mean equip. How do we equip ourselves to have the mind of Christ? I believe this is the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. I also think of putting on the armor of God as described in Ephesians 6.

As modern Christians understanding and interpreting 1 Peter, we need to recognize the return of Jesus was expected soon at the time of the writing of 1 Peter. “But the end of all things is at hand (I Peter 4:7).” Much of the acceptance of suffering was recommended because Peter felt time was short before Jesus came and established the Kingdom of God on earth.

The suffering of Jesus included his death. Jesus suffers innocently. His death saves humanity. Human suffering means all humans will die. If resurrection follows Jesus’ death, then his disciples will experience resurrection after their deaths. This is what I believe when Peter says suffering brings glory: “Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God



in this matter (1 Peter 4:16).” Jesus states this in the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:11-12): “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake.”

Christians need to be ready to share their faith and the reasons they believe in Jesus as the Messiah. This type of suffering is seen as discipline. “Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful, nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it (Hebrews 12:11).”

This is a serious and somber subject for modern Christians. I believe the suffering we face is apathy rather than persecution. We must be ready to defend and share our faith in the faithfulness of God. If God is faithful to us in Jesus, then we should be faithful in our witness to Jesus.

*Mike*

**UPDATE**

*Women's Event*

**GOD'S PLAN FOR  
HEALTHY EATING  
& A HEALTHY LIFE**

**12:15 P.M. SUNDAY, MARCH 22  
FELLOWSHIP HALL**

*Guest speaker*  
Certified Health Coach and Christian Health Mentor  
*Christina O'Malley*

Nutritional lunch, snacks, and recipes will be served. Cost: \$5.  
Childcare available. Register with QR code.  
Contact Janet Brand: janet81661@aol.com



## Women in Ministry 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:** 2:30 p.m. Sunday, March 15,  
Evelyn Childers' home

**Chairwoman:** Alexis Morris

### **Women of Grace**

**Meeting:** 6:30 p.m. Monday,  
March 16, Japonica Lane

**Chairwoman:** Betsey Moore

**Bible Moderator:** Charissa Canfield

### **Joyful Hearts**

**Meeting:** 10 a.m. Tuesday, March 10,  
Room 100

**Chairwomen:** Alice Caldwell and  
Nancy Thompson

**Bible Moderator:** Betsy Olsen

### **Soul Sisters**

**Meeting:** Noon Tuesday, March 10  
Price Classroom

**Chairwoman:** Carolyn Holland

**Bible Moderator:** Patti Hubbs

### **Serenity**

**Meeting:** 3 p.m. Tuesday, March 10  
Lawson-Rain Chapel

**Chairwoman:** Linda Smiley

**Bible Moderator:** Tabatha Davis

### **Prayer Warriors**

**Meeting:** 6:30 p.m. Wednesday,  
March 11, WOC

**Chairwoman:** Amy Williams

### **Wednesday Night Women**

**Meeting:** 6:15 p.m. Wednesday,  
March 11, Parlor

**Chairwoman:** Laura Marecal

**Bible Moderator:** Emily Whitehead

### **Disciples**

**Meeting:** Noon Thursday, March 12  
off campus

**Chairwoman:** Janet Brand

**Bible Moderator:** Kimberly Packard

### **Bread and Fish**

**Meeting:** 9 a.m. Saturday, March 14  
Women's Only Classroom

**Chairwoman:** Peggy Swearingen



# MUSIC MINISTRY



## Calling all musicians, vocalists



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 TBD

*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.*

## EASTER LILIES AND PALMS



Remember or honor a loved one this Easter as we herald the remembrance of our risen Lord with a profusion of lovely palms, lilies, and greenery to accompany our worship. Your gift of \$10 should be turned into the church office, along with your loved one's name, and your name and phone number by Monday, March 30.

**CIRCLE ONE:**

In memory / honor of \_\_\_\_\_

Given by:

Phone:

# Joyful February

February was filled with dancing, fellowship, laughter, and joy. The children enjoyed making snow and snowmen, learning about items that are big and small, writing their names, learning colors and shapes and much more. The children also enjoyed singing for the Keenagers during their monthly luncheon, the CDC/FPC Valentine's Dance, and Valentine's Day class parties.



# Parenting One on One

Come join Ms. Kelly on Wednesday nights for her class called Parenting One on One. There is still plenty of time to join us. We will meet from now until March 25.

During our time together, we will look at tools to add to our tool belt to hopefully help strengthen parenting skills. This class will be interactive with opportunities each week for anonymous Q&A time.

Participants will engage with one another as we share life experiences, dig into scripture, learn ways to parent differently while laughing together. Parenting is the hardest job in the world, and it really does take a village. Join the village and see where God leads.



## MEET THE CDC TEAM



### MRS. STEPHANY MCDOWELL

Mrs. Stephany is our bright, beautiful, smiling ray of sunshine, God-fearing and wise, 2K teacher who loves children and God with her whole heart. Mrs. Stephany joined the CDC family in August. She enjoys family time, church, teaching, and mud bogging on their ATVs. Most of all she enjoys the love of God and people. What Mrs. Stephany likes most about working at the CDC is the positive atmosphere, teaching her babies and having a relationship with their parents: "The CDC is a life changer for me. The experiences of shaping little minds are a work of the heart."

### HER FAVORITES

FOOD: Mexican, seafood, ox tails  
 COLOR: Pink  
 FLOWER: Roses  
 PLACE: Florida  
 SEASON: Fall

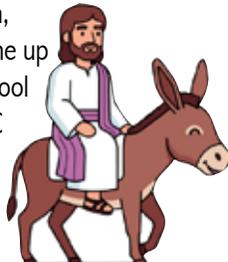


# SUNDAY

# MONDAY

# TUESDAY

# WEDNESDAY

<p><b>1</b> First Connections, 10 a.m. JFH Youth: Small Groups, 5 p.m.</p> 	<p><b>2</b> Worship Team Meeting, 5 p.m.</p>	<p><b>3</b> Keenagers, noon JFH Boys &amp; Girls Club Steak N Burger Dinner, 6 p.m.</p> 	<p><b>4</b> WiM Bible Moderators, 5 p.m. Wednesday Dinner, 5:30 p.m. Youth Group, 5:30 p.m. Wednesday Programs, 6 p.m. WiM Coordinating Team, 6 p.m.</p>
<p><b>8 Daylight Saving Time</b> New Covenant Partners introduced during services Youth: Paintball, 1:30 p.m. Birds &amp; Bees, 4 p.m. Sanctuary</p> 	<p><b>9</b> Florence Garden Club, 10 a.m. WOC Girl Scouts, 4:30 p.m. Evening of Hope, 6:30 p.m. Florence Center</p>	<p><b>10</b> WiM Joyful Hearts, 10 a.m. WiM Soul Sisters, noon WiM Serenity, 3 p.m. Enabling team meeting, 5:30 p.m. WinShape leadership planning meeting, 5:30 p.m.</p>	<p><b>11</b> Veterans Brunch, 8 a.m. Missions Team, 12:15 p.m. Wednesday Dinner, 5:30 p.m. Youth Group, 5:30 p.m. Wednesday Programs, 6 p.m. WiM Wednesday Night Women, 6:15 p.m. Parlor Prayer Warriors, 6:30 p.m.</p>
<p><b>15</b> First Connections, 10 a.m. JFH Children's Sunday planning, noon CLC WiM Salty Sisters, 2 p.m. Youth: Spring Getaway</p>	<p><b>16</b> WiM Women of Grace, 6:30 p.m. off campus</p> 	<p><b>17 St. Patrick's Day</b> Evangelism &amp; Discipleship, noon WOC Diaconate Meeting, 6 p.m.</p> 	<p><b>18</b> Wednesday Dinner, 5:30 p.m. Youth Group, 5:30 p.m. Wednesday Programs, 6 p.m.</p>
<p><b>22</b> Children's Sunday Planning, noon CLC Women's Healthy Lunch, noon JFH Youth: Small Groups, 5 p.m.</p>	<p><b>23</b> CDC Book mobile, 9 a.m. Girl Scouts, 4:30 p.m. CDC Staff meeting, 6 p.m. JFH St. Anthony Catholic School Musical, 7 p.m. CLC</p>	<p><b>24</b> St. Anthony Catholic School Musical, 4 p.m. CLC Session, 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p><b>25</b> Wednesday Dinner, 5:30 p.m. Youth Group, 5:30 p.m. Wednesday Programs, 6 p.m. St. Anthony Catholic School Musical, 7 p.m. CLC</p>
<p><b>29 Palm Sunday</b> Palm Sunday procession, 10:50 a.m. children line up St. Anthony Catholic School Musical, 1:30 p.m. CLC Easter Egg Hunt, 4 p.m. off campus</p> 	<p><b>30 Holy Monday</b></p>	<p><b>31 Holy Tuesday</b> Deadline to register for the Men's Retreat</p>	<p><b>APRIL</b> <b>1 Holy Wednesday</b></p>

# THURSDAY

# FRIDAY

# SATURDAY

# MARCH

## WEEKLY

**5**  
 Youth: F.E. Pop's, 7 a.m.  
 Faith in Motion Men's Bible study, 7:45 a.m.  
 Good News Club, 2 p.m.  
 HFF Family Blessing, 4 p.m.  
 Kiwanis Pancake Supper, 5 p.m.  
 Girl Scouts leaders, 6:30 p.m.

**6**  
  
 Confirmation Retreat, Friday-Sunday

**7**  
 Spring Getaway deadline  


### SUNDAYS

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

**12**  
 Donuts for Dad's, 7 a.m.  
 Youth: F.E. Pop's, 7 a.m.  
 Faith in Motion Men's Bible study, 7:45 a.m.  
 WiM Disciples, noon  
 Good News Club, 2 p.m.

**13**  
 InterVarsity team meeting, 10 a.m. Lawson-Rain  
 Youth: Spring Getaway, 2 p.m.  


**14**  
 Parking Lot Mission, 6 a.m.  
 WiM Bread & Fish, 9 a.m.  
 Women's Only Classroom Service for Bob Silver, 1 p.m.  
 Youth: Spring Getaway

### MONDAYS

- CDC Chapel, 9 a.m.
- 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.

**19**  
 Faith in Motion Men's Bible study, 7:45 a.m.  
 Good News Club, 2 p.m.  


**20** **Spring begins**  
 St. Anthony Catholic School, 4 p.m. CLC  


**21**  
 Florence Music Festival, 8 a.m.  
 Service for James Cook, 2 p.m.  
 Youth: Hockey game, 7 p.m.

### TUESDAYS

- Staff meeting, 10 a.m.
- Just for Women Bible Study, 11 a.m.
- CDC Music Time, 3 p.m.

### WEDNESDAYS

- Family Night Dinner, 5:30 p.m.
- Youth Group, 5:30 p.m.
- Wednesday Night Electives, 6 p.m.
- Chancel Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.

**26**  
 Youth: F.E. Pop's, 7 a.m.  
 Faith in Motion Men's Bible study, 7:45 a.m.  
 Good News Club, 2 p.m.  
 St. Anthony Catholic School Musical, 4 p.m. CLC  
 Wedding Rehearsal, 5 p.m.

**27**  
 St. Anthony Catholic School Musical, 4 p.m. CLC  
 DuBose Wedding, 4 p.m.

**28**  
 St. Anthony Catholic School Musical, 1 p.m. CLC  
 Florence Music Festival, 2:30 p.m. Sanctuary

### THURSDAYS

- Men's Bible Study, 7 a.m.
- Youth Coffee, 7 a.m.
- Faith in Motion men's study, 7:45 a.m.
- Women's Bible Study, 10:30 a.m.

### MARCH DINNERS

- March 4: Barbecue/chicken bog, slaw, rolls, and peach cobbler
- March 11: Pancakes/grits, bacon, scrambled eggs, and fruit
- March 18: Chicken tenders, green beans, mac and cheese, and chocolate cake squares
- March 25: Baked ham, potato salad, broccoli, and brownies

**2** **Maunder Thursday**  


**3** **Good Friday**      **4** **Holy Saturday**  

  
 A lot can happen in seven days.



# Lord, Hear Our Prayer

MAY GOD BE GRACIOUS TO US AND BLESS US AND MAKE HIS FACE SHINE UPON US. PSALM 67:1



## SYMPATHY

Kathy Hatfield and Debbie Wilson, loss of their mother, Helen Brown  
Family of Clariann Kellam  
Melanie Neal, loss of her mother, Myrnith Noble  
Karen Silver, loss of her husband, Bob  
Family of Phyllis Williams

## SICK & RECOVERING

Aubrey Crawford      Rainey Josey  
Quincy Kennedy      Dave and Linda Lawson  
Bob McLean          Lalla Saleeby  
Ginger Sullivan      Mary Lynn van Witzenburg

## EXTENDED CARE

<b>Lowman Home</b>	<b>The Manor</b>
Mac King	Betty Bell
<b>Presbyterian Community</b>	Joyce Floyd
Nell Oliver	Maria Whitehead

## HOUSEHOLDS

Flock 1: Allen and Vicky McCall  
Flock 2: Ellen Pearson  
Flock 3: Letty Hall  
Flock 4: Judy Fuller  
Flock 5: Weber and Brittany Mimms, Margaret, Web, Ford  
Flock 6: Bruce and Patti Hubbs  
Flock 7: Donna Fields  
Flock 8: Berta Allen

## BAPTISM

Harry Edward Spencer,  
son of Rhett and Eliza Spencer

## BIRTH

John "McCcollough" Lewis, born February 2,  
son of John and Amy Lewis

## MEMORIALS

Helen Brown  
Myrnith Noble

## ELDERS

Rocky Pearce  
David Spivey

## DEACONS

Lee Nunn  
Pack Packard

## MISSIONS

Manna House  
Empower Believers Connections

## WOMEN IN MINISTRY

Meg Temple  
Amy Williams

## TEACHERS

Laura Anne Hofler  
Emily Lake

## STAFF

Cris Baker  
Leroy Williams

## CDC STAFF

Ms. Allie  
Mrs. Christina  
Ms. Frances  
Ms. Lynn

## FLOWERS IN THE SANCTUARY

March 1: Communion  
March 8: Ellen Pearson  
March 15: Karen Silver  
March 22: Ginger Sullivan  
March 29: Easter lilies

*Do you have a friend or relative you would like to honor? Contact Genia Tyson at 843-992-8904.*

# March BIRTHDAYS

**MARCH 1**

Kristen Myers

**MARCH 2**

Michael Coker  
Jan Green  
Sullivan Johnson  
Maggie Jones

**MARCH 3**

Karen Silver

**MARCH 5**

Billy McBride  
Amanda McLaurin  
Maggie Reames  
John Richey  
Hattie Kaye Scott  
Ed Sprenger

**MARCH 6**

Denise Alvey  
Mary Wallis Vaught

**MARCH 7**

Matthew Dowdell

**MARCH 8**

Donald Buckner  
Brooklynne Clancy  
Karen Johnson

**MARCH 9**

Amelia Abernathy  
Philip Leach

**MARCH 10**

Klay Kennedy

**MARCH 11**

June Chang-Kim  
Kaitlyn Molnar  
Luke Williams

**MARCH 12**

Hal Campbell  
Madison Hindman  
Daniel Hubbs  
Anna Watt

**MARCH 13**

Whit Dozier  
Eleanor Early  
Grace Munn  
Julianne Newton  
Mike Nunn  
Emily Patton

**MARCH 14**

Carson Jeffords  
Marcia McNeil

**MARCH 15**

Weave Whitehead

**MARCH 16**

Bankston Wallace

**MARCH 17**

Ford Hofler  
Wilson Josey

**MARCH 18**

Levi Hayes

**MARCH 19**

Joyce Dalsbo  
Steven Halus  
Marla Kunz

**MARCH 20**

Beth Brown  
Hunter Grace Bulloch  
Cannon Coker  
Elizabeth Fast  
Sonya Molnar  
Madison Williams

**MARCH 21**

William Duncan  
Ronald Hayes  
Merrell Kennedy  
Anne Evans Scott

**MARCH 22**

Pam Meharg

**MARCH 23**

Libbie Reames

**MARCH 24**

Ashleigh Bulliner  
Elizabeth Frost  
Hope Hanna  
Ann Spearman

**MARCH 25**

Dan Abernathy  
Noah Johnson  
Jean Lavespere  
Jeremy Williams

**MARCH 26**

Jack Banner  
Brandon Blankenship  
Mike Fleenor  
Nell Oliver

**MARCH 27**

Jane Heath  
Bob Olsen  
Jude Packard

**MARCH 28**

Kathy Crawford  
Mary Ervin  
Donna Fields  
Stone Lewis  
Allyson Pittman

**MARCH 29**

Berta Allen  
Megan Matthews  
Mary McMillian  
Ted Moore

**MARCH 31**

Gamble Dozier  
Warren Montgomery  
Terry Rardon



Dear CDC Family,

As we enter the Lenten season, Pastor Stuart's sermon, "[Our True Calling](#)" has been ruminating in my mind. As I pondered his message, I kept asking myself: Who am I? To whom do I belong? What/who do people see when they see me? Do they know I am a disciple, that I follow Jesus?



ON THE WEB

Pastor Stuart's sermon  
*Our True Calling*



As I thought about each of these questions, I felt moved to share these questions with you. Who are you? To whom do you belong? What or who do people see when they see you? Do they know you are a disciple?

I believe with my whole heart that it is extremely important for all of God's children, regardless of age, to think about these questions and talk about them with our children, our family members, co-workers, and even strangers.

Knowing who we are, whose we are, and what it looks like to be a disciple of Jesus is a true testament to our faith. I know it took me awhile to learn that I am a COG, a child of God, and that I belong to Him. I am so thankful for the disciples who instilled these values within me. If it weren't for them, the ones who saw me for me and showed me the way of Jesus, I am not sure where I would be.

I pray that during the Lenten journey, you, too, will spend time thinking about these questions all while helping your children, grandchildren, loved ones or even strangers, know who they are, whose they are and what it means to know and follow Jesus. After all, this is "Our True Calling."

Much love,  
Kelly

*"By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." John 13:35*

Dear Church Family,

February was full of growth, laughter, and meaningful moments in our Children's Ministry. From bright smiles at Sunday Morning services to thoughtful conversations about God's Word, it is such a joy to witness the ways our children are learning and growing together.

As we move closer to Easter, we are helping them understand the depth of Christ's love and the hope we carry because of Him.

This past month, we also re-established our Children's Ministry Team — a structure that has served us well in the past and is now stepping into a renewed season. I am so thankful for Karen Jordan, Janet Brand, Laura Anne Hofler, and Emily Lake, who continue their faithful dedication to the children of First Presbyterian. These women have long been pillars in our ministry, and their experience, wisdom, and heart for children are such a gift. If you ever have thoughts, feedback, or simply want to share how we can better serve your family, our team is always glad to listen and pray alongside you. It is truly a blessing to serve in a church that loves its children so deeply.

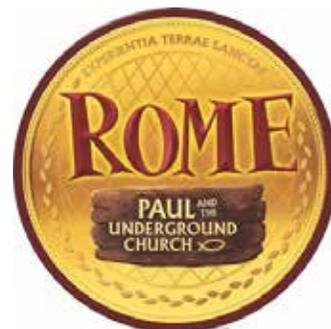
In Christ's love,  
Kaiti Bryant

## VBS Summer 2026

### Save the Date!

### June 15-18

Registration opens April 2.  
For more information,  
contact Kaiti Bryant,  
[kbryant@florencefirst.org](mailto:kbryant@florencefirst.org).



# BIRDS & BEES

**A Parent Education Talk with Mary Flo Ridley**



**Mary Flo Ridley**

**\$20 admits two adults to the event.**

**What You'll Learn:**

Talking to kids about bodies, boundaries, and sex doesn't have to be awkward or overwhelming. Join nationally known speaker **Mary Flo Ridley** for an encouraging, practical talk designed to help parents:

- Know **what to say** when kids ask big questions
- Learn **when and how** to start age-appropriate conversations
- Build trust so your child comes to **you first**, not the internet or peers
- Approach these topics calmly, confidently, and in line with your family's values

This talk is for **parents of children of all ages**- from toddlers to teens- and focuses on simple, everyday conversations rather than "one big talk."

**Childcare will be provided for children from nursery-2 years old, 3K-5K, and 1st-5th grade during this event.**

**March 8, 2026**  
4:00pm-6:00pm

**First Presbyterian Church**  
700 South Park Avenue  
Florence, SC 29501








## 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
March 1	9 a.m.	Kelly Hickey	Abby Ansley
	11 a.m.	Charissa Canfield	Ellen Wilhoit
March 8	9 a.m.	Kelly Hickey	Eliza Spencer
	11 a.m.	Charissa Canfield	Kaiti Bryant
March 15	9 a.m.	Kelly Hickey	Kaiti Bryant
	11 a.m.	Charissa Canfield	Gracie Tolson
March 22	9 a.m.	Kelly Hickey	Kaiti Bryant
	11 a.m.	Charissa Canfield	Margaret Jones
March 29	9 a.m.	Kelly Hickey	Linda Smiley
	11 a.m.	Charissa Canfield	Marla Slaughter



# Lenten Happenings



## Palm Sunday Procession



11 a.m. service March 29

Children are invited to take part in our Palm Sunday Procession during the 11 a.m. worship service as we celebrate Jesus' joyful entry into Jerusalem. Children should gather with Ms. Kaiti outside the church steps by 10:50 a.m. to receive a palm and get ready for the procession into worship. Children attending the 9 a.m. service are welcome to join and depart after the procession.

This beloved tradition is a joyful and meaningful way for our children to participate in Palm Sunday, and we are so excited to celebrate this special moment with them again this year.



## EASTER EGG HUNT

4-5 p.m. Sunday, March 29

The Whitehead's Farm, 175 W. Pocket Rd.

Children and families are invited to join us for our **annual Easter Egg Hunt**—a fun-filled afternoon celebrating the joy of Easter! Be sure to bring your **Easter basket** and the **whole family** as we gather for this beloved tradition.

As we prepare for this exciting event, we need your help! We invite members of the congregation to support the hunt by providing **at least two dozen boiled and decorated eggs**. Our goal is 800 boiled eggs (approximately 67 dozen) to make this event extra special for our children.

Eggs may be dropped off Sunday morning, March 29. Coolers will be available outside the kitchen area in the CLC for dropoff. Thank you for helping make this joyful Easter tradition possible for our children and families — we can't wait to celebrate together!

Our 2026 Confirmands began their classes and Catechism journey in September, and we are excited to recognize this special year as they prepare to be confirmed with the Session and celebrated during Confirmation Sunday at 10 a.m. May 3 combined worship service. Please keep these young people in your prayers as they continue this incredible journey, growing together in faith and deepening 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

### Confirmand and Youth Service Project

Confirmands and youth are invited to join Miss Kaiti for a special service project on Sunday, March 29. Students will serve our church's children and families by helping hide over 60 dozen eggs for the Easter Egg Hunt.

Immediately following worship, students will help load the eggs, enjoy lunch and fellowship together at Cook Out, and then travel by church bus to the Whitehead Farm to hide the eggs. Students and families are welcome to stay for the Easter Egg Hunt at 4 p.m.

Please contact Kaiti Bryant, [kbryant@florencefirst.org](mailto:kbryant@florencefirst.org), by Sunday, March 22, to sign up or with any questions.



# Children's Sunday

This Mother's Day, May 10, our children will keep a beloved tradition alive by leading the entire worship service — from greeting and ushering to singing, praying, and more! If your child would like to participate in this special service, please contact Kaiti Bryant by March 8 to sign up, [kbryant@florencefirst.org](mailto:kbryant@florencefirst.org).

## Planning Sessions, 3rd–5th Grade

Beginning Sunday, March 15, third through fifth graders are invited to join Miss Kaiti and Ms. Kelly for planning sessions in preparation for Children's Sunday. We will meet with lunch in the CLC, immediately following the 11 a.m. service until 1:30 p.m.

Sessions also include March 22 and April 12.

## Practices, 1st–5th Grade

Starting Sunday, April 19, all children in first through fifth grade will begin rehearsals together. Practices will take place in the CLC, immediately following the 11 a.m. service until 1:30 p.m. Lunch will be provided. Other rehearsal dates include April 26 and May 3.

The Special Dress Rehearsal will be from 5:30 to 6:15 p.m. Wednesday, May 6, in the Sanctuary.

If you have any questions, please contact Kaiti. We are so excited to see our children lead worship in this meaningful and joyful way!



## Lunch to feature high school musicians

Keenagers will meet at noon March 3 in the fellowship hall. The program will feature Wilson High School Tiger Production accompanied by Betsy Johnson. Meal will include corned beef, boiled potatoes, glazed carrots, cabbage salad, Irish soda bread, and pistachio fluff. All covenant partners 55 and older are welcome to join for food, fun, and fellowship. Cost of meal is \$6.

## Wednesday Nights at First

On Wednesday nights, First Presbyterian offers dinner and programs for all ages. Dinner service and Youth Group start at 5:30 p.m. Children's programs start at 6 p.m. Adult programs start at 6:15 p.m.

We offer two classes for adults. Pastor Stuart Bond leads a study on the *Book of Luke* and Kelly Hickey leads a class on parenting. Pastor Stuart digs through the text to enhance your Sunday worship experience, as he'll be preaching from Luke. Join him in the Lawson-Rain Chapel after Wednesday dinner.

Kelly, director of Children's Ministries, leads *Parenting One on One*, an interactive class diving into scripture, learning ways to parent differently, and engaging with one another.



Betsy Johnson



Don Hebert

## 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 Betsy Johnson, our Music Ministry Assistant, who rejoined our staff in February 2023.

Betsy previously served First Presbyterian Church as Director of Music. We also recognize Don Hebert our Church Administrator, who joined us in March 2014. Thank you, Betsy and Don; we are grateful for you and your contributions to the ministry of First Presbyterian Church.

## Donations sought for March blood drive

We could really use your help as we prepare for our upcoming blood drive on March 24. There are open appointments between noon and 5 p.m., and here are two ways to help us meet our goal of 25 donations.

1. If you haven't scheduled your donation yet, sign up! Make your appointment at [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org) using sponsor code *FirstPresFlorence* or download the Blood Donor App.
2. Invite a friend to our drive. Donating blood is always more fun with a friend, so bring one along or in place of your donation.

The community is invited to take part in this special event and donate blood for hospital patients in our neighborhoods and across the nation.

# Scouting for Food



Scouts collected so many donations from their neighbors for The Manna House as part of a Cub Scout project. Pictured above from left are Ford, Hayes, John, and Benjamin Hofler, sons of Jack and Laura Anne Hofler. At right, John and Taylor Early's second-grade Cub Scout son, John, stands with the food he collected as part of the "Scouting For Food" service project. Our Cub Scouting ministry is a combined ministry with Central United Methodist Church. If interested in Cub Scouts, contact Jack Hofler at [jack.hofler@gmail.com](mailto:jack.hofler@gmail.com).

## Men's Retreat: A Game Changer for Life

There are 2 Questions every man must answer:

- No.1: Who am I?
- No. 2: Why am I here?

The first is a question of IDENTITY. And the second is a question of PURPOSE.

Our Men's Retreat is going to ask you to consider these two vital questions. In an atmosphere of FUN ... FRIENDSHIP ... FAITH, I believe this weekend can be a "difference maker" in every realm of your life — relational, vocational, and yes, spiritual.

Do yourself a favor and commit to attending our Men's Retreat, April 17-19, at Hickory Knob State Park. This will be a great opportunity to have some fun, build life-long friendships, and explore what a life of Significance looks like.

It's MARCH! No more procrastination ... go to Realm, use the QR code, or the church office to register for our Men's Retreat. If you have any questions, contact me, 407-473-0912.



Bill Cain

P.S. Registration ENDS on March 31.

# Service project, snow fun round out February

February was fun! We went on a ski trip to Snowshoe in West Virginia. The youth always look forward to this trip. A big shout out to the Packards and the Emerts for joining us as chaperones and for braving the snow, ice, and everything else. The Super Bowl party was fun! Thank you to the Genobles for hosting this year.

As a service project, the youth have been collecting food items for The Manna House, Florence's community soup kitchen and pantry. Thank you so much to everyone who made donations.

Our small groups started back and we are learning about spiritual gifts this semester.

Summer trips, event dates, and information will be finalized and sent out next week! We are excited that Catherine Canfield and Penn Packard will be joining us and serving as summer interns.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Sunday School** (March 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29) 10 a.m.  
Light breakfast served.

**Small Groups** (March 1 and 22) 5-7 p.m. Dinner provided.

**Wednesday Night Youth Group** (March 4, 11, 18, and 25) 5:30-7:15 p.m.  
Food, raffles, and service projects! \$7 dinner provided by the church. On March 25, we will dye Easter eggs.

**Coffee at F.E. Pop's** (March 5, 12, 19, and 26) 7 a.m.

**Paintball** (March 8) 1:30 – 6 p.m.  
We will meet at the church and go to Pee Dee Paintball (Darlington). Cost is \$45. Snacks and water provided. Bring a friend!  
**Please sign up and pay by Wednesday, February 25.**

**Spring Getaway** (March 13-15) Leave at 2 p.m. for Dreher Island State Park in Chapin. We will spend time in God's word through quiet times, small groups, and worship. There will be team games, canoes, time around the campfire, and more! Cost will be \$85. If there are multiple siblings or friends that join, each will get \$25 off their trip. Youth will need



money for two meals on the road. **Please sign up and pay by Friday, March 7.**

**Pee Dee Ice Cats Hockey Game** (March 21) 7 p.m.  
We will meet at the Florence Center. Tickets start at \$16. Once I have numbers, I can give you the exact price. They only take cards, or you can bring cash, and I will purchase the tickets in advance.  
**Please sign up and pay ASAP.**

**Easter Egg Hunt** (March 29) Noon to 5 p.m.  
Youth will help hide the eggs and are encouraged to stay to spend time with their church family.



700 PARK AVENUE, FLORENCE, SC 29501  
843-662-2583  
FLORENCEFIRST.ORG

## CHURCH STAFF

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

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

JOIN US FOR AN

# EASTER EGG HUNT

MARCH 29 | 4 - 5 PM

## THE WHITEHEAD'S FARM

175 W. Pocket Road

AS WE PREPARE, WE NEED YOUR HELP  
WE INVITE COVENANT PARTNERS TO SUPPORT THE HUNT  
BY PROVIDING TWO DOZEN BOILED AND DECORATED EGGS.  
OUR GOAL IS 800 EGGS!  
DROP OFF EGGS THE MORNING OF MARCH 29  
OUTSIDE THE KITCHEN AREA IN THE CLC.