

The REMINDER

JULY 2026

Vacation Bible School

Our church community came together in June for a week of Bible school. One hundred and nineteen children participated with 71 volunteers involved. The fifth-graders' week was mission-oriented with acts of service, volunteering at My Brother's Keeper, Manna House, Foster Care Clothing Closet, and more. The younger children stayed on campus learning about Rome during the time of Paul. The faith-filled fun included family time on the lawn, adventures under the big tent, crafts in the market place, and lessons with Paul, Brutus, and underground church leaders. For more pictures, see pages 16 and 17.



Missions: Carol Crom, One Challenge

In May, Covenant Partner Carol Crom celebrated her 40th anniversary of being a missionary. Also in May, a brief hospital stay delivered a full-circle connection: “Throughout the next four days (in the hospital), nurses, aides, respiratory therapists, doctors, lab techs, cleaners, and kitchen workers, colleagues, pastors and friends came and went, sometimes



performing two or three different activities at a time.

The Lord used each one. None more so than night nurse Heather. She noticed the beautiful shawl wrapped around my shoulders and asked if someone made it. “Yes. My church has a ‘knit and chat’ group who craft shawls for those facing unexpected trauma or transitions. A pastor from the Caring Ministries team brought this. The card said, ‘Think of this as a hug from your church.’ Isn’t that lovely?” Heather asked which church. “First Presbyterian, downtown.” She replied, “They’re really involved in the community and support several local outreaches.” “Yes,” I added, “and they support mission efforts around the world, including me.”

I told her May marked the 40th anniversary of my first smuggling trip to deliver Christian books behind the Iron Curtain and that I lived in Bratislava, Slovakia, almost

18 years before returning to the U.S. She exclaimed, “Slovakia? That’s amazing! My husband is Czech. His grandfather was a Baptist pastor in eastern Czechoslovakia who received smuggled Christian books! They had a big wooden box in the yard of their family chata (cabin), where teams left books they brought in that were later delivered to believers across Czechoslovakia.” That grandfather’s church also participated in underground training for church leaders like that which Entrust facilitated across the Soviet bloc starting in 1979. Incredible! Over the next few hours, I learned the grandfather was a member of a group of pastors who were betrayed in the late 1970s or early 80s. All but two were shot and killed. Afterward, he was pressured but refused to join the Communist party. He was informed his children would never have opportunities to study or get good jobs. That’s what prompted Heather’s mother- and father-in-law to escape with their two sons and spend a year in a refugee camp in Yugoslavia waiting for a sponsor to the U.S. or Australia. In 1986, their family of four arrived in California with \$100.

“I’d love for my husband to meet you,” Heather said. I was eager to hear more of his story. She said she could not ethically give me her contact information since I was a patient, but if I gave her mine after I was released from the hospital, she’d text me. I happily agreed and sure enough, the next Sunday I received a message, “I hope you had a lovely sabbath. How are you feeling?” I have yet to meet her husband in person, but we will!

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ON THE COVER: First-graders listen to VBS leaders Taylor Early and Connie Stewart during Family Time on the lawn.



Gray Scott, The Antioch Partners

Join us at 11 a.m. Sunday, July 12, in the Jenkins Fellowship Hall for a meet and greet with Missionary and Covenant Partner Gray Scott, who works with The Antioch Partners, a missions sending organization.

She serves in Barcelona, Spain, with Arab Ministries. Arab Ministries works with the Arab migrant community in and around Barcelona, meeting their practical, psychological and social needs. Through relationships developed at their community centers, Gray works as the hands and feet of Jesus so they can encounter Him.

This spring Gray attended both a conference and retreat that equipped and encouraged her: “(The retreat with The Antioch Partners) was a time of refreshment and blessing, and I look forward to sharing more details.”

Subscribe to her newsletter: gray-scott.epistle.org/subscribe.



Restorative Summer

Cindy and I have some news that I will only tease here because there just has to be an upcoming sermon when I can use it as an example of his grace. The net is, we are doing great.

My sense is that this is a gracious time for our church. Most of us are enjoying some lazy summer days, with many making journeys to the beach. Soon enough the obligations and opportunities of the Fall will be upon us. For now, I think of that gentle line from Psalm 23: 2-3a,

*He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,
he refreshes my soul.*

Spirit



Vacation Bible School's Paul visits with the children ahead of the day's faith-filled fun.

SESSION *notes*



We are continuing to fill in the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee with a representative from the Deacons, Brandon Blankenship, and two representatives from Session, Porter Stewart and Janet Brand. Now it is up to our ad hoc committee to nominate four persons from the Congregation to complete our committee. Please consider who you think might be a good choice to serve on that body, ask them if they would be willing, and if they say "yes," please nominate them via the nomination forms we have at the church.

We celebrated the VBS that was just completed and look forward to the Lord touching young lives at WinShape Camp and Fun in the Son for highschoolers. We also learned of a "new," longtime ministry coming to us at First. The Tabernacle is a re-staging of the "Tent of Meeting" that is described in the Torah. Some of our dedicated leaders have carried forth this minis-

try for more than 20 years. After a windstorm tore it up in New Jersey, the future looked bleak for The Tabernacle. But, by God's grace, it is back and coming to our church in late September.

We stopped to pray for this endeavor that reaches about 5,000 people each time it is set up. We ask you to pray. And also, to volunteer. This effort takes dozens of willing hands to put it up and dozens more to serve as guides. No great knowledge of the Old Testament required! Just a willing heart and a desire to see people encounter the Lord is all that is needed. The Tabernacle Team will train you in the rest.

With leaders like we have on our boards and a congregation that is willing to serve God in so many ways (keep praying for those foster kids we sponsored at WinShape), we think God has only begun what he has in mind for us.



*The LORD is righteous in all his ways and faithful
in all he does. PSALM 145:17, NIV*

Toward a Healthier Church

Stewardship is about more than money. But clearly monetary giving is the starting point. In the Old Testament we read: *“Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the LORD your God has blessed you.”* (Deuteronomy 16:17). The chart below is a snapshot of giving through the first six months of 2026.

2026 Ministry Action Plan Summary

Pledge Gifts Received	\$620,946.00
Non-Pledge Gifts Received	\$193,461.00
Miscellaneous Income	\$40,096.00
Total 2026 Ministry Action Plan Receipt	\$854,503.00
Average Weekly Need	\$38,424.00
Weekly Average (as of 6/21/26)	\$32,865.00
Weekly Average Surplus (Deficit)	(\$5,559.00)

Each year First Presbyterian Church asks our covenant partners to make a pledge to financially support the ministry and mission of the church in our community and around the world through our Ministry Action Plan. During our fall stewardship emphasis, 163 of our covenant partners made pledges supporting our **2026 Ministry Action Plan**. The Ministry Action Plan, approved by the Session totaled \$1.98 million. That translates to a weekly need of \$ 38,424 to fully fund the ministries of First Presbyterian Church for 2026. In addition to various church ministry programs (pre-school, children, youth, adults and an extensive music ministry) the Ministry Action Plan includes support to our missionaries (Emerts, Carol Crom, Gray Scott, and others) as well as providing support to the local agencies (House of Hope, Light House, Mercy Medicine, Tenacious Grace, A Choice to Make, etc.) As of publication, our **actual** weekly receipts are averaging \$ 32,865, which is less than the weekly need. This is not unique to our church. Many churches and non-profit organizations dependent on charitable giving from donors are experiencing similar financial challenges. There are numerous factors that are affecting giving trends. The good news is that, despite this deficit, First Presbyterian Church is current in our support of our missionaries. Additionally, our staff and ministry leaders are to be commended for being good stewards of what has been

given as they continue to plan and implement ministry activities. Examples of the health of our church abound. Additionally, our worship attendance this summer has been very good this year. We see new families visiting weekly and becoming involved in the life of our church. Elsewhere in the newsletter, you'll see pictures from our recent Vacation Bible School. When you look at things from that perspective, “Life is good!”

Contribution statements for January-June

Statements will be sent via email in early July. These statements are intended to serve as a reminder of the commitments made to support the mission and ministry of First Presbyterian Church. When you receive your statement, let me encourage you to reflect on what you see and respond as God prompts your heart.

In Memoriam Panel

The Columbarium Memory Garden adjacent to the Sanctuary is a beautiful addition to our campus. In addition to niches for inurnment of cremains, the columbarium features an “In Memoriam” section. The In Memoriam section provides an opportunity to permanently remember covenant partners, their spouses, children, as well as the parents of covenant partners, who are deceased and interred elsewhere. We have completed four panels and are working on a fifth one. Each panel contains eight (8) names, currently we have four names, which means we need four more to fill out the panel. Many of our covenant partners may not be aware of this way to memorialize a beloved family member. If you would like more information about the “In Memoriam” section or, are interested in reserving a niche please contact George Beshere, Steve Grady, or me. We'll be happy to assist you with the necessary arrangements. First Presbyterian Church is pleased to be able to offer this option for our covenant partners as part of the end-of-life planning process.

Considering Heaven: Focused on Eternity

2 PETER 3:1-18, JUDE 17-18

David Jeremiah, in *1 and 2 Peter*, asks: “What emotions do you feel when you consider your future in heaven?” Basic to the Christian message is the faith in eternal life. Because life is eternal, then it is logical that God is concerned how humans live that life.

Life on earth prepares us for eternal life. God wants humans to obey God’s will as outlined in the Law and Jesus’ teachings. God sent Jesus to show humans how to live on earth to prepare for eternal life. Our future in heaven is our eternal existence. Chapter 3 in 2 Peter builds on the warning of false teachers in 2 Peter 1 and 2. Chapter 3 is advice on how to live on earth in preparation for heaven. This final chapter includes many references to the important doctrines in Scripture.

The apostles’ witness to the words of the prophets and Jesus as the truth are two doctrines that help us control our earthly life. The Church and followers of Jesus are to believe there will be a “day of the LORD.”

“The day of the LORD” will come quickly and without warning like “a thief in the night (2 Peter 3:10, Luke 12:39-40, 1 Thessalonians 5:2, and Revelation 3:3, 16:15).

The world will be recreated on the day of the LORD. Those who have lived a godly life in obedience to God’s Law and Jesus’ teaching do not fear this day but look forward to it when they will inherit the new creation. This is language referencing the Second Coming of Jesus, called the Parousia.

Two Peter assumes this is the day the living will be judged and separated into the redeemed and wicked. The day of judgment will be a refining fire. Two Peter has images of creation and the great flood as evidence of the judgment day.

I believe the most important verse of 1 and 2 Peter is 2 Peter 3:9. This is the great promise of God to humanity: “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness, but is long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”

This promise details accepting the salvation that God offers through Jesus. The latter part of 2 Peter 3 outlines the judgment on the day of the LORD. This judgment is a destructive fire in which the earth is dissolved.

The letters of Paul are referenced as evidence that 1 and



2 Peter are witnesses to the true Gospel as preached by the apostles. It is possible the false teachers were distorting the letters of Paul which were circulating to the churches. We do not know how the teachings of Paul were being distorted.

The concluding doxology calls the reader to avoid the wicked lifestyle and “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18).”

Mike



Church News

Associate Pastor Nominating Committee

The ad hoc committee for selecting the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee welcomes and encourages your participation in the nominating process. If you have a name(s) of a covenant partner you would like the committee to consider for the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee, please use the form available in the Welcome Center and Sanctuary. Deadline for submissions is **July 12**. There will be 7 people who will serve on the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee, as outlined below:

1. **2 of the 7** will be sitting elders (nominated by the Session)
2. **1 of the 7** will be a sitting deacon (nominated by the Diaconate)
3. **4 of the 7** will be at-large FPC members

The ad hoc committee would appreciate your help by submitting nominees for the at-large positions. Anyone submitting a nomination must first ask the prospective nominee for their approval before submitting their name. It is important to recognize that any name placed in the nomination box has a real possibility of being selected. Prayerfully consider each name placed on the ballot and be sure to give nominees sufficient time to consider their willingness to serve. To help the committee consider the person's qualifications, please comment on the candidate by using the general guidelines on the form, which the denomination suggests for your consideration of nominees. Nominations can be placed in the boxes in the Welcome Center or Sanctuary, mailed to the church or given to a member of the ad hoc committee, which includes Elders Alice Caldwell and Chris Scott; Deacons Cathy Lee and Ed Sprenger; and Women in Ministry's Jane Heath.

RightNow Media access available

We've purchased unlimited access to thousands of Christian videos, and we're giving free access to everyone in our church. The extensive library of biblical video series for adults, youth, and children to stream on your favorite device. RightNow Media has programming taught by such leaders as Francis Chan, Jennie Allen, J.D. Greear, Dr. Tony Evans, and more. Use the QR code to create your free account or visit <https://app.rightnowmedia.org/join/FPCFlorence>.



Church Directories available

Labeled Church Directories are available for pick up in the Welcome Center by Covenant Partners that had their picture taken for the book.

For those who did not submit a portrait or get their picture made and would like a copy, directories are available in the church office for \$10.



Spots open for Mission Trip to Aqua Preita, Mexico

Covenant Partners are invited to join a delegation from Sharon Presbyterian Church on a cross-cultural mutual mission trip with churches and organizations in both Mexico and the U.S. through Frontera de Cristo to gain an understanding of spiritual, political, and economic connections across borders. Trip will be October 23-28. For those interested in finding out more, please contact Elder David Spivey, spiveys_@outlook.com or 704-604-3644. Cost is expected to be no more than \$1,500, including airfare, transportation, room, and meals. Lodging in the church building in Agua Prieta will be dormitory rooms, which provide access to a full kitchen, women's and men's bathrooms and showers.



Church family night at Flamingos a hit

More than 80 First Presbyterian Church family and friends showed up to cheer on the Florence Flamingos baseball game versus Tri-City Chili Peppers on June 19.

Blood Drive yields 11 units, next drive in October

Thank you to all who joined us for the blood drive. We were able to collect 11 units of our 17-unit goal. Help us surpass our goal in our next drive Tuesday, October 13. Register online at redcrossblood.org with sponsor code firstpresflorence.

— Submit church news to Kim Brauss in the church office, kbrauss@florencefirst.org.



Scouting Ministry

Our Scouts spent a week in June at Camp Barstow on Lake Murray. The summer camp program for Scouts is merit-badge based and activities include canoeing, kayaking, swimming, sailing, fishing, and more. In July, Hunter Morgan will lead a canoe campout on Lake Jocassee and Scoutmaster Luke Scott will help lead a New River Gorge rafting trip for our scouting ministry. Contact Scoutmaster Luke Scott for information on Boy Scouts, 843-621-3203. If your child is interested in Cub Scouts, grades K-5, email Jack Hofler, jack.hofler@gmail.com.

YOUTH MINISTRY

JOIN US IN MAKING A DIFFERENCE.

Volunteering can look like:

- Trip Chaperones
- Small Group Leaders
- Game Planners
- Music Leaders

Your engagement helps develop habits of community and fellowship among middle schoolers and high schoolers that will serve them well in all areas of life. Your support can range from providing transportation, a safe environment, to being a resource for education. Together, we can create meaningful connection in our community.

WE WANT YOU!



Bird, eggs, VBS fill June

The children had a wonderful time diving into the theme: “Birds and Eggs.” They learned about embryos, flying, habits and that eggs come in a variety of shapes, colors, and sizes. The 3K, 4K, and 5K summer classes enjoyed an amazing week of Vacation Bible School as they stepped into the world of the early church in Rome and discovered what it meant to follow Jesus during the time of Paul. They also enjoyed Kona Ice and a giant water slide. We ended the month with crazy sock day and wacky Wednesday. June was full of fun, love, laughter, and adventures. Thank you FPC for an amazing ministry!





MEET THE CDC TEAM



MS. MIRANDA DEAN

Ms. Miranda is our little but fierce, fun-loving, team player, who is determined, God-loving and faithful 3K teacher assistant who joined our team in June 2025. She is a Florence native and a 2007 South Florence graduate. She enjoys spending time with family, loves being a mom, and spending time with God. What she loves most about working at the CDC is the environment. The children are so smart and are so loved. God's love is strong in our school, and it shines on our children's faces every day.

HER FAVORITES

FOOD: Steak
 COLOR: All colors
 FLOWER: Wisteria and hydrangeas
 PLACE: with family
 SEASON: Not winter



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
28	29 	30	1 
5 Communion Sunday Traditional service, 10 a.m.	6 Church office closed Jobs for Life Graduation, 2 p.m. Worship Team, 5 p.m.	7 Treasured Tuesday: Dino Park, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Youth Prayer Retreat, 11 a.m. 	8 Veterans Brunch, 8 a.m. Missions Team, 12:15 p.m. Wonderful Wednesday: Flip Factory Zone, 12:30 p.m. Youth Prayer Retreat
12 Contemporary service, 10 a.m. Meet & Greet with Gray Scott, 11 a.m. Fellowship Hall Youth: RSVP for FLOAT 	13 CDC: Bookmobile, 9 a.m. Enabling Team, 5:30 p.m.	14	15 Youth: FLOAT, 9 a.m. Youth RSVP for wake park 
19 Traditional service, 10 a.m.	20 Youth: Shark Wake Park 	21 Evangelism & Discipleship Meeting, noon CDC: Helping Hands Parenting, 5 p.m. WOC Diaconate Meeting, 6 p.m. Youth RSVP for Brunch	22 Youth: Brunch and Tie-Dye 
26 Contemporary service, 10 a.m. 	27 CDC staff meeting, 6 p.m.	28 Session, 6:30 p.m.	29 School begins for Florence 1 

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

JULY

WEEKLY

<p>2 Youth: FE. Pop's, 9 a.m. Youth RSVP for Prayer Retreat CDC Fourth of July Parade, 1:30 p.m. CDC closes at 2 p.m.</p>	<p>3 CDC closed</p> 	<p>4 Independence Day</p> 
<p>9 Thundering Thursday: Frankie's Fun Park, 10:15 a.m. Youth Prayer Retreat</p> 	<p>10 Youth Prayer Retreat</p>	<p>11 Parking Lot Mission, 6 a.m. Flute recital, 1 p.m. Youth Prayer Retreat</p>
<p>16 Youth: FE. Pop's, 9 a.m.</p> 	<p>17</p> 	<p>18</p>
<p>23 Youth: FE. Pop's, 9 a.m.</p> 	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p> 
<p>30 Youth: FE. Pop's, 7 a.m.</p>	<p>31</p>	

SUNDAYS

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

MONDAYS

- CDC Bible Study, 12:15 p.m.
- Prayer Group, 2:30 p.m.
- Selah Yoga, 5:30 p.m.
- Boy Scouts, 6 p.m.
- Men's Bible Study, 7 p.m.

TUESDAYS

- Staff meeting, 10 a.m.

WEDNESDAYS

- Small Group Bible Study, 10 a.m.

THURSDAYS

- Men's Bible Study, 7 a.m.
- Youth Coffee, 9 a.m.
- Faith in Motion men's study, 7:45 a.m.
- Women's Bible Study, 10:30 a.m.



SICK & RECOVERING

Aubrey Crawford
Mary Kirkpatrick
Dave and Linda Lawson
Bob McLean
Ginger Sullivan
Peggy Swearingen

EXTENDED CARE

Betha

Margaret Baroody

The Manor

Betty Bell
Joyce Floyd
Maria Whitehead

Lowman Home

Mac King

Presbyterian Community

Nell Oliver

HOUSEHOLDS

Flock 1: Pam and Mike Morgan
Flock 2: Cille and Chris Scott, Pearce and Anne Evans
Flock 3: Kathy Hatfield
Flock 4: Brett and Donna Green
Flock 5: Susan Perrou
Flock 6: Tom and Michele Lewis, Jake and Benjamin
Flock 7: Don and Vicki Hebert
Flock 8: Yarrow and Michelle Babb, Kendall, and Kate, Emma, and Ben Carter

FLOWERS IN THE SANCTUARY

July 5: Communion
July 12: Open
July 19: Barbara Meeks
July 26: Marian Howard

*Do you have a friend or relative you would like to honor by placing flowers in the sanctuary?
Contact Genia Tyson at 843-992-8904.*

ELDERS

Janet Brand
Billy McBride

DEACONS

Weber Mimms
Hunter Morgan

MISSIONS

Gray Scott, The Antioch Partners
Helping Florence Flourish

WOMEN IN MINISTRY

Carol Banner
Carolyn Holland

TEACHERS

Patti Hubbs
Linda Smiley

STAFF

Kaiti Bryant
Kelly Hickey

CDC STAFF

Ms. Antwai'Nya
Mrs. Kendra
Mrs. Michele

July BIRTHDAYS

JULY 1

Belle Rockhill
Julia Watkins

JULY 2

William Bratton
Derek Hemmingsen
Pessy Losah
Weber Mimms

JULY 3

Tate Allison
Harriett Gilpin
Avery Hucks
Harper Suggs
Frances Welch

JULY 4

Natalie Hall
Louise King

JULY 5

Lucy Hubbs
Ken Jackson
Erik Marechal

JULY 6

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

JULY 7

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

JULY 8

Leslie Brodie
Emily Jordan
Maggie Reece

JULY 11

Missie Demory
Frank Hodges
Rob Lewis
David Spearman

JULY 12

John Hofler
Sammie Kennedy
Luke Poston
Susan Rhea

JULY 13

Nabil Cotran
Ann Houck

JULY 14

Marty Coates
Gregg Jones
Barbara Maffett

JULY 15

Eiley Foxworth
Lilly Gratham
Robbie Suggs

JULY 16

Pat Conyers
Emily Witt

JULY 17

Mary Margaret Eldridge
Mac Gandy
Jessica Garris
Mitchell Green
Margaret Lee
Jim Moseley

JULY 18

Robert Miles
Pam Morgan

JULY 19

Landen Turner
Blakely Witt

JULY 20

Nancy Harwell

JULY 21

John Boulware
Marsha Fincher
Denise King
Mike Porter
Freeman Williams

JULY 22

Jimmy Green
Rob Molnar

JULY 23

Martha Blanton
Walt Burch
Alice Caldwell
Andrew Tolson

JULY 24

Erin DuRant
Beth Player
Kim Ryan
Ford Scott
Christy Wallace

JULY 25

Emily Brannon
Shawn Bulliner
Alicia Truman
Elizabeth Tuttle

JULY 26

Lyall Grantham

JULY 27

Troy Mbunu
Michael Miles
Duncan Williams

JULY 28

Margaret Jones
Caleb King

JULY 29

Bruce Crawford
David DuBose
Thomas Hardee
Laura Outz

JULY 30

Thomas Davis
Vicki Hebert
Jill McQuillan
David Sanderson

JULY 31

Joshua Courtney
Seth Crawford
Palmer Jones

God-wink Connections at VBS



Dear Church Family,

If you saw our VBS [recap](#), you may have noticed that I shared my favorite part of Vacation Bible School each year isn't the decorations, the crafts, or even the excitement of the week itself. My favorite part is the connections that are made.

VBS has a wonderful way of creating new friendships while also rekindling old ones. This year, I had the privilege of witnessing a beautiful full-circle moment that reminded me just how deeply connected we are as a church family.

One of our youngest friends, WA, attended VBS for the very first time this summer. Like many young children, he was a little hesitant to leave his mom, Hannah Tolson, to join his group. But throughout the week, he formed a special bond with one of our youth helpers, Henley Thompson. The next morning, when WA didn't want to come with me to his group, I knew exactly who might be able to help. I called Henley over, and she walked over and began talking with him.

As they chatted, Hannah mentioned that Henley's name sounded familiar. She asked a few questions, and then suddenly, she realized why.

Years ago, when Hannah was a child here at First Presbyterian, she portrayed Mary in our Living Nativity. She was given the honor of holding a real baby as baby Jesus — and that baby was Henley. Think about that for a moment. The baby once cradled in our Living Nativity grew up to become the trusted youth leader of Hannah's son at Vacation Bible School.

Moments like these remind me that the church is so much more than a place we attend on Sundays. We are a family whose stories are beautifully intertwined by God's love. We celebrate one another's milestones, help raise each other's children, and witness generation after generation growing in faith together.

What a gift it is to belong to a church where one generation pours into the next, and then watches those same children grow up and begin pouring into others. That is the beauty of the body of Christ. We are connected in more ways than we often realize, and God continues to use those connections to



remind us that His love binds us together as one family. Thank you for being the kind of church where these full-circle moments happen. I can't wait to see the stories God is still writing among us.

In Christ's love,
Kaiti Bryant

God's Calling



Children's Sunday School Schedule

There will be no Sunday School during July. Sunday School will kick off a little earlier this year on Sunday, August 9! Because the church will continue with one worship service in August, Sunday School will meet at 9 a.m., followed by worship at 10 a.m. Beginning September 12, Sunday School will return to its regular 10 a.m. Sunday School hour, which will continue through April.

Save the Date: Promotion Sunday is August 9

Join us for a special Sunday as our children move up to their new Sunday School classes!

During the 10 a.m. worship service, we will:

- Present Bibles to our 2K children as they move from the nursery into Sunday School.
- Present Bibles to our first-graders.
- Recognize and present Bibles to our new Sixth Grade Catechism and Confirmation Class as they begin this important step in their faith journey.

We look forward to celebrating these milestones together as a church family!

VBS 2026: Thank You!

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who volunteered their time, donated supplies, loaned tents and decorations, supported our mission project, and helped in countless ways to make this year's VBS a success! Because of your generosity and dedication, VBS: Rome — Paul & The Underground Church came to life for our children.

Throughout the week, our children learned that God's love is a gift, God's love changes us, nothing can separate us from God's love, and His love is worth sharing with others. They worshipped, created, served our community, and grew in their faith in meaningful ways. We are so grateful for every person who helped make this incredible week possible. Thank you for investing in the lives of our children and for helping create a joyful, faith-filled experience they will remember for years to come.

Watch the [recap video](#) by scanning the QR code.



Dear CDC Family,

Lately, I have been hearing the word “call” a lot. Over time, I have learned when I hear something over and over, it is usually from the Lord.

As I thought about the word “call,” I reflected on the fact that we are all called. Some are called into the medical field, and others the legal field. There are those who are called to serve in education or the finance field, while others are called to the culinary field. We all have different callings in life. There is, however, one calling each of us has that is the most important call in life: the call to be in relationship with God. There is nothing more important!

I also believe, as someone who has been called to be the parent of four beautiful girls, one of the greatest gifts I hope to instill within them is the understanding that they, too, are called to be in relationship with God. It is the most important relationship in life. I want my girls and all the children God places in my life to know they are loved, adored, cherished, and chosen. There is nothing more important than choosing and falling in love with the one who created them — to live in relationship with Him, knowing He is their strength, their comforter, their guide, their peace, their EVERYTHING.

Proverbs 8:17 states, *“I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me.”*

My prayer is that we all whole heartedly accept the call to be in relationship with God with a resounding YES! For there is no one who will love us more than He!

Much love,

Kelly

Calling Sixth-graders: Confirmation is Coming!

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

Parent, Confirmand & Mentor Lunch

11: 15 a.m. Sunday, August 9, Fellowship Hall

This important gathering will kick off our Confirmation year as we walk through the entire process together. Parents and mentors will receive the year's schedule, important information, and have an opportunity to ask questions as our confirmands begin this exciting step in their faith journey.

Vacation Bible School: Rome in the time of Paul





Summertime Adventures

We are excited about the July adventures planned for our children! Our Treasured Tuesdays, Wonderful Wednesdays, and Thundering Thursdays are back — with several exciting new additions.

Registration is required for all trips, and space is limited. Be sure to sign up early and note the deadlines below!



Tuesday, July 7 – Dino Park in Myrtle Beach
Cost: \$25 per child | Deadline: July 4
Meet at 8 a.m. | Return at 3 p.m.

Dino Park is an interactive dinosaur adventure experience where children can explore life-sized dinosaur exhibits, dig for fossils, and enjoy hands-on fun. We have booked the park exclusively for our group from 10 a.m. to noon! Children should bring a bagged lunch, which we will eat together at the park. Each child also will receive a 3D Make-A-Dino Kit to take home — and we'll stop for a surprise ice cream treat on the way back!

QR code to [register](#).



Thursday, July 9 – Frankie's Fun Park in Columbia
Cost: \$65 per child | Deadline: July 3
Meet at 10:15 a.m. | Return at 5 p.m.

One of our most anticipated trips each year! Children will receive the highest group package at Frankie's, including multiple attractions such as go-karts, mini golf, arcade games, and more. Lunch will be provided upon arrival so everyone is ready for a full afternoon of fun. Link to [register](#).



Wednesday, July 8 – Flip Factory Zone in Columbia
Cost: \$50 per child | Deadline: July 4
Meet at 12:30 p.m. | Return at 6:30 p.m.

Children will enjoy the Ultimate Package experience, which includes trampolines, ninja courses, climbing walls, and more! The price includes required grip socks and food during our visit. Because of our schedule, we ask that children eat lunch beforehand, as food will be served later in the afternoon.

QR to [register](#).



Our first- through third-graders enjoyed a day trip in June to see the show at Pirate's Voyage in Myrtle Beach.

Fun in the Sun completes June

June was a beautiful month! We started out with brunch at Buc-ee's, a trip to Neptune Island, coffee, lunch at Moe's, junior high Bible study, and learning to read our Bibles better and more frequently.

We just returned from Fun in the Sun, where we had a wonderful time! We enjoyed morning and evening sessions of games, worship, Bible study, and family time. The speakers this year were incredibly engaging and spent time hanging out with us on the beach and during the sporting events. It made our experience even more memorable. A big thank you to Brandon Blankenship for joining us this year!

Our prayer retreat is coming up, and we are looking forward to being back in the mountains spending time learning new ways to pray, more ways to pray specifically, and the importance of praying together and for one another. Please let Taiter know if you would like to attend.

UPCOMING EVENTS

F.E. Pop's: 9 a.m. July 2, 16, and 23; 7 a.m. July 30

Prayer Retreat: July 7-11, departing at 11 a.m.

We will travel to Black Mountain, N.C. Youth will learn to pray by themselves, in pairs, and in groups. This will be a wonderful time together as we study God's word by reading it, journaling it, and praying it. We will also pray specifically for the upcoming school year. Cost is \$125. *Please sign up and pay as soon as possible.*

FLOAT: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. July 15

We will canoe and kayak down the Little Pee Dee River! Cost is \$10 per person. *Please sign up and pay by Sunday, July 12.*

Shark Wake Park: 8:30 a.m. July 20

We will travel to North Myrtle Beach and spend the day playing in the water on their obstacle course, wake and knee boarding, water skiing, and more! Cost is \$65 plus money for one meal on the road. *Please sign up and pay by Wednesday, July 15.*

Brunch at Venus and Tie-Dye Party: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. July 22

We will meet at Venus for brunch and then go to the church. Please bring the item(s) you would like to tie-dye. Youth will need to bring money for their meal. *Please RSVP by Tuesday, July 21.*





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