



# ***First Pres News***

## **FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH** Rocky Mount

153 N. Church Street  
Rocky Mount, NC 27804  
[www.fpcrm.org](http://www.fpcrm.org)  
252-446-9121

**December 2019**

✧ Friends,

Thanksgiving and Advent are peculiar times of the year. We spend a day in gratitude for all that we have, but we rush out the next morning to spend and spend on more and more. We have a season for quiet waiting, but we fill it with noise and activity. As the weather cools and the evenings lengthen, we know we should pace ourselves for the winter to come. Instead, we run a mad dash to January 1st and crash into the New Year.

I want to say that the church is counter cultural. I want to tell you that the church is a place that exhibits the truth of Thanksgiving and Advent. The truth is: we are busier than ever as the celebration of Christ's birth approaches. We are rehearsing Christmas music, writing liturgies, and preparing bulletins. It is a busy season. It has been a busy time of transition. It has been a very, very busy 2019.

My prayer for each of you is one of rest. I hope that you are able to pause for a moment and soak in the beauty of God's presence in our midst. I cannot promise an entire season of reflection. Rather, I pray that you would feel and know the love of God through Evensong worship, the music of the season, the warmth of Christmas Eve candles, the laughter throughout the church office, or the simple act of joining in prayer. May the Prince of Peace be a source of peace this Advent Season.

In gratitude for you all,

✧ **Matt**

Rev. Matthew Baker

*Pastor:* The Rev. Matthew Baker

*Church Ministry Coordinator:* Dionne Seale

*Director of Music:* Jim Smith

*Sexton:* Michael Smith

*Parish Associate:* The Rev. Dr. Preston Smith

*Financial Secretary:* Jeanne T. Shannon

*Organist:* Virginia Vance

*Assistant Sexton & Nursery Attendant:* Charity Lodge

*Nursery Assistant:* Mary Hilliard

# Faith & Fellowship

...with First Presbyterian!

## WEDNESDAY EVENING FELLOWSHIP

FAITH. FOOD. FUN.

All are welcome for a covered dish meal in the Fellowship Hall on Wednesday evenings at 6:00 p.m. followed by a program in the Session Room at 6:45 p.m.



### BROWN BAG Bible Study

*Brown Bag Bible Study meets on Mondays at noon in the Session room unless otherwise*

*noted. All are welcome to bring a lunch and join in for fellowship and thoughtful biblical discussions!*



## Tuesday, December 3, 2019 First Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall

Social Time 5:00-6:00 p.m.

Dinner 6:00 p.m.

Catered by "Something Different" of Wilson, NC

**Menu:** Honey Dijon Chicken and Beef Tips, Red-skin Boiled Potatoes, Green Bean Casserole, Seven Layer Salad, Yeast Rolls, choice of carrot cake or mini cheesecakes for dessert, Tea, Coffee and water.

**Cost:** \$24.00 per person

**Responses were due** by November 27 to either Marie Kem or Sue Jackson and also let them know of any dietary restrictions.

***Please bring a small can of fruit or vegetables for Covenant Homes.***



Monday, December 16 at noon  
Bellemonte House

Campus of NC Wesleyan College  
3400 N. Wesleyan Blvd.

(Please note the house is now located in the back of the campus.)

Join us for good food and fellowship as the Lunch Bunch gathers to break bread! We will enjoy shrimp and grits, green beans, hot spiced fruit, and dessert. If you are not already on the "permanent list", please notify the church office if you can attend. Faithful volunteers prepare and serve the food, and a basket is passed for contributions to offset the cost of the meal. A suggested donation of \$10 per meal is appreciated for this event. While geared towards retirement age folks, all are welcome!

## MAKES CENTS

Please review the below church income and expense data for the month shown. The prior month is not available as of the newsletter print date. Please call or email Jeanne Shannon in the church office with any questions.

Pledges and Loose Offering through October 2019	
Month – to – date	\$ 62,440.92
Year – to – date	\$ 544,350.48
Expenses through October 2019	
Month – to – date	\$ 75,895.85
Year – to – date	\$ 514,077.26



Stewardship season is upon us! Each pledge is a blessing to the church as we seek to be faithful stewards of the resources God has entrusted to us. First Presbyterian Church offers the below options for making your contribution:

**Bank draft** – This is a safe and steady way to consistently support First Presbyterian Church. It can be selected on your pledge card and attaching a voided check. The monthly bank draft occurs on the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month. If the 25<sup>th</sup> falls on a weekend or holiday, it is drafted on the next business day. If you currently have a bank draft and want to continue, this can be indicated on your pledge card. The draft for your 2020 contribution would begin January 27<sup>th</sup> 2019. If you choose the bank draft, you can also stop it by contacting Jeanne Shannon in the church office 2 weeks before the 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Envelopes** – these can be ordered by marking this option on your pledge card

**Sale of stock** – If using this method, please contact Jeanne Shannon to request a stock donor letter or have your broker contact Jeanne in the church office. **The stock sale process should begin in early November due to the length of time for the process and to make the 12/31 deadline due to holidays.**

**Loose checks in the Sunday collection or checks placed in Jeanne Shannon's mailbox** - All checks will be applied to your pledge unless indicated otherwise in the 'memo' line.

**Online giving** – Sow the seeds for the future with online giving today! This is an easy and convenient way to give your tithes using a debit or credit card or electronic funds transfer. The service through PayPal is easily accessed through the church website. You can rest easy knowing that the transaction is safe and secure, and your gift will be available to our ministry immediately, with no waiting periods. Visit [www.fpcrm.org](http://www.fpcrm.org) using the 'Online Payment' link in the top right corner to see for yourself how easy it is to give online.

Questions? Please contact Jeanne Shannon in the church office by phone at 252.446.9121 or by email at [Jeanne.shannon@fpcrm.org](mailto:Jeanne.shannon@fpcrm.org). Jeanne's office hours are Monday thru Thursday from 8:30-2:30



The Session met on Tuesday, November 19, 2019 and the following items were discussed:

- The Property committee reported that they have recently completed two walk throughs of the church to address any repairs that need to be made. They ask that you keep your eyes open and see Gordon Vestal or another member of the committee if you see something that you think should be done around the church.
- The Outreach committee reported that each month they will focus on one group to offer support, etc. This is an effort to eliminate multiple collections at the same time.
- The Stewardship committee reported that there are still 29 outstanding pledges. Please get your pledge cards in so that the final budgeting for 2020 can be completed. If you have questions about the 2020 budget, please see Winslow Rogers, Julian Parks or Russell Proctor.
- The APNC reported that the Ministry Information Form is complete and is in the process of being approved and submitted. Dee Whitley reported that this committee is both efficient and effective and he was happy to report their confidence in calling a great community pastor for FPCRM.

We welcome your input on this and all other matters.

-Submitted by Mike Gaynor, Clerk

# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION UPDATE



## DATES FOR DECEMBER :

- ♦ **Sunday, December 1:** Lunch fun after worship in the youth suite (All Youth)
- ♦ **Friday, December 6-7:** Middle School Christmas Party and Lock In (Friday Night) & Help with Peacemakers Toy Sale (Saturday)
- ♦ **Sunday, December 8:** 5:00 p.m. Advent Evensong Service; 6:30 p.m. Sr. High Christmas Party and meal at the Warner home, 108 Dartmoor Court
- ♦ **Friday, December 13:** 6:15 a.m. Sr. High Breakfast with Lee Proctor at Highway Diner
- ♦ **Sunday, December 15:** 4:00 p.m. Christmas Concert at FPC (Youth group is highly encouraged to attend!)
- ♦ **Tuesday, December 24:** 5:15 p.m. —Christmas Eve Candlelight Service



Thursday

December 19, 2019

4:30 p.m.

*Snacks, music, crafts and  
FUN with Pastor Matt for  
ages Pre-K through 5th  
Grade!*



Children's Choir  
rehearsal with Mrs.  
Crocker (and  
Pastor Matt!) They  
meet again Dec. 4  
from 5-5:30 p.m.  
& sing Dec. 8!







P. E. P. (Presbyterians Educating Presbyterians) Class meets in the church parlor—currently studying “More Presbyterian Questions, More Presbyterian Answers”.

Present Word Class meets downstairs in the History Room and uses “The Present Word” Bible Study.

	<b>ELEMENTARY</b> (Grades 2-5; Room 203)	<b>MIDDLE SCHOOL</b> Youth Suite	<b>HIGH SCHOOL</b> Youth Suite
<b>Dec. 1</b>	Annie Daughtridge	Christie Sondergard Viva 1 Viva Las Christmas	Mike Gaynor Viva 1 Viva Las Christmas
<b>Dec. 8</b>	Gingerbread Workshop	Anne Mosley Viva 2 Viva Las Christmas	John Turnage Viva 2 Viva Las Christmas
<b>Dec. 15</b>	Winnie Gaynor	Dionne Seale Viva 3 Viva Las Christmas	John Turnage Viva 3 Viva Las Christmas
<b>Dec. 22</b>	Kate Tharin	Christie Sondergard Viva 4 Viva Las Christmas	Katherine Fisher Viva 4 Viva Las Christmas
<b>Dec. 29</b>	<i>No Elementary or Youth Sunday School</i>		

## First Presbyterian Happenings

Below, a fidget blanket is proudly displayed by Preston, Frances, and Matt—thanks to the Handcraft Ministry!



At right, a delegation from FPC supports Matt at the Presbytery Gathering in Smithfield as he is received into the Presbytery of New Hope (10/26/2019).



At left, The “Holy Habanero” Chili Cooking Team proudly represented FPC at the Meals on Wheels Beans and Brews event (11/7/2019).



Above, commissioning John Etheredge for ministry and service in Ghana (11/10/2019).



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

***The Outreach Committee wants to be more intentional about collecting for special causes. Rather than having multiple ongoing collections, we will focus on one special collection per month.***



The Handcraft Ministry will meet on Tuesday, December 17 at 1:30 p.m. in the former computer lab room upstairs next to the Craft Room here at the church.

This wonderful ministry provides prayer shawls, blankets, etc. to those in need of God's warmth.

### *December Outreach Collection Project*



We will be collecting donations for teen parents who attend Tar River Academy. They can especially use the following items for ages newborn—5 years of age: diapers, clothing, wet wipes, bottles, towels/wash cloths, bibs, swaddlers, formula, stuffed animals, sippy cups, lotion, shampoo and baby wash. Items can be brought to either the bin located in the narthex on Sunday mornings or the volunteer office.

To the right is FPC Deacon Laura Dudley with Jacqueline Esule, Student Support Specialist with Communities in Schools of Rocky Mount Region for Tar River Academy.



**PEACE  
MAKERS**  
COMMITTED TO OUR COMMUNITY

*Christmas toy store items can be dropped off directly at the Davis Street location from Dec. 2-5th.*

Covenant Homes invites you to their Open House to celebrate the Christmas season. Come see the beautiful decorations, enjoy refreshments and a time of fellowship with Covenant Homes Staff and Residents.



Monday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>  
10am until 3pm





**Girl Scout Troop 55** put together a raised garden planter box for Conetoe which will be delivered there on November 26.



### Boy Scout Troop 7 News from November



Troop 7 recently camped at Parker's Creek Campground located on Jordan Lake. Temperatures were down to 27 degrees at night and highs only in the 50's. No worries. The scouts put up our dining canopy and we added heaters and hot chicken noodle soup to warm everyone up. For this weekend, the scouts worked on cooking in Dutch ovens, compass work and got in some hiking. The scouts did a great job also in packing as no one got cold at night even with the low temperatures. Mr. Lane really might be on to something every time he preaches to them about dry socks for bed!



Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
**Presbyterian Mission**

*Here is an update from John Etheredge. You can read more about World Mission Agency at [www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/missionconnections/john-etheredge](http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/missionconnections/john-etheredge).*

Dear Friends,

You can say I am a resident of Ho, Ghana. There is about 100,000 people living in the city. It is very hot here, it was 98 yesterday. I have a fan but no air. There is no cook stove or ice box as they are called, had to buy both. The money exchange is 5.52 Cedi to 1.00 U. S. dollar. Had to buy bedding, a set was 228 Cedi which is about \$40.00. An ice box was 799 Cedi equal to about \$145.00, this is a small one. It's a different world but they are God's creation. I will spend some time learning the EWE language and culture, (ex. you never give someone anything with your left hand.) The people are very friendly and accommodating. I'll be sending out a newsletter, so you will know about this place as I do.

I have a new phone number and my email is still the same.

Blessings to all of you in the United States

John Etheredge

P. S. I will send plenty of pictures when I learn how to take pictures with my phone and email them to you.

## Presbyterian Women Update

The annual Ladies' Christmas Tea is a signature event that welcomes in the Christmas season at First Presbyterian Church. ALL women are invited to attend. See the invitation in this month's newsletter and make plans to attend!

The Circles continue to nurture their faith through prayer, Bible study, and service. This month the focus is adopting a family from My Sisters House, participating in the Peacemakers Christmas Toy Store, and supporting the Christmas Celebration for residents of Covenant Homes.

Find your place of fellowship and service with the caring community of women at FPC.

- PWCT will meet December 2 in the History room at 10:00 a.m.
- Circle of Friends will meet December 9 at 7:00 p.m. with Mary Watson with Janice Smith and Roslyn Gragg leading the Bible Study.
- Circle of J.O.Y. will meet on December 10 in the Session Room at 10:30 a.m. The Rev. Bettie Kirkpatrick will lead the Bible Study lesson.



### 2019-20 PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN COORDINATING TEAM

Janice Smith, Moderator

Stephanie Hayworth, Vice-Moderator

Tempie Fuller, Secretary

Frances Guerry, Historian

Sylvia Phillips, Together in Service

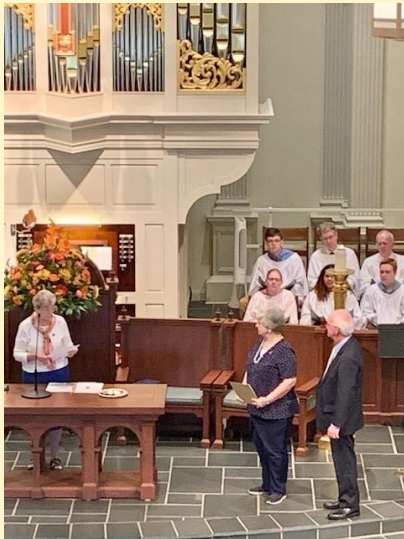
Myra Richardson, Circle of Friends Leader

Becky Parks, Treasurer

Laura Durham, Spiritual Nurture

Edie Reeves, Together in Service

Nancy Richardson & Martha Tesoro, Circle of J.O.Y Co-Leaders



### ***PW Honorary Life Memberships*** ***The Rev. Dr. Preston Smith and Judy Smith***

On October 27, Judy and Preston Smith were doubly surprised when both were presented with Presbyterian Women Honorary Life Memberships! We are so grateful for their combined years of loving and serving others!



Above, the PW Circle of Friends collected canned fruit for United Community Ministries.



At right, PW Circle Members Bridget and Laura helped purchase bikes for the Peacemakers Christmas Toy Sale.





## Sunday Volunteer Schedule

*"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace."*

*1 Peter 4:10*



### December 1, 2019

Head Usher: Andy Warner

Ushers: Lynn Warner, Charlie Warner,

David Farris, Anne Mosley

Greeter: Frances Guerri

Liturgist: Russell Proctor

Children's Sermon: Jim Lilley

Acolytes: Ellen Feagans, Britt Gaynor

Advent Wreath: Middle/High School Youth

Communion Preparers: Winslow Rogers, Gordon Vestal

Communion Servers: Winslow Rogers, Joe Brewer,

Virginia Brewer, Melanie Marshall-Park

### December 8, 2019

*11:00 a.m. Joy Gift Program*

Head Usher: Andy Warner

Ushers: Lynn Warner, Charlie Warner,

David Farris, Marie Kem

Greeter: Frances Guerri

Acolytes: Frances Tharin, Jack Powers

Advent Wreath: Children's Choir

### December 15, 2019

Head Usher: Tim Hathaway

Ushers: Bridget Hathaway, John Feagans, Virginia

Feagans, Janice Smith

Greeter: Judy Smith

Liturgist: Randy Adams

Children's Sermon: Randy Adams

Acolytes: Nan Barnhill, Ward Rose

Advent Wreath: TBA

### December 22, 2019

Head Usher: Tim Hathaway

Ushers: Bridget Hathaway, John Feagans, Virginia

Feagans, Janice Smith

Greeter: Judy Smith

Liturgist: Richard Hunt

Children's Sermon: Matt Baker

Acolytes: Ann Cleveland Fisher, Walt Fisher

Advent Wreath: TBA

### December 24, 2019

*5:15 p.m. Christmas Eve Service*

Ushers: TBA

Acolytes: Mary Powell Chesnutt, Thomas Honey

Advent Wreath: TBA

Communion Preparers: Dee Whitley, Nancy Richardson,  
Gordon Vestal

Communion Servers: David Farris, Marianne Farris,  
Jay Gardner, Mike Gaynor, Anne Mosley, Dee Whitley,  
Becky Parks, Nancy Richardson, Ben Roberson,  
Winslow Rogers, Anne Kinnaird, John Turnage

### December 29, 2019

Head Usher: Rob Barnhill

Ushers: Bea Barnhill, Kim Sutton, Gaye Moore, John  
Turnage

Greeter: Beth Turnage

Liturgist: Janice Smith

Children's Sermon: Matt Baker



**Mark your calendars for Thursday, December 5—the Worship Committee invites all who wish to help decorate the church for the Christmas season to come to the sanctuary at 10:30 a.m.**

**Also, the Worship Committee is in need of greenery—Cypress, Cedar, Pine, Holly, Magnolia (with a brown back) even if you can't come to decorate. Either drop off that morning or notify us if someone can come to cut it from your yard!**

# Keeping in touch...

FOLLOW  
US!

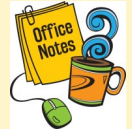


First Presbyterian Rocky Mount



fpc\_rockymount

**Contact Information Updates:** Kindly notify Dionne Seale in the church office at 252-446-9121, ext. 21 or [dionne.seale@fpcrm.org](mailto:dionne.seale@fpcrm.org) of any email, address, or phone number changes so we can keep our database up to date.



**Regular church office hours are Monday—Thursday from 8:30-4:30 p.m. Please contact the church in advance should you need access to the building during non-office hours.**

Dear Church Family,  
I was so surprised and pleased with your response to help establish the “professional clothing closet” at Wesleyan College! I made 3 trips with the back part of my Subaru full of clothing and 1 trip with the back 1/2 full. Dr. Knode and I are most appreciative of your desire to help the students.

Sincerely,  
Pell Foster

**Below, a picture from the Business Etiquette Class**



Thank you so much for the sanctuary flowers sent to congratulate me on receiving the Honorary Life Membership. I am still enjoying them.

Love,  
Evelyn Reese

Dear Youth Group,  
We just want you to know what a “treat” it was to receive your card and picture. Thanks for brightening our day.

Jim and Pat Blanchard

Thank you for all your support. I really appreciate your prayers, financial support and the lovely flowers. Please keep me in your prayers.

John Etheredge

Dear Friends,  
Thank you so much for the beautiful peace lily. I really appreciated all your love and prayers when my mother passed away. Thank for being such good friends. I feel very blessed!

Love,  
Jan Warren  
Director, Meals on Wheels

Dear Presbyterian Women,  
My brothers (Don III and Doug) and I thank you so much for your generous gift to the Littrell-Thorpe Scholarship Fund in memory of our mother. My family and I are grateful to you for your many thoughtful cards, notes and letters to Mom (and Dad) over the past two decades since our parents moved from Rocky Mount to Twin Lakes-Burlington.

Your love and support encouraged her, provided strength and encouragement in many ways. You helped her persevere through the loss of both our dad and our youngest brother, Drew, in 2003. You lifted her spirits countless times, for example, when you surprised her with a beautiful handmade prayer shawl. We sincerely appreciate all these expressions of love and caring.

Gratefully,  
David Cole  
(Son of Liz Cole)



We decorate our Sanctuary during Advent with beautiful poinsettias which are made available by your donations to honor and remember special friends and/or loved ones. Envelopes are available from either the Narthex or from the church office for you to pick up and enclose payment along with the name(s) of those you wish to honor. You can either place your envelope in the offering plate during worship or return to Dionne Seale's church mailbox. A donation of \$18 per poinsettia is appreciated. A special bulletin remembers the honorees on Christmas Eve and the deadline to donate is **December 15, 2019**.



Janice Smith is pleased to report the birth of her great-grandson, James Linwood Smith, IV, on October 23, 2019. His parents are Trey and Brittany Smith of Apex, NC and grandparents are Kim and Linwood Smith, Jr.



*our thoughts and prayers are with...*

**THE FOUNTAINS AT THE ALBEMARLE—  
Tarboro**

- ▶ Tom Dill
- ▶ Jim and Pat Blanchard

**CARDINAL AT NORTH HILLS—Raleigh**

- ▶ Dick Fountain

**HOMESTEAD HILL—Winston-Salem**

- ▶ Nancy Liipfert

**BROOKDALE—Rocky Mount**

- ▶ Betsy Boddie

**ADDITIONAL CONCERNS**

Jim Blanchard

Mayo & Jean Boddie

Mike Braswell

Janet Cooper (mother of Elizabeth Rose)

Geraldine Donnell (sister of Janice Smith)

Herman Ferguson

Earl and Phyllis Goodwin

John McInnis (Jack Perry's brother-in-law)

Char Mather

Georgia Mixon

Ruth Munro (mother of Lynn Warner)

Gerry Niece (friend of the church)

Phyllis Parker

Anne Wilgus Podesta

Evelyn Reese

Blanche Robinson

Cora Rowe (granddaughter of Jean Kitchin)

Jean Rowe (Steve Rowe's mother)

Polly Rowlett (Leigh Skeen's mother)

Maida Sessoms

Keith Sutton

Bobbi and Hassell Weeks

Susan Yenney





All women of the church are  
invited to the  
Presbyterian Women  
Christmas Tea

Thursday,  
December 5, 2019

Stop in between 11:00-1:00 p.m.  
First Presbyterian Church parlor

## O Come, All Ye Faithful...

### Joy Gift Program

Sunday, December 8 at 11:00.

Children's Choir, Handbell Choir, Chancel Choir.

### Advent Evensong Service

Sunday, December 8 at 5:00.

Candlelight service of scripture, music,  
communion, and contemplation.

### Christmas Concert and Christmas Reception

Sunday, December 15 at 4:00.

Carols and songs of the season with  
singers from:

Nash/Rocky Mount Schools

First Presbyterian Chancel Choir

Rocky Mount Chamber Choir

### Christmas Eve Service

Tuesday, December 24 at 5:15

Candlelight service of Lessons  
and Carols, with communion



OUR WISH FOR YOU

## A SEASON OF PEACE & JOY

From all the staff of First  
Presbyterian Church

*The church office will be closed  
December 25 and December 26.*



We were grateful to celebrate  
Mary Watson and her 90th  
Birthday along with her friends  
and family on November 3,  
2019.