



First Pres News

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH Rocky Mount

153 N. Church Street
Rocky Mount, NC 27804
www.fpcrm.org
252-446-9121

JULY 2020

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your expressions of concern after my recent bout with health problems. I believe I'm on the mend and headed in a better direction for health and well-being.

I'd like to highlight wonderful news all around the church. I am not trying to dodge the severity of the pandemic, the struggle for racial justice and peace, or the crises infecting so many facets of life. Rather, I am hoping to provide some rays of light in which you can bask. (Also, given the rate at which the news cycle changes, please know that this is being written on June 17.)

First, we were able to worship together on June 14 on the Soccer Field at RMA, and it was a wonderful and joyous time. We enjoyed the Lord's Supper, laughed, shed a tear or two, and enjoyed a picturesque morning outside. Around 90 of us were able to gather, and it felt so wonderful to be together.

Second, we are looking at when and how we can worship in the sanctuary. Members of the Session are of very similar mind, and we are calling upon leaders in medical fields to help us develop plans, policies, and procedures for a modified return to communal worship. Please hold tight as we work to reenter in a proactive way.

Third, music is one of the most difficult elements of pandemic precautions. However, Jim, Jennie, and I are working together on Christmas plans, continuing musical offerings, and perhaps a special treat to be announced this autumn. We are studying and applying new ways to make sure that the power of music will not be lost during this season.

Fourth, the church is open for meetings both physical and virtual. If you want to get a group of people together for masked, socially distanced gatherings - please reach out to reserve a space and time at the church. We need one another, and your church is trying mightily to make connections a reality.

Fifth, (and most excitingly in my opinion) we will have another outdoor worship opportunity on July 12th. We plan to gather on the front church lawn and side parking lot at 10:00 a.m., and the Session has called a congregational meeting during this service to introduce the new Community Pastor for FPC Rocky Mount. We will learn a bit about this amazing candidate and vote on terms of call.

Again, there is a lot of hurt and pain all around us. If you need a bright spot in your walk of faith, I hope that these rays of light brighten your life.

With Love and Gratitude,
Matt

Pastor: The Rev. Matthew Baker

Parish Associate: The Rev. Dr. Preston Smith

Church Ministry Coordinator: Dionne Seale

Financial Secretary: Jeanne T. Shannon

Director of Music: Jim Smith

Organist: Virginia Vance

Sexton: Michael Smith

Assistant Sexton & Nursery Attendant: Charity Lodge

Nursery Assistant: Mary Hilliard

Worship
with us
from
HOME

Sunday Worship Recordings are uploaded Saturday evenings, so you can always access the Vimeo link on Sunday morning. The link is <https://vimeo.com/showcase/fpcrm> or you can access the link from the church website:
www.fpcrm.org



No member of church leadership will ever text or email a request for gift cards. This is a popular scam that is affecting churches across America. If you receive such a request, please delete it and do not reply.

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 May 2020

Month – to – date \$ 37,340.66

Year – to – date \$ 282,254.89

Expenses through May 2020

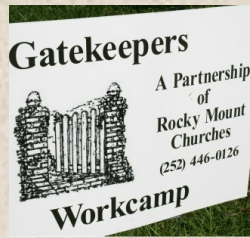
Month – to – date \$ 33,682.36

Year – to – date \$ 248,271.17



Need to get reimbursed for a church expense? Please complete the reimbursement form found in the office mail slots. If you don't know the expense code you need, explain what the expense is on the form. Be sure to attach receipts to the back of the form and leave in Jeanne Shannon's box. Questions? Contact Jeanne in the church office.

Church office phone 252.446.9121, option 5
Jeanne's email jeanne.shannon@fpcrm.org



July 13—17, 2020

Gatekeepers will be held this year with some modifications (half day schedule, no lunch provided, all outdoor projects) in order to keep volunteers as safe and healthy as possible. We have 15 youth and 3 adult volunteers participating!

T-Shirts for Sale



Many of you may have noticed the awesome T-shirts our own Beth Turnage helped design for the youth. We have a **limited** number of extra adult sizes (M, L, and XL) in stock available for purchase - \$20.00 each. If interested please message Dionne Seale, and she can hold a shirt for you to pick up at your convenience during office hours. (Monday-Thursday between 10:00-2:00 p.m.)

Communications Deadlines

- We publish the "First Pres" newsletter monthly. The newsletter is either emailed or a hard copy can be mailed to those without email. The deadline to submit information is the third Thursday of each month.
- The weekly email update is sent out via Constant Contact on Wednesday afternoon. The deadline for information is noon on Wednesday.



July Zoom Small Group Opportunities

Wednesday

Noon- Tech Savvy Seniors (45 minutes)
(Older Adults)

Our most seasoned members are invited for some social time and prayer.

Thursday (Week of July 9 only)

4pm- Middle School Youth Group (45 minutes)

5pm- High School Youth Group (45 minutes)

Zoom Meeting ID: 875 561 2727

Zoom Password: FirstPres7



The church office and building is now open to church members/visitors Monday—Thursday between 10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m. Hand sanitizer stations have been set up and we ask that folks wear a mask and not enter staff offices.



The Community Partners Committee has been hard at work! Please take a look and how God's love is being spread by First Presbyterian...



Peacemakers: The Community Partners Committee donated funds to buy snacks for Peacemakers Freedom School. Funds donated by church members also bought snacks for the children attending this summer.

Meals on Wheels: They hope to resume daily meal delivery the week of July 13, 2020, and will notify volunteers in advance. FPC needs more 4th Tuesday volunteers! Please contact Kate Tharin if you have interest or questions.



Handcraft Ministry: 48 fleece blankets were donated to the hospital for the comfort cart. Margaret Dudley donated 6 crocheted baby blankets and 7 grandparents in the church received blankets for their newborn grandchildren. A nice card was sent to Laura and Frances thanking them for the beautiful handmade face masks.

Tar River Academy: To celebrate the last day of school, Tempie Fuller took a homemade cake, nuts and beverages to the teachers and staff. TRA sent a note of appreciation for all the kindness given by our church.



NC Wesleyan International Students: Jay Quinan drove 2 international students to Walmart on May 14, and two different students on May 26.

Covenant Homes: Our calling committee continues to make weekly calls to residents. Members of this committee also send cards, bring magazines, make goody bags and drive residents to the grocery store or to appointments. A grant was awarded to Covenant Homes by the Cannon Foundation and gives them enough money to begin building the health and wellness center.



Below, Happy Father's Day to all 16 of the fathers at Covenant Homes from First Pres!



Above, a hot dog lunch with baked beans, chili, slaw, chips and homemade ice cream was held on June 3, 2020.



It is with a joyous and grateful heart I inform you on behalf of our staff, Board Directors, and our residents, that Covenant homes has been awarded a Cannon Foundation Grant. We also have been awarded a grant from the Rocky Mount Community

Foundation. With the receipts of these grants plus a contribution from the church specified for building expansion at Covenant Homes, we should be able to break ground and start construction of the building facility soon. We are very excited about this significant growth in our complex. The addition will allow us room specifically for physical fitness programs, provide better control of the safety guidelines set forth by the CDC, and continuing to practice social distancing. This will enable staff not to have to breakdown tables and chairs between event and activities.

We are especially grateful to Alyssa Matthews, Marketing and Development Director of the YMCA, for her valuable assistance in preparing the documentation submitted to the Cannon Foundation, and the Rocky Mount Community Foundation. I think we can all agree that we can look back and see God's Hand involved in this endeavor, especially when you think of the many, many requests for assistance throughout our area and the difficult times we are facing.

Submitted by Jack Perry

GIVE BLOOD

You can make a difference.



**American
Red Cross**

First Presbyterian Church

July 14, 2020

2:00—7:00 p.m.

**You are welcome to visit
redcrossblood.org to schedule a time or
walk in that day!**

At each blood drive and donation center, American Red Cross employees follow thorough safety protocols including wearing gloves, routinely wiping down areas, using sterile collection sets for every donation, and preparing the arm for donation with an aseptic scrub. All Red Cross employees are trained in universal precautions to help prevent the spread of any type of infection. Additional precautions, including additional donor screening both before and at drives, social distancing, temperature readings before admittance at a blood drive, basic face masks, and hand sanitization have been implemented.



Presbyterian Women Update

"She stood in the storm, and when the wind did not blow her away, she adjusted her sails."
(Elizabeth Edwards, Resilience)

Despite having to end our Bible Study in March, the PW have continued to be mission minded. The traditional Birthday Offering and Littrell-Thorpe Scholarship Fund were thoughtfully administered. In addition, the Ladies have faithfully supported our FPC family during the pandemic with cards, emails, phone calls, and handcrafted gifts. Both Circles continued to show their commitment to our community by contributing to Covenant Homes, Peacemakers, Children's Hope Alliance, and the Bassett Center.

The Circles do not meet during the summer months. Please know however, that the PW is always involved and actively supports our Church family. Once it is decided that our Church can safely reopen, the PWCT will host its Annual Meeting.

And finally, your support is vital in enabling your sisters to continue to make a difference locally and within the FPC congregation.....and we thank you!

PW Coordinating Team will meet July 20th at 10:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

Keeping in touch...

FOLLOW
US!

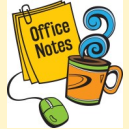


First Presbyterian Rocky Mount



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



What a wonderful surprise to find a sign in my yard reminding me that Jesus Loves Me. It was certainly the bright spot in my day.

I do appreciate everything our church family is doing to keep us connected during this time of social distancing. I look forward to the time when we can all be together again.

*Love,
Mary Lou Fountain*

Dear Members of First Presbyterian,

Our third daughter Ella (granddaughter of Greg and Carol Hutchins) was gifted a baby blanket knit by one of your members. We are touched! Than you so much.

The Hutchins Family

*To our Dear Church Family,
Carol and I are so thankful for the beautiful baby blanket made by our Handcraft Ministries and delivered by Frances Guerry. Our twin granddaughters, Helen and Isabel, sleep with their blankets every night and we know that Ella will have the same attachment. Your kindness and thoughtfulness touch our whole family every day.*

*Blessings to all,
Greg and Carol Hutchins*

Thank you for sending a bit of "sunshine" to me each month. I loved the "Irish Blessing" and the Family Circus is always good. Our paper stopped the comics to conserve money. A little laughter is good medicine and we need a little these days.

Please thank your Presbyterian Women for their notes. I think I'm improving but I have to have a walker to walk.

Each day brings something different and I am blessed.

*Love,
Polly Rowlett (mother of Leigh Skeen)*

My sincere and heartfelt thanks for the meals, prayers, cards, calls and the artistic sign delivered by a handsome young man. I thank God for a such a wonderful and caring church family.

*Sincerely,
Evelyn Reese*



Congratulations to Jean and Hodge Kitchin on the birth of a granddaughter. Jean's son Mercer Rowe and his wife Alex welcomed Christine Eva Rowe on May, 17, 2020 in Santa Cruz, California.

Congratulations are also extended to Beth and Tom Steed on the birth of their granddaughter, Wynn Adams Shepherd, on June 10, 2020. Paton and Ben Shepherd of Atlanta, Georgia are her parents.



The love and sympathy of the congregation is extended to Winslow, Laura and Vivian Rogers upon the death of Winslow's father, Dr. Harding Rogers, of Mooresville, NC on June 25, 2020.



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

BROOKDALE—Rocky Mount

- ▶ Betsy Boddie

ADDITIONAL CONCERNS

Lloyd Bailey

L.M. and Margaret Barnes

Jim Blanchard

Jean Boddie

Mike Braswell

Janet Cooper (mother of Elizabeth Rose)

Augusta Daniel

Geraldine Donnell (sister of Janice Smith)

Herman Ferguson

Earl and Phyllis Goodwin

Nancy Liipfert (now home in RMT)

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

Char Mather

Georgia Mixon

Gerry Niece (friend of the church)

Phyllis Parker

Jack Perry

Anne Wilgus Podesta

Evelyn Reese

Robin Reeves (daughter of Edie and Ron Reeves)

Blanche Robinson

Peggy Rogers (mother of Winslow Rogers)

Cora Rowe (granddaughter of Jean Kitchin)

Jean Rowe (Steve Rowe's mother)

Polly Rowlett (Leigh Skeen's mother)

Maida Sessoms

Preston Smith

Scott Solether

Bobbi Weeks

Susan Yenney



*Outdoor
Worship at
First
Presbyterian
Church*

July 12, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.
Please bring a lawn chair, mask and your own
bread & juice for communion. There will be a
Congregational Meeting at the end of worship.

Let's try meeting on "Home Soil" for our next outdoor worship service! This time will be even more special, because we get to hear about our NEW Community Pastor, learn a bit about the hard work of the Nominating Committee, and vote on Terms of Call!

Weather permitting- We'll gather on the front lawn, between the offices and Church St., and in the side parking area. Please park behind the church- using Howard St. (back alley) as an entrance, or please park in front of the Sanctuary- in the church lot on the corner.

Weather uncooperative- We'll ask you to come down Church St., turn into the church driveway, and participate in "drive-thru" church. Matt will meet your vehicle under our overhang for prayer, a write-up on our new pastor, and instructions for registering a vote.

Join us in hoping for beautiful weather and praying for the amazing candidate who is so very excited about serving God and our church. Don't forget to bring your own bread & juice for communion. Masks will be required.



A beautiful outdoor worship service was held June 14, 2020 on the soccer field at Rocky Mount Academy.

