



First Pres News

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rocky Mount

153 N. Church Street
Rocky Mount, NC 27804

www.fpcrm.org

252-446-9121

September 2020

Dear Friends,

By now you should have received the mailing with all the wonderful things happening around the church. Please know that YOU make these offerings wonderful. Without you- we are talking to a blank computer screen. Without you- communication and prayers are words in the wind. Without you- the church is only an idea. You bring the energy of the Holy Spirit when we gather together in person or on a screen.

September 1st marks my 1-year anniversary with FPC. It is beyond remarkable to think about the myriad of ways that the world has changed in that 1 year. We were planning large gatherings for Rally Day, Stewardship, and Christmas. We were building community by meeting around the church and gathering for worship in the sanctuary. We were getting to know each other with coffee meetings, after church chats, and office visits.

While I miss ALL of that, my incredible team here at the church is helping me to focus on the amazing work that we can do in the midst of the world that exists. We don't need to dwell on what was. We don't need to obsess over what will be. We can only create the best possible today, given the parameters of the moment.

This is where I give praise to God for the gift of the Spirit. She moves in wonderfully flexible and mysterious ways. Whenever I get stuck in the dogma of tradition, I am reminded of the Spirit's presence in creating something new.

I pray that you are all able to experience the Spirit's guidance, pull, and love as you rejoice with us and reengage in new and exciting ways around our church.

With love and gratitude,

Matt



Pastor: The Rev. Matthew Baker *Community Pastor:* Pastor Hannah Trawick *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

You are invited to Hannah's Ordination

Celebrate the Ordination and Installation of our new Community Pastor, Hannah Trawick. Hannah's Virtual Ordination will take place on **Sunday, September 13 at 4pm**. Hannah's Ordination will be streamed on Facebook for interactive worship and witness and will also be available for viewing on the Church Website. A link to both will be sent out to all members at 3:50pm on Sunday, September 13.

Here's what you can do to prepare:

- If you have not already done so, go "like" First Presbyterian Church Rocky Mount on Facebook for easy, interactive viewing of the service.
- Participate fully by using the chat box to share your name, support, and celebrations throughout the service! During the service, consider sharing it on your personal page (if you're comfortable doing so) so others in our community can worship with us.
- If you have technological questions, contact Hannah Trawick (336.262.6932) BEFORE Sunday, September 13.
- Prepare for home communion: bread and grape juice or wine, crackers and water—whatever it is, have something on hand so that we can share communion together.

While this service is pre-recorded, it will be premiered live, meaning that for full participation, the service should be viewed at 4pm on Sunday, September 13, though it will be available for later viewing as well. Please help make this day special by showing up in this virtual space and worshipping together while witnessing and celebrating Hannah's ordination in the Presbyterian Church, USA and her installation at First Presbyterian!



Hi, FPC,

It has been a wonderful whirlwind start to my call as your Community Pastor. So far I have had the joy of getting to know our high school youth through Montreat at Home in early August; I have gotten to tour Covenant Homes and paint bird houses with a few of the residents; I have spoken to a number of you over the phone or smiled with you through mask-covered-faces as you stopped by my office; and most recently I've enjoyed meeting a few of you at Books and Beans for my Office Hours there. This place feels more and more like home already thanks to your hospitality, and I can emphatically say that it is *good* to be here!

The month of September has the bustlings of a joyful and celebratory fall. I'm eager to see you at our Rally Day Celebration and am hopeful you'll join me later that day for my Virtual Ordination and Installation! On the 20th, we will be kicking off Confirmation and High School Youth, and our six-week Autumn Zoom Series, which offers a number of ways to engage in community and to learn and discover more about ourselves and God, including a study of the Enneagram with me! I hope you'll pick one (or more!) of the courses to participate in—as well as engaging in some of the in-person options we are offering as you feel comfortable.

It's been a weird year, y'all, but we are all in it together. I can already tell that your joyful spirits have not been too dampened and are shining through in the life and liveliness of this beloved church.

Sending you big air hugs and so much gratitude,

Hannah



Contact Hannah:

336-262-6932 (Call or Text)
hannah.trawick@fpcrm.org

Hannah's Books and Beans Office Hours:

Wednesday, September 2 (11:30- 1:30pm)
 Friday, September 4 (8:30-10:30am)
 Wednesday, September 9 (11:30-1:30pm)
 Friday, September 11 (8:30-10:30am)



The Church Office will be closed on Monday, September 7, 2020 for the Labor Day Holiday.



Our work of peace and reconciliation is supported by gifts to the Peace & Global Witness Offering. These gifts also unite us with Presbyterian peacemakers across the country and the world who are active, not passive; who are doing, not waiting.

25% of this Offering stays with individual congregations to support local peacemaking and reconciliation efforts and ministries.

25% of this Offering will go to mid councils to join congregations in support of peacemaking throughout presbyteries and synods.

50% of this Offering supports the work for peace and reconciliation being done by Presbyterians across the globe.

When we all do a little, it adds up to a lot. We ask that should you choose to give to this offering, either send in a check payable to the church noting Peace & Global Witness in the memo line or bring it to worship on World Communion Sunday, October 4, 2020.



August 11, 2020 Session Meeting

-The Session welcomed Community Pastor Hannah Trawick to her first Session meeting, and Hannah opened the meeting with a wonderful devotional about the importance of teamwork in overcoming obstacles.

-There was much discussion about the Church's urgent need for a comprehensive upgrade of our audio-visual technology. Our capacity for "remote" ministry to members and non-members is important now, but equally important for our future. Matt will be engaging a professional to assess our needs, but any member with interest, time, or talent for technology is encouraged to reach out to Matt!

-The Session reviewed the "return to worship" recommendations of the ad-hoc Medical Task Force. We will begin weekly Worship in the Courtyard on Rally Day, September 13. A plan is in place so that the Sanctuary will be ready, "when the World is ready" to once again worship indoors.

-The Session approved a request for the STEP program to use some space in the education building this fall. The STEP program provides safe space for school children to have internet access for limited periods during the school week.

Submitted by Randy Adams, Clerk of Session

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 July 2020

Month – to – date	\$ 55,388.55
Year – to – date	\$ 368,947.77

Expenses through July 2020

Month – to – date	\$ 59,358.12
Year – to – date	\$342,452.12

Church office phone	252.446.9121, option 5
Jeanne's email	jeanne.shannon@fpcrm.org
Jeanne's office hours are Monday thru Thursday from 8:30-2:30 p.m.	



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION UPDATE



Pre-K Kids

Pastors Matt and Hannah will lead a Bible Stories and Coloring Zoom session for our littlest members on Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m. starting **September 23, 2020**. The Pre-K families will receive their own link for this and do not need to pre-register like the Adult Zoom classes.

Elementary Age Kids

We have selected a new curriculum called "Celebrate Wonder" and beginning Sunday, **September 13th** families can pick up a packet to be used at home for that week's lesson. A short video will be available for the kids to watch to accompany the lesson (more info to come with the video link).

Middle School

Our Middle School youth will meet from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. at the church on Sunday evenings throughout the school year starting **September 20th** to engage in the process of Confirmation with Pastors Matt and Hannah. All youth are invited for a shared dinner at 5:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall on the first and third Sundays of each month. The first shared dinner in September is **September 20, 2020**.

High School

Our High School youth will gather on the first and third Sundays of each month from 6-7:00 p.m. for Faith and the Front Page—an informal discussion series around questions raised about learning to live out one's faith in the "real" world. All youth are invited for a shared dinner at 5:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall on the first and third Sundays of each month. The first gathering for High School is **September 20, 2020**.

An Invitation

Any congregation-led Bible studies such as *Present Word* and *PEP (Presbyterians Educating Presbyterians)* as well as any additional small groups are invited to resume in-person meetings after our 9 a.m. outdoor worship service on Sunday mornings.

Brown Bag Bible Study

Brown Bag Bible Study participants will resume meeting Mondays at noon with a pastor for a time of biblical discussion. This group will gather (socially distanced) **in the church parlor** at noon starting **September 21, 2020**. Please note—the group will not meet September 28, 2020 due to the upcoming Stewardship lunch.



FPC's Autumn Zoom Series!

FPC will be hosting a 6-week virtual Zoom series from the week of September 20-October 27. Sign up for one or more of the options at <https://tinyurl.com/y6ht5np7>! By signing up, you will receive a Zoom packet with information on how to get on zoom, notes on the classes, and weekly reminders. Mark your calendars and get excited with us!

- Mondays at 7:00—**The Road Back to You: A Study in Enneagram and Spirituality**; Join Pastor Hannah on Mondays at 7pm starting September 21st for a journey of self (re-) discovery in a time that has forced us to question who we are, who we want to be and who God is calling us to be.
- Tuesdays at 2:00—**Mindfulness and Wholeness**; Join Dionne Seale on Tuesdays at 2pm for an ongoing study to learn the practice of Mindfulness and Wholeness—two important practices for surviving life's curveballs and thriving in the midst of life's uncertainties.
- Wednesdays at 6:00—**Minor Prophets Bible Study**; Join Pastor Matt for FPCRM's traditional Wednesday Night Bible Study starting September 23rd. For six weeks, Matt will lead study and discussion on the Minor Prophets who led their communities through change and upheaval. How do the lessons of the Minor Prophets guide us in this day and this age?
- Thursdays at 12:00—**Pastoral Prayer Time**; Starting September 24th, join your pastors for a time of check-in, prayer, and renewal so that we might support one another in times of hardship, and rejoice with one another in times of celebration!

Help us take the church to the community by inviting a friend to sign-up with you!

Sign-up information will be published in the weekly update, and Pastor Hannah will be available for tech support so that all can participate, regardless of technological know-how!

Fountain Scholarship Recipient



The Trustees of the A.P. Thorpe Foundation have very proudly announced that this year's Fountain Scholarship is being awarded to Megan Seale. The Fountain Scholarship was named in honor of Kacky Fountain, a longtime member of FPC who devoted much of her life to education. The Fountain Scholarship is awarded annually to a college-bound member of FPC who has made a significant contribution to the life of the Church. "Significant" is a bit of an understatement in describing Megan's contribution to our congregation. From Cherub Choir to Gatekeepers - and everything in-between - Megan has truly been an outstanding child of the Church. Megan is taking her considerable talents to High Point University this fall.

Submitted by Randy Adams, FPC Endowment Committee



Covenant Homes residents enjoyed a pork chop or baked chicken lunch with creamed potatoes, butter beans, roll, cookies and drink sponsored by First Presbyterian Church on Wednesday, August 12, 2020.



FACE MASK DONATIONS

Bill Buchanan volunteers with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and recently brought back 3000 face masks from a FEMA distribution event in Burlington. Face masks were in turn distributed to other Presbyterian churches in the area, Covenant Homes, Tar River Academy and Peacemakers.

**PEACE
MAKERS**
COMMITTED TO OUR COMMUNITY



One of our youth, Walker Rose, contacted the church wanting to help collect food donations for Peacemakers during the month of August. Well over 200 items were collected and delivered there by her!

Diane Dixon's grandson, Cameron, heard about Walker's food drive and wanted to help her by collecting food items from his neighborhood! We are grateful for their servant hearts!





August 19, 2020

Greetings from the International Student Services department of NCWC!!

This is our update and prayer letter. You had requested to be on our prayer list.

We have amazing news! God is moving to allow the students to come back and for new ones to join us!! Dawn and I keep saying the word “Amazing!”

With the entire world being affected by Covid-19, and many, many in-country and international travel restrictions, the majority of our students have found a way to get back to campus! Praise the Lord! Many stayed in the USA this summer, either with friends or family, about twenty stayed on campus and twenty stayed in apartments they were already renting.

Many of those overseas found a way to get back. And we have NEW Students who are somehow finding a way to come. They have to get emergency embassy interviews in many cases.

Also, the college is granting the ability to study online (on a case by case basis) from the students’ countries IF they have a medical reason or travel restrictions making it almost impossible to fly here.

As of now, we have students attending from 33 countries. We have approximately 100 international students here on campus (or in an apartment) and about 23 studying online from their countries. And, against all odds, we have 12 new students, and three more expected in the next week or two.

As you can imagine, the campus is doing everything it can to keep everyone safe. Many protocols have been put into place for all – students, staff, faculty... everyone! Everyone is wanting to continue to have seated classes and life on campus, so there is compliance across the board.

Today is the first day of classes.

Please pray for continued health for all on campus.

Please pray that the college can continue to have classes as planned.

Please pray for students to be able to connect to others—even with masks and social distancing.

Please pray that the new students will feel at home and find new friends—even when there isn’t a lot of opportunity for clubs, campus ministries, etc. (The college is putting safety first with extra “distancing” in place for at least these first two weeks.)

Please pray for all the staff (including Dawn and myself). We ALL have MANY Extra Responsibilities (in addition to our normal hectic back-to-school duties) that we are working to fulfill – in order to take care of the students returning to campus.

We just wanted to give you an update and ask you to join us in prayer.

Walking the Grace Path with you!

Suzanne and Dawn

Suzanne Hening—International Student Services Coordinator

Dawn Turner—Director of International Student Services



Presbyterian Women Update

2019-20 Moderator's Report

The PW year for 2019 & 2020 got off with a wonderful start with our Annual Fall Luncheon and Bible study introduction on August 29, 2019. All of the five Rocky Mount Presbyterian Church PW were invited and we had extremely good attendance as well as a delightful luncheon. The Rev. Bettie Kirkpatrick presented the overview for our new Bible Study, "Love Carved in Stone, A Fresh New Look at the Ten Commandments."

It was a wonderful study and were pleased to have Bettie, Matt, and Preston to lead our Circle of J.O.Y. lessons through the entire season. The Circle of Friends had Matt and Bettie each lead one lesson and the remainder were presented by our own members. Such a blessing! Thanks to everyone for a blessed circle year.

We participated in very worthwhile projects such as Bingo prizes for Covenant Homes, as well as serving 21 Thanksgiving meals to residents that would be alone on Thanksgiving Day; we gave pillows to the Bassett Center, helped furnish back to school supplies for Tar River Academy, donated to Peacemakers, helped with their Christmas Shop, donated Christmas toys, adopted a family for Christmas from My Sister's House—with a teenage boy and a little girl (you should have seen how quickly Stephanie and Becky purchased those Christmas gifts online!) We donated a medicine kit for Church World Service, we made donations to Children's Hope Alliance, and even helped with the Blood Drive.

We were having such a delightful year of caring and sharing— and then comes Coronavirus—COVID 19!! Everything came to a complete stop! NO, it didn't! We prayed, we made phone calls to check on our church families, to check on the Covenant Homes residents, shopping and cooking for shut-in friends, making masks and the list goes on. I'm sure more than I even know about! BUT, no PWCT and circles meetings in April and May, no Annual Birthday meeting, no Spring Gathering, etc.

Fortunately, some of us finished our "Ten Words" via YouTube, presented by the author, Rev. Eugenia Gamble, herself, that in itself was a delight.

I want to add a special thank you for the special offerings endorsed by the PWP-PCUSA. You were very generous in your giving to help show your love and support for the Birthday, Thank, and Fellowship of the Least Coin offerings.

We did not sell as many Easter lilies this year as usual because of not being able to have our regular Easter worship service, therefore not as much money was available for scholarships. Four Littrell-Thorpe Scholarships were presented to our much deserving college bound members.

All of this being said, it reminds me of how truly blessed we are. It reminds me again and again that God's words of promise in our 2018-19 Bible Study, "I will be with you, I will not leave you."

Thanks be to God!
Submitted by Janice Smith,
PW Moderator

Mark your calendars!

Tuesday, September 1, 2020: 10:00 a.m. PWCT

Tuesday, September 15, 2020: 10:30 a.m. Both the Circle of J.O.Y. and the Circle of Friends will meet in the fellowship hall



Beginning with our Rally Day Celebration on September 13th, we plan to offer weekly worship in the front courtyard at 9:00 a.m. every Sunday. If the weather turns sour, we will send an email at 8:00 a.m. to notify you of a cancellation. Rain or shine, we will record the morning service (to the best of our ability) for online distribution Sunday afternoon around 4:00 p.m. Don't forget to bring a lawn chair and wear a mask if we are able to gather outdoors.



Sunday, September 13, 2020
9:00 a.m.

Weather permitting, we will gather together on September 13th at 9:00 a.m. in the courtyard for a Rally Day Celebration. Come worship with us as we celebrate God's love, the beginning of a new school year, and a return to communal worship. There will be butterflies, bagpipes, and a light breakfast. Boxed breakfasts will be available for pickup upon arrival for those who requested one by the August 31 deadline. Unfortunately, we will not be able to enjoy the annual Rally Day picnic at Rose Hill due to the pandemic. So come out and bring a lawn chair, wear a mask, and practice social distancing to ensure the safety of our community.

**In case of bad weather, worship will be recorded in the sanctuary and sent out for viewing by 6:00 p.m. You are still invited to come by the church that morning and pick up your reserved boxed breakfast at 9:00 a.m.—they will be handed out at the covered side/portico entrance. Also, Elementary Age Kids will be able to pick up their "Celebrate Wonder" notebooks for home Sunday School use.



Your music staff along with our choral scholars have used the pandemic time to record a Christmas CD, which is currently in production. We do not know what winter will look like this year, and we fear that singing music together may not be safe. Jim and Jennie have been hard at work over the summer to bring us some amazing music to listen to this winter and feel like you are sitting in the middle of the sanctuary. We'll have details soon for how you can get a copy for family and friends.

Keeping in touch...

FOLLOW
US!

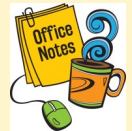


First Presbyterian Rocky Mount



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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.



The church building is now accessible to visitors Monday—Thursday from 9:00-4:00 p.m.

We are so excited about all that is going on, but we are still realistic about the dangers posed by the coronavirus. Please wear a mask when you are at the church. Please remain outside individual staff offices. Please keep 6 feet of distance whenever possible. Please use hand sanitizer. PLEASE refrain from coming if you are feeling sick or have been directly exposed. Finally, please understand that plans are changing rapidly, and we may need to respond to situations and change plans quickly.

Thank You for Helping Rock the Mount COVID Style!



We sincerely appreciate your participation in the North Carolina Wesleyan College new student Welcome Bags. Although more subdued than our normal Rock the Mount festivities, our students still received a warm welcome to the Rocky Mount community thanks to YOU!

*Dear Handcraft Ministry,
What joy it was to send the beautiful baby blanket to our new little granddaughter in Santa Cruz, California. We would love to have wrapped her in it ourselves. Mercer and Alex were thrilled with it and love knowing that the ladies in our Handcraft Ministry lovingly made it for sweet little Eva. Please share their appreciation with your fellow knitters.*

*Love,
Jean Kitchin*

*Dear Handcraft Ministry,
Thank you so much for the beautiful baby blanket you made for our granddaughter Ada.*

We are so fortunate to have you and all of your talents contributing to the Handcraft Ministry of our church. We truly appreciate your thoughtful service.

Stephanie and Clif Hayworth

Per Preston:

Scott Solether extends his gratitude for all of the cards and notes of support he received after several health setbacks.

Dear Laura and Bereavement Committee,

Thank you so much for the wonderful lunch buffet you provided for the family of Blanche L. Robinson. It was so relaxing and delicious during such a time of mixed emotions.

Brenda Brown



The love and sympathy of the congregation is extended to Sarah Bailey and family upon the death of her husband, Dr. Lloyd W. Bailey, on August 12, 2020.

Our love and sympathy is also extended to Pat Blanchard, Anne Wilgus Podesta and family upon the death of Pat's husband and Anne's brother, Jim Blanchard, on August 21, 2020.



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.



our thoughts and prayers are with...

THE FOUNTAINS AT THE ALBEMARLE—Tarboro

- ▶ Tom Dill
- ▶ Pat Blanchard

CARDINAL AT NORTH HILLS—Raleigh

- ▶ Dick Fountain

HOMESTEAD HILL—Winston-Salem

- ▶ Nancy Liipfert

BROOKDALE—Rocky Mount

- ▶ Betsy Boddie

ADDITIONAL CONCERNS

L.M. and Margaret Barnes

Jean Boddie

Mike Braswell

Janet Cooper (mother of Elizabeth Rose)

Augusta Daniel

Geraldine Donnell (sister of Janice Smith)

Herman Ferguson

Warren Gold

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

Edie Reeves

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

Stewardship 2021

Rejoice with us!



Our God continues to do amazing things in our midst! There is a growing sense of wholeness around the church. We are beginning regular outdoor worship services, so that we can see one another and share time with each other. The church staff is whole and moving into a new season of ministry, dedicated to expanding our connections with members and community. Our facilities are feeling whole again with some needed window and roof work. There is much to celebrate, so we invite you to "Rejoice with Us!"

Traditionally, we have gathered for a big meal and budget presentation. Our stewardship goal this year is to have 100% congregation participation. Respecting everybody's different risk tolerance, we want to give you 4 different options for this year's stewardship program. It is our hope that each and every one of you will choose **one** of the following options:

- Dinner on Sunday (9/27) from 6-7pm
- Lunch on Monday (9/28) from 12-1pm
- Breakfast on Tuesday (9/29) from 8-9am
- Zoom gathering on Thursday (10/1) at 7-7:40pm
(call-in is available for people without Zoom)

The meal options will be boxed meals in the Fellowship Hall with physical distancing and a cap on the number of available tables.

Each of these four choices will begin with a time of worship, led by Matt and Hannah. This will be followed by a presentation of our current financial standing and our proposed budget for 2021. There is also time for relevant questions.

We are asking each and every member and/or family to choose what works best for them and RSVP for one of the four options **no later than September 18th**. We hope to hear from all of you, so that we can coordinate how to rejoice together at these gatherings.

Please call 252-446-9121, option 2 or email dionne.seale@fpcrm.org at the church office to reserve your choice no later than 9/18/2020.

Thank you, all!