



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rocky Mount

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

November 2020

Dear Friends,

The strangest sensation blew through the church offices with the mid-October breeze. For the first time in ages- we felt contentment. Don't get me wrong- the world is still broken; several of our families are struggling. Yet, a wave of peace blew through the office as we prepared lessons, attended classes, wrote sermons, paid bills, and sanitized surfaces.

In the last few weeks, I've laughed so hard that my stomach hurt. I've been invited into the most honest conversations: from fear of death to hope for 2021, from anger at the virus to hope that we will not be so judgmental when it's over, from immeasurable loss to the joy of seeing an unmasked smile.

There is so much to lament. Yet, in our worship, classes, and fellowship opportunities- there is a growing and abiding sense of wholeness and joy. My prayer for all of you is that the October winds and November rains will wash over your soul and bring an abiding sense of God's peace and tranquility.

In love and gratitude,

Matt

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

A NOTE FROM HANNAH:

Dear First Pres,

How are you? Really, how are you? From my conversations with you, most of you seem well. A little tired, a little frustrated with pandemic restrictions, but mostly safe, mostly happy, and mostly secure. Some of you are grieving. You have family or friends who have lost a battle with COVID or cancer or mental health. Some of you are struggling with new diagnoses and ongoing medical concerns, unmanageable physical pain, the exhaustion of trying to find new hope every single day--or maybe just the exhaustion of trying to figure out what's for dinner every single day. I feel your joy, your hope, your pain, and your exhaustion with you, and I'm honored in your trust to share it with me.

One of the spiritual practices I've tried to cultivate over the past several months is a practice of gratitude. Throughout the good, the bad, and the ugly, I have found gratitude to be a grounding, joyful, and breath-giving practice. So this month, here is what I'm most grateful for in my work with this church:

- 1) Zoom Bible Stories and Coloring with our Pre-K Students:** Y'all, this is the most joyful, carefree fifteen minutes of my week. These children are bright, they are kind, they are creative and curious and full of questions. We've spent the past several weeks talking about different parts of the Creation Story, and they have an ability to marvel at God's creation with the great gift of childlike wonder. In my time with them, they have helped me to find that same wonder in myself once more.
- 2) Zoom Enneagram Class:** Every Monday evening, I have had the immense privilege to gather with 12+ wonderful women of this church to explore the Enneagram, a personality system, as a tool for Spiritual growth. Together we have bonded over vulnerable moments, grown in our own self-discovery, and strengthened relationships with our family members, co-workers, and friends. This small group has been a source of life, joy, and exploration for me. I'm grateful for the wonderful women who decided to sign up and give it a shot with me!
- 3) Connecting with Community Partners:** You know what's fun? Starting as your Community Pastor in the middle of a pandemic! Nevertheless, I have spent this month having distanced and outdoor meetings with the directors of various community initiatives around town. I am forming friendships with these people as I learn more and more about the services they offer, the change they inspire, and their ultimate vision for Rocky Mount. Let me assure you of what you already know, God's Kingdom is being built in this little corner of Eastern North Carolina and spreading far and wide. I'm honored to be a part of it with you.

What have you been grateful for this month?

Sending you love, hugs, and prayers,
Hannah



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE OCTOBER SESSION MEETING

The Session met on Tuesday, October 20. Most of the meeting was devoted to the Church's efforts toward a return to indoor worship. Highlights from the meeting are as follows:

- We will return to the Sanctuary, in limited numbers, for indoor worship on November 8 at 11:00 a.m.
- The Nominating Committee is working on a slate of proposed officers for the Class of 2023.
- The Session began a discussion of how the Church might handle Christmas services this year.
- A final 2021 budget will be presented to the Session in December.

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 September, 2020

Month – to – date \$ 49,689.60

Year – to – date \$493,772.28

Expenses through September, 2020

Month – to – date \$ 53,403.67

Year – to – date \$437,621.93



The third quarter contributions statements were mailed in mid-October to those members with a pledge. Another statement will be sent in early December as an update. Please contact Jeanne if you need an update on your pledge balance.

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 25th of each month. If the 25th 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 2021 contribution would begin January 25th 2021. If you choose the bank draft, you can also stop it by contacting Jeanne Shannon in the church office 2 weeks before the 25th of any month.

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

Sale of stock – **Schwab online does not include the church member name in the trade details. If using this method, please contact Jeanne Shannon with the details or ask your broker to contact Jeanne in the church office. The stock sale process should begin in early November to allow time for the process (two weeks from initial trade date to receiving the check) 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 using the 'Online Payment' link in the top right corner to see for yourself how easy it is to give online.

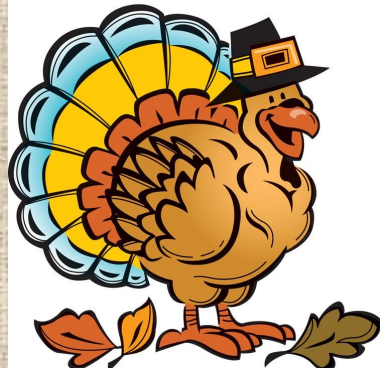
Church office phone—252.446.9121, option 5; Jeanne's email: jeanne.shannon@fpcrm.org

Jeanne's office hours are Monday thru Thursday from 8:30-2:30 p.m.

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS!!

*Don't forget to change your clocks!
Daylight saving time ends
November 1, so "fall back" an hour
on October 31!*

Thanksgiving Holiday



**The church
office will be
closed
November 25
and 26 for the
Thanksgiving
Holiday.**

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION UPDATE



Pre-K Kids

Pastors Matt and Hannah are leading a Bible Stories and Coloring Zoom session for our littlest members on Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m. 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 each family received a notebook with a weekly lesson and a family activity book.. A short video is available for the families to access and watch on their own schedule.

Middle School

Our Middle School youth meet from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. at the church on Sunday evenings throughout the school year 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.

High School

Our High School youth 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.

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 has resumed meeting Mondays at noon with a pastor for a time of biblical discussion. This group gathers (socially distanced) **in the church parlor** at noon.



Sunday, Nov. 1

SUNDAY YOUTH SCHEDULE:

4:30pm Confirmation Class

5:30pm Shared Meal (Fisher Family to provide)

6:00pm High School Youth

Sunday, Nov. 8 4:30pm Confirmation Class

Sunday, Nov. 15 4:30pm Confirmation Class

5:30pm Shared Meal (Daughtridge Family to provide)

6:00pm High School Youth (TRA Boxes)

Sunday, Nov. 29 4:30pm Confirmation: Trinity Projects



Tuesdays @ 2: Mindfulness and Wholeness

Click Here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82190387823>

Meeting ID: 821 9038 7823

Facilitated by Dionne Seale, this is a thirty-minute reprieve from your week to learn tools to fight stress and explore the topic of being a mindful Christian. It's also a time to connect with one another and support each other from afar.

Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m.: Coloring and Bible Story with a Pastor for Pre-K kids!

Let Matt or Hannah know if you need a link to join the fun on Wednesday mornings!

Stay tuned for more Zoom opportunities in the near future!



Due to COVID, we will miss not having the Gingerbread workshop this year at the church. Instead, gingerbread houses, icing, and some candy will be available for pick-up at the church the week of November 29-December 4th. An email will be sent to the parents of the preschool-5th graders to see who is interested in participating. You will also be asked to kindly

deliver the finished gingerbread house to one of our church members as a way to spread Christmas joy (name and address for delivery will be provided at pick-up).



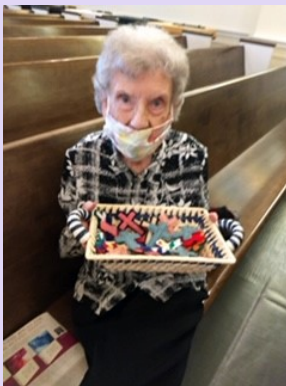
Your music staff along with our choral scholars have used the pandemic time to record a Christmas CD, which is currently in production. We do not know what winter will look like this year, and we fear that singing music together may not be safe. Jim and Jennie have been hard at work over the summer to 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.



Handcraft Ministry



The Handcraft Ministry continues to make masks, skull caps and fidget blankets for UNC Nash Hospital. They are also continuing to make baby blankets for church members and crocheted blankets for those in our congregation who become ill. Evelyn Reese made several canvas crosses for distribution as well (see below).



Margaret Dudley donated several handmade scarves for Handcraft Ministry distribution (at right).



Tempie Fuller and Laura Dudley report that our usual teacher appreciation surprises are presently on hold due to Covid-19. However waters and snacks were delivered for distribution (see below). We are still planning on providing the annual Thanksgiving food boxes to TRA families.



Against many odds, we were able to welcome 16 new International Freshmen to the Wesleyan campus this fall. They had to overcome many challenges—closed U.S. embassies in their countries for visa appointments, flight restrictions, etc. But they persevered and are here on campus—safe and sound! Praise the Lord!

The campus has many measures in place to keep everyone safe and healthy. Masks, social distancing, and very limited group gatherings are all in place. But at least we are able to still have seated classes. What no one wants is to go to all online classes. This would disrupt all students' learning experiences plus impact our international students dramatically.

We aren't having the personal interactions and social activities we would like to have, but definitely stay in touch with the students through technology platforms. We look forward to the restrictions easing when possible. Then we will have more on-campus events and interact more with the community.

Please keep the students in your prayers and the faculty and staff. We all are striving to be "Wesleyan Wise".

Suzanne Hening, International Student Service Coordinator



Our Collection drive for October benefited Agape Village. The Baileys recorded a short video for us to share more info on their ministry and joined us for worship on October 25. Thank you for helping fill the blue barrel with useful items for the children at the Agape Village orphanage and the Bucket Brigade was a huge success! One church member even contributed his "poker" change!



Bucket Brigade Success!



Each year those of you who shop at Harris Teeter have the opportunity to link your VIC savings card to various schools/entities as a fundraiser. Barium Springs (now known as Children's Hope Alliance) would greatly appreciate your support as they receive a percentage based on the purchase of Harris Teeter brand products. The code is 5443 and you can either link/relink at the cashier or by going online to:

www.harristeeter.com/together-in-education.



With a teacher to student ratio of 1:6, Peacemakers had a successful summer school and once again improved reading levels by one grade. Peacemakers benefited from the Belk Charity Sale fundraiser—First Presbyterian Church sold 25 tickets and \$125.00 was donated to them.

PEACEMAKERS CHRISTMAS TOY STORE

Peacemakers will have a Covid restricted Christmas Toy Shop for parents to purchase items for children ages birth to 18 on December 4 and 5.

FPC will collect toys for this effort during the month of November.

Peacemakers can also use wrapping paper, ribbon and tape. Basketballs and earbuds are very popular items. Toys & wrapping supplies can be placed in the Peacemakers Christmas box in the volunteer room beginning November 1.



Presbyterian Women Update

"The Christian faith is a perpetual tightrope. On one side is a pit of knowing despair; the other side is a pit of joyful ignorance. Both sides are pulling at us stronger than ever. Don't fall....just keep walking." Matt Baker

The Presbyterian Women continue to walk in service for the kingdom. They faithfully volunteer and participate in acts of care and concern for our church family as well as our community. The women send cards and emails, make phone calls, assist in transportation, provide meals, share meals, offer friendly support when needed, and most importantly....they study the Bible together. The joint circle meetings in the sanctuary continue to be successful. From our study of Biblical lament, we learned that the perceived absence of God is at the heart of lament yet God never abandons us. To that, we added the idea that our community also does not abandon us. The text reminds us that we do not walk through this world alone because we are all connected through our faith. And through our faith we find hope. So keep walking ladiesjust keep walking.

This month the women will come together in service by providing Thanksgiving Meals to the residents of Covenant Homes. Each year, the PWCT coordinates this project along with volunteers from each Circle. In addition, members of the Circle of Joy will be participating in a canned food drive.

PWCT will meet Monday, November 2nd in the church parlor at 10:00 am

Find your place of service with the wonderful women at FPC by joining a Circle —

The Circle of Friends will meet Monday, November 9th in the parlor at 10:30 am *

The Circle of JOY will meet Tuesday, November 10th in the parlor at 10:30 am *

*note change in format for November

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN COORDINATING TEAM 2020-21

Janice Smith, Moderator

Stephanie Hayworth, Vice-Moderator

Gaye Moore, *Secretary*

Julia Brown, *Treasurer*

Frances Guerry, *Historian*

Laura Durham, *Spiritual Nurture*

Nancy Richardson, *Together in Service*

Martha Tesoro, *Together in Service*

Myra Richardson, *Circle of Friends Leader*

Tempie Fuller, *Circle of J.O.Y. Leader*

PW THANK OFFERING

The Presbyterian Women's Thank Offering was started in 1888. Concerned people have responded and given sacrificially "a thank offering to the Lord". More than \$26 million has been granted to 1,700 different projects worldwide through the Thank Offering.

The Creative Ministries Offering Committee of PW received 49 applications for this year's grants. 15 were funded, 13 serve people in the U.S. and 2 are international. Two of the 15 are in our Synod of the Mid-Atlantic (Presbytery of Western Carolina & National Capital Presbytery). Western Carolina's project is Faith 4 Justice—a bridge between local faith leaders and Black community leaders. National Capital's project is Crossroads Food Community Network.

We can express our deep gratitude for God's blessings in our lives by giving back to people in our communities and around the world. Through the Thank Offering, we help fund programs that provide education relief from disaster, safe housing and so much more. Let us give thanks to God for one another as this year is not like any we have seen before. Thank you for your prayers, your love and support of Presbyterian Women. We hope you are able to give generously as we collect the Thank Offering during worship on **November 22, 2020** or send in a check made payable to Presbyterian Women (memo line: Thank Offering).

Scenes from First Presbyterian Life!

At right, Rev. Hannah Trawick led the time of study for both PW circles on October 13, 2020.



Above, Church member John Etheredge, who is serving as a long-term volunteer with Presbyterian World Mission in Ho, Ghana, demonstrates how to cook a traditional African dish called Fufu.



Above, Matt and Hannah lead us in outdoor worship on October 18, 2020.

Keeping in touch...

FOLLOW
US!

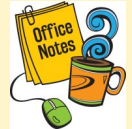


First Presbyterian Rocky Mount



fpc_rockymount

Contact Information Updates: Kindly notify Dionne Seale in the church office at 252-446-9121, ext. 21 or dionne.seale@fpcrm.org 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.

During a time like this we realize how much our family and friends mean to us. Your kind expression of sympathy will always be remembered. Thank you so much for the prayer blanket and stitched cross you made for Hospice patients at Nash. It helped bring us peace.

The family of Gertrude Neumann

The family of Claude Smith wish to thank the church members and staff for their many acts of kindness and sympathy upon his death.

Michael Smith and family

Good morning. Thank you so much for this morning's snacks. I got up late and did not have breakfast. The mixed nuts hit the spot!

*John Scheipers
Tar River Academy
Middle School Teacher*

Dear First Pres Family,

"Blessed are the givers, and grateful are the receivers. Thank you so much."

Wow! Your gift of \$2,500 is an answer to prayers! We have such a huge need right now to find funding for extra therapy session for children and families.

Covid has hit our donors hard and we are way behind what is needed to keep providing for the services needed.

Thank You, Thank You, THANK YOU!

Thanks for blessing our socks off!

Huge hugs,

*Lorie Fees
Children's Hope
Alliance*



- Our love and sympathy is extended to Ben Roberson and family upon the death of Ben's aunt, Fannie Lou Hardison of Washington, NC on September 21, 2020.
- We extend our love and sympathy to Michael Smith upon the loss of his brother, Claude Smith, on October 15, 2020.
- Our love and sympathy is also extended to Elizabeth, Jep, Mary Ashley and Lucy Rose upon the death of Elizabeth's mother, Janet Fulcher Cooper, on October 24, 2020.



Please notify the church office if you would like to sponsor flowers in the sanctuary in honor of or in memory of someone. The following dates are available in November: 11/15 and 11/22.

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

BROOKDALE—Rocky Mount

- ▶ Betsy Boddie

ADDITIONAL CONCERNS

L.M. and Margaret Barnes

Mike Braswell

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

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



Upcoming Worship Services

Sunday, November 1, 2020 (10:00 a.m.) *All Saints' Day and 22nd Sunday after Pentecost; Outdoor Worship Service—weather permitting; Livestreaming of service available through link on church website or Facebook page.*

RETURN TO IN-PERSON WORSHIP STARTING NOVEMBER 8TH

(live-streaming of the service will still be an option)

- A limited capacity of 18 family units, spread between the chapel and sanctuary.
- At least 6 feet of physical distancing between family units at all times.
- **Mandatory masking** with a cotton or surgical face mask that covers the nose and mouth at all times.
- **No congregating** in the Narthex before or after the service.
- **A reservation system** to ensure equitable access to all who desire to worship indoors. Notify the church office to be added to the reservation list. Please call 252-446-9121, option 2 or email us at office@fpcrm.org. We will make calls to the first 18 family units on the list on the Monday prior to the service. If you are contacted and are unable to attend that week, your name will be moved to the top of the list for the following Sunday in a rotation to allow all an opportunity to attend.

Sunday, November 8, 2020 (11:00 a.m.) *23rd Sunday after Pentecost*

Sunday, November 15, 2020 (11:00 a.m.) *24th Sunday after Pentecost; Extra Advent Wreath Kits available for pickup*

Sunday, November 22, 2020 (11:00 a.m.) *Christ the King Sunday; Accept the PW Thank offering; Extra Advent Wreath Kits available for pickup*

Sunday, November 29, 2020 (11:00 a.m.) *First Sunday of Advent*

At Home Advent Wreath Kits



Since in-person worship will be a little different this Advent season, we are offering a limited number of Advent Wreath kits for use at home, especially for those unable to attend worship. Kits will be delivered to our home-bound members, and extras will be available for pick-up beginning November 15 or from the church office during office hours prior to November 29.