



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rocky Mount

First Pres News

September 2021

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

WELCOME BACK

Dear Friends,

As you look through this month's newsletter, you will see the best of our planning and intentions. Officers, staff, Hannah, and myself have tried to organize celebrations, study opportunities, fellowship possibilities, outreach events, and much more. We are excited about all that can be done in the upcoming year.

Since planning all of this, the pandemic numbers have skyrocketed, and fear is gripping our most vulnerable members. Not a day goes by without a member coming to me and telling me that they want to participate in such-and-such, but they just don't feel safe at this point. It is discouraging but completely understandable.

Regardless of whether our best intentions pan out or not, here is our end goal in the age of COVID—help us keep you connected to your God, your church family, and your sense of well-being. Come where you feel comfortable. Have grace where things change at the last minute. Reach out if life is getting to be too much. Pray daily for each other, the church, and yourself; know that you are being prayed for by name. We are all in this together.

While we pray that we are able to do all that you will see in the following pages, there is a very real possibility that some of these events may not happen as we expect. However, we will continue to do everything possible to fulfill our mission of bringing the church to the community and the community to the church.

Thank you for your grace, understanding, and commitment to FPC.

In Love and Gratitude,

Matt

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

A NOTE FROM OUR COMMUNITY PASTOR:...

A Prayer for September

Dear God,

September feels like January, in a “New Year” sort of way. A time for new beginnings, second chances, and celebration. School years, and sport seasons, and church calendars, the beautiful and hot chaos of summer settles into a familiar routine, a fresh start, a new beginning, a new year, here at the end of August.

God, we pray for the students. For the Pre-K 3s and 4s class, to first-day kindergarteners, to fifth graders and middle schoolers, first-day freshmen, first-day seniors, new college students, and new graduate students—at every age this time of year feels frenetic, open, hopeful, and full of possibility. We pray that the students around the world might feel your presence in this year ahead. Remind them, always, that they are so much more than a grade on a test.

And God, we pray for the teachers, faithful people who have answered the charge to shape and to form, to teach and nourish students from a diversity of backgrounds. In the chaos of Covid-style school, help them to find peace. As they navigate the nerves of children and parents, may they find the strength to lead with kindness and perseverance. When the days are long and they feel overworked, may words and gestures of appreciation flow freely from unexpected places. Remind them, always, that they are so much more than their lessons.

Oh God, we pray for school boards and administrators, for custodians and tech support—the work and planning and decision making that comes with trying to offer a safe and clean place to learn is heavy, and people can be harsh and unforgiving. God be their strength and their courage and their stamina in the weeks ahead. Remind them, always, that they are so much more than their decisions.

We pray, too, oh God, for the parents, parents who are working and raising families and worrying and wondering and trying to do what’s best for their children. Calm their fears, ease their tears, and remind them, always, that they are not alone, for a village surrounds them.

God, when the newness of the school year wears off and things feel mundane and routine, remind us all to look for joy, to practice gratitude, and find moments of peace the beautiful, crazy, draining, stimulating rhythm of life that births anew each September.

In your holy name we pray, Amen.

Hannah



- ♦ Deacons—September 14, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. in the Session Room.
- ♦ Session—September 21, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. in the Session Room.

MAKES CENTS

The church income and expense data for the month shown is available for review. 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 2021

Month – to – date \$ 26,803.08

Year – to – date \$383,787.70

Expenses through July 2021

Month – to – date \$ 55,670.17

Year – to – date \$343,433.64



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.

Community Partners

September Focus: Peacemakers



Suggested supplies:

dry erase markers,
individual scotch tape
plastic dispensers, pla
dough individual
containers, masking tape,
construction paper,
Sharpies, Super sticky Easel
pad post-it charts, electric
pencil sharpeners

Our friends at
Peacemakers are in
need of school
supplies for their
location to assist local
children. Donations
can be brought to the
sanctuary narthex or
the volunteer office.



WORSHIP UPDATE

Effective August 23, 2021

Session has voted to return to wearing masks when in the church. This is temporary measure, and we will continue full worship with singing. Thank you for your understanding.

The church office will be
closed on Monday,
September 6, 2021 for the
Labor Day Holiday.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION UPDATE

Pre-K- 5th Grade Offerings

Kiddos in the Kirk

Offered on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of each month, Kiddos in the Kirk is a chance for our PK-5th graders to come hang out with the pastors at the church from 3-4:30pm. This time of fun, fellowship, and learning will include a snack, games, bible stories, crafts, and music.

Fall Dates: Sep. 20, Oct. 4 & 18, Nov. 1 & 15 (November 15- Advent Workshop focus), Dec. 6

Treating Others

On **Thursday, October 28 from 3pm-4pm**, our youngest members will dress up in their Halloween best and go to Covenant Homes to give candy to members of our community who could use some Halloween joy! There just might be a bag of candy for all who participate, too!

Gingerbread Houses and Caroling

On **Sunday, December 5**, our church kiddos will gather from 3pm-5pm with our Middle Schoolers, High Schoolers, and choir members to travel around town caroling to our shut-in members.

Middle School and High School Offerings

SEE PAGE 5: Youth & Parents—mark your calendars for September 12 from 4:30—6:00 p.m. (more details forthcoming to parents about location) and learn more about the following:

- Pizza with the Pastors
- Tacos with the Pastors
- "Shiny Diner" Breakfast
- Sunday School
- Youth Group

Adult Education Offerings

Brown Bag Bible Study

A time of discussion and fellowship at **noon on Mondays** in the Session Room with Pastor Matt Baker.

Community Small Groups

Join Hannah and community members at various small groups around town. Depending on the setting and purpose, these small groups might involve worship, bible study, conversation, prayer, or fellowship.

Brookdale Senior Living: **3:30 on Sept. 13; 2nd Sundays at 2pm starting in October (Oct. 10, Nov. 14, Dec. 12)**

Covenant Homes: TBD

Wednesday Night Bible Study

Meeting 5:00 p.m. (**NEW TIME) on Wednesdays starting September 15th—Join Matt Baker for a time of Bible Study in the Session Room and you are welcome to stay for a covered dish meal at 6:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

Young Heretics

After a kick-off on September 16th, this group will meet on the first Thursday of each month at Rocky Mount Mills. The Young Heretics group is a space to wrestle with big questions of faith and doubt and say the quiet parts out loud together, like: is the Bible still even relevant? What if God is not conscious? What does our faith mean in our modern reckonings of racism, sexism, and gender-identity? Can I be a Christian if I believe _____? Of course, this is best done over food and beer (for those who wish). Join for a spirited conversation of fun and fellowship!

Fall Dates: September 16, Oct. 7, Nov. 4, Dec. 2 at 5:30 p.m.

Sip and Chat Book Club

The Sip and Chat Book Club will gather over wine and cheese in the homes of members to fellowship, commiserate, celebrate, pray, and learn together, centering conversation on a shared and agreed-upon book. Potential authors include Rachel Held Evans, Anne Lamott, Glennon Doyle, Jen Hatmaker—and any others participants recommend!

Fall Dates: Sep. 23, Oct. 14 & 28, Nov. 11 & 23, Dec. 9 at 5:30 p.m.

Tuesdays @2:00 Zoom Mindfulness Study—

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. Contact Dionne in the church office to sign up for the emailed Zoom link. ****Will not meet on**

September 7, 2021**

SUNDAY MORNINGS (9:45 am)

- PEP (Presbyterians Educating Presbyterians) Class—Church Parlor starting September 19
- Coffee Talk—Fellowship Hall starting September 19
- High School (2nd Sunday starting October 10)
- Middle School (4th Sunday starting September 26)

Our Youth enjoyed
"one last hurrah"
before starting
school by joining
Pastors Matt and
Hannah on a fun
kayak trip on the
Neuse River with
Neuse River
Outfitters on
August 10th!

Community Partners

FPC representatives helped "Rock the Mount" at NC Wesleyan College on August 24th by meeting new students and giving out goody bags with personalized messages!

Covenant Homes residents and Board members enjoyed a covered dish luncheon on July 28th with fried chicken and hush puppies from Gardner's.

Above, thank you note from N.E.W. for our recent partnership to allow meeting space for their leadership training.



Link your VIC card to Barium Springs Home for Children with TIE code 5443 either at the Harris Teeter app or ask your cashier to link it at check out!



Below, Laura Dudley represented FPC Community Partners by helping host a back to school breakfast for staff at Tar River Academy in August!

Left, Rev. Hannah Trawick discusses starting at Bible Study with residents at Covenant Homes on August 10.

Presbyterian Women Update

Well, here we are, coming to the end of summer and gearing up for the events of the fall. As we move from one season to another, let's continue to widen our circles beyond our typical paths. Don't miss opportunities to enjoy the fellowship and fun of working with others for a common purpose. Participating in a FPC Circle is a great place to start!

Andin case you missed "it", the PWCT hosted the annual Fall Kick-Off meeting on August 26th in the Fellowship Hall with light refreshments. The Rev. Hannah Trawick introduced this year's Bible Study "What My Grandmothers Taught Me - Learning from the Women in Matthew's Genealogy of Jesus". Everyone had a wonderful time!!

Kindly note changes due to Labor Day Holiday.....

- PWCT will meet Monday, September 13th in the History Room at 10 a.m.
- Circle of Friends will meet Monday, September 13th at 7 p.m. at home of Janice Smith (101 Covenant Court—Covenant Homes)
- Circle of JOY will meet Tuesday, September 14th in the Session Room at 10:30 a.m. with Mary Lou Fountain teaching Bible Study Lesson one.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN COORDINATING TEAM 2021-22

Nancy Richardson, Co-Moderator

Stephanie Hayworth, Co-Moderator

Julia Brown, Treasurer

Laura Durham, Spiritual Nurture

Martha Tesoro, Together in Service

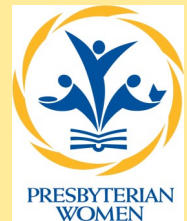
Tempie Fuller, Circle of J.O.Y. Leader

Gaye Moore, Secretary

Sarah Gooding, Historian

Laura Dudley, Together in Service

Myra Richardson, Circle of Friends Leader



*"What My Grandmothers Taught Me—
Learning from the Women in Matthew's Genealogy of Jesus"
PW Bible Study Kick-off on August 26, 2021*





SUNDAY WORSHIP HELPERS

Date	Ushers	Nursery	Children's Sermon
Sept. 5	Mary Watson, Laura Durham Acolytes: Ann Cleveland & Walt Fisher	Linda Amerson	Hannah Trawick
Sept. 12	Randy Adams, Sally Adams, Dee Whitley, John Turnage	Dionne Seale	Hannah Trawick
Sept. 19	Ike Amerson, Linda Amerson, Tricia Vestal, Chris Watson	Volunteer needed	Jim Lilley
Sept. 26	Rob Barnhill, Chrissy Barnhill, Wicky Thorpe, James Tharin	Kate Tharin	Matt Baker

Chancel Choir looking for new members...

If you've thought about singing in the choir, now is a good time to put thought into action. If you've not thought about it, please think about it!

You don't have to audition and you don't have to already know how to read music. Although it's an important skill to learn if you're going to stick with singing for a long time, it is by no means required when you start. Even singers who have been performing for years may not know how to read music. In the choir, you can learn the songs by listening and repeating.

The activity of singing is a wonderful workout for the lungs. The actions of breathing deeply and opening the diaphragm help to oxygenate the blood, creating more white blood cells, which strengthens the whole body. The breathing rate slows and deepens, releasing endorphins and increasing a sense of well-being. Singing improves your posture and tones your stomach muscles. A strong core supports the spine so your body will be less prone to injury as you age.

Music is a strong emotional force. Choir rehearsal may become your favorite part of the week. It is an opportunity to escape your daily stresses and responsibility for a few hours and focus on creating something beautiful.

Choir contributes to the understanding of God and the experience of worship.

Choir gives us the opportunity to be worship leaders.

Choir fulfills the Biblical admonishment to "sing to our God."

Choir focuses on DOING rather than OBSERVING.

Choir allows praise with body, mind, spirit, and voice.

Choir helps develop concepts of teamwork and cooperation.

Choir is a gift that will last a lifetime.

*Choir rehearsal is on Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m.
for approximately ninety minutes. We need
new members. Think about it.*

Thanks, Jim

Chancel Choir

Wednesdays at 7:30 pm

Handbell Choir

Wednesdays at 6:40 pm
beginning September 15, 2021

Keeping in touch...

FOLLOW
US!



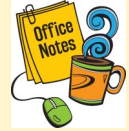
First Presbyterian Rocky Mount



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.

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Dear First Presbyterian Church,

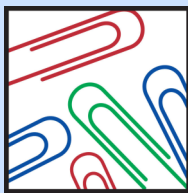
Thank you so much for your continued support of the Boys & Girls Club especially during our most difficult time, Covid. Your donation helped us to move from being an after school & summer program to a full day program with virtual learning. We are so grateful. You have truly inspired & enabled young people, especially those who need us most to reach their full potential as productive, responsible & caring citizens.

*Faithe N. Preston
Boys & Girls Clubs of the Tar River
Region*

Dear FPC Church Family,

Sonny and I were so surprised with a beautiful bouquet of flowers delivered by Bobbi Weeks! The flowers have certainly brightened our living room and showered us with Presbyterian love.

*Best regards,
Pell and Sonny Foster*



Church Office
Hours

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



The love and sympathy of the congregation is extended to Sue Jackson and family upon the death of her husband Gene Jackson on August 28, 2021.

Honor someone or mark a special occasion in the coming year by signing up by the date you prefer on the flower chart that is posted on the bulletin board outside the copy room. Dionne Seale can place the order on your behalf at a cost of \$75 that will be billed to you or contact her for names of **approved** floral arrangers that you can contact and pay directly. Not only do we enjoy these flowers during worship, but they are made into smaller arrangements and delivered to those in need of cheer the following day.

Donations are also accepted to the flower fund so the church can provide flowers on dates that are not assigned.

These upcoming dates are currently available for flowers to be placed in the sanctuary:

September 26
October 3, 10, 17, 24, 31



our thoughts and prayers are with...

THE FOUNTAINS AT THE ALBEMARLE—Tarboro

► Tom Dill

CARDINAL AT NORTH HILLS—Raleigh

► Dick Fountain

BROOKDALE—Rocky Mount

► Betsy Boddie

► Mike Braswell

► Cora Lee Gold

ADDITIONAL CONCERNS

L.M. and Margaret Barnes

Augusta Daniel

Mary Kathleen Duncan

Geraldine Donnell (sister of Janice Smith)

Herman Ferguson

Phyllis Garriss (mother of Meredith Cooper)

Earl and Phyllis Goodwin

Emily Kicklighter (friend of the church)

Nancy Liipfert (staying with son in Winston-Salem)

Patsy Manning

Char Mather

Georgia Mixon

Gerry Niece (friend of the church)

Phyllis Parker

Jack Perry

Anne Wilgus Podesta

Evelyn Reese

Edie Reeves

Cora Rowe (granddaughter of Jean Kitchin)

Jean Rowe (Steve Rowe's mother)

Polly Rowlett (Leigh Skeen's mother)

Maida Sessoms

Preston Smith

Scott Solether

Phyllis Toler

Alice Watson (daughter-in-law of Mary Watson)

Willette Williams (daughter of Charity Lodge)

Susan Yenney



Rally Day 2021!

Sunday, September 12, 2021

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

and please RSVP for Lunch by September 8!

- 10:45 a.m. Listen for the bagpiper!**
- 11:00 a.m. Join us for worship and communion!**
- 12:05 p.m. Butterfly release in courtyard!**
- 12:15 p.m. Lunch served in the fellowship hall or playground**
- 12:45 p.m. Games/Prizes**
- 1:00 p.m. Special Presentation**
- 1:30 p.m. Worship+2 Challenge & Sign-ups**
- 1:45 p.m. Survey Announcement, Hymn, Benediction**

Mid-Week Fun!

Wednesday Lunch
Fellowship was a
success this summer!
Join us for a
Wednesday Night
Fellowship program
in the Session Room
at 5:00 p.m. *NEW
TIME* followed by a
(covered dish meal
at 6:00 p.m. in the
fellowship hall
starting September
15th!