

Easter Sunday

First Presbyterian Church

1621 E. Garrison Boulevard • Gastonia, North Carolina

704.864.2651 • www.fpcgastonia.org • streaming live



WELCOME

Happy Easter! On behalf of our staff and leadership, I offer you a warm welcome to First Presbyterian Church Gastonia. We joyfully gather this morning as a unified community of believers to embrace and proclaim the Good News God has given us through Jesus' resurrection. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we believe that Easter provides all of us an opportunity to encounter God's love in a way that renews and transforms us while providing a path to belong to God and one another. Whether you are an active member, first-time visitor, or anywhere between, I pray that our worship today helps you draw near to that love. If you are looking for a church to call home, I invite you to join us as we continue our lifelong pursuit of Christ. Everything we do as a congregation is an effort to grow closer to Christ and spread his love to our neighbors near and far.

If you have questions about God, your faith, or are interested in becoming more involved at FPC, please do not hesitate to contact me. We are glad God brought you here today!

He is risen, indeed!



Rev. Daniel J. Commerford, Senior Pastor

AUTHENTIC WORSHIP

When we gather to worship, we believe God welcomes us as we are and transforms us through hearing and proclaiming God's Word known to us in Jesus Christ. We offer two services each Sunday as well as special services throughout the year.



Thrive Worship

9:00 am—Fellowship Hall

A casual worship service with modern music.



Traditional Worship

11:00 am—Sanctuary

A traditional service with organ, hymns, and liturgy.

GROWING FAITHFULLY

Pursuing Christ is a lifelong journey, and we grow in faith through deepening our knowledge of scripture and asking honest questions together as we explore relevant ways to live out our faith. For that reason, we offer opportunities for people of all ages to grow in faith alongside others on the same journey. Our Faith Formation Ministry offers programming for infants, children, youth, and adults. At every stage of life and faith, we strive to gather and learn about God's love together.



MEANINGFUL MISSION

We believe that God calls us to participate in the restorative work of the Holy Spirit by putting our faith into practice. Through sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ and continuing his ministry, we look for ways to help others that make an impact. Here are some of the ministries in our community we partner with:

- Backpack Weekend Food Program
- Black Mountain Home for Children
- Boys & Girls Club
- Children's Hope Alliance
- Crisis Assistance Ministry (CAM)
- Dream Center Academy
- Projects in Guatemala and Malawi
- Rise Against Hunger
- The Rotary Community Garden
- Scout Programs
- Sherwood/Grier Schools Collection
- Sleep in Heavenly Peace

We'd love for you to experience the connection and belonging that comes with joining us at FPC Gastonia. If you're interested in any of the above or want to learn more about us, feel free to scan the QR code, visit fpcgastonia.org, or call us at (704) 864-2651.



SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY
Easter Sunrise Service
April 5, 2026
7:00 a.m.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Rev. Daniel J. Commerford

The sun is rising and Christ has risen!

He is risen, indeed!

Christ is risen! Death has been conquered.

Christ provides new life through perfect love!

Christ is risen! All that is broken has been made whole.

Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?

Christ is risen! Rejoice!

Praise the Lord! He is risen indeed!

†SONG

"Christ The Lord Is Risen Today (He Is Not Dead)"

Charles Wesley, Kurtis Parks, Samuel Arnold

Verse 1

Christ the Lord is risen today alleluia

Sons of men and angels say alleluia

Raise your joys and triumphs high alleluia

Sing ye heavens and earth reply alleluia

Verse 2

Lives again our glorious King alleluia

Where oh death is now thy sting alleluia

Dying once He all doth save alleluia

Where thy victory oh grave alleluia

Chorus

He is not dead He is alive

We have this hope in Jesus Christ

Verse 3

Love's redeeming work is done alleluia

Fought the fight the battle won alleluia

Death in vain forbids Him rise alleluia

Christ has opened paradise alleluia

Verse 4

Soar we now where Christ has led alleluia

Following our exalted Head alleluia

Made like Him like Him we rise alleluia

Ours the cross the grave the skies alleluia

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Jill Kimbirl

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 28:1-10

MEDITATION

Shake, Rock, Roll

Jill Kimbirl

†SONG

"Because He Lives"

Gloria Gaither, William J. Gaither

Verse 1

God sent His Son they called Him Jesus
He came to love heal and forgive
He bled and died to buy my pardon
An empty grave is there to prove
My Savior lives

Chorus

Because He lives I can face tomorrow
Because He lives all fear is gone
Because I know He holds the future
And life is worth the living
Just because He lives

Verse 2

How sweet to hold our newborn baby
And feel the pride and joy he gives
But greater still the calm assurance
This child can face uncertain days
Because Christ lives

Verse 3

And then one day I'll cross that river
I'll fight life's final war with pain
And then as death gives way to vict'ry
I'll see the lights of glory
And I'll know He reigns

EASTER LITANY

Rejoice, for Easter gives us new life!

Christ has reconciled us to God.

Rejoice, for Easter gives us new life!

Christ has conquered death so that we do not have to fear it.

Rejoice, for Easter gives us new life!

Christ heals our wounds that fester inside us.

Rejoice, for Easter gives us new life!

Christ shows us how to love others as he loves us.

Rejoice, for Easter gives us new life!

Christ brings value to those we cast aside, purpose to those who wander, and hope for those who are lost.

Rejoice, for Easter gives us new life!

May the joy of Easter transform our hearts, minds, and souls!

OFFERING

Today, a special offering is being collected for One Great Hour of Sharing. Through your gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing, you can serve people in your community and around the world by alleviating hunger, providing hope through rebuilding efforts, and working with communities to promote self-development. Please scan the QR code, or you can write "OGHS" in the memo line of your check.



†SONG (verse 4 only)

"Christ The Lord Is Risen Today (He Is Not Dead)"

Charles Wesley, Kurtis Parks, Samuel Arnold

Soar we now where Christ has led alleluia

Following our exalted Head alleluia

Made like Him like Him we rise alleluia

Ours the cross the grave the skies alleluia

†BLESSING

SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

April 5, 2026

Easter Sunday

11:00 a.m. Worship

WE GATHER FOR GOD'S WORD

ORGAN VOLUNTARY

"Festival Toccata"

Percy Fletcher

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

Please use this time to silently prepare for worship.

HANDBELL PRELUDE AND SILENT MEDITATION

"The Glory of Easter"

arr. by Eric Timerding

CALL TO WORSHIP

Jill Kimbirl

Do you see? Do you believe? Christ is risen!

He is risen, indeed!

Are you renewed with hope? Are you filled with joy? Christ is risen!

He is risen, indeed!

Will you be transformed? Will you go and tell the world? Christ is Risen!

He is risen, indeed!

People, rejoice! Our Lord is risen on this day.

He is risen, halleluiah! He is risen, indeed!

†HYMN #232

"Jesus Christ Is Risen Today"

EASTER HYMN

WORDS OF WELCOME

Rev. Daniel J. Commerford

WE PREPARE FOR GOD'S WORD

FIRST GOSPEL READING

John 20:1-10

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

We see the linens on the ground but dare not enter the tomb, for doing so calls us to a new way of life. We feel it in our hearts, minds, and souls that Jesus is risen, but do not understand how his resurrection transforms us. We are called to move forth as those who are transformed, but remain stuck in our old ways. Forgive us when we do not understand, do not care about, and do not act in light of your resurrection. Help us to live into the new life provided through the glory of Easter, (silent prayer), amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Be at peace with God and one another, for in Christ, we are all forgiven.

Thanks be to God!

†GLORIA PATRI #581

†PASSING OF THE PEACE

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

CHILDREN'S SERMON

Mary Taneti

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SECOND GOSPEL READING

John 20:11-18

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God!

SERMON SERIES

Promises Made, Promises Kept

SERMON

Promises Made, Promises Kept

Rev. Daniel J. Commerford

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

†HYMN #238

"Thine Is The Glory"

JUDAS MACCABEUS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

CALL FOR THE OFFERING

Tithes and offerings may be presented online at www.fpcgastonia.org/giving or by scanning the QR code on the right.



Today, a special offering is being collected for One Great Hour of Sharing. Through your gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing, you can serve people in your community and around the world by alleviating hunger, providing hope through rebuilding efforts, and working with communities to promote self-development. Please use the special envelopes available, or write "OGHS" in the memo line of your check.

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

"All Shall Be Amen and Alleluia"

Thomas Keesecker

All shall be Amen and Alleluia. We shall rest and we shall see.
We shall see and we shall know. We shall know and we shall love.
We shall love and we shall praise. Behold our end which is no end.

All shall be Amen and Alleluia. We shall rest and we shall see.
We shall see and we shall know. We shall know and we shall love.
We shall love and we shall praise. Behold our end which is no end.

All shall be Amen and Alleluia. We shall rest and we shall see.
We shall rest and we shall see and we shall know.
We shall know and we shall love.

†DOXOLOGY #606

DEDICATION OF THE OFFERING

SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

COMMUNION OF GOD'S PEOPLE

These are the Gifts of God for the People of God.

Thanks be to God!

When directed by an usher, please come forward to receive communion. If you wish to have communion served to you in the pew, please raise your hand and our servers will come to you.

PRAYER OF BLESSING

WE COMMIT TO SHARE GOD'S WORD

†HYMN #248

"Christ Is Risen! Shout Hosanna!"

HYMN TO JOY

†BENEDICTION

†POSTLUDE

"Toccata (Organ Symphonie No.5)"

Charles-Marie Widor

†If you are able, please stand.

EASTER LILIES

Presented to the Glory of the Risen Christ

In Loving Memory Of

Dr. and Mrs. Simeon Adams
Virginia Avery
Thelma Brown
Lucille and Carl Butler
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Leighton Choate Sr.
Joseph Leighton Choate Jr.
Elainne Cinq-Mars
Warren Clark
Shirley Craig
Mary Louise Dame
Annie Dix
Ellen Dix
Leslie Dix
Ron Eads
Mrs. Lillian Edwards
Tim Fuller
Mary and Richard Henderson
Mr. and Mrs. George F. Henry Jr.
Mr. James Heyward Henry
Our daughter Karen Hubanks
Frank Matthews Jackson
Harriet Matthews Jackson
Mary and Ed Jackson
R. M. Johnston III
Louise Keir
James "Jim" Houston Kelly
Eugene R. Matthews Sr.
Mr. and Mrs. B. Frank Matthews II
Mr. and Mrs. James Houston Matthews Sr.
James Houston Matthews Jr.
Vann M. Matthews II
Thelma and L. L. McLean
Helen Beal Montague
Johnnie Nivens
H. William "Billy" Palmer Jr.
Mary Ann and Neale Patrick
My faith filled parents
Stuart Rawls III
Mr. and Mrs. Dane Samuel Rhyne Sr.
Mr. and Mrs. D. Sam Rhyne Jr.

Given By

Polly and Jeff Jasmin
Ibby and Danny Page
Kathy and Harvey Brown
Suzanne and Les McLean
Katherine and Gene Matthews
Katherine and Gene Matthews
Ellen and Bob Cinq-Mars
Cindy Clark
Patti and Tim Scamardo
Ellen and Bob Cinq-Mars
Helen and Les Dix
Helen and Les Dix
Helen and Les Dix
The Eads family
Frances and Bill Henry
His loving family
Their Family
Frances, Bill, William, and Charles Henry
Frances, Bill, William, and Charles Henry
Barbara and Dennis Winkles
Katherine and Gene Matthews
Katherine and Gene Matthews
Kathy and Harvey Brown
Geraldine Johnston
Lisa and John Pardo
Katherine and Gene Matthews
Katherine and Gene Matthews
Katherine and Gene Matthews
Katherine and Gene Matthews
Katherine and Gene Matthews
Suzanne and Les McLean
Katherine and Gene Matthews
Patti and Tim Scamardo
Katherine and Gene Matthews
Their family
Marsha Wright
Ashley and Jay Rawl
Debbie Rhyne
Debbie Rhyne

EASTER LILIES

Presented to the Glory of the Risen Christ

In Loving Memory of

Annabelle Zeigler Matthews Royster
Coy Lee Schultz
Betsy Merritt Choate Sherard
Maxene and Theodore Thiele, parents
Ted Thiele
James P. Thomas MD
Mr. and Mrs. William N. Thrower
Mr. and Mrs. W. T. Walser
Catherine Choate Ward
Dr. and Mrs. David G. Welton
Fletcher Wilson

Given By

Katherine and Gene Matthews
The Coy Lee Schultz family
Katherine and Gene Matthews
Judy Theile
Helen and Les Dix
Katherine and Gene Matthews
Betsy and Don Thrower
Betsy and Don Thrower
Katherine and Gene Matthews
Katherine and Gene Matthews
His family

EASTER LILIES

Presented to the Glory of the Risen Christ

In Loving Honor of

William "Bo" Abernethy
Adriel Apau-Kese
Martha Barnett Beal
Cookie and Lance Brenner
Confirmation Class of 2026
Susanne and Will Current
Josie Conner and Barbara Winkles
Beebo and Pop
Elizabeth and Ben, David, and Mary Stewart
Ann and Tom Efird
Caroline and Lewis Efird
Coleman Efird
Coleman and Tim Efird
The Lewis Efird Family
The Tim Efird Family
Nora and Duke Hale
Claude Hathcock
Sandra Garrison Hodges
My sister, Deborah Howard
Annabelle and Bill Kelly
Grady Kennington
Alica Stowe Matthews
Houston and Sharon Matthews
Brienne, Matt, Henry, Lucy, and Franklin McMullen
Lenise Melton
Lee Nester
Our children
Our grandparents
Betty Abbott Quarles
Sally McConnell Robinson
Becky Rowland and PWS Staff
Seniors Class of 2026
Colt Taneti
Betsy Thrower
Becky Voorhees

Given By

Katherine and Gene Matthews
Mary Taneti
Katherine and Gene Matthews
Katherine and Gene Matthews
Mary Taneti
Copeland Smith
Mary Taneti
Elizabeth, David, Larkin, Mary Stewart, and Thomas
Mom and Dad
Katherine and Gene Matthews
Copeland Smith
Tim, Elizabeth, David, and Mary Stewart
Copeland Smith
Anne and Tom Efird
Anne and Tom Efird
Katherine and Gene Matthews
Mary Taneti
Katherine and Gene Matthews
Marsha Wright
Katherine and Gene Matthews
Copeland Smith
Katherine and Gene Matthews
Katherine and Gene Matthews
Frances, Bill, William, and Charles Henry
Copeland Smith
Copeland Smith
Sabrina and Trey Robinson
Carter and Anna Robinson
Katherine and Gene Matthews
Katherine and Gene Matthews
Judy Thiele
Mary Taneti
The Taneti family
Her grandchildren
Copeland Smith

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

Presented to the Glory of the Risen Christ

In Loving Memory of

Jan Baldwin
William L. Craig Jr.
Rev. Dr. Charles Davenport
Dora and Hoyle Efird
Reola and E. W. Faris
Coy Ferris
Tim Fuller
My parents Dorothy and J. P. Gwinn
Bert Hickson
Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Hickson Sr.
Louise Wade Kelley
Lena and Grady McCarter
Mr. and Mrs. Robert E. McLean
Robert E. McLean Jr.
Kitty Mackie
Helen Beal Montague
Bennie and John Peden
Our parents
Ruth and Mart Reid
Patsy and Kenneth Silvers, and
Brandon Silvers, grandson
Mary and Elmer Seaton, and John Templeton
Ann Reid Wyatt
Barbara and Ed Wrightson

In Loving Honor of

Pastor Dan and all the ministerial staff
Bethany Jennings, David Jennings, and
the musical team
The Henderlite Class
The Pastoral Care Committee

Given By

Molly B. Trosper
His family
Betty Davenport
Anne and Tom Efird
Vicky, Paul, and Scott Faris
His family
His loving family
Beth G. Silvers
Family of Gloria and Hub Hickson
Gloria and Hub Hickson
Ellen and Bob Cinq-Mars
Gloria and Hub Hickson
Cookie and Lance Brenner
Cookie and Lance Brenner
Cookie and Lance Brenner
Cookie and Lance Brenner
Vicky, Paul, and Scott Faris
Barbara and Dennis Winkles
Lil Lanier

Randy Silvers
Beth Templeton Silvers
Lil Lanier
Anne Wrightson and Tom Efird

Given By

Beth and Randy Silvers

Beth and Randy Silvers
Patty and David Ratchford
Patty and David Ratchford

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS FOR EASTER HOLIDAY

The Church office will be closed Monday, April 6, and will resume normal hours on Tuesday, April 7.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S SPRING GATHERING

Saturday, April 18, 10:00 am, Long Creek Presbyterian Church. We will recognize the scholarship and Faith Fund recipients, hear from our mission partners in Guatemala, and honor those women who joined the Church Triumphant in 2025. Our guest speaker, Brian Smith, is a member of the Long Creek Congregation and a local history expert. Registration begins at 9:00 am. Cost: \$15/person.

CONNECT, SHARE, AND LOOK FORWARD

Sunday, April 19, 5:00 pm, Fellowship Hall. All are invited to join the Deacons for an evening of fellowship and shared vision. Dinner will be served at 5:00 pm, followed by a 5:45 pm update from the Curiosity and Courage Committee. Childcare will be available at 5:45 pm for children through 5th grade. This is a chance to come together, enjoy a meal, and engage in the life and direction of our church. Middle and high school students are welcome to participate in the gathering or assist in the nursery. Cost: Free. Scan the QR code to RSVP or call the Church office.



BLOOD DRIVE

April 21, 1:00 to 6:00 pm, Church parking lot. Help save lives by donating blood. Your donation can support patients in our community who rely on life-saving blood transfusions. Sign up to reserve your donation time. Presbyterian Women are asking ladies to bake cookies to give to donors.



SAVE THE DATE: PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S BIRTHDAY LUNCHEON

Monday, May 4, Noon to 3:00 pm, Fellowship Hall. Celebrate Presbyterian Women's birthday with lunch, fellowship, and a message from Susanna Kavanaugh, Executive Director/Co-Founder of Least of These Carolinas.

ROAD RUNNERS DAY TRIP TO THE NC TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM

Thursday, May 7, 7:30 am to 5:00 pm, off-site. Climb aboard with the Road Runners for a day of history, discovery, and fun at the North Carolina Transportation Museum. Enjoy a 25-minute train ride, explore the museum on a guided tour, and wrap up the day with lunch together at a local restaurant. It's an easy, joy-filled outing where you can connect, learn something new, and simply enjoy being together. Contact Connie Gesser at 704-473-6430.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT UPCOMING EVENTS, VISIT
[FPCGASTONIA.ORG/EVENTS](https://fpcgastonia.org/events)



WELCOME

Welcome to First Presbyterian Church! Whether you are a first-time visitor, a lifelong member, or anywhere between, we pray that you experience God's love found in Jesus Christ through our worship this morning.

CONNECTION CARDS

Please fill out a Connection Card located in front of your pew. We will reach out to you as promptly as possible if you have a prayer request, would like to sign up for an event, or need a pastor to reach out to you.

NEW MEMBERS

Are you interested in becoming a member? If so, you may contact the Church Office or check the appropriate box on your Connection Card.

NURSERY CARE

Professional nursery care is offered for infants and children up to four years old. The nursery is located on the first floor; please see an usher for directions.

LEADING WORSHIP AT SUNRISE SERVICE

Rev. Daniel J. Commerford; Jill Kimbirl; Noah Williams; Copeland Smith

LEADING WORSHIP AT THRIVE SERVICE

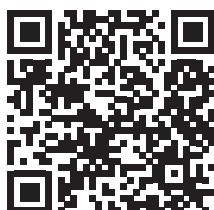
Rev. Daniel J. Commerford; Jill Kimbirl; Mary Taneti; Noah Williams; Thrive Band

LEADING WORSHIP AT TRADITIONAL SERVICE

Rev. Daniel J. Commerford; Jill Kimbirl; Mary Taneti; Bethany Jennings; David Jennings; Sanctuary Choir; Sanctuary Ringers

MISSION OPPORTUNITIES

Today, a special offering is being collected for One Great Hour of Sharing. Through your gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing, you can serve people in your community and around the world by alleviating hunger, providing hope through rebuilding efforts, and working with communities to promote self-development. Please use the special envelopes available, scan the QR code below, or write "OGHS" in the memo line of your check.



CONNECT & GROW THIS WEEK

BIBLE STUDY

- **Men's Fellowship & Breakfast:** *Tuesdays, 8:00 am, PAD.*
- **Women's Bible Study:** *2nd and 4th Wednesdays, 10:30 am, Confirmation Room.*

OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Faith and Fiction: today, 5:00 pm, off-site.

THRIVE

April 5, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.

WE PREPARE FOR GOD'S WORD

†GATHERING SONG

"Death Was Arrested"

Adam Kersh, Brandon Coker, Heath Balltzglier, Paul Taylor Smith

WELCOME

Rev. Daniel J. Commerford

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Jill Kimbirl

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

CHILDREN'S SERMON

Mary Taneti

SCRIPTURE READING

John 20:11-18

SERMON SERIES

Promises Made, Promises Kept

MEDITATION

Promises Made, Promises Kept

Rev. Daniel J. Commerford

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

†SONG OF RESPONSE

"What A Beautiful Name"

Ben Fielding, Brooke Ligertwood

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

OFFERING OUR LIVES TO GOD

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

When directed by an usher, please come forward to receive communion. If you wish to have communion served to you in your seat, please raise your hand and our servers will come to you.

†SENDING SONG

"What A Beautiful Name"

Ben Fielding, Brooke Ligertwood

†BLESSING