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IN THIS ISSUE

**Planned Giving
Spotlight**

- Page 6

PET Report

- Page 8

**Faith Formation
Updates**

- Page 10

WHAT EASTER MEANS TO ME by Rev. Daniel J. Commerford

Not too long from now, all of us will gather on Easter morning and proclaim “He is Risen!” Easter is my favorite time of the year for so many reasons, and I’d like to share a few of those reasons with you below in no particular order:

- Easter is the center of our faith. Without the resurrection, there is no Christianity. Because of Easter, we have a faith that is alive and vibrant.
- Easter vindicates everything we believe about Jesus’ birth, life, teachings, and death. When Jesus was raised from the dead, he definitively showed us who he is and why we worship and follow him.
- Out with the dark and solemn colors, in with the bright pastels!

Continued on page 2



- Growing up in Minnesota, Easter always marked the time of year that I noticed more light at the end of the day. Easter always reminds me that darkness never lasts forever.
- Some of my favorite hymns are Easter hymns! You better believe I'll be belting "Jesus Christ is Risen Today" at the top of my lungs.
- Easter fashion is just the best. Seersucker, linen, and everything floral!
- Easter shapes my perception of death. Because of Christ's resurrection, I grieve with hope instead of despair.
- There are a few years that Easter coincides with the final round of the Masters. Easter worship followed by the Green Jacket ceremony is about as good as a Sunday can get.
- The resurrection story is inherently revolutionary. Jesus first appeared to those whom society did not value, giving them the honor of being the first to convey the Good News of Jesus Christ.
- As a pastor married to a CPA, Easter always means that our first vacation of the year is not too far away.
- Everyone is always so happy on Easter morning. I love watching families gather, laugh, and get together for pictures.
- Two words: Easter Brunch.
- Three more words: Post Easter nap!
- Easter shows us the power of God's love for us. Not even death can separate us from God's love shown to us in Jesus Christ who was resurrected on Easter morning.

In short, Easter is everything. I pray that your Easter is blessed and that you have a real encounter with the Risen Lord. He is Risen, indeed!

Nickel-A-Meal

Check your pockets, purse and car for any loose coins you see. Save them for collection day so we may feed the hungry!! Please remember 5 cents a meal a day helps keep hunger away!!

Our next collection will be **Sunday, April 10**. Look for the red buckets on Sunday morning or make your donations at www.fpcgastonia.org/giving (select Nickel-A-Meal fund) or by mailing a check to our church.



BROKENNESS AND BEAUTY

HOLY WEEK CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Palm/Passion Sunday **Sunday, April 10, 2022**

- 8:55 a.m. Thrive Service in Fellowship Hall.
- 11:00 a.m. Traditional Worship in the Sanctuary with procession of palms and Carolina Brass.
- 12:15 p.m. Children's Ministry Easter Egg Hunt in the Fellowship Hall.

Holy Week Art Walk

Monday, April 11, through Thursday, April 14, 2022

Drop by throughout Holy Week to participate in this immersive prayer experience through the Stations of the Cross.

Monday, April 11	12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Tuesday, April 12	9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Wednesday, April 13	9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
	Guided tour at 6:00 p.m.
Thursday, April 14	9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Maundy Thursday Dinner and Service **Thursday, April 14, 2022**

Service and meal will begin at 6:30 p.m.

Join us around the table as we observe Maundy Thursday and the Last Supper. Meal and service will take place in the Fellowship Hall. Children age 5 and up are invited to attend. Nursery care will be available.

Good Friday Service

Friday, April 15, 2022, at 7:00 p.m.

This traditional tenebrae service will take place in the Sanctuary. Nursery care provided.

Easter Sunday **Sunday, April 17, 2022**

- 7:00 a.m. Sunrise Service at the Columbarium
- 8:55 a.m. Thrive Service in Fellowship Hall.
- 11:00 a.m. Traditional Worship in the Sanctuary.



Welcome New Members!



Brian Edwards

Brian was born in Burlington, NC, to Sarabeth and Greg Edwards. He was brought up through Harrisburg United Methodist church. His father passed away March of 2005. Brian now resides in Gastonia, NC, and lives with his mother, Sarabeth, and brother, Matthew Edwards. Brian is overjoyed to become a member and participate in the service and mission work at FPC Gastonia!



Paul Faris

Paul Faris grew up and attended public schools in Gastonia. After graduation from college, he taught school for a short period and then became an Elementary School Principal. He is married to Vicky Peden and has one son and three grandchildren. Paul and Vicky now reside at Covenant Village.



Sherry and Mike Kirby

Mike is a retired professional musician and Sherry is a retired Exceptional Children's Teacher. They have three grown children and nine grandchildren. Three dogs complete their family. Both Sherry and Mike sing in the Choir and love to be around people!



Jonathan Lowery

Johnathan is a native of Gastonia, NC, where he graduated in 2002 from Forestview High School. He attended the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, graduating in 2006. Johnathan has three wonderful children, Jacob (10), Jayne (7), and Josie (4). He loves spending time in various activities with his family. He serves as a member of the Board of Directors for the Heart Society of Gaston County and also serves on the Board of Directors of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Gaston. Johnathan is the Managing Partner of Lowery Financial Group, located in Gastonia.



Nancy and Michael Robinson

Michael and Nancy both grew up in Gastonia. They have one son, daughter-in-law, and two grandchildren that live in Charleston, SC. Nancy and Michael moved to Charleston to be close them but moved back to Gastonia in 2020. Nancy is retired from the North Carolina Highway Patrol and now works part time for the Bessemer City Police. Michael is retired from the Automobile Business. In the past, Nancy and Michael were long time members here at First Presbyterian Gastonia, so they look forward to being back!

Jake Kennington	4/1	Braden Crabtree	4/11	Rachel Commerford	4/22
Scotty King	4/2	Marshall LaFar	4/11	Tim Efird	4/22
Helen Rogers	4/2	Will Choquet	4/12	Emily Simpson	4/22
Cynthia Anderson	4/3	Sally Kate Buckles	4/13	Brendon Withers	4/22
David Pacetti	4/3	Peggy Cooke	4/13	Barbara Voorhees	4/24
Linda Dixon	4/4	Emily Dickson	4/13	Luther Blair	4/25
Jimmy Greene	4/5	Eric Francum	4/13	Elizabeth Crabtree	4/25
June Jones	4/5	Erika Wallace	4/13	John Rhyne	4/25
Nancy Harrill	4/6	Beverly Stewart	4/14	Tim DuBois	4/26
Sloan Walthall	4/6	Susan Adams	4/15	Mac Kelly	4/26
Robert Cinq-Mars	4/7	Larkin Efird	4/16	Evie Nester	4/27
Nancy Robinson	4/7	Evan Shiflet	4/16	Megan Reen	4/27
Jessica Schultz	4/7	Barbara Spencer	4/17	Leigh Williford	4/27
Anna Vaughn	4/7	Jackson Falls	4/18	John Lowery	4/28
Samuel Deason	4/8	Marsh Spencer	4/18	Donna Atkins	4/29
Ross Boyd	4/9	Laura Anderson	4/19	Greg Cherry	4/29
Julie Craig	4/9	Jim Cookson	4/19	Barbara Hammerle	4/29
Sharon McGerrigle	4/9	Thomas Hobson	4/19	Hugh Bryant	4/30
James Vaughn	4/9	Isobel Rose	4/19	Dustin Letts	4/30
Nan Bridgeman	4/10	Nell Alala	4/20	Mandy Mudd	4/30
Allison Howe	4/10	Raleigh Chapman	4/21	Jennifer Poag	4/30
Elizabeth Mecum	4/10	Donna Dickson	4/21		
Knox Winget	4/10	Sherry Kirby	4/21		

Condolences to:

Lindsie and Nick Chapman, and their children, Nash and Raleigh, upon the death of Lindsie's grandmother, Hilda Weaver, on December 29, 2021, and Lindsie's uncle, William Weaver, on February 14, 2022.

Sherry Moore upon the death of her father-in-law, David Frankin Moore, on February 27, 2022.

Susan and Pete Allen, and Jessica Allen Coffield upon the death of Bennie Brookshire on March 1, 2022.

Joyce LaFar upon the death of **Dan LaFar** on March 3, 2022.

Becky and Coerte Voorhees and their sons, Garrett and Gavin, upon the death of Becky's father, Dr. Michael Joseph Pollak, on March 9, 2022.

Rodney Owens upon the death of his uncle, John Cleveland Owens, III, on March 10, 2022.

Jewel Brown upon the death of her sister, Ruth Hendricks, on March 13, 2022.

PLANNED GIVING SPOTLIGHT: HELEN AND DAVID ROGERS

by Cindy Clark

Your Planned Giving Ministry team welcomes the opportunity to talk with First Presbyterian Church members who feel called to support our church through their estates. Your planned gift to support current and future ministries of our church will ensure that future generations in our congregation will be blessed as we have been and enable us to continue to share Jesus' message of hope and love in our community and beyond.

Acknowledging that all our blessings come from God, David and Helen Rogers have given generously of their time, talents, and treasures to First Presbyterian Church since joining this congregation in the early 1980s when they first moved to Gastonia. They were drawn to the church by their neighbors in Roland Park and other members David met through his business as a CPA. They felt very welcomed by the Senior Minister, Dr. Jim Stuart, as well as Rev. Frank Mayes and many other church members.

From the beginning they were active in church activities and supported them financially as well. A young couples group in particular helped them form relationships with other church members and get involved in church ministries. Soon after joining the church, they were asked to participate in the Heritage Campaign by contributing and visiting other church members to ask them to contribute as well – a challenge they admit was “a scary way of meeting established members.”

Over the years Helen and David have faithfully served the church in many of its ministries. Helen is currently a member of Service Circle A and the Pastoral Care and Hospitality ministries. David has served as both a Deacon and an Elder, and on many church ministries. He is currently a member of the Finance Committee, where he has shared his expertise as a CPA during many previous terms as well. He served on the Search Committees for both the current Associate Minister and Senior Minister.

Even before the Session created our Planned Giving Ministry, Helen and David had already made provisions for the church in their estate plans. They shared with me their desire to continue to support the church after their deaths.

“Our church family is important to us,” said Helen, “and we want to continue to love and care for the children in our church.” “Our goal is to help make First Presbyterian Church a strong church, both now and in the future,” added David.



Helen and David have established an endowment fund with The Gaston Community Foundation which will continue their annual pledge to the church after both of their deaths. Their investment will also fund annual gifts to the church's Presbyterian Endowment Trust's Heritage Fund, which provides monies to finance capital improvements and repairs for the church's physical facilities. In a significant and tangible way, their fund will indeed continue to support their church.

Helen and David and all members of First Presbyterian Church who make a planned gift to the church will be recognized as members of The 1882 Giving Circle, because like our founders, they too have a vision for the present and future of our church. All current members of the Circle will be recognized on our first annual Planned Giving Sunday on May 15.

If you have included First Presbyterian in your estate plans or have an interest in making a provision, please contact Liz Sumner (lsumner@mhc-law.com) or any member of the Planned Giving Ministry so that you too will be recognized on Planned Giving Sunday.



Planned Giving Sunday

We are pleased to announce that Sunday, May 15, has been designated Planned Giving Sunday at First Presbyterian Church. Members of the Planned Giving Ministry will be on hand at both services to answer questions about ways you can support the church's ministry now and in the future. In addition, we will take this opportunity to thank the members of the "1882 Giving Circle" which is the group of church members who have already remembered the church in their estate planning. We will thank them at both services and at a lunch to be held in the parlor after the 11:00 a.m. service. And we'd like to include you! If you've already made a planned gift to the church in your estate plan, or if you are interested in doing so, please let us know. Just contact Liz Sumner at lsumner@mhc-law.com or any member of the Planned Giving Ministry. We look forward to hearing from you!

One Great Hour of Sharing

One Great Hour of Sharing is the single, largest way that Presbyterians come together to work for a better world by advancing the causes of justice, resilience, and sustainability. During Lent, we celebrate that God connects with us through Jesus' resurrection and connects us with those "who have the least" — that's how Matthew 25 puts it — and that's what One Great Hour of Sharing is all about.

Each Sunday during Lent, we will collect special offerings on

behalf of One Great Hour of Sharing. You are invited to give online at fpcgastonia.org/giving (just select One Great Hour of Sharing from the options) or you can give in person by writing a check to the church with "OGHS" in the memo line. Special offering envelopes can be found during the worship services on Palm Sunday and Easter.

Learn more by visiting our website at fpcgastonia.org/oghs!

Welcome Our New Receptionist!

Martha "Mot" Davis hails from Shelby, NC where she resides with a 2 year old rescue dog, Maddie Mae.

Mot has one daughter, three grandchildren, and one great grandson. The oldest is Lauren who is married and a middle school teacher in Boiling Springs, SC. The middle is Catherine, who lives in NYC and studies Musical Theater and Business at NYU. The youngest, Matthew, is at UNC – Charlotte studying Business and Marketing.

From 1986 to 2010 Mot was the Office Manager/Bookkeeper for JF Chitty & Associates Real Estate Appraisers and Young Rentals. After the owner's death, she ran the business from 2006 until 2010 until the estate was settled.

From 2010 until 2017, she was the Office Manager/Bookkeeper at Ellis Lumber Company. From there, she moved to the Cleveland County Association of Realtors as Executive Office Assistant/Office Manager.

We are excited to welcome Mot to our staff!



2021 Presbyterian Endowment Trust Annual Report

The Presbyterian Endowment Trust (PET) was established by our congregation in 1979 for the purpose of holding and managing the endowment funds of the church. According to our congregational resolution, these funds are to be used to expand our witness to Jesus Christ, to serve God and mankind through our denomination, to provide new and varied opportunities for religious fellowship, worship and education, and to support worthy community projects and programs designed to attend to the needs and wants of the elderly, sick, poor, young, bereaved, and disabled. To those ends, the funds of PET award grants each year to a variety of worthy causes which are set out in this Annual Report.

General Fund

Bose Portable Sound System (FPC).....	\$1,000
Habitat for Humanity (Dixon Village).....	\$50,000
Camp Grier	\$5,000
Transformer Relocation (FPC).....	\$46,000
Crisis Assistance Ministry (CAM).....	\$20,000
Serving Our Community with Kindness in Springwood (S.O.C.K.S.)	\$10,000
Family Promise	\$10,000
Gaston Literacy Council.....	\$10,000

Heritage Fund

Pipe Organ Repairs (FPC)	\$2,128
Boiler Replacement (FPC).....	\$202,770

Frank Davis Children’s Fund.....\$0.00

David Groves Fund

Crisis Assistance Ministry (CAM).....	\$4,012
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PWS Endowment Fund

PWS Scholarships	\$5,160
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Jackson Youth Fund

Torrence Fund

Pearl Wilson Mission Fund

Pearl Wilson Grants	\$7,180
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The market value of PET funds as of December 31, 2021 was as follows:

General Fund.....	\$3,848,345
Heritage Fund.....	\$465,339
Frank Davis Children’s Fund	\$245,567
David Groves Fund	\$110,456
PWS Endowment Fund	\$147,477
Jackson Youth Fund	\$221,769
Torrence Fund	\$123,441
Pearl Wilson Mission Fund	\$200,182

FUNDS

The General Fund provides funding for broad benevolent purposes. The Heritage Fund provides funding to finance major capital improvements and repairs to FPC. The other named funds were established for specific purposes consistent with the mission of PET. In 2019 the Session approved the creation of four new funds to support the various ministries of our church: the Worship and Music Fund, the Christian Education Fund, the Missions and Benevolences Fund and the Congregational Care Fund. The four new ministry funds have not yet received any gifts but we encourage you to consider them if you have a special passion for any of those ministries.

CONTRIBUTIONS

The portion of undesignated bequests and gifts to First Presbyterian Church which are directed to PET by the Session is generally allocated 50% to the General Fund and 50% to the Heritage Fund. Specific bequests and gifts are credited to whichever fund is designated by the donor.

HOW YOU CAN GIVE

You may give to PET by including the church in your will or trust, by naming the church as the beneficiary of a retirement plan or life insurance policy, by giving cash, securities or property to the church, or by establishing a charitable trust, to name just a few ways. If you wish to establish a new named fund, or for more information about planned giving in general, please contact the church's business administrator, David McFadden, at 704.864.2651, ext. 117. Gifts to the church and to PET are tax deductible in accordance with IRS Regulations.



The Presbyterian Endowment Trust Committee is comprised of nine members who are approved by the Session for three-year terms. The Committee regularly meets each quarter.

The members of the PET Committee for 2022 are:
Class of 2022: Spurgeon Mackie, Barbara Voorhees, Sarah Wentz
Class of 2023: Davidson Hobson, Lewis Efird, Donald Parrott
Class of 2024: David Conner, Liz Sumner, Larry Stiles

Faith Formation Updates



Easter Egg Hunt

All children from nursery to 5th grade are invited to participate in our Easter Egg Hunt on Sunday, April 10, 2022! We'll gather in the Fellowship Hall at 12:00 p.m. immediately following the traditional worship service. Please bring your own baskets (we'll have some extras if you need one) and prepare for an egg-cellent time!



Members of the Confirmation Class had a blast at their weekend retreat!



During March, our Children's Ministry focused on the importance of Music.

APRIL 23, 2022
10:30 AM-6:30 PM

JOIN WITH MIDDLE SCHOOL
AND HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH
GROUPS FROM ACROSS THE
PRESBYTERY FOR A DAY
FILLED WITH RECREATION,
ADVENTURE, LAKE FUN AND
WORSHIP AT CAMP GRIER!

PWNC YOUTH
ADVENTURE
DAY @ CAMP GRIER

Schedule:

10:30 - NOON

Registration and Group Games

Noon

Picnic Lunch (BRING YOUR OWN!)

1:00 - 5:00 PM

Adventure On Campus (AOC)

5:00 - 6:30PM

Dinner, Music and Worship

AOC ACTIVITIES:

FARM/GREENHOUSE
CLIMBING WALL
HORSES/OUTDOOR GAMES
ORIENTEERING RELAY*
CANOEING/LAKE ZIPLINE

*NEW ACTIVITIES FOR 2022!

THE FIRST PRESS

First Presbyterian Church

1621 E. Garrison Blvd.
Gastonia, N.C. 28054

Return Service Requested

PERIODICALS
US POSTAGE PAID
Gastonia, NC



Service Views and Attendance

Date	Thrive	Thrive Livestream	Traditional	Traditional Livestream
March 6	46	19	80	52
March 13	37	36	69	57
March 20	49	17	74	40
March 27	65	25	74	37

Please note service views do not include those watching via closed circuit television at Covenant Village.