

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

THE FIRST PRESS

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ENJOYING THE ENTIRETY OF SUMMER by Rev. Daniel J. Commerford

26 Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

27 And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?

28 And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin,

29 yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these.

30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you

of little faith?

31 Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?'

32 For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

33 But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

34 So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today. -Matthew 6:26-34

Continued on page 2

It has been an amazing summer so far! Over the last few months, I've enjoyed vacations to Charleston and Minnesota, spent countless hours in the pool, and joyfully lost more balls on the golf course that I'm willing to admit in writing. At FPC, we've enjoyed a united worship service that has brought different generations together, grew together learning about God's Word in combined Sunday School classes, and found moments for fun and fellowship along the way. As I reflect on the summer months in Gastonia this year, it's safe to say that it's been a joyful season for both my family and me.

As we begin the month of August, I've already caught myself looking ahead to what's coming next. Both kids will begin the new school year in the middle of August. Our families are beginning to ask us about our holiday plans. At church, we are preparing to share the program offerings for all our fall ministries. We have even begun discussing Christmas Eve (and Christmas Sunday) worship service plans! As a planner, I always feel the pull of what is to come while doing my best to enjoy the present.

Although planning is a necessary part of life, Jesus reminds us to resist the urge to turn our planning into worrying. To plan is to do our best to prepare

for the needs of the future. To worry, on the other hand, is to spend an unhealthy amount of emotional energy fixating on what is to come, what has been left undone, and what could go wrong. When we find ourselves worrying, Jesus encourages us to remember the birds of the air and the lilies of the field who rely on God to provide. In the same way, all of us can be confident that, amidst all the plans we make, we worship a God who continues to provide for us when things go as expected and unexpected. Perhaps I'm writing to myself more than anyone else, but I need to heed these words Jesus shares with all of us. Yes, there is much to be done in the future. Yes, along with the moments of joy, there will be unexpected challenges I will encounter. No, I cannot control what those challenges may be. The best I can do is prepare as much as I can and trust in God to take care of the rest while enjoying the moments God has given me in the present. With that in mind, I hope to enjoy the entirety of the summer before fall arrives. If you need me outside of office hours, look for me by the pool or on the golf course.

See you on Sunday!

Church Directory Update

We are updating the church directory. Please check your UCD App to verify your contact information. If your contact information needs updating, please email tstewart@fpcgastonia.org or call (704) 864-2651 Ext #109

From Our Parish Nurse

Covid numbers are rising everywhere and Gaston County has elevated also. Our Parish Nurse has provided a full box of face masks that are FREE to all church members who may need them.

We are no longer doing COVID testing at First United Methodist Church. Should you need an official COVID test, please visit <https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/FindTests> for a list of places where you can find one.

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS / CONGRATS & CONDOLENCES

Sandra Hodges	8/1	Shelby Duncan	8/13	James Whitley, III	8/24
Megan Mason-Chapman	8/1	Cecil Morris	8/13	Ashley Beaty	8/25
Kelly Shovelin	8/1	Rose Stanley	8/13	Kenny Howe, Jr.	8/25
Clara Wallwork	8/1	Jack Thornburg	8/13	Sarah Levy	8/25
Tom Efird	8/3	Debbie Stuart	8/14	Tom Bryant	8/26
Yvette Howe	8/4	Jeff Jasmin	8/15	Ashley Carroll	8/27
Daniel Boyd	8/5	Becky Rowland	8/15	David McFadden	8/27
Hannah Dickson	8/5	Micah Commerford	8/16	Frank Sell	8/27
Casey Kelly	8/5	Zach Conner	8/16	Beth Cox	8/27
Mike Kirby	8/5	Ralph Dickson, III	8/16	Mot Davis	8/28
Calvin Craig	8/7	Burr Keathley	8/16	Ann LaFar	8/28
Tyler Dickson	8/7	Sally Robinson	8/16	Jayne Howe	8/29
Charles Gallman	8/7	Bev Bryant	8/18	Beth Bolin	8/29
Anne Bradley Bing	8/8	Merritt Doyne	8/18	Hank Sumner	8/29
Anderson Nester	8/8	Jimmy Poag, III	8/18	Jeff Barbour	8/30
Benjamin Spencer	8/8	Stephanie Young	8/18	Mary Layton	8/30
Elaine Deason	8/10	Pam Glenn	8/19	Mary Quay Benzie	8/30
Thomas Efird	8/10	Will McLean	8/19	Ellen Cinq-Mars	8/31
Claude Hathcock	8/10	Hudson Falls	8/20		
Jean Hileman	8/10	Katie Kennington	8/20		
Warren Quarles	8/10	Sarah Sumner	8/20		
Robert Spencer	8/10	John Bridgeman	8/21		
Dotty Blake	8/11	Teresa Dickson	8/21		
Mac Gallman	8/11	Maureen Sell	8/21		
Mary Ann Aycock	8/12	Debbie Withers	8/22		
Annie Levy	8/12	Ida Jane Cole	8/24		
Lisa Marisiddaiah	8/12	Coleman Efird	8/24		
Austin Bradshaw	8/13	Katie Vaughn	8/24		

Births

7/24 Wilson Howard Sigal - son of Price and Ryan Sigal, grandson of Beverly and Bobby Sumner

Deaths

6/29 Ron Nesheim - husband of Kay Nesheim
7/7 Gayle Gordon Petry - mother of Margaret Smith
7/11 Carol Andrews
7/13 Patricia Jennings - grandmother of Bethany Jennings

Nickel-A-Meal

Are you saving your nickels? Our next Nickel-A-Meal offering is coming up on August 14! Be sure to bring your change and your "green" to support this wonderful ministry that provides meals for the hungry, both in our region and worldwide. Just look for the red buckets during the worship service!





Rev. Lance Perry's first sermon

On July 17, Rev. Lance Perry gave his first sermon, "Breathe on Me, Breath of God," as Interim Associate Minister. When asked about his experience on Sunday, he said, "I always feel a little nervous when preaching for the first time in a new place. I have to adjust my view since I wear trifocals and usually cannot see the people in the back. Church members were very vocal and welcoming."

After the service, FPC held a welcoming reception for Perry. He said, "The reception was wonderful. People were friendly and seemed to enjoy their conversations. I especially enjoyed the ham biscuits and the cheese snacks!" Because Perry is from Blowing Rock, North Carolina, some of the congregants used that as a conversation piece. "Several people shared memories of visiting my current home, Blowing Rock, and some formerly owned property in the area," said Perry.

As Interim Associate Minister, part of Perry's work will be to help with the transition into finding our next Associate Minister. When asked about the transitional period in his life and the life of FPC, he said, "I have had good feelings since my early conversations with Rev. Daniel J. Commerford and the rest of the Personnel Committee members. Everyone has been open to the idea of interim ministry and how intentional conversation about transitions can help congregations gain perspective about the ministry of a previous pastor and prepare to call a new one."

Perry's next sermon is scheduled for August 14. "I am energized to be a part of the ministry here for this season in the church's life!"



WHAT'S HAPPENING AT FPC?

Wednesday Night Alive featuring Matt Smith

On July 20, we held our second Summer Pop-Up Concert event with special music played by our very own Matt Smith! Smith played a variety of music from modern praise and classic rock and roll. Covers such as "Over the Rainbow/What A Wonderful World," the Allman Brothers' "Melissa," and Matt Maher's "Your Grace is Enough," were played. Rain decided to make it's presence, but that did not stop the fun from happening in the fellowship hall.

Our last Wednesday Night Alive Concert is on August 10 and will be featuring an FPC Ensemble curated by Director of Music Ministries, Bethany Jennings.



Last Outdoor/Combined Worship Service

Our last Sunday of outdoor worship is September 4. This is also serving as the last Sunday of Combined Worship. We will resume separate Thrive and Traditional services on September 11.



Special Music Guest David LaMotte

Save the date! On September 18, we will have special music featuring David LaMotte for our Thrive service. LaMotte will be performing a concert for us later on that evening at 6 pm!

From his website: "David LaMotte is an award-winning songwriter, speaker and writer. He has performed over 3000 concerts and released twelve full-length CDs

of primarily original music, touring in all of the fifty states, as well as five of the seven continents. The Boston Globe writes that his music "pushes the envelope with challenging lyrics and unusual tunings, but he also pays homage to folk tradition," while BBC Radio Belfast lauds his "charm, stories, humour, insightful songs, sweet voice and dazzling guitar ability."

Upcoming Events

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 8/1 - 8/4 | Vacation Bible School |
| 8/14 | Blessing of Backpacks |
| 9/4 | Faith and Fiction |
| 9/4 | Last Outdoor and
Combined Service |
| 9/11 | Rally Day |
| 9/18 | David LaMotte Concert |

New August Sermon Series!





FAITH FORMATION

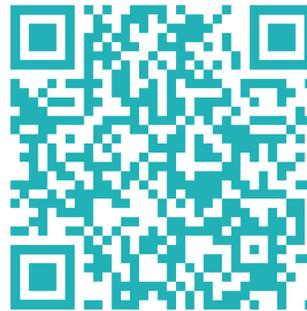
Second Sunday Intergenerational Breakfasts

Join us for an intergenerational Sunday School at 9 am on August 14 in the Fellowship Hall! Adults, youth, and children are all invited to share a light breakfast, fellowship, and participate in a lesson to help us all hear and celebrate the Good News together!



Sunday Funday and Children's Chapel

Have you enjoyed seeing the new ways our young children engage on Sunday mornings? The children of our church are connecting to one another and their faith during Sunday School, and learning more about worship in Children's Chapel. To continue to make these programs a possibility, we need to ensure that we have adult leadership to help support, teach, and guide our young children. We need a minimum of two adults to help for each Sunday. Rev. Rachel H. Vogado provides all the supplies and an easy to follow lesson for both Sunday Funday and Children's Chapel. Please consider sharing your time so that our children can learn and grow together.



**Volunteer for
Sunday Funday!**



**Volunteer for
Children's Chapel!**

Save the date for the Blessing of the Backpacks!

All students are invited to bring their backpacks to worship on August 14 to pray for the new school year.

Passport Kids Camp

Passport Kids Camp at Montreat was full of fun and fellowship, worship and prayer, rock hopping and making new friends!



Pictured top (page left):

Folks gather for July 10 Second Sunday Intergenerational breakfast.

Pictured bottom left (page left):

Congregants wave to the camera for a welcoming photo for those at home.

Pictured bottom right (page left):

Rev. Rachel H. Vogado teaches Sunday school. The lesson, "Picturing God," was about how we think about the names we use for God and how that shapes how we imagine God to be.

THE FIRST PRESS

First Presbyterian Church

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Gastonia, N.C. 28054

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Service Views and Attendance

Date	Service	Livestream
July 3	56	80
July 10	103	366
July 17	94	59
July 24	95	82
July 31	79	64

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