

# THE FIRST PRESS

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## ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING: BECAUSE WE GROW

Trinity White Plume just turned 13. Like the gardens she has newly learned to plant and tend, she is growing in extraordinary ways.

Where Trinity lives on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota — roughly the size of the state of Connecticut — there is but one grocery store. Moreover, Oglala Lakota County, where the reservation is located, has the lowest per capita income in the country and consistently ranks as the poorest county

in the nation.

During the pandemic, what was already a food desert has become even more so, heightening the challenge of food accessibility for Trinity's family and all the families living in Pine Ridge. Thanks to gifts from One Great Hour of Sharing, the garden projects of Owe Aku (pronounced OH-WAY AH-KOO) are making a difference.

*Continued on page 2*

Owe Aku is a grassroots, nonprofit organization that puts people in charge of their own food supply, nutrition, health and well-being by reclaiming ancestral wisdom and teaching Lakota history and culture. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) partners with Owe Aku through the Presbyterian Hunger Program (PHP), supported by gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing.

For the Lakota, there is a strong spiritual connection between the land and the people. “Although traditionally we’re not an agricultural people, we have evolved into wanting to preserve the land, and preserve the people on the land, by beginning our garden project,” said development director Kent Lebsack. “We thought the best way to do this is with the families, and especially young people.”

And thus was born Ama’s Freedom School, which encourages youth to learn not only about growing food, but also about the medicinal and ceremonial plants that have been used for generations.

Trinity is a young, emerging leader with the potential to carry the program forward for many years. She attends and assists with every class and workshop put on by Owe Aku, and, in turn, she and the other students have begun to teach their families. Trinity is also proving herself to be gifted in other areas that benefit the reservation by helping with bookkeeping and other office work.

“I want to learn my traditions from Ama’s Freedom School so that I can keep them alive for the future generations,” she says. With our support, we believe that she indeed will continue to grow and make a difference.

Gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing helps address the root causes of hunger in places around the world — places like the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation and others where food security is a serious need. Please give generously, for when we all do a little, it adds up to a lot.



***Trinity White Plume (13) pictured with plants from her garden on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota.***

## April Birthdays

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

### Condolences to:

**Kristin, Richard, David, and Jane, and to Scotty King and family** upon the death of **Dr. Glendall King** on February 28, 2021.

**Rick Smyre** upon the death of **Priscilla “Brownie” Smyre** on March 11, 2021.

### Our Joy is With:

**Josie and David Conner** upon the birth of their grandson **Amos James Conner** on March 15, 2021.

**Mallory and William Trogdon** upon the birth of their daughter **Ella Beaty Trogdon** on March 23, 2021.

## Again and Again: We Draw on Courage

*During the season of Lent, we are focusing on the theme “Again and Again,” using resources from A Sanctified Art. Below we have included artwork, scripture, and artist reflection for Holy Week.*



### Through the Palms

by Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman

Inspired by John 12:1-19

*Hand-carved block printed with oil-based ink on paper*

Jesus lies down on the donkey’s back, steeling himself before his journey through the palms. He has a target on his back—he’s a disruption to the status quo upheld by the Pharisees and Chief Priests, and a threat to the power of the empire. His friend Lazarus is caught up in it all too. I imagine as he closes his eyes and strokes the donkey’s hair, he hears the anguish in Mary and Martha’s voices as they cried out to him, wondering why he took so long. I imagine he smells the pungent fragrance of the burial perfume poured on his feet, bringing into clarity the reality of his impending death. I imagine he sees the judgment on Judas’ face as he was scrutinized for wasting perfume and neglecting those in desperate need.

Jesus plans to enter the city in a way that symbolically subverts power, taking a route opposite of the military leaders who oversee the festival celebrations. His entry would make a definitive statement, imaging an alternative kind of power, a servant leader riding an humble donkey. He knew this act would inch him closer to state-sanctioned torture and death.

We are in a time when we need to draw on courage to call into question the structures that uphold systems of oppression. We are in a time when we need to subvert the powerful and protect the vulnerable. The crowds close in on Jesus. Some lift their hands in praise, others point accusingly. I hope this image serves as a reminder to call upon God for the courage you need, to rest and recharge for the work ahead. But I hope it also heartens you to move forward in courage, even in the midst of great resistance, toward the work God is calling you into.

—Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman

## Congregational Meeting

A Congregational Meeting has been called for Sunday, April 18, immediately following the 10:00 a.m. worship service. At this meeting, we will receive a report from the PNC as they introduce the selected candidate for the position of Senior Minister. You will be able to join and participate in this meeting either by attending in-person or signing on via Zoom. Please be on the lookout for more information in the coming weeks which will explain how to register and join the meeting remotely.

## Welcome New Members!

Please welcome our new members Dr. Joellen and Mr. Russell Harris. They transfer their letter from Faith Presbyterian Church, Williamston, SC, and live in Clover, SC. Joellen has her Ph.D. in Education and Russell is in healthcare philanthropy. Welcome Joellen and Russell!

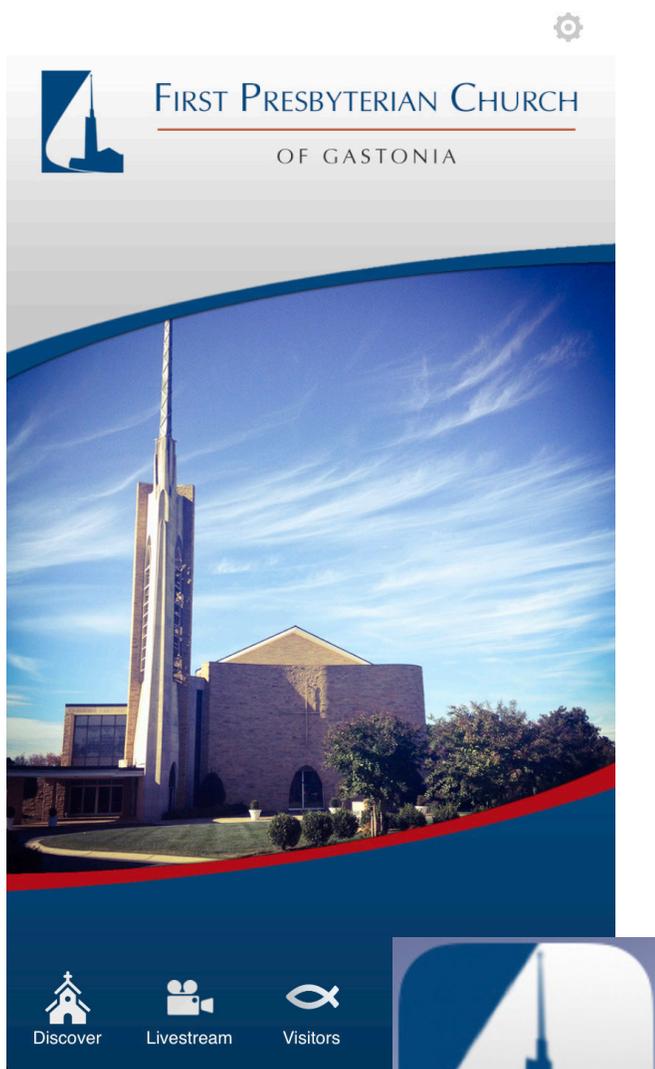
## Phase-Out of Old FPC App

**On April 1, 2021, we will begin phasing out the old FPC mobile app as we transition to using the FPC directory app exclusively.**

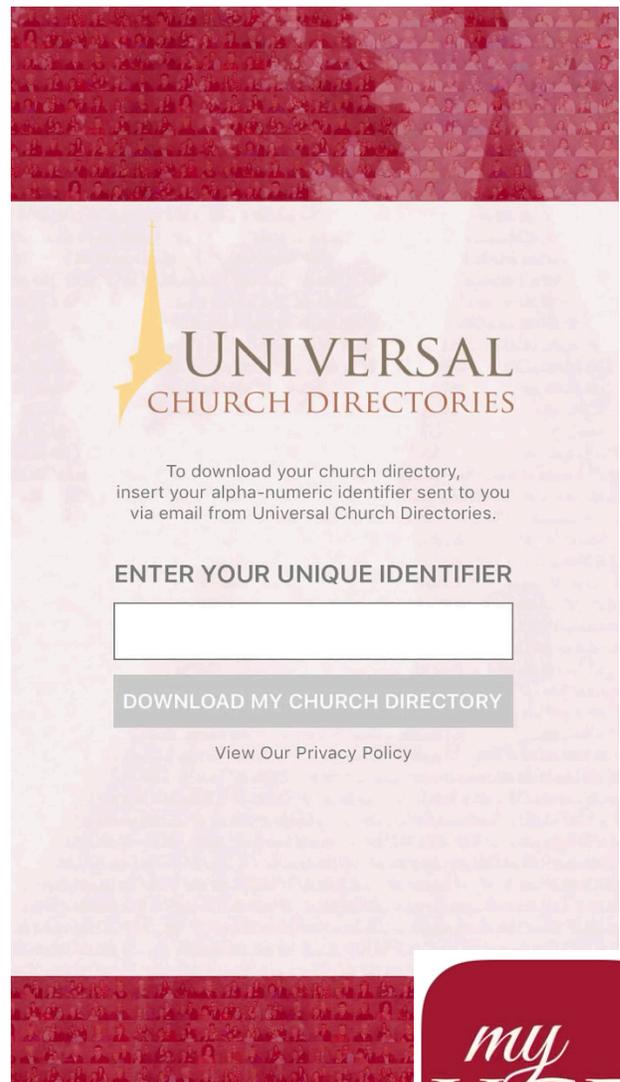
For several months, we have maintained using both apps which, apart from the member directory, offer many of the same features and capabilities. After close examination of both applications, the Communications Ministry determined that the FPC mobile app offered less functionality, was more difficult to maintain and update, and was less cost effective than the FPC directory app. For this reason, we have decided to discontinue service of the FPC mobile app and solely promote the FPC directory app instead.

**To download and access the FPC directory app:** Visit the Appstore on your device and search for “Universal Church Directory.” Once downloaded, you will be prompted to enter your unique identifier. This code is unique to each family unit, and offers secure access to the online directory. If you do not know your unique identifier, please contact Celeste Crowe (ccrowe@fpcgastonia.org) or Trip Stewart (tstewart@fpcgastonia.org) to receive it.

**Thank you for your patience as we make this transition! If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Celeste Crowe for more information.**



**Old FPC Mobile App to be Discontinued.**



**New FPC Directory App to Download.**





### Presbyterian Women Birthday Luncheon

We are excited to announce that the Presbyterian Women’s Annual Birthday Luncheon will take place in the church parking lot on Monday, May 3, at 12:00 p.m. Box lunches will be provided by Spindle City Cafe and will include 1/2 chicken salad sandwich with lettuce and tomato on wheat bread, fresh fruit medley, and triple chocolate pound cake, with waterbottles and chips provided by the church. Each meal cost \$8, or feel free to bring your own sack lunch!

We will not be using tickets this year, so we instead ask that you please RSVP online by April 23. Visit [www.fpcgastonia.org/presbyterian-women](http://www.fpcgastonia.org/presbyterian-women) to signup and place your lunch order!



### Scholarship Applications Now Available

The church business office is now accepting applications for scholarships intended to provide financial assistance to church members pursuing a secondary education.

Awards are based upon financial need; however, merit, academics, Christian character, and the record of service within the church are taken into consideration during the review of applications. Previous award recipients must re-apply and are not automatically eligible for continuance of the scholarship.

Those interested in applying may receive an application through the church business office. Applications must be completed and returned by **April 1, 2021**, in order to be considered.

### Transformer Repair

Beginning on **Monday, April 5**, the church building will be closed while repairs and upgrades are made to the building’s electrical transformer. We anticipate that this project should take roughly 3 days to complete, but there is the possibility that it may take longer. In the event that repairs are not complete by Sunday, April 11, a special communication will go out regarding the service.

While the office will be closed on Monday, April 5, in observance of the Easter holiday, church staff will work remotely beginning on Tuesday, April 6, until power in the building is restored. If you have a concern during this time, please reach out via email.



## Nickel-A-Meal

The Nickel-A-Meal offering supports both regional and international hunger programs that show compassion and do justice for those in need. The plan of Nickel a Meal is very simple. Each person puts 5 cents (or more) in a special bank for each meal they eat. This amounts to \$54.75 per person per year.

The money is sent to Presbytery. Twice a year the Presbytery Hunger Committee reviews grant requests from regional ministries working with those who are poor. These agencies must have programs that meet the guidelines adopted by Presbytery, be endorsed by local Presbyterian churches, and representatives must meet with the Hunger Committee. International programs/agencies receiving funds must have been approved by the PCUSA, or else receive approval for Presbytery's Coordinating Council. The funds are allocated as follows: International projects: 55%; Regional projects: 40%; Education and Administrative costs: up to 5% (with the unused portion allocated to international projects). Presbytery Council must approve regional allocations, and Presbytery is informed regularly. An annual report is sent to all congregations at the beginning of the new year.

Our next collection will be **Sunday, April 11**. Look for the red buckets on Sunday morning or make your donations at [www.fpcgastonia.org/giving](http://www.fpcgastonia.org/giving) (select Nickel-A-Meal fund) or by mailing a check to our church. Thank you for your gifts as each nickel makes a big difference!

## Session Committee Contacts

As our new officers begin their term, we would like to share the various ministries and committees with which each Elder serves. Each of these ministries is vital to the life and work of First Presbyterian Church. Thank you to these members, and all who serve a on committee, for your faithful service!

### Class of 2021

Frank Craig—Personnel Ministry  
David Dickson—Worship and Music Ministry (includes Thrive, Traditional worship and Wedding Guild)  
Lewis Efird—Finance Ministry  
Lynne Hathcock—Missions Ministry  
Mary Layton—Christian Education Ministry (includes Adult, Youth and Children)  
Dustin Letts—Building and Grounds Ministry  
Beverly Sumner—Congregational Life Ministry (includes Membership Development, Communications, Pastoral Care and Hospitality)

### Class of 2022

Beth Bolin—Missions Ministry  
Dale Bullock—Buildings and Grounds Ministry  
Geof Planer—Personnel Ministry  
Beth Silvers—Christian Education Ministry  
Larry Stiles—Finance Ministry  
Tim Witherell—Worship and Music Ministry

### Class of 2023

Becky Adams—Worship and Music Ministry  
Josie Conner—Christian Education Ministry  
Tim Fuller—Buildings and Grounds Ministry  
Margaret Mackie—Missions Ministry  
Warren Quarles--Congregational Life Ministry  
Kevin Schultz--Personnel Ministry  
Bob Spencer--Finance Ministry

## Parish Nurse Updates



### Self Care is Not Selfish Event

On **Thursday, March 18**, the Gastonia Parish nurse Ministry hosted a virtual event for the women of First United Methodist and First Presbyterian Churches. Members gathered on Zoom for fellowship and discussion followed by a special presentation by guest speakers Kim Leppert and Stefanie Patyak Jester. In case you missed it, a recording the presentation can be viewed online by visiting [www.fpcgastonia.org/parish-nurse](http://www.fpcgastonia.org/parish-nurse). Thank you to everyone who logged on and participated!



### Community Foundation Run

The Community Foundation is hosting a virtual run on **Saturday, April 17**. How does a Virtual Race work? You get out and run the distance that you registered and bring along your favorite tracking device. When you are finished, take a picture or screenshot that shows your distance and time. Please consider supporting the Gastonia Nurse Ministry by registering or making a donation at [www.cfgaston.org](http://www.cfgaston.org). All funds raised are used to promote health education awareness programs, events, and giveaways. Contributions can be made through **April 23**, to qualify for matching funds.

### Upcoming Blood Drive

Our next blood drive will be held on **Monday, April 12**, from 2:30-6:30 p.m. in the Chapel Parking Lot. Walk-ups are welcome, but advanced registration is recommended and preferred. Visit [donor.oneblood.org/donor/schedules/drive\\_schedule/1040018](http://donor.oneblood.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/1040018) to schedule your appointment today!

## COVID-19 Vaccine Information

Interested in receiving the COVID-19 vaccine? Below are some suggestions and resources to help you get registered.

To date, the following groups are eligible to receive the vaccine:

- Group 1 - Health Care Workers and Long-term Care Staff and Residents.
- Group 2 - Anyone 65 years or older.
- Group 3 - Anyone working in childcare or in PreK–12 schools and frontline essential workers

Currently the following organizations are scheduling appointments:

- DHHS - Call 704-866-3170 between 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Information can also be found at [gastonsaves.com](http://gastonsaves.com). Please note that beginning March 5, Gaston County vaccination clinics will no longer be held at the Farmer's Market and will instead be held at Eastridge Mall.
- CaroMont Health - Call 704-834-2000. You do not have



to be a CaroMont Health patient to schedule or receive a vaccine through CaroMont.

- Medical Center Pharmacy - Call 704-867-5343.
- Atrium Health - Visit [www.atriumhealth.org/COVID19Vaccine](http://www.atriumhealth.org/COVID19Vaccine).
- Novant Health - Visit [www.novanthealth.org/mynovant.aspx](http://www.novanthealth.org/mynovant.aspx).
- Walgreens Pharmacy - [www.walgreens.com](http://www.walgreens.com).

## Get Outside this Spring!

Spending time outdoors, especially in green spaces, is one of the fastest ways to improve your health and happiness. It's been shown to lower stress, blood pressure and heart rate, while encouraging physical activity and improving mood and mental health. Spending just 20 minutes in a park — even if you don't exercise while you're there — is enough to improve well-being, according to the research.

Gaston County is fortunate to have many parks and walking trails. Try visiting one listed below today!

Lineberger Park  
632 E Garrison Blvd.  
Gastonia, NC 28054

Rankin Lake Park  
1750 Rankin Lake Rd.  
Gastonia, NC 28052

George Poston Park  
1101 Lowell Spencer Mountain Rd.  
Gastonia, NC 28056

Martha Rivers Park  
1515 Neal Hawkins Rd.  
Gastonia, NC 28056

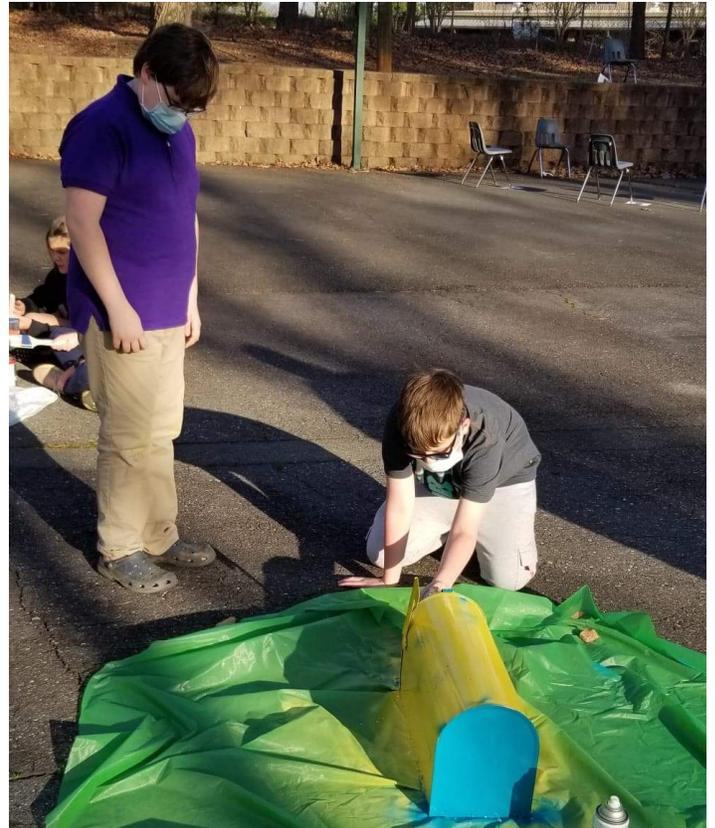
Dallas Park  
1303 Dallas Cherryville Hwy.  
Dallas, NC 28034

South Fork River Park  
4185 Mountain View St.  
Gastonia, NC 28056

Gastonia Optimist Club Park  
403 S Vance St.  
Gastonia, NC 28052

Goat Island Park and Greenway  
141 8th Ave.  
Cramerton, NC 28032

## Faith Formation Updates



### PAD Prayer Walk

FPC youth have begun to create a prayer walk that will go along the drive up to the PAD. This prayer walk will be a place for congregants and community members alike to engage in prayer in new and interactive ways, enjoy God's creation, and encourage and pray for one another. Be on the lookout for an announcement about it's completion so that you can come experience the prayer walk for yourself!

## Youth Casserole Fundraiser

Help our youth go to Massanetta Springs Middle School Conference and on their Mission Trip to Lexington County, SC! Go online or call the church to pre-order a casserole made by our wonderful caterer Gwen Yon! Choose from baked spaghetti, chicken casserole, or veggie lasagna. An 8"x8" pan is \$20 and a 9"x13" pan is \$30. Orders must be in by Friday, April 16. The casserole pickup will be from 5:00-7:00 p.m. on Sunday, April 25. The FPC Youth are excited to go out into the world to learn, love, & serve—your faithful support helps them in so many ways!

### Upcoming Dates!

**Youth Fundraiser - Order by April 16,  
Pickup on April 25**

**Youth Sunday - April 18**

**Confirmation Sunday - May 2**

## Vacation Bible School 2021

Join us for Discovery on Adventure Island VBS as we explore the Quest for God's Great Light. Our quest takes place on August 2-5, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. We are currently seeking volunteers to help with Bible Stories, Science, Crafts, Snacks, Music, Recreation, Mission, Technology, and act as Class Leaders. Contact Susannah Bryant ([sbryant@fpcgastonia.org](mailto:sbryant@fpcgastonia.org)) if you are ready to accept this mission! Registration for young adventurers opens on April 15!



## Palm Sunday Easter Egg Hunt

Following the Palm Sunday worship service, children and families gathered on the Fellowship Hall patio to participate in the FPC Easter Egg Hunt.

# 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	Livestream	10:00 a.m. Worship
March 7	110	80
March 14	96	65
March 21	111	74
March 28	86	125

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