

THE FIRST PRESS

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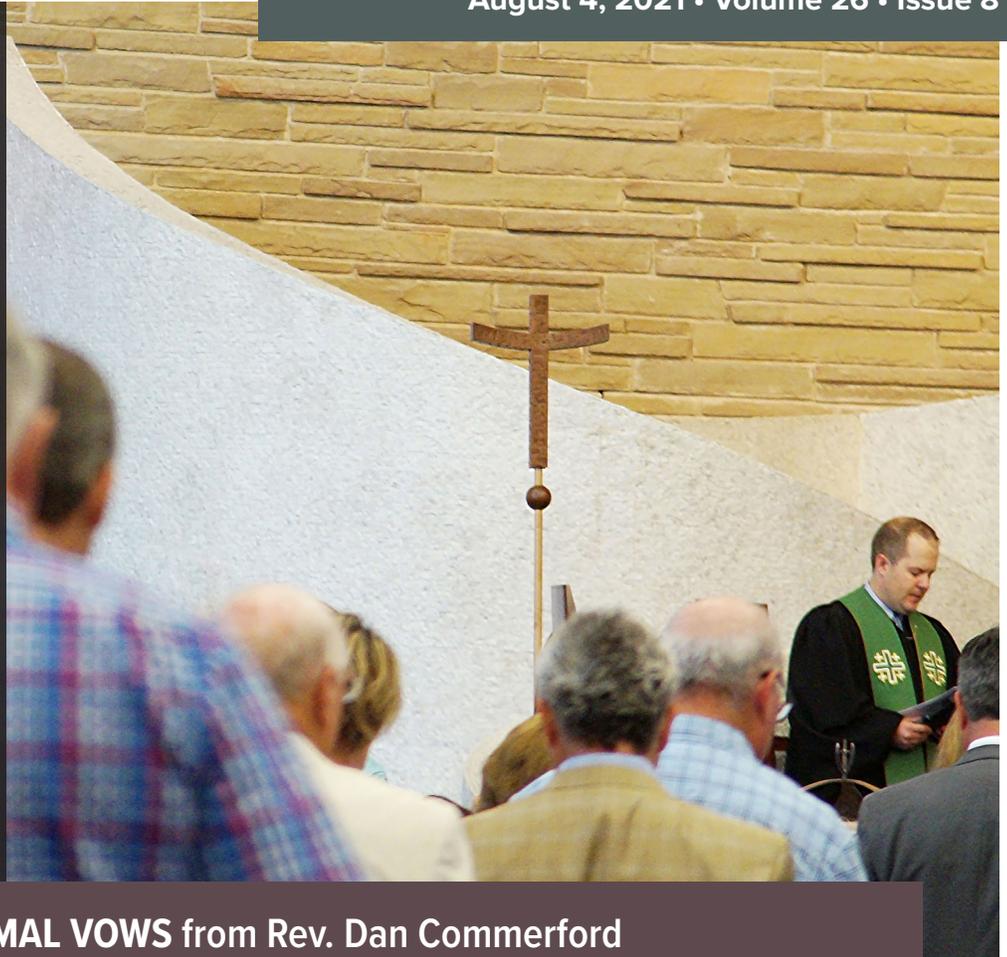
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UPHOLDING OUR BAPTISMAL VOWS from Rev. Dan Commerford

While I was packing to move here this summer, I came upon a letter I wrote to my son Micah, a letter I read for the sermon the Sunday he was baptized. In the letter, I affirmed that before we even knew who he was, Micah was created, claimed, and loved by God. I conveyed my hope that he would strive to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly as his namesake encouraged. I also committed to do everything I can to raise him in a way that he would never doubt how much we love him

and (most importantly) how much God loves him in Jesus Christ. Lastly, I confessed that I won't always succeed in being the parent God calls me to be, which is why God gave him the church to help him deepen his faith as he walks his journey of faith.

All of us know that it takes a village to raise our children. Every parent relies on other parents, friends, teachers, and mentors to

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help our children become successful adults. Similarly, it takes an entire congregation to help nurture the faith of the next generation. Parents cannot be the sole resource for their children’s faith development, nor can the pastor or church employee be the only person who talks to them about Jesus. For that reason, all of us make vows to nurture our children’s faith when they are baptized. To refresh your memory, here are the vows all of us make at each baptism:

Parents: Relying on God’s grace, do you promise to live the Christian faith, and to teach that faith to your child?

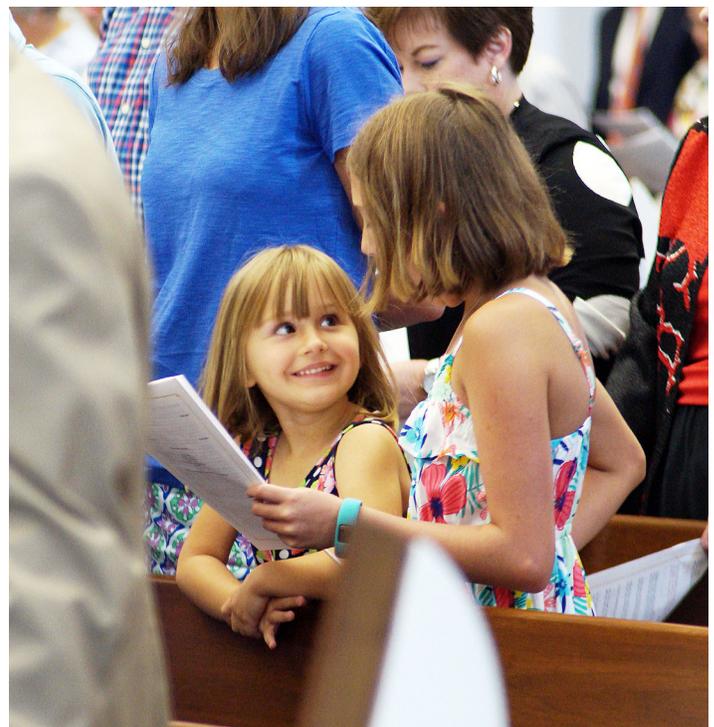
Family & Teachers: Do you promise, through prayer and example, to support and encourage this child to be a faithful Christian?

Children: Do you promise to be a friend to this child, showing them what it means to learn about God by inviting them to join you in that journey?

Congregation: Do you, as members of the church of Jesus Christ, promise to guide and nurture this child, by word and deed, with love and prayer, encouraging them to know and follow Christ and be a faithful member of this church?

When we answer “I do” to these questions, we make a vow to raise the children in our congregation to be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. These vows do not end when they are old enough to go to school; they don’t end when they learn how to drive, nor do they end when they graduate high school.

Our baptismal vows last for a lifetime! As faithful Christ followers, all of us are called to uphold the vows we make and do whatever it takes to ensure that the next generation has every opportunity to learn and grow in their faith. What are specific ways we keep the promises we’ve made to the next generation at First Presbyterian Church of Gastonia? If we are not sure how to answer this question, here are some ways that we help our children learn about what it means to follow Jesus Christ:





Parents: First, follow Jesus in your own life and make it a priority to keep your faith active and vibrant. If you are not growing in your own faith, it will be hard to expect your children to grow in theirs. Second, Read the Bible to your children and talk to them about your faith. Ask them questions that help them connect what is happening in their life with their faith in Christ. Third, do not stop pushing them to grow in their faith, no matter how old they are! You are the first person they look to for guidance as well as the biggest role model they have for living a life that faithfully follows Christ. Last but certainly not least, pray with them and for them as much as you can.

Family & Teachers: First, follow Jesus in your own life and make it a priority to keep your faith active and vibrant. If you are not growing in your own faith, it will be hard to expect children to grow in theirs. Second, be sure to check in on them from time to time, taking a genuine interest in their lives. When they have a hard time listening to their parents (this won't take long, in my experience), you can be the "cool" adult they will follow. Use that opportunity to encourage them to learn about Jesus, sharing with them the honest joys and challenges of your faith life. Last but certainly not least, pray with them and for them as much as you can.

Children: First, continue to learn about Jesus and have fun in the process! Laugh, play games, make friends, ask your Sunday school teachers questions, and try to stump the pastors. Second, be sure to include those who are younger. Be a friend to them and help them whenever you can. Last but certainly not least, pray as often as you can and know your entire family and congregation are lifting you in prayer every day.

Congregation: First, follow Jesus in your own life and make it a priority to keep your faith active and vibrant. If you are not growing in your own faith, it will be hard to help our

children to grow in theirs. Second, find real and tangible ways to support their faith development. Volunteer to teach Sunday school or consider helping out with our Youth Group (whether it is an occasional or weekly commitment, every bit helps!). Support them financially by tithing faithfully and giving to their fundraisers. Third, include them in the life of the church. Take time to speak with them when you see them on Sunday and Wednesday. Encourage them to be involved in as many activities as possible so they learn how to be an active member at church. Last but certainly not least, pray with them and for them as much as you can.

God brings us together as a congregation so that we can all care for our children together! My prayer is that we do the work to enable the Holy Spirit to shape and support next generation of Christ followers. If you would like ideas for how to best support our children or youth or would like to become more involved with our ministries devoted to them, please reach out to anyone on our pastoral staff or our Director of Faith Formation.

See you on Sunday!

Rev. Dan Commerford



Congregational Cares

August Birthdays

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

Condolences to:

Faye and Roland Lanier and Sharon and Vann Lanier upon the death of Leona Weisner Goss on July 3, 2021.

The friends and family of **David Pegram, Sr.** upon his death on July 3, 2021.

Beverly and Bobby Sumner upon the death of Elizabeth Kinnison Sumner on July 20, 2021.



Thank You For Supporting Potter's House!

Many thanks to everyone for your overwhelming support of Gastonia Potter's House this Christmas in July! On Sunday, July 25, we presented our gifts to Executive Director of Gastonia Potter's House, Cindy Marshall, who shared a Minute for Mission during the worship service. Several participants in the program attended as well. We hope to continue working with GPH in the future! If you would like to learn more about this ministry, you can pick up a brochure from the Reception Desk, or visit www.gphrecovery.com.



Nickel-A-Meal Offering

Peanut butter and jelly, pimento cheese, hot ham and cheese on rye, A plate of eggs, 2 strips of bacon and a biscuit, oh my!!

Or perhaps an apple, peach or pear is what you'd like to eat, A slice of watermelon and some homemade ice cream to make the meal complete.

But what if these delicious foods were never available to you? What if you did not know when you would get a meal - what would you do?

Please remember those who have no food the next time you take a bite, Remember those that hunger and have no food in sight.

Just 5 cents a meal for our brothers and sisters can relieve the effects of hunger

Let's all pitch in, last year's collection total let's outnumber!!

Total Nickel-A-Meal collection for 2020: \$8569.54

Total Nickel-A-Meal collection through June 2021: \$4088.00

Wednesday Night Alive! Resumes September 8

Open to all ages, September Wednesday Night Alive! will feature Conversations about Calling from FPC's Pastors.

During September, the Pastoral Staff will lead interactive conversations about hearing and understanding one's call. Throughout the month, our pastors will share their particular call stories and how God led them into ministry. Join the conversation beginning with intergenerational dinner from 5:30-6:15 p.m., followed by presentations from 6:15-7:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

- 9/8—What is a Call and How Do You Know What Yours Is?
- 9/15—Dan Commerford leads
- 9/22—Lauren Vanacore leads
- 9/29—John Stanley leads

Children's Ministry offerings will take place for Kindergarten through 5th grade, including choir, bible story and crafts, from 6:15-7:00 p.m.

Nursery care will be provided for infants up to Pre-K.

Be sure to plan your Wednesday evenings throughout the Fall around all of the offerings at First Presbyterian Church which will include engaging Bible Study, Current Events, and Arts options in October, November, and December.





90th Birthday Celebration

You are invited to help us celebrate our outstanding older members!

Please join us Wednesday, August 18, at 12:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall as recognize everyone in our congregation who has celebrated their 90 and above birthdays over the past year! Lunch will be served. Please call Sandra at 704-864-2651 to make a reservation.



Faith and Fiction

Faith and Fiction, a special FPC book club, is back! Faith and Fiction will meet on Sunday, September 5, at 5:00 p.m., in the Card Room at Covenant Village. The book we will be discussing is *The Ballad of Gussie & Clyde* by Aaron Latham. Please contact Sarah Wentz with any questions.

Women's Bible Study

Beginning August 31, the weekly Women's Bible Study will resume at 11:00 a.m. in the Seeker's classroom. Led by Coleman Efird, all women are invited to participate in this study and join us for fellowship. All you need to bring for your first day is your bible! Contact Coleman if you have any questions!

Volunteer with Crisis Assistance Ministry

Crisis Assistance Ministry (CAM) is looking for volunteers to help pick up, pack, and organize food from local stores in its food room. Shifts are during operating hours (Monday - Thursday from 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.) and require some standing and light lifting. Call 704-867-8901 or visit crisisassistancegastonia.org for more information.

Congregational Meeting

A Congregational Meeting has been called for Sunday, August 29, immediately following the 10:00 a.m. worship service. At this meeting, we will vote to elect officers for the class of 2024 and members of the nominating committee At-Large for 2022. Please be on the lookout for more information about slated candidates!



Summer Ukulele Workshop

Thank you to everyone who participated in our Summer Ukulele Workshop! We had a delightful time learning various chords, strumming patterns, and making an all-around joyful noise! We are currently brainstorming about more opportunities like this in the future!

If you would like to learn or continue to practice on your own, here are a few additional resources from Bethany:

If you would like to purchase your own ukulele, be sure to get a soprano, concert, tenor size. The tuning and chords for a baritone ukulele were not covered in this workshop! As far as brand, Bethany suggests Cordoba, Flight, Kala, or Ohana.

If you are looking for additional books or materials, you should check out *21 Easy Ukulele Hymns* by Rebecca Bogart, *Essential Elements for Ukulele Book 1* by Hal Leonard, or the Ukulaliens Channel on YouTube!

In addition, we encourage you to watch the recordings of each of our workshops by visiting our YouTube page!

Lastly, we would like to invite you to join our regular Music Ministry programming. The Sanctuary Choir will meet for the first time on Sunday, August 22, from 3:00-5:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall for a time of informal orientation and fellowship. Regular rehearsals will begin on Wednesday, August 25, at 7:00 p.m. Please prayerfully consider joining us as we enter this new season in our church. It's exciting!

A huge thank you to Bethany Jennings for sharing her knowledge and love of music with our congregation through this workshop and all of our Music Ministries!



Parish Nurse Updates



Park Hop



Park Hop is a free, summer long scavenger hunt that explores Gaston County's local parks, trails, and greenways. Gaston County has a wealth of parks with countless activities for all ages to enjoy that are fun, affordable and right around the corner. We hope that the

Park Hop scavenger hunt will become an annual tradition for friends and family to enjoy.

Medicare 101 Seminar

Join us in the Fellowship Hall on Thursday, September 23, to learn more about Medicare parts A, B, C, and D! We'll discuss and educate you on making the most of your rights, options, and entitlements, how and when to enroll in Medicare, what Medicare does and doesn't cover, Medicare Advantage and Medicare Supplement insurance, and much more! The seminar will begin at 12:00 p.m. and free lunch will be provided if you register by September 16!

Flu Shot Clinics

Flu Shot Clinics provided by Medical Center Pharmacy will be available in the Fellowship Hall Atrium on Wednesday, September 22, from 4:00-7:00 p.m. Cost is \$30 for the regular flu shot, or \$45 for the high dose (over 65 years old.) The shot is covered by most insurances and is free with Medicare part B. Make an appointment today by visiting www.fpcgastonia.org/parish-nurse-ministry/

COVID-19 Testing and Vaccinations

Beginning on August 16, free COVID-19 vaccinations and drive-up COVID-19 testing will be available every Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday from 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. and from 1:00-5:00 p.m. at First United Methodist Church of Gastonia. This is a partnership of Gaston County DHHS, the Gastonia Parish Nurse Ministry and FUMC. No appointments required!

How can you participate?

1. Scan the QR code below or visit gastongov.com/parkhop to get a copy of your passport.
2. Register your Park Hop Passport.
3. Visit parks and answer clues.
4. submit your answers by September 6, 2021.

Prizes include Whitewater Center gift cards, t-shirts, and games for the whole family!



Scan here for more information



Faith Formation Updates



Children's Day at the Farm

On June 30, our Children's ministry took a trip to Darby Acres Farm! We had a blast getting to meet and feed all the animals!



Wild and Wacky Wednesday - Water Extravaganza

On July 14, the children's ministry slid right into summer with a giant water slide and water extravaganza!



PASSPORTKids Camp
 On July 6-9, members of our Children's ministry traveled to Montreat, NC for PASSPORTKids Camp.



Sr. High Mission Trip
 Our Sr. High Youth Traveled to Lexington County, SC on July 18-24, for a week of meaningful mission and fellowship. They painted and made repairs to homes in the area while also diving deeper into their faith.

THE FIRST PRESS

First Presbyterian Church

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

Return Service Requested

PERIODICALS
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Gastonia, NC



Service Views and Attendance

Date	Livestream	10:00 a.m. Worship
July 4	68	83
July 11	95	201
July 18	64	168
July 25	67	117

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