

THE FIRST PRESS

November 3, 2021 • Volume 26 • Issue 11



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TIME AND TALENTS from Rev. Daniel J. Commerford

Over the past month, we have imagined how we can work to “Renew” our church as the theme of our stewardship season suggests. Sarah Sumner, our Stewardship Chair, has encouraged us to express our gratitude for God’s guidance by devoting our time, talents, and treasures to the life and ministry of FPC Gastonia as we embark on a new season together. Being new to the scene, I can’t tell you how grateful I am to be a part of a congregation that has persevered through

so many challenges these past couple years and is now positioned to imagine where God is leading us next with a sense of confidence and optimism. My heart goes out to the many congregations who are struggling to survive and can only dream of such possibilities. God is doing a new thing, here, and for that reason we can all be grateful for the opportunity to “renew.”

Continued on page 2



Whenever we talk about stewardship, we usually categorize it into three categories: Time, talents, and treasures. If we are honest, we normally jump right to the third category during stewardship season. Although we rely on the financial generosity of our congregation to accomplish our goals, I feel that we often focus on money at the expense of the other two components of stewardship that are equally as important. Since arriving, I have been so encouraged by the wide variety of members who have been willing to give their time and talents in addition to their treasures in order to strengthen the mission of our Church. Every day, I witness disciples here giving their time, talents, wisdom, and experience in order to help out at church. Some give their professional expertise while others give a helping hand. Some are here early on Sundays and others are here throughout the week. Without the commitment of all of us giving our time and talents, no amount of money will enable us to renew in a way that leads to growth.

As we discern how God is leading us to give our time, talents, and treasures, I'd like to encourage us to pray about those first two. Whether it's serving as an usher during worship, teaching our kids during Sunday School, serving on a committee, or even answering the call to become an elder or deacon, God has a purpose for all of our time and talents. If you are waiting to be asked, consider this article my personal invitation for you to hop on board! God relies on all of us to be Christ's hands and feet in this church. I look forward to seeing how God uses your time and talents this next season!



Congregational Cares

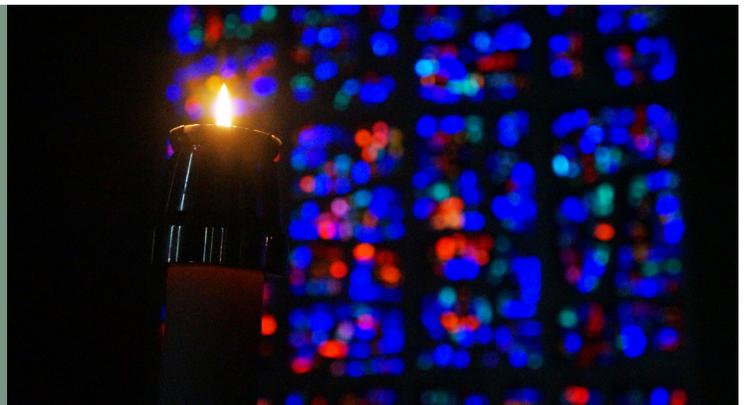
November Birthdays

Jim Jones	11/1	Josie Conner	11/12	Shelton Winget	11/22
Spence Newcombe	11/3	Stephen de la Vega	11/12	Baxter Harrill	11/23
Danny Page	11/3	Louise Keir	11/13	Ed Reese	11/23
Les McLean	11/4	Debbie Rhyne	11/13	Bill Henry	11/24
David Wentz	11/4	Trey Templeton	11/13	Scott Roberts	11/24
Kevin Schultz	11/5	Richard de la Vega	11/14	Ragan Rogers	11/24
Sarah de la Vega	11/6	Sarah Giles	11/14	Martha Thomas	11/24
Charles Davenport	11/7	Linda McGregor	11/14	Rachel Rockett	11/25
Mandy Digby	11/7	Clarissa Craig	11/15	Beth Silvers	11/25
John Vaughn, Jr.	11/7	Larry Stiles	11/15	David Dickson	11/26
Dianne Belton	11/8	Anne Stowe	11/15	John Duncan	11/26
Pat Glenn	11/8	Vickie Burgess	11/16	Rebecca Wren	11/26
Bruce Sudderth	11/8	Mallory Craig	11/16	Lee Matheny	11/27
Marion Farkas	11/9	David Gibbons	11/16	Sydney Craig	11/28
Don Thrower	11/9	Hayes Pierce	11/17	Bill Massey	11/28
Tina Barringer	11/10	Kim Price	11/17	Josh Rutherford	11/28
Caroline Bowyer	11/11	Robert Buckles	11/18	Travis Lipscomb	11/28
David Garrett	11/11	Adam Jackson	11/19	Carol Andrews	11/29
Ellie Mudd	11/11	Doug Harris	11/19	Zach Beaty	11/29
Ron Nesheim	11/11	Ed Anderson	11/21	Pamela Joles	11/29
Lindy Sell	11/11	Carole Fuller	11/21	Jonathan Reed	11/29
Jen Winningham	11/11	David Jennings	11/21	Don Renfro	11/29
Dan Commerford	11/12	June Thompson	11/22	Mary Stewart Efird	11/30

Help us celebrate your day! Contact the church office to make sure that we have your birthday and contact information correct. Please email Trip Stewart at tstewart@fpcgastonia.com with your information or updates. Please note that your full birth date will never be shared publicly, only the month and day. Thank you for your cooperation!

Condolences to:

Sharon and Vann Lanier upon the death of David Rhinehart on October 17, 2021.



Wednesday Night Alive!

Rediscover the gift of Advent that comes without packages, ribbons, and bows.

“We don’t know why the Grinch hated Christmas. We just know he did. In this new Advent study, Matt Rawle explores the faith themes in the Christmas classic, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* including, how did the Grinch’s heart grow three sizes come Christmas morning? How did Christmas save the Grinch? Could it be that the very thing we think we hate is the one thing that changes our lives? This Advent and Christmas season, look at a familiar classic through the lens of faith and see how Christ speaks to us through our culture.”

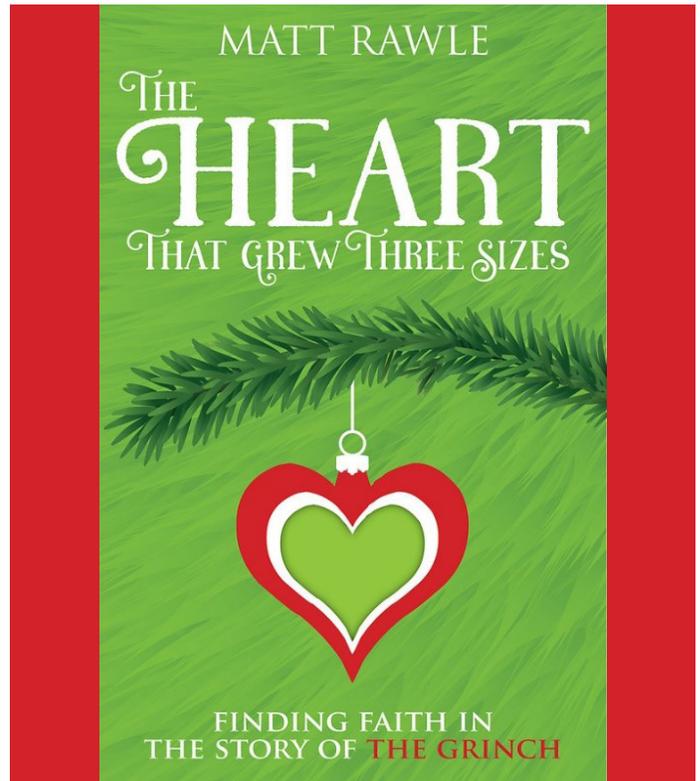
In preparation for Advent, the Adult Ministry Committee will offer a new four-week series on Wednesdays, November 10 and 17, and December 1 and 8, titled “The Heart that Grew Three Sizes.” Gather for fellowship at 6:15 p.m. as we share in the joy of the Advent season. The program will begin at 6:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall and will be led each week by staff and lay leaders. Programming for children and nursery care will also be provided.

Nickel-A-Meal

Are you still saving your nickels? Our next Nickel-A-Meal offering is coming up on November 14th! 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!



Circle 2/3 collects canned goods for the Caring Cupboard!



Kirkin’ O The Tartans

Save the date! On Sunday, November 14, we will gather for one combined service at 11:00 a.m. as we participate in the Kirkin’ O the Tartans! During this service, we will participate in the tradition of carrying tartans into the church as we celebrate our Presbyterian Scottish heritage. Special guest preacher will be Rev. Dr. Brian Blount, President of Union Presbyterian Seminary, which has campuses in Charlotte and Richmond. Please RSVP to Kevin Schultz (Schultz.kevinlee@gmail.com or 704-960-0940) to let him know who will carry your tartan or if you are interested in carrying a tartan.

PW Circle Meetings

Please note the following locations and meeting times for Presbyterian Women’s Circles this month. If you have any questions, please contact your circle moderator.

Circle 1 will meet on Monday, November 8, at 10:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

Circle 2/3 will meet on Monday, November 8, at 10:30 a.m. at Covenant Village.

Circle 4 will meet on Tuesday, November 9, at 11:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall.



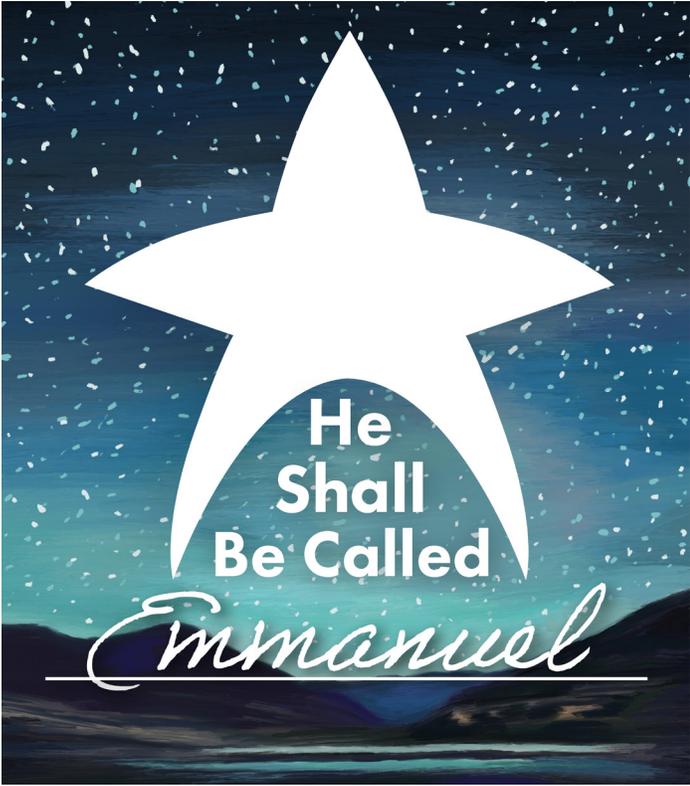
WE'RE HIRING!
MINISTER OF VISITATION

Learn more at www.fpcgastonia.org/jobs

Seeking New Minister of Visitation

First Presbyterian Church of Gastonia is seeking a full time Minister of Visitation who will be primarily responsible for the visitation of the sick, homebound, and hospitalized in the congregation as well as coordinating with the Pastoral Care Committee to help provide that care.

FPC Gastonia is a vibrant congregation that is seeking a candidate who is passionate about sharing Christ's love with not only its members, but the entire community. If you or someone you know are interested in submitting a resume or have questions, please contact Sherry Moore at smoore@fpcgastonia.org.



Welcome Rev. Dr. Charles Davenport!

Beginning November 1, Rev. Dr. Charles Davenport will serve as our part-time Interim Minister of Visitation while we search for someone to fill the full-time position. Charles is an honorably retired minister who has served many churches in our community and throughout the Presbytery. Be sure to say hello and welcome Charles as he begins serving in this new role!

Advent Devotional Booklet

Be on the look out for our special Advent devotional booklet written by members of the FPC Gastonia congregation! The booklet will include daily scripture readings, prayers, and a message. If you would like a copy, print editions will be available for pick up at the church or you can download a digital version on our website! Want a daily reminder? You can also opt-in to receive daily emails which include the devotion for that day. Make sure you are on our mailing list by visiting bit.ly/heshallbecalled.

Volunteers are pictured building bunk beds for the new cabins at Camp Grier! If you are interested in getting involved with the cabin project at Camp Grier, please contact Gwin Hilton at gwin.hilton@gmail.com.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!



Rachel Commerford grew up in Birmingham, Alabama until her dad became a baptist minister when she was 12 which led to her living in 8 states. Rachel met her husband, Dan, in college and they have two beautiful children, Hannah (6) and Micah (2) along with two dogs, Harry and Lilah. She is a CPA and works as a Tax Manager for GreerWalker, LLP in Charlotte. In her spare time, she enjoys running and training for half marathons, hiking the mountains in NC, cooking new recipes, and reading.



Rebecca Stabler Crank grew up in Rockford, IL, and is the youngest of four children. She is a retired school teacher (like her mother and father before her.) Rebecca has two adult children, Erick, her oldest, who lives in Florida, and Heather who is a cosmetician in Charlotte. Rebecca has been married for 42 years and moved to Gastonia 13 years ago from Florida for her husband's career at Belk's corporate headquarters. Due to the pandemic, Belk reduced its staff and her husband has since retired.

Rebecca shares her gratitude for the warmth, love, and acceptance she has experienced from the community at FPC Gastonia and is proud to be one of its newest members!



Dale and Michelle Melton moved to Gastonia in 2018 at the invitation of Covenant Village, where Dale serves as Chief Executive Officer. Michelle is Vice President of Marketing and Philanthropy at WellPointe Advisors, a specialized retirement-industry consulting group. With deep professional roots in Presbyterian theological education, Dale and Michelle are delighted to join the welcoming congregation of FPC Gastonia, where they are forming lasting friendships and finding opportunities to serve.



Elizabeth and Tripp McLean are thrilled to join First Presbyterian Church along with their sons Will (8) and Jack (4). A native of Gastonia, Tripp grew up in FPC Gastonia and graduated from Clemson University with a degree in Construction Science Management. He is now the owner of McLean Homes and McLean Self Storage in Belmont, NC. Elizabeth was born in Roanoke, VA, and grew up in Second Presbyterian Church. She is a graduate of the University of Virginia, having obtained both a Bachelor's degree in Spanish and a Master's of Education from UVA. Elizabeth is employed as an ESL instructor at the Gaston Literary Council. Elizabeth and Tripp love spending time with their family in Montreat, NC, and are active in the SALT class and Young Adult Supper Club at FPC Gastonia.



John Mudd grew up in southern Maryland with his parents, John and Betty, and older sister, Maggie. He graduated from Salisbury University in 2009 with a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature before moving to Arlington, VA. There he started working in financial aid at the Art Institute of Washington where he met his future wife, Mandy. John and Mandy were engaged in October 2014 and relocated to Charlotte soon after. They were married on November 14, 2015. Their first daughter, Ellie, was born in 2017, and their second daughter, Caroline, was born in 2020. Mandy and John love Charlotte and are looking forward to becoming more involved in the community.



Interested in joining or learning more about First Presbyterian Church of Gastonia? Contact Trip Stewart at tstewart@fpcgastonia.org for more info!



I'M GOING PURPLE FOR NOVEMBER

Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month

November is Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month! Pancreatic cancer may cause only vague unexplained symptoms. Pain (usually in the abdomen or back), weight loss, jaundice (yellowing of the skin and/or eyes) with or without itching, loss of appetite, nausea, change in stool, pancreatitis, and recent-onset diabetes are symptoms that may indicate pancreatic cancer. If you are experiencing one

or more of these symptoms, we urge you to speak to your doctor immediately and reference pancreatic cancer.

If you are interested in getting involved to help spread awareness and/or help with the PurpleStride walk on April 30, 2022, please contact Lisa Marisiddaiah at nurse@fpcgastonia.org.



FAITHFUL FAMILIES Thriving Communities

Join us for a virtual program
Mondays October 11-December 6 6:00-7:00 PM

Learn More About:

- EATING SMART AT HOME
- SIMPLE SOLUTIONS FOR PLANNING, SHOPPING, FIXING, AND EATING MORE MEALS AT HOME.
- THE IMPORTANCE OF EATING MORE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES AND LESS FAT.
- MOVING MORE, EVERY DAY, EVERYWHERE
- FAITH AND HEALTH CONNECTION

Healthy Eating and Nutrition Program

Our healthy eating program continues this month!

Did you know that 78% of patients who have been hospitalized, needed a ventilator, or died from COVID are either overweight (27.8%) or obese (50.2%).

The Gastonia Parish Nurse Ministry has coordinated this program to help educate members on the benefits of healthy eating and risks that obesity can cause when experiencing COVID-19 infections.

If you haven't joined us already, you can still participate now! The series will take place each Monday night through December 6, from 6:00-7:00 p.m. During each session we offer practical tips, guidance, and support on healthy nutrition and fitness options. Open to anyone, anywhere! Contact ashlyn.wadsworth@gastongov.com to receive the Zoom link.

This is a partnership of Gaston County DHHS-Public Health and the Gastonia Parish Nurse Ministry.

COVID-19 Antibody Therapy

COVID-19 antibody therapy is now available in Gaston County through StarMed Healthcare! This form of therapy can help to reduce symptoms of COVID-19 following exposure, greatly decreasing the risk of hospitalization due to symptoms. This treatment is recommended for COVID-19 patients experiencing mild to moderate symptoms.

Located on the corner of W. Walnut Ave. and N. York Street in Gastonia, the clinic is open Monday thru Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Walk-ups are welcome or you can register ahead of time by visiting www.starmed.care/antibody or calling 980-445-9818.

COVID-19 Booster Shots

The booster shot for the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine has been authorized by the FDA!

If you qualify to receive a booster, (or are needing other vaccinations,) The Gastonia Parish Nurse Ministry will be hosting a Flu and COVID-19 vaccine clinic at FPC on Wednesday, November 10, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.! Appointments are not required, but if you would like to reserve a time slot you may do so by visiting www.fpcgastonia.org/parish-nurse-ministry.

Not sure if you qualify for the booster? If you were vaccinated more than 6 months ago with the Moderna COVID-19 shot, boosters are now available for people who are:

1. 65 years or older
2. 18 years or older who:
 - live or work in a nursing home or long-term care facility, have underlying medical conditions;
 - work in high-risk settings like healthcare workers, teachers, and childcare providers or food workers;
 - live or work in a place where many people live together (for example, homeless shelters, correctional facilities, migrant farm housing, dormitories, or other group living settings in colleges or universities).

The Moderna booster is a smaller dose than what is given in the first two shots. Be sure to let your provider know you want the booster.

If you received the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine, it is recommended that anyone 18 or older who was

Honoring Our Veterans

You are invited to join us in-person or on online as we honor our veterans during a special presentation on Wednesday, November 10, from 11:00-11:30 a.m. The program will feature keynote speaker Vivian Dennis, Ret. Col., Air Force, Gaston Symphonic Brass Band, and Color Guard. For those joining in person, a to-go lunch will be provided by Shane's Rib Shack with free lunch available for veterans who RSVP by November 5. If you plan to join remotely, please visit www.fpcgastonia.org/parish-nurse-ministry to view the Livestream feed.



vaccinated more than 2 months ago should get a booster dose.

Pfizer (BioNTech) booster shots continue to be available to anyone at high risk for serious illness or exposure, and who received their second dose at least six months ago.

If you are homebound and would like to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, flu shot, and/or booster, contact Lisa Marisiddaiah at nurse@fpcgastonia.org to arrange a home visit.

To find a COVID-19 booster visit myspot.nc.gov to search for vaccine locations near you.

Have questions about whether your personal medical conditions or job might make you eligible? Talk to a doctor, pharmacist, or nurse about whether you should get a booster and which booster shot might be right for you.

Faith Formation Updates



Children's Ministry Recap

Our first ever Bike Night was a blast as bikes, trikes, and scooters zoomed around the church and we sure had fun decorating pumpkins at our Pumpkins and Pizza party! We sure have some great pumpkin artists!





Sign Up For Remind Alerts!

Youth and Parents of Youth, help us stay connected with you. We've had to make some updates to our Remind App. Because of the new account needs, all youth and parents who would like Remind texts will need to sign up again, using the link in the weekly Faith Formation Newsletter or by going to <https://www.remind.com/join/rvogad>. Once you have joined the new group, please let Rachel know if you are not receiving the texts so that she can work to solve that issue.

“Food Banksgiving” Food Drive

In the month of November the children of the church will be focused on giving and will learn about how they can share their gifts as a response to God’s goodness! Throughout the month, the Preschool, Kindergarten, and Elementary Sunday School classes will join in a “Food Banksgiving” food drive to support the ministry of CAMs. Be on the lookout for the donation boxes and check out the Faith Formation weekly newsletter for needed food items!



First Youth Fellowship

The Youth had a great time creating “Scary Potter” for the Scarecrow Walk at the Schiele Museum. What fun it is to share in some spooky fun and get to support our museum neighbors!



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
October 3	52	47	81	65
October 10	54	39	87	68
October 17	55	52	81	62
October 24	46	29	80	41
October 31	-	-	247	71

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