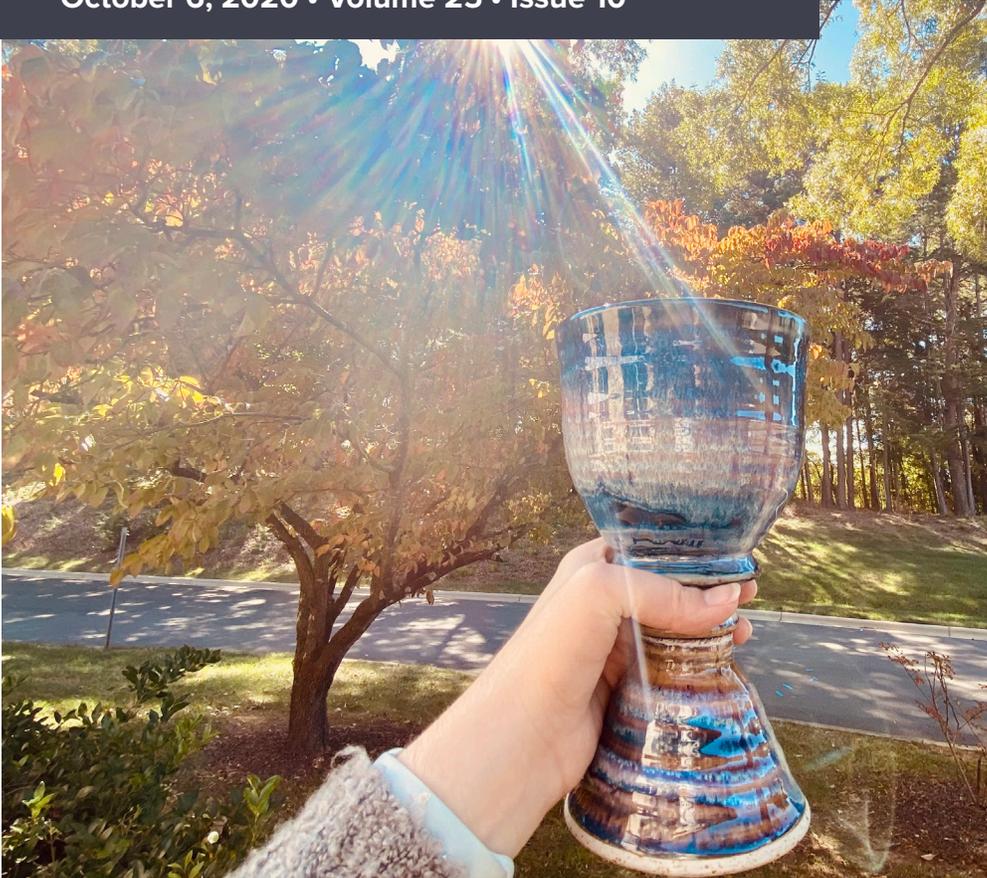


THE FIRST PRESS

October 6, 2020 • Volume 25 • Issue 10



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OUR FINEST HOUR: MEANINGFUL MINISTRY AT BLACK MOUNTAIN HOME

First Presbyterian Church of Gastonia, has a long history of helping Black Mountain Home meet the needs of at-risk children. Ongoing financial support, in-kind gifts, volunteerism, and regular prayer have helped thousands of children over the years. The church has brought busloads of volunteers for Work, Worship & Play Days; supported the Fall Festival; provided Christmas gifts; and made a picnic pavilion possible through the Legacy of Love Campaign (with volunteer support!). First Presbyterian Church has played a vital role in the Home's ability to more than triple the number of children served annually over the past decade. (See attached letter from 2010 for some highlights!)

The mission of Black Mountain Home for Children, Youth & Families is to glorify God by caring for children and families. We strive to meet the physical, educational, and emotional needs of children from birth to college graduation and beyond through the following programs:

- Community-based Family Foster Care. The Home licenses loving, committed families that welcome children into their homes. By supporting these families, our goal is for children to remain with one family until a forever home can be found.
- On campus Cottage Care in Black Mountain and Pisgah

Continued on page 2

Forest, NC. Children live in safe, secure homes maintained by married house parent couples. Kids attend public schools, participate in activities, enjoy meals as a family, worship together, and experience a warm, family atmosphere.

- Transitional Living and Life Coaching. Our goal is to equip teens with adult life skills such as cooking a healthful meal, filling out a job application, and opening a bank account.
- Independent Living and the Apprenticeship Program. All too often, older youth “age out” of the foster care system with few resources to help them succeed. Once youth have earned a high school diploma or GED, we provide them with the housing and support they need to continue their education or to pursue a specific career goal.
- Mountain Home Thrift Store: Cheryl’s Place and Thirteen Pennies Café are the most recent additions to the ministry. They provide jobs for youth in the Independent Living and Apprenticeship Programs while also creating new income streams for the ministry.

The coronavirus has brought a variety of challenges to Black Mountain Home. In addition to restricted campus interactions and limited visitation with family members, having to cancel all in-person fundraising events and the temporary closing of our thrift store and café had a negative impact on our revenue. In addition, some supporters needed to adjust their giving due to job losses or other circumstances related to the virus. It has also created challenges with the need for maintaining a safe campus, distance learning for 30+ children, and the inability to host volunteers in many areas.



In addition, the Families First Prevention Services Act is expected to go into effect in October 2021. This legislation will reduce government funding for many of the children we serve. While the ministry has been anticipating cuts for some time and has taken measures to help offset lost revenue, we expect significant cuts to government support starting next year.

There is an ever increasing need to expand our services to help care for the overwhelming number of children in the foster care system. In the last decade, our ministry has had to turn away more than 900 children ages six and under due to the shortage of foster homes.

Ten years ago the children’s home sent the following letter in appreciation of the church’s amazing support. We thought you’d enjoy looking back on our partnership as much as we did!





“What a difference partnering in Christ can make. Over the last several years, First Presbyterian Church of Gastonia has had an incredible impact on the ministry at BMH. While the First Presbyterian Gastonia Picnic Pavilion is probably the most obvious change you’ve helped bring to the Home, it is far from the only change. Your gifts of time, funds and prayer have had an impact all across our campus. You’ve helped change our landscape while also modeling Christian servant-leadership to our youth.

Here are just a few of the projects the church has helped make possible:

- Addition of a picnic pavilion with bathrooms that will seat 250;*
- Remodeling and addition of HVAC to Barkely Building;*
- Addition of privacy fence around the campus dumpster;*
- Repainting of hallways, a conference room, and a counseling room in Smith Building;*
- Hanging wallpaper borders in computer lab, social work hallway, library, and family room;*
- Building a counter and cabinets w/fridge, sink, coffee maker, and microwave in board room;*
- Trimming the interior windows and doors in the board*

room and replacing the outside ballast;

- Finishing the counter in the model/train room;*
- Providing plants to help beautify campus throughout the year;*
- Purchasing/replacing Christmas lights and decorations;*
- Building shelves in a closet in the Game Room;*
- Involving the church’s youth in mission projects;*
- Supplying baskets for the annual Fall Festival;*
- Sending representatives to participate in events;*
- Providing supplies for the annual beach retreat; and*
- Providing a valuable and involved board member in Grady Kennington.*

Working with abandoned, abused, and neglected children can be challenging. But staff at the Home know that we are not working alone, but with the help of our brothers and sisters in Christ who believe in our ministry and believe in making the world a better place for children. First Presbyterian Church of Gastonia has been an invaluable partner in the work God has called us to do. Thank you.”

Tom Campbell, President of Black Mountain Home for Children, Youth, and Families

To learn more, visit www.blackmountainhome.org, email Community Relations Coordinator Sheryl Eller, at seller@blackmountainhome.org, or call 828-686-3451. We look forward to continuing to partner with you in ministry!

October Birthdays

Congregational Cares

Ken Eddins	10/1	Meredith Witherell	10/9	Kyra Osei-Boateng	10/18
Susan Blair	10/2	George Dent	10/10	Billy Stafford	10/18
Dale Bullock	10/3	Jennifer Humphrey	10/11	Graham Renfro	10/20
Hazel Emmerling	10/3	Davis Spencer	10/11	Braxton DuBois	10/21
Sam Kelly	10/3	Leslie Wallace	10/11	Adrienne LaFar	10/21
Caroline Williford	10/3	Nova Watson	10/11	Brandi Bridgeman	10/22
Doc Bradshaw	10/4	Macie Bridgeman	10/12	Carl Kunkle	10/22
Kathy Carmichael	10/4	Anne Buchanan	10/12	Rodney Owens	10/22
Emily Cole	10/4	Georgia Nicole Simmons	10/12	Gene Matthews	10/24
Brent Rutherford	10/4	Lisa Dent	10/13	David Pegram	10/24
Harper Humphrey	10/5	Christi Falls	10/13	Preston Bullock	10/25
Laura Lineberger	10/5	Tanya Finley	10/13	Grayson Howe	10/25
David Ratchford	10/5	Max Morris	10/13	Natalie Jordan	10/25
Charlton Torrence, III	10/5	Chris Planer	10/13	Malinda Lowery	10/25
Robbie Bridgeman	10/6	Les Dix, II	10/14	Alyson Schultz	10/25
Carol Goode	10/6	Michael Eads	10/14	Kassi Sell	10/25
Tabitha Abernathy	10/6	Pat Aunan	10/15	Wayne Shovelin	10/25
Taylor Dickson	10/7	Henry Longbine	10/15	Rob Wallace	10/25
Ron Digby	10/7	Thomas Stewart	10/15	Adam Kessell	10/26
Frank Matthews	10/7	Mamie Buckles	10/16	Tripp Matheny	10/26
Lisbet Nielsen	10/7	Carolyn Maiers	10/16	Reilly Hovis	10/27
Geraldine Johnston	10/8	Grayson LeVeen	10/16	Brownie Smyre	10/28
Isaac Melton	10/8	Billie Browning	10/17	Lee Spencer	10/28
Alex Jackson	10/9	Ron Eads	10/17	Laura Paschall	10/29
Joan Newell	10/9	Ralston Pacetti	10/17	Meghan Fuller	10/30
Donald Parrott	10/9	Charlie Pacetti	10/17	Bill Lawson	10/30
Roger Rizk	10/9	Ed Pegram	10/17	Esther Nelson	10/30
Trey Robinson	10/9	Pete Allen	10/18	Elizabeth Efird	10/31

Condolences to:

Sonya and Robert Spencer upon the death of John Alton Skinner, Jr. on September 4, 2020.

Calvin Craig upon the death of William "Bill" Neely Craig on September 11, 2020.

June and Tony Murphrey, Jonathan Murphrey, and Heather and Lee DuBois and their children Brynn and Braxton upon the death of Camellia Murphrey on September 15, 2020.

Virginia Choquet, Ragan Rogers and William Choquet upon the death of **Mary Sue "Susie" Mason** on September 16, 2020.

The friends and family of **Dr. George Miller** upon his death on September 26, 2020.

Tom Avery and Ibbey and Danny Page upon the death of **Virginia Ann "VA" Patrick Avery**, September 28, 2020.

First Presbyterian As It Was

We are going through our photo archives! If you can tell us anything about the photo shown below, contact communications@fpcgastonia.org. In our next edition, we will reveal the details of the picture and share your responses!



Last month's photo was taken in 2014 during a Samaritan's Feet event. Samaritan's Feet shares hope with children in the U.S. and around the world by washing their feet, giving them a new pair of shoes, and helping them believe that their dreams can come true

Wednesday Night Alive!

Adult Ministries is excited by the response to our expanded speakers' series, which began on September 11. During the month of September, we studied a four-part Bible series entitled, "The Faith of a Mockingbird," written by Pastor Matt Rawle. Using the text of Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, each presenter spoke from the perspective of one of the major characters in the novel: Scout Finch, Atticus Finch, Tom Robinson, and Boo Radley, subsequently taught by Pat Glenn, Craig Whitley, Roger Rizk, and Russ Keeney. Anyone who did not see the original presentations may receive access by contacting communications@fpcgastonia.org.

It is our hope that very soon we will be meeting together in the Fellowship Hall to hear the remaining speakers. However, until that time arrives, the programs will be prerecorded, and available for viewing online.

Our study for the next five weeks will include three ministers from the Western Presbytery speaking about the Matthew 25 Church initiative. Topics include "Congregational Vitality," "Eradicating Systemic Poverty," and "Dismantling Structures of Racism." Rev. Lauren Sease Vanacore will introduce the speakers each week and explain the Matthew 25 initiative.

Dr. Rebecca Davis and Dr. Rodney Sadler, both professors at Union Theological Seminary, will speak on issues of social justice on October 28, and November 4, Dr. Sadler

is returning to conclude a discussion begun in 2019.

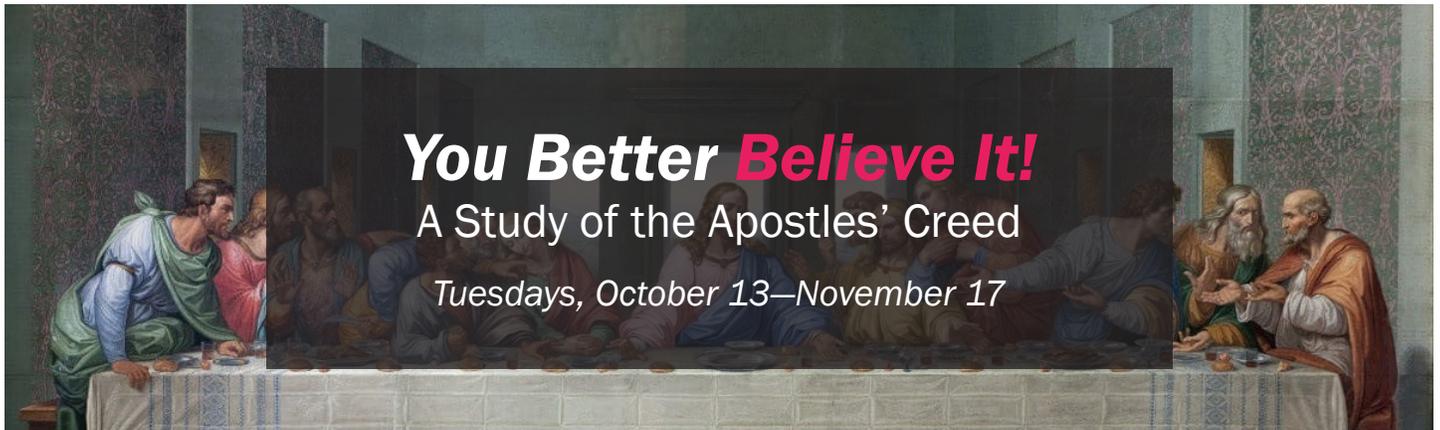
Our Advent bible study is based on Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, focusing on the character of Ebenezer Scrooge, the man we all love to hate. The series, also written by Pastor Matt Rawle, is called "The Repentance of Scrooge" and will begin on November 11, with an introduction and overview of the study by Beth Silvers. On November 18, Charlie Grissom will teach on "The Ghost of Christmas Past," followed by Sylvia Seawell teaching on "The Ghost of Christmas Present" on November 25, and Bob Blake will conclude the series on December 9, with "The Ghost of Christmas Future."

Much thought and preparation has gone into this series which Adult Ministries hopes will challenge and inspire our congregation. An E-Blast with links to the video will be sent out each Wednesday night, just prior to 6:00 p.m. We hope you will join us then!



Food For Thought: Weekly Zoom Fellowship and Discussion

Bring your lunch and click on the Zoom link in the Friday E-Blast or on the church website to join Lauren and Fred for “table fellowship,” prayer, and study on Tuesdays at 12:00 p.m. Even if you can’t Zoom for every lesson, gather when you are able as together we will share “Food for Thought.”



You Better Believe It!

A Study of the Apostles' Creed

Tuesdays, October 13–November 17

Lauren will teach a six-week study written by Adam Hamilton focusing on the Apostles' Creed. This study will focus on elements of the Creed which include: God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Church & the Communion of Saints, the Forgiveness of Sins, and the Resurrection of the Body.



All Marked Up: A Study on the Gospel of Mark

Tuesdays, December 1-15, and January 5-26

This Advent begins the year when the Revised Common Lectionary (established readings from the Bible for preaching) focuses on the Gospel of Mark. Fred's study, "All Marked Up," is a 7-week overview of Mark. An outline of the course will be available in November to help prepare for each session.

**We will not Zoom during Thanksgiving week on Tuesday, November 24 or during Christmastide break on December 22 and 29.*

Congratulations to our Confirmands!

On Sunday, October 4, we welcomed our seven newest members from the 2019-2020 confirmation class, as they professed their faith and were received by the congregation. Now in 9th grade, the congregation confirmed Eva Wood Coffey, William Ange "Tripp" Current, III, Joshua Morris Duncan, Karl Kwame Asiedu Osei-Boateng, Thomas Carter Robinson, Elizabeth Graham "Ellie" Shine, and William Jeffrey Vanacore.

A new confirmation class is already underway! Our 8th graders are meeting every Sunday on the PAD patio, following the outdoor worship service. We ask that you keep the following confirmands in prayer as they learn more about their faith and what we believe: Anne Bradley Bing, Mary Stewart Efird, Sarah James Jentsch, Thomas Jentsch, Madeline Letts, Kyra Osei-Boateng, and Ford Poag.

Updated Online Directory App

We are excited to announce an updated version of our online directory app is available for download!

Over the past few months, we have been working to update photos and contact information for all members in our online directory through the Universal Church Directory app. This app is available for all church members to download from the Apple App Store and the Google Play store. In addition to the photo directory, the UCD app now includes links to the church calendar, online giving, service livestreams, and more!

When downloading the app for the first time, you will be asked to input an identifier code that is unique to each church member. You will need your code to log on to the app and access the directory. This helps to ensure that personal contact information is secure and available to our members only. If you are downloading the app for the first time, please contact Trip Stewart (tstewart@fpcgastonia.org) or Celeste Crowe (ccrowe@fpcgastonia.org) to receive your unique code.

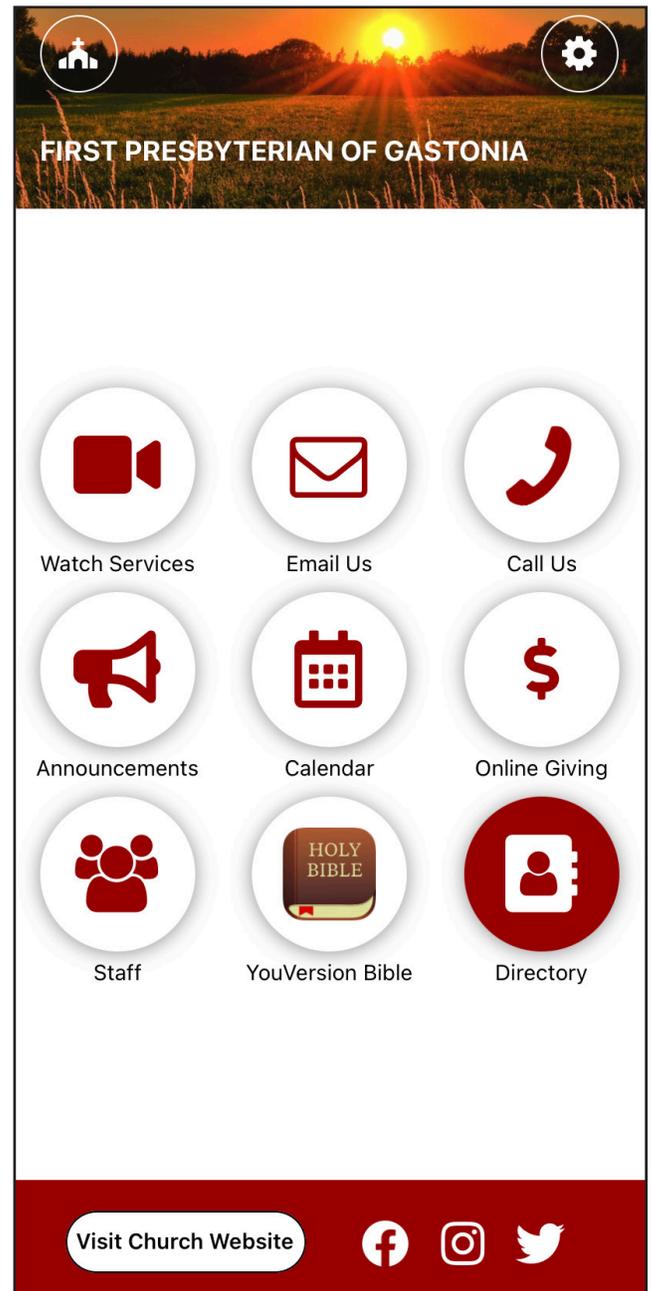
If you have downloaded the directory app previously, there is an easy way to update your directory! Simply click on the settings icon (upper right corner,) then click “download my church directory.” This will download the most up-to-date version of the directory right to your phone.

Nickel-A-Meal

I am making an appeal
That we all will feel
Like we are making a big deal
To provide the hungry with a meal
It can be a bowl of oatmeal
Or even a big cheese wheel
A nice cut of veal
Or Jello to congeal
Let us not conceal
God’s love, let us reveal
As together we help heal
With 5 Cents a meal

By Cynthia Anderson

Our next collection will be Sunday, October 11. Donations can be made at www.fpcgastonia.org/giving (select the Nickel-A-Meal fund) or by mailing a check to the church.



Indoor Worship Begins October 25

Beginning October 25, we will offer one service at 9:00 a.m. with choice-seating in the Sanctuary or Fellowship Hall, with the service being conducted live in the Sanctuary and piped into the Fellowship Hall via Livestream. The Chapel will also be available for remote seating, but as the third option after the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall. Those who wish to worship in the Fellowship Hall will enter by those doors. Those who wish to worship in the Sanctuary will enter at that entrance. Livestream will still continue from the Sanctuary for people to watch at home. Masks will be required and physical distancing should be observed. We look forward to once again worshipping in these indoor spaces!

Faith Formation Updates



Rise Up Student Ministry started off the fall semester with a color party! In a game of Capture the Flag, colored powder was used to decorate white shirts.

Off to a Great Start!

What a blessing the month of September has been in the life of our Faith Formation ministries here at First Presbyterian Church! We kicked off both youth and children's ministry fall programs the second week of the month (one with a color party and the other with a water day!) and it seemed as if we picked up right where we left off back in March! Of course, we've all been challenged and stretched in ways we didn't know were possible six months ago, but having the chance to gather together safely in person has been medicine for our souls. Gathering outside the PAD every Sunday evening, middle and high school youth are diving into our fall theme of "Family Matters." Here, we're exploring what it means to be a member of the family of God in our own families, in our community, in our country, and in our world. On Wednesday nights, our children's program is launching into learning all about "Brave Women & Men in the Old Testament" as we meet outside on the chapel breezeway. The joy of being together again is evident behind every masked face, and we look forward to what the 2020-2021 school year will bring us!

Childcare Available at Outdoor Worship Service

Outdoor worship childcare is now being provided! Children ages 0-7 are invited to enjoy the new playgrounds during the 9:00 a.m. outdoor worship service. Ages 0-4 will go to the PWS playground and ages 5-7 will go to the After School playground. Our nursery caregivers and volunteers will be there to supervise and keep everyone safe. If your child is able to wear a mask, please encourage them to do so!

Volunteers Needed!

If you are interested in volunteering with any of our Faith Formation programs for a week or two this fall, please check out the sign ups that have been coming to your inbox in our E-Blasts! If you would like to become more involved as a regular, weekly volunteer, please email Susannah Bryant at sbryant@fpcgastonia.org. Support from wonderful people like you helps us keep these programs up and running!



Children's Music Ministry

Since they are currently unable to sing as a choir during Wednesday Night Alive!, the children's music ministry has been learning to play Boomwhackers! Similar to handbells, each Boomwhacker plays a different pitch when you knock it on the ground or the back of a chair. Each Wednesday night, the music ministry has been learning the importance of teamwork by playing songs together.



Our Children's ministry kicked off Wednesday Night Alive! with a water day and slip n' slide.

Children ages 5 to 10 are invited to join us each Wednesday Night from 5:45 - 7:00 p.m. at the Chapel Breezeway for games, music, and a Bible lesson.

Parish Nurse Updates



Navigating the Path to Emotional Wellness

Thank you to everyone who joined us online for our latest webinar series on Navigating the Path to Emotional Wellness! In case you missed it, or would like to watch a session again, recordings of all six sessions are available at www.fpcgastonia.org/emotional-wellness. We hope to continue offering similar events in the future!

Support for Parents During a COVID Christmas

On Thursday, December 3, at 7:00 p.m., Russ Keeney, MA, LPC, will lead a Zoom discussion and offer support for parents as we begin the holiday season. For many families, this Christmas will be different in a number of ways. Families may be unable to travel, host guests, or give in the same way that they have in years past. Learn how you can prepare your child for a COVID-19 Christmas.

Join the Zoom meeting using the information below.

Meeting ID: 881 0725 0463

Passcode: 794416



Recycle for Sight and Prayer Beads

As you are cleaning your house and closets during your time-at-home, please consider donating items to our Parish Nurse Ministry. We are collecting:

- Old eyeglasses or sunglasses for the "Recycle for Sight" program. Your old glasses can bring a new view to someone else in a developing country, perhaps allowing them to read, go to school, or gain employment.
- Jewelry with beads or charms for the Prayer Beads Ministry.

Please contact Lisa Marisiddaiah at nurse@fpcgastonia.org for more information!

SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER (SAD)



Seasonal Affective Disorder

Wednesday, November 18, 12:00-1:00 p.m.

Russ Keeney, LPC, and Eddie Ingram, LCSW, will together present a Zoom session on the effects of Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Seasonal Affective Disorder is a type of depression that is related to seasonal changes. Typically, SAD is most prevalent during the winter months when the days are shorter, you are unable to spend time outside, and are not exposed to necessary sunlight. Symptoms can include loss of energy, changes in weight or appetite, hopelessness, and feeling sluggish or agitated. Eddie and Russ will discuss SAD in depth and offer possible solutions.

Join the Zoom meeting using the information below.

Meeting ID: 815 1031 7526

Passcode: 050128

Diabetes Awareness

Wednesday, November 4, 12:00-1:00 p.m.

Join us on Zoom for a special presentation by Endocrinologist Javaid Wani MD, PhD, FACP, on the *Causes Symptoms and Complications of Diabetes*.

Join the Zoom meeting using the information below.

Meeting ID: 893 0343 4174

Passcode: 345762

COVID-19 Testing

Do you want to have a COVID-19 test?

Visit covid19.ncdhhs.gov/about-covid-19/testing/find-my-testing to find a testing center near you! The NC Department of Health and Human Services will help you to identify where you can go in your area to receive a COVID-19 test. COVID-19 testing is provided at some local health departments, doctor and clinician offices, many hospitals and clinics, many pharmacy sites and retail outlets, and other community locations. Some sites even offer free testing. However, most sites require advance online registration, so be sure to make an appointment before going!

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First Presbyterian Church

1621 E. Garrison Blvd.
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Return Service Requested

PERIODICALS
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Gastonia, NC



Service Views and Attendance

Date	Outdoor Worship	Livestream
September 6	69	141
September 13	-	165
September 20	65	113
September 27	68	165

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