

# The First Press

First Presbyterian Church Gastonia

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# Becoming a Missional Community

*Written by Rev. Brad Simpson*

*6 If you put these instructions before the brothers and sisters, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound teaching that you have followed. 16 Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; continue in these things, for in doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers. (1 Timothy 4)*

As followers of Christ, we are instructed to pay close attention to His teachings as we strive to live with faith, hope, and love. Often, our focus is on the broader perspective of faithful living, with an emphasis on the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, and the Parables. In summary, we are called to love God and to love our neighbors, reaching out especially to those who are poor and who are the “untouchables” of our society.



This picture of faithful living seems to be very clear. However, as we move from this focus on the “bigger picture” of our lives, paying closer attention to what we say and do, we confess that change is needed. We are called to live humbly, yet there are times when we judge others and feel that we are “better” than the man/woman we pass on the street, especially the one who is aimlessly loitering.

Loving others is easier when the other person returns love to us – when hate or anger is the response we receive, the temptation is to turn away and show hate/anger for the “other.” Caring for the poor surely defines our faith community – this “big picture” includes all of the support we provide for helping agencies in Gaston County. However, the “detail” of caring for the poor and hungry involves us in caring for that stranger who stops us on the street and asks for support. What is our response when we encounter this person without a name?

Special Challenge – In the photograph above, the “bigger picture” is a beautiful Winter morning, framed by a red barn, a frosted hillside and a few cows. This is easy to see. Look more closely and find the large bird (perhaps an Eagle) that invited itself into the picture. This bird reminds us to pay attention to the details of our daily lives. Keep looking and let me know if you locate the bird!

Peace, Brad

# Kristin DelVecchio Joins Our Staff



My name is Kristin DelVecchio, and first and foremost I’m a mom. I have three daughters, ages 16, 15, and 11. I’m also a preschool teacher at Presbyterian Weekday School, where I teach 3 year-olds. I’ve been in childcare for three years.

Prior to that I was a stay-at-home mom for fifteen years. In 2020, I earned a certificate for teaching children’s yoga. Social emotional awareness, mindfulness, and self-regulation are some aspects of early childhood that I’m passionate about. In 2023, I earned an Associate of Arts degree for Teacher Prep. I have also earned EDU 119 for my studies in childcare, along with extensive continuing education and training. I’m CPR and First Aid certified. Teaching and caring for children is a demanding job, but it is an honor and a joy to be able to serve children and their families!

## Welcome High Family



(Back row) Heath and Rachel High.  
(Front row) Elan (age 9) and Finn High (age 7).



Photo: Courtesy of the Historical Association of Catawba County.

### TRAVEL TO MURRAY’S MILL IN CATAWBA COUNTY WITH THE ROADRUNNERS

*Thursday, November 7, 2024.* Step back in time to the 1890’s and explore Murray’s Mill, General Store, Wheathouse Exhibit Gallery and more. Take a tour of the historic mill (Cost: \$10), buy locally roasted coffee beans, or enjoy the picturesque surroundings. We’ll eat lunch at Granny’s Country Kitchen. Please be at the church at 9:00 am; we will be returning around 4:00 pm.

For more information, contact  
Connie Gesser at (704) 473-6430

# Women Supporting Women

*Written by Sabrina Robinson*

Girl Scout Troop 20013 that meets here at First Presbyterian is partnering with the Presbyterian Women of Western North Carolina and several sewing members of our church to provide feminine hygiene support for girls and women in poverty in Malawi. Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world. This project is the first part of earning their silver award.

Keeping girls in school is important. It gives them a chance to thrive and grow and get out of poverty. Education is one way out of poverty in Malawi, where the school attrition rate for girls is high and the consequences of girls leaving school early could be disastrous for their future.

Teenage girls stay away from school during their period because they do not have the needed menstrual products, which are not available or affordable in most of Malawi. Staying out of school means the girls get behind in their studies and are not able to keep up at the grade level. Often these girls drop out of school.



Consider for a moment your daughter, sister, granddaughter, mother, or wife was without access to feminine hygiene supplies. That is the condition of many girls and women in Malawi. Girls are often shunned during their monthly cycle. Reusable washable menstrual pads could help girls stay in school and give women better control over this part of their lives.

Our girls are making reusable, washable sanitary pads for girls and women that can be taken to Malawi. Each girl will receive a bag with a supply of pads, underwear, and soap. The girls have been working hard to complete their bags for shipment.

The girls will also be collecting donations of disposable feminine hygiene products for Gaston County Schools to support local teenage girls as the second part of their silver award. If you have sewing skills or would like to help support the troop with donations to this project, please reach out to troop leader, Sabrina Robinson, for more information.



# Trunk or Treat is About COMMUNITY

*Written by Mary Taneti*

The Trunk or Treat in 2023 gave us a great opportunity to invite people from our community to celebrate Halloween in a safe, secure, and welcoming environment. We were prepared with 25 trunks and estimated about 150-200 families. Fifteen minutes into the event we realized that we were way off our estimation.

Most of our trunks were running out of candy, treats and toys. Many of our TRUNKers made several rounds to the grocery store to replenish candy. We hosted around a thousand families that evening. What a joy! We want to be well prepared this year to welcome as many families as will come. We need



your help with ensuring that we have a great supply of candy. Please donate candy (individually wrapped Halloween candy), small toys (shop orientaltrading.com), and treats (individually wrapped cookies). Drop off your donations in the baskets placed at the Reception Desk, Memorial

Gallery, and Fellowship Hall. Mark your calendars to attend **Trunk or Treat, Sunday, October 27 from 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.** and invite family, friends, and neighbors.



# The Secret to Life at 90+

Written by Wendy Gem & Esther Nelson

In 1980, 720,000 people in the US lived into their 90s. In 2020, despite COVID, that number rose to an impressive 2,774,880 and is expected to continue increasing. These individuals, who were children during World War II, have witnessed significant changes in the world. They are living repositories of history and wisdom. Several of these remarkable individuals will celebrate 90+ years at the luncheon on **October 23**. When asked about the secret to a long life, they shared these words:

*"I attribute my long life to God's plan by giving me strong genes, lots of luck, and trying to do things in moderation. My faith in God guides me and helps me lead a better life."*

— Martha Beal

*"I attribute my longevity to God! I have tried to live a good, healthy life, seeing a doctor when needed. I feel God is not finished with me on this earth yet and don't know why, but I have faith in His love and plans for me."*

— Jewel Brown



*"I thank God who is my secret to a long life! I came into this world into a wonderful family who always cared for me! They taught me to be kind to everyone and remember to do what I could to help those less fortunate and to love everyone! I have always been blessed with the gift of good health and have two wonderfully, healthy children! I remember those in health care and feel the need to help make someone happy – for just a little while – by just being their friend."*

— Alberta Kincaid



**Happy Birthday** to those celebrating 90+ years this year!

# Upcoming Events



**PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S CIRCLE MEETINGS**  
 October 14, 10:00 am: Circle 1, Parlor  
 October 14, 10:30 am: Circle 2, Covenant Village  
 October 14, 6:30 pm: Circle 6, Parlor  
 October 28, 7:00 pm: Circle 5, off-site

## WEEKLY BIBLE STUDIES

- **Young Presbyterians**  
Sundays, 4:00 to 6:00 pm, Fellowship Hall.
- **Youth Group**  
Sundays, 5:00 to 7:00 pm, PAD.
- **Men's Fellowship, Breakfast, and Bible Study**  
Tuesdays, 7:30 to 8:30 am, PAD.
- **Women's Bible Study**  
Wednesday's, 10:30 to 11:30 am, Parlor.

**FAITH, MENTAL HEALTH, AND SUICIDE AWARENESS WORKSHOP FOR YOUTH**  
 October 20, 5:00-7:00 PM, PAD.

**90TH BIRTHDAY LUNCHEON**  
 October 23, Noon - 1:30 pm, Parlor.



## Wednesday Night Alive

Fall 2024 Schedule

Time: 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.

Date	Event
Sept. 18	Introduction Ch.1 <i>The Spirit of the Garden</i> by Charles Gallman
Sept. 25	Ch.2 <i>Tending the Shoots of Love</i> by Dale Melton
Oct. 2	Ch.3 <i>Tending the Shoots of Joy</i> by Rev. Daniel Commerford
Oct. 9	Ch.4 <i>Tending the Shoots of Peace</i> by David Ratchford
Oct. 16	Ch.5 <i>Tending the Shoots of Patience</i> by Beth Silvers
Oct. 23	Ch.6 <i>Tending the Shoots of Kindness</i> By Josie Conner
Oct. 30	Ch.7 <i>Tending the Shoots of Goodness</i> by Rev. Brad Simpson
Nov. 6	Ch.8 <i>Tending the Shoots of Faithfulness</i> by Charles Grissom
Nov. 13	Ch.9 <i>Tending the Shoots of Gentleness</i> by Rev. Grady Moseley
Nov. 20	Ch.10 <i>Tending the Shoots of Self-Control</i> Conclusion by Mary Taneti

**Tending The Wild Garden**  
 Author: Eugenia Anne Gamble  
 A light dinner will be served.  
 Childcare will not be available at this time.

**Faith, Mental Health, and Suicide Awareness**  
 for Middle and High School Youth  
**Mental Health Awareness Workshop for Youth**  
**OCTOBER 20, 2024**  
 5:00 - 7:00 pm  
 PAD  
 Mental health and suicide are real issues, and it's time to talk. We will explore how faith can guide us through life's toughest moments, address mental health concerns, and foster support within our church community. Through games, discussions, and prayer, we'll break the silence around mental health and offer hope rooted in God's love. Let's support one another and learn how faith can bring healing.  
[www.fpcgastonia.org/events](http://www.fpcgastonia.org/events)

**Hope in the Struggle:**  
 Supporting Youth Mental Health with Faith and Compassion  
**Youth Mental Health Awareness Workshop for Parents**  
**OCTOBER 6, 2024**  
 5:00 - 7:00 pm  
 Fellowship Hall  
 Speaker:  
 Karyn Cherry Davenport, LMFT- Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist  
 Join us for a 2-hour program designed to empower parents with the knowledge, tools, and faith-based strategies to better understand and respond to youth mental health challenges. Learn how to recognize warning signs, open up meaningful conversations, and use faith as a source of resilience for your children.

**FOR THE LATEST UPCOMING EVENTS VISIT OUR WEBSITE**  
[www.fpcgastonia.org](http://www.fpcgastonia.org)

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## First Presbyterian Church

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**Return Service Requested**

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### Service Views and Attendance

Date	TRADITIONAL SERVICE		THRIVE SERVICE	
	Service	Livestream	Service	Livestream
September 1	—	—	95	41
September 8	119	82	65	42
September 15	124	79	89	68
September 22	120	78	78	50
September 29	109	37	68	32

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