

The First Press

First Presbyterian Church Gastonia

September 2024 • Volume 29 • Issue 9

FALL FAITH & FELLOWSHIP

FAIR

FOOD, GAMES, LIVE MUSIC

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

SEPTEMBER 22

★ ★ ★ 4:30-7:00 P.M. ★ ★ ★

The Seasons, They Are A Changin'

Written by Rev. Dan Commerford

At the time I am writing this, summer vacation is coming to a close in the Commerford house, and that reality hit us all at different times. For me, it occurred when I had to start incorporating school drop-offs and pickups into my calendar when setting up meetings. For my wife, it occurred when a regular fall tax deadline necessitated an increase in hours she was required to work every week. For my children, it occurred when their summer nanny had her last day with them before she started her own school year.

One by one, we realized that summer was behind us and fall was just around the corner. Along with that transition came a certain amount of grieving for the elements of summer we enjoy as well as an anticipation for the joys that fall brings every year.

In the same way, life at First Presbyterian Church follows a similar rhythm. Summer is a time when the pace of church life slows down a bit as members and staff take much-deserved time off to travel, rest, and rejuvenate. But summer is also a time when certain ministries flourish.

Over the last few months, our congregation worshiped together in a unified service, embarked on several trips, retreats, and conferences, and opened the doors to a community of children who participated in our Vacation Bible School.

Even though summer is often a season when so many of us are away, God continued to bring us together to grow in faith and share the Good News of Jesus Christ. For that reason and more, we can look back at this summer with gratitude for what God has done, even if we grieve its passing a bit.

By the time you read this, summer will be in the rearview mirror and fall will fully be upon us. As we remember with fond feelings our experiences over the summer, my prayer is that we can also be excited for what God has ahead of us.

At FPC, our staff and leadership have been hard at work creating opportunities for us to worship Christ, grow in faith, get to know one another better, and build God's Kingdom together this fall. Some of our ministries this fall will look familiar while some will be brand new experiences.



If we take time to realize it, every season is an opportunity to grow closer to one another and share the Good News of Jesus Christ together.

Just as God met us and led us in seasons past, I look forward to seeing how God will do the same this fall. Seasons may change, but our God remains the same. For that, I am grateful.

See you at Church this Fall!

Pastor Dan



Fall Faith & Fellowship Fair

Join us for a festive and fun Fall Faith and Fellowship Fair on **September 22, 2024**, from **4:30 to 7:00 p.m.** Participate in exciting games for all ages, including cornhole, sack races, and a dunking booth. Enjoy live music by Gabe Mark while savoring delicious hamburgers, hot dogs, snow cones, cotton candy, and popcorn. Buses will be provided for transportation to and from Covenant Village. Don't miss out on this fantastic event! Register on Realm or contact khayes@fpcgastonia.org.

Cost:

Adults (\$10)

Children ages 4-14 (\$5), Children under 3 (Free)

*\$30 Family Cap



Enter your homemade cake, pie, or ice cream for a chance to win a blue ribbon and bragging rights for one year! Bring your entry to the church by **4 p.m. on September 22**, the day of the event.

Sharing Your Time

Written by Claude Hathcock

The 2024-2025 school year has started for our Gaston County schools and I would like you to consider volunteering at our neighboring school or perhaps another public school in our area. Sherwood Elementary School is located behind our church and members from our church have been giving of their time to help children there with their learning.

You can volunteer with Gaston County Schools in several ways including:

- **Classroom support:** work with small groups or individual students to complete assignments.
- **Reading buddy:** assist with small reading groups or read with individual students.
- **Mentor:** matches a student and adult to develop life skills, build confidence, and serve as a role model.

You can volunteer for as little as one half-hour per week, or more if you wish. I volunteered at Sherwood Elementary in Classroom Support and worked one-on-one with children and helped them improve their math or reading skills. Sometimes I



have served as a “reward” for children who have had good behavior, by taking a small group of them and playing educational games designed to improve math or reading skills. From my own experience, nothing can be more satisfying than when a child has been struggling with a particular math or reading skill, and suddenly he or she gets it.

The teacher I work with, Ms. Tiffany Mendez, is a second grade teacher and the Volunteer Coordinator at Sherwood Elementary. Last year, I helped match volunteers from First Presbyterian with volunteer positions needed at every grade level, pre-K through 5th grade. I look forward to doing that again this school year.

For more information about volunteering with Gaston County Schools or to apply, visit their website, gaston.k12.nc.us/volunteer.



Celebration of Boy Scout Troop 11

The Scouts of Troop 11 enjoyed a court of honor in the Chapel on August 28, 2024. This was an opportunity to recognize them for the badges and ranks that they have earned at Scout Camp Bud Schiele and on various occasions.



Welcome Walker Family



(L-R) Marshall Walker, Marshall Patterson Walker Jr. (Patterson), Lauren Walker, Edward McDowell Walker (Ward), and William Hays Walker (Hays).

“Mini-Mission” Trip!



Our young Presbyterians enjoyed an exciting adventure to Camp Grier for a day of hiking, kayaking, canoeing, and feasting. We explored the camp greenhouse and chased two butterflies that reminded us that summer is still here! Thank you to Mary and the Children’s Ministry Committee who planned this trip.

Women's Connection Retreat

Written by Josie Connor

"Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

-Matthew 11:28

What does it mean to go on retreat and make connections? The dictionary defines retreat as "an act of moving back or withdrawing" and connection as a "relationship in which a person is linked or associated with something or someone."

Over the weekend of August 9th-11th, twenty-seven women from First Presbyterian Church, Gastonia took the opportunity to retreat and make connections with each other and over 500 other women in the beautiful setting of Montreat. Throughout the weekend we heard messages from Ruth Santana Grace, Laura Jernigan, and keynote speaker, Becca Stevens (founder of Thistle Farms). These women encouraged us to remember "what it was like to be scooped up into a caregiver's lap and held tight with love." Through message and song we were reminded that regardless of what we are going through, God holds us in His arms. Each day began and



ended with corporate worship where the message was delivered through word and music, led by Betsy Homer, Maria Montenegro, and Camille Core.

Between the worship events, we had the opportunity to participate in activities such as marbling, preparing and singing a piece for the final worship event, learning the history of Montreat, Bible study, walks around the beautiful Lake Susan, hikes up Lookout Mountain, pickleball, yoga, Enneagram, current topics, and shopping in Black Mountain. Most importantly this weekend provided time for FPC women to retreat and connect with each other. Moments together during meals, rocking on porches, sitting in the beautiful lobby of Assembly Inn, and other times provided time to share and laugh for each of us representing all ages and stages of life. We were able to recharge while resting in the arms of our always protecting and loving heavenly Father.

Upcoming Events

Build Assemble & Deliver children's beds

NO KID SLEEPS ON THE FLOOR IN OUR TOWN!

Join us
SEPTEMBER 10, 11, 14, 21

Sleep in Heavenly Peace Build Project

SCAN ME

First Presbyterian Church Belmont and First Presbyterian Church Gastonia

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S CIRCLE MEETINGS

September 9, 10:00 am: Circle 1, Parlor
 September 9, 10:30 am: Circle 2, Covenant Village
 September 9, 7:00 pm: Circle 6, Parlor
 September 10, 11:30 am: Circle 4, PAD
 September 23, 7:00 pm: Circle 5, off site

SEPTEMBER 13, 10:00 A.M.
 Friday Morning Book Club, Church Grounds.

SEPTEMBER 15, 4:00 P.M.
 Young Presbyterians Kickoff (pre-K - 5th grade), the Fellowship Hall.

SEPTEMBER 15, 5:00 P.M.
 Youth Group Kickoff (6th grade and up), PAD.

SEPTEMBER 19, 10:00 A.M.
 Intercessory Prayer Group, Chapel.

SEPTEMBER 24, 7:30 A.M.
 Men's Fellowship Breakfast and Bible Study, PAD. Rev. Grady Mosely will lead.

SEPTEMBER 25, 10:30 A.M.
 Women's Bible Study, Parlor. Coleman Efird will lead.



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 Mosely
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.

**FOR THE LATEST NEWS,
 VISIT OUR WEBSITE
www.fpcgastonia.org**

THE FIRST PRESS

First Presbyterian Church

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

(704) 864-2651

Return Service Requested

PERIODICALS
US POSTAGE PAID
Gastonia, NC



Service Views and Attendance

Date	Service	Livestream	Service	Livestream
August 4	142	110	—	—
August 11	95	52	—	—
August 18	147	136	—	—
August 25	168	31	—	—
	Combined	Combined	Thrive	Thrive

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