



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rocky Mount

First Pres News

December 2022

153 N. Church Street
Rocky Mount, NC 27804
www.fpcrm.org
252-446-9121

HOLIDAY MAIL

Merry Christmas &
Happy New Year!
If you send out
Christmas photo cards,
please send us one to
display in the office
lobby!



to: First
Presbyterian
from: The
Church Staff

Did you know that we use a different bell for every "Chiming of the Trinity"? The correct bell is chosen to match the key signature of the prelude. That is the meticulousness that we strive to put into every Sunday worship service.

You are probably being just as meticulous in your preparations for Christmas. You're making shopping lists, purchasing gifts, decorating the house, and getting everything in the right place. You're making your travel plans, meal plans, worship plans, and honoring other traditions. Every Christmas is an event with lots of planning and preparation.

This Advent and Christmas season, I hope that you are able to enjoy the fruits of your labor. I hope that you can take a moment in the midst of the celebrations to bask in the glow of family brought together, hard work paid off, and planning coming to fruition.

At the end of every wedding that I officiate, I ask the couple to stand and take in the sight of the family and friends who have gathered for this special occasion. I pray that you are able to pause, reflect, and take in the sights, sounds, smells, and wonder of Christmas.

God bless you all as you make your preparations, live into the moment, and create memories to cherish for a lifetime.

With love and gratitude,

Matt

Pastor: The Rev. Matthew Baker *Community Pastor:* The Rev. Hannah Trawick
Church Ministry Coordinator: Dionne Seale *Financial Secretary:* Jeanne T. Shannon
Director of Music: Jim Smith *Organist:* Virginia Vance

Sexton: Michael Smith

Assistant Sexton & Nursery Attendant: Charity Lodge

Nursery Attendant: Mary Hilliard

Community Connections: Covenant Homes

We are the church in the community and the community in the church. This spot highlights a community initiative in Rocky Mount or a church mission at FPC that needs its story told. If you know of an organization, program, or person that our church should know about, please contact Pastor Hannah. And, know that this space is always an invitation. If you see something highlighted here that awakens your sense of call, reach out to Hannah—you never know how the spirit is moving!

On the Monday before Thanksgiving, I started my day with pancakes, bacon, stewed apples, breakfast casserole, coffee, and orange juice in the gathering room at Covenant Homes, surrounded by residents eager to “break bread” together. There was great laughter, storytelling, relationship building, memory sharing, and a spirit of festivity that hovered over the room. I offer this as just a small glimpse into the life folks share at Covenant Homes.

Covenant Homes was founded in 1976 by this very congregation who responded to a need for an affordable, independent senior living community in town. To this day, the board is majority run by members of First Presbyterian Church and works closely with staff to ensure a safe and relational place for the residents.

Each month, a calendar is published with communal offerings, including CrossFit exercise classes, bible study, prayer groups, bingo games, Food Truck lunches, craft projects, etc. It’s a place that offers community and the full-ness of life to folks in their later years.

On Sunday, December 4 at 2pm, Covenant Homes will be hosting a Christmas Open House in the new Activity Center. Come out to see all the fun and learn about Covenant Homes.

With Love,
Hannah



MAKES CENTS

Merry Christmas! It's a joyous time of year when gratitude and love is in our hearts. Please consider this when sending in your pledge card.

Please review the below church income and expense data for the month shown. The prior month is not available as of the newsletter print date. Please call or email Jeanne Shannon in the church office with any questions.

Pledges and Loose Offering through October 2022

Month – to – date	\$ 38,481.80
Year – to – date	\$ 495,891.01



Expenses through October, 2022

Month – to – date	\$ 53,307.99
Year – to – date	\$ 527,888.96

Stewardship season is here! Each pledge is a blessing to the church as we seek to be faithful stewards of the resources God has entrusted to us. First Presbyterian Church offers the below options for making your contribution:

- Bank draft – This is a safe and steady way to consistently support First Presbyterian Church. It can be selected on your pledge card and attaching a voided check. The monthly bank draft occurs on the 25th of each month. If the 25th falls on a weekend or holiday, it is drafted on the next business day. If you currently have a bank draft and want to continue, this can be indicated on your pledge card. The draft for your 2022 contribution would begin January 25th 2022. If you choose the bank draft, you can also stop it by contacting Jeanne Shannon in the church office 2 weeks before the 25th of that month.
- Envelopes – these can be ordered by marking this option on your pledge card
- Loose checks in the Sunday collection or checks placed in Jeanne Shannon's mailbox - All checks will be applied to your pledge unless indicated otherwise in the 'memo' line.
- Sale of stock – Please notify Jeanne Shannon when you are planning to trade stocks for your pledge. She needs your name, stock names, number of shares and an expected trade time frame. **The stock sale process takes two weeks from initial trade date to receiving the check so it should begin in November to allow time to make the 12/31 deadline due to holidays.**
- Online giving – Sow the seeds for the future with online giving today! This is an easy and convenient way to give your pledge using a debit or credit card or electronic funds transfer. The service is easily accessed through the church website. You can rest easy knowing that the transaction is safe and secure, and your gift will be available to our ministry immediately, with no waiting periods. Visit www.fpcrm.org using the 'Online Payment' link in the top right corner to see for yourself how easy it is to give online.

Questions? Please contact Jeanne Shannon in the church office by phone at 252.446.9121 or by email at jeanne.shannon@fpcrm.org. Jeanne's office hours are Monday thru Thursday from 8:30-2:30 PM.



DEACONS
Do not meet in
December

SESSION
December 20, 2022
5:30 p.m.



COMMUNITY PARTNERS



Covenant Homes Happenings

- Oct. 27—Treat bags from the Rocky Mount Garden Club were distributed, then bingo!
- Nov. 16—Pumpkin painting fun!
- Nov. 21—A Thanksgiving Breakfast was enjoyed by residents with our ministers and the Board Members serving.



On behalf of our International Student Services department and our graduating Seniors, we would like to thank First Presbyterian Church for hosting a dinner to honor our Seniors.

It was such a pleasant evening. The students felt very special.

*With Sincerest Gratitude,
Suzanne Hening
NC Wesleyan University*



Hygiene buckets for students & families with Southside Academy were prepared by our wonderful PW ladies!



NC Wesleyan University International Students
December graduate celebration—November 14



As Suzanne has already said, last night was so very special for so many reasons. I want to say a special thank you as well! The fellowship, the food, the fun atmosphere, the prayer of blessing, the décor, gifts, and the beautiful cake...were all such wonderful ways to bless our students, they will never forget it. We do not take it for granted how much time and energy is poured into something like this. Please share our heartfelt gratitude to the ones who were there and helped put this together. A special thank you to the two Laura's for organizing this! A special thank you to Suzanne for all the great communication and plans on our end that were made.

*Again, many thanks to you all!
Dawn Turner*

CONGREGATIONAL BLESSINGS



Dear Friends,

I hope you've been able to follow along with Pam Gragg's stained glass window presentations. The church commends her for her hard work and research.

We have some exciting news! Four of the abandoned windows have been located and restored to their original beauty. They are being installed into back-lit panels in the rear of the chapel and the narthex. You'll see some construction over the next few weeks as the windows are installed into their new homes. We thank the generous benefactors who made this restoration and installation possible.

Also, speaking of stained glass windows, the large window in the sanctuary will be removed, restored, and reinstalled over the first half of 2023. We know it will make the sanctuary a bit darker and less cheerful for a season, but the window is in disrepair and desperate need of attention.

Thank you for your understanding, and if you have any questions about these projects, please do not hesitate to give me a call.

Matt

HOLY HABANERO!



THESE THREE AMIGOS REPRESENTED FIRST PRESBYTERIAN WHILE SERVING SOME DELICIOUS CHILI AT THE NOV. 3 MEALS ON WHEELS BEANS AND BREWS FUNDRAISER! THEY EVEN WON "BEST DECORATED TABLE" - CONGRATS!



Mary Watson's birthday celebration with family and guests at the MOW Beans and Brews fundraiser.



80 Tar River Academy Thanksgiving food bags were filled by our FPC youth group with special thanks to Lige and Annie Daughtridge for the use of his warehouse and to Mike and Winnie Gaynor for the pizza supper!



to-do list

Joe, Julia, Sam and Joseph Brown were recently featured in the November Our State Magazine!

AT THE MARKET: PECANS

Sam Brown and his family, the farmers behind Edgecombe County's Pleasant Hill Pecans, spend their November days harvesting nuts from about 30 acres of pecan trees. Sam shares his expertise on growing, harvesting, and enjoying pecans this fall.

Q: When is the best time to harvest pecans?

Brown: Mature trees are dormant during the winter and begin to wake up early in the spring — the buds will start to open and turn green. Different varieties are ready at different times, but generally, pecans are harvested from October until the end of November.

Q: How do you know when pecans are ready to be harvested?

Brown: There are these things called shucks that cover the nuts themselves. When they either start drying out and turning brown or just splitting open, the pecans are ready.

Q: What should nut lovers look for in a pecan?

Brown: Typically, you want your pecans to be a light golden brown color. You don't want to have dark spots or very dark veins on the nuts. Those will typically have a bitter taste to them.



SAM, JOE, JULIA, & JOSEPH BROWN

Q: What are some of your favorite ways to eat pecans?

Brown: I eat pecans in a salad almost every night. For special occasions like Thanksgiving and Christmas, my family incorporates pecans into our sweet potato casserole. Plus, my brother Joseph makes cinnamon sugar candied pecans that are delicious.

PLEASANT HILL PECANS
700 North Church Street
Rocky Mount, NC 27804
(252) 442-8415
pleasanthillpecans.com

Small Group Fellowship

Sip & Chat

This group meets monthly in the living rooms across town to fellowship and discuss a book of choice, engaging authors like Kate Bowler, Rachel Held Evans and Jen Hatmaker. We will be discussing **Inspired** by Rachel Held Evans this fall. Text Pastor Hannah at 980-271-7851 to receive reminders and location

**5:30 PM on December 8 at
home of Emily Watson**

Heretics

Meeting the first Thursday of each month at the Rocky Mount Mills with Pastor Matt Baker, this group sits at picnic tables with a beverage of choice and asks the hard questions about faith, God, and life! Text Pastor Matt at 252-458-6758 to receive updates.

5:30 PM on December 1

Young Adults

An intentional faith-based group for 18-35ish year olds, this group meets regularly around town to fellowship, discuss podcasts, support one another, and/or play trivia! Text Pastor Hannah at 980-271-7851 to receive reminders and location updates.

**No Gathering in
December**

In-Betweens

This is a fun-loving group of retirees (or nearly retired!) who meet for dinner in members homes every other month for a time of friendship, fellowship, and support. Contact Marie Kem for more information and check out the bulletin and weekly emails for more details each month.

**See the page 9 of the
newsletter for reminder for
In-Betweens Christmas Dinner
5:00 p.m. on December 6**

Men's Breakfast Fellowship

Meets at the Hardee's restaurant at 3525 Sunset Ave. on the third Thursday each month at 7:30 a.m. for good food and fellowship! No need to RSVP - just show up if you can!

7:30 AM on December 15

PLEASE NOTE: No Wednesday Night Activities are scheduled for December 21 or 28.

Wednesday Night Live

Fellowship Meal | 6:00 PM

All are welcome to meet in the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 p.m. for a covered dish meal. This is a wonderful mid-week opportunity to fellowship and also feed our ECU Choral Scholars! Come every week or sporadically as you're able!

Handbell Choir | 6:40 PM

Our Handbell Choir rehearses on Wednesdays from 6:40 -7:30 p.m. in the choir room. They can teach you if you don't know how to read music! New ringers are always welcome!

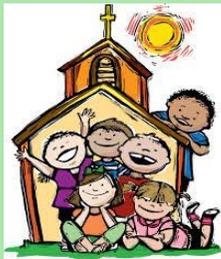
Chancel Choir | 7:30 PM

The Chancel Choir meets Wednesdays from 7:30-8:45 p.m. in the choir room. Come make a joyful noise with this wonderful group - new singers are always welcome!

Theology 101 | 6:45 PM

Taught by Pastor Hannah in the Session Room, this class explores, discusses, and challenges various church doctrines, such as:

- Who is God: Doctrine of the Trinity**
- What are we Doing Here: Doctrine of Creation**
- Why Doesn't God do Something about It: Doctrine of Providence and the Problem of Evil**
- Why Don't You Just be Yourself?: The Doctrine of Sin**
- Where is God?: The Doctrine of the Incarnation**
- Is God Against Us?: The Doctrine of the Atonement**
- Who is in Charge Here?: The Doctrine of the Resurrection**
- What's New?: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit**
- Living or Dead?: The Doctrine of the Church**
- What's Going to Happen to Us?: The Doctrine of the Christian Hope for the Future**



KIDDOS IN THE KIRK: On the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month from 3:30-5:00 p.m., our kids come after school for a time of music, wonder, and play!

Structured like a mini VBS, we enjoy a healthy snack, singing, bible lessons, and recreation. Open to all kids in the community, this opportunity is a chance for our children to grow in relationship to one another, with the God who loves them, and with adults who care for and cherish them.

Upcoming Dates: December 5 & 19



- December 4—12:00 p.m.
Decorate Gingerbread Houses—Fellowship Hall
- December 11—5:00 p.m.
Youth Christmas Party—Location TBA

Gingerbread House Fun!

Sunday, December 4 at noon
Fellowship Hall

All kids & youth are invited to help decorate gingerbread houses that will brighten the holidays for several church members! Please bring candy for decorating if able!

Presbyterian Women Update

IT'S BACK and BETTER THAN BEFORE

The Presbyterian Women's Christmas Tea Party is December 13th starting at 11 am. Mark your calendars now and plan to attend. The PWCT is hosting the event in our beautiful church parlor. There will be no program, just holiday cheer!

In this season of giving, the Circles have generously shared their time and talents with Peacemakers, Southside Academy, Covenant Homes, My Sister's House, and the upcoming Christmas Concert by the Community Christmas Choir. In addition, the PWCT has continued its tradition of adopting a family for Christmas from My Sister's House. Items will be thoughtfully purchased, wrapped, and delivered by the team.

- PWCT will not meet in December
- Circle of JOY & Circle of Friends will meet TOGETHER Tuesday December 13th in the Session Room at 10:30 for a special Christmas lesson with Roslyn Gragg. Afterwards, everyone is invited to the parlor for the Christmas Tea!

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN COORDINATING TEAM 2022-23

Nancy Richardson, Co-Moderator

Stephanie Hayworth, Co-Moderator

Gaye Moore, *Secretary*

Sarah Gooding, *Historian*

Laura Dudley, *Together in Service*

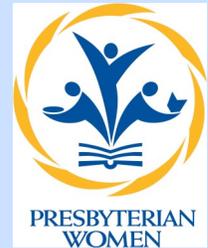
Myra Richardson, *Circle of Friends Leader*

Julia Brown, *Treasurer*

Laura Durham, *Spiritual Nurture*

Martha Tesoro, *Together in Service*

Linda Amerson, *Circle of J.O.Y. Leader*



WORSHIP HELPERS

"Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received."

1 Peter 4:10

Date	Ushers	Time with Children
December 4	Tricia Vestal, Janice Smith, Linda Amerson, Ike Amerson; Acolyte: Margaret Barnhill	Hannah Trawick
December 11	Lige Daughtridge, Annie Daughtridge, Joe Brown, Julia Brown Acolyte: Cate Powers	N/A (Joy Gift Program)
December 18	Ben Roberson, Valerie Roberson, Marie Kem, Bridge Hathaway Acolyte: Elizabeth Chesnutt	Matt Baker
December 24	TBA Acolyte: Elly Mae Baker	N/A
December 25	Blessings & Coffee Service	N/A



Christmas Day Blessings & Coffee

Christmas morning falls on a Sunday this year! In lieu of a worship service, we will be offering blessings and coffee. Drop in between 11:00am and 11:30am to sit in the sanctuary, offer your own silent prayers, hear some prerecorded Christmas music, enjoy a cup of coffee in the narthex, or receive a blessing from Matt and Hannah. Wear your Christmas pajamas if you'd like, and stop by for a minute if you're in the neighborhood.



In-Betweens Christmas Dinner Reminder

Tuesday, December 6, 2022
Tavern 19 - Belmont Lake Golf Club

5:00 p.m.

\$25 entree payment should be given to Marie Kem



ALL PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN ARE
INVITED TO A

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN CHRISTMAS PARTY

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2022

11:00 A.M.

CHURCH PARLOR



Keeping in touch...

FOLLOW
US!

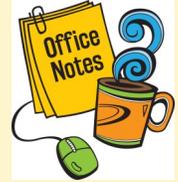


First Presbyterian Rocky Mount



fpc_rockymount

Contact Information Updates: Kindly notify Dionne Seale in the church office at 252-446-9121, ext. 21 or dionne.seale@fpcrm.org of any email, address, or phone number changes so we can keep our database up to date. Church office hours are 9:00-4:00 PM Monday-Thursday.



Dear First Presbyterian Church,

Thank you so much for the beautiful flowers and sweet note you sent, along with the prayers for my grandmother. We have loved getting to be a part of your wonderful community. Your thoughtful gesture brought smiles to our faces and we so appreciate your support and prayers. Wishing you all a happy and healthy holiday season.

*Love,
Sara & Dylan Castellino*

Dearest Church family, the Flower Committee, and the Handcraft Ministry,

"Thank you, Thank you, Thanks!" The soooo soft & special baby blanket from the talented ladies of the Handcraft Ministry was so sweet and appreciated.

Thank you for honoring me and my family with your thoughts and prayers as we celebrate the birth of my two (2) special great-grands. That makes me four (4) times Great!

*Blessings,
Janice Smith*

Church Family:

You are always there. I am so deeply grateful for your prayers, delicious food and cards as I was recovering from surgery for my broken shoulder, elbow and wrist. I have seen 1 Corinthians 12-14 describing the church in this way. With use of only one hand and arm, I was limited and church friends became visible as my other parts. Our church is blessed by the love and compassion within.

*With love in Christ,
Sarah Bailey*

Dear Friends of First Presbyterian,

Thank you so much for your kind words on my research of the stained glass windows. I am truly humbled that God led me to tell the story. It is such a wonderful story to tell. Who knew there were so many twists and turns! Special appreciation goes to those who attended the videos in person, especially the Sunday school class. I was so honored by your presence and your enthusiasm!

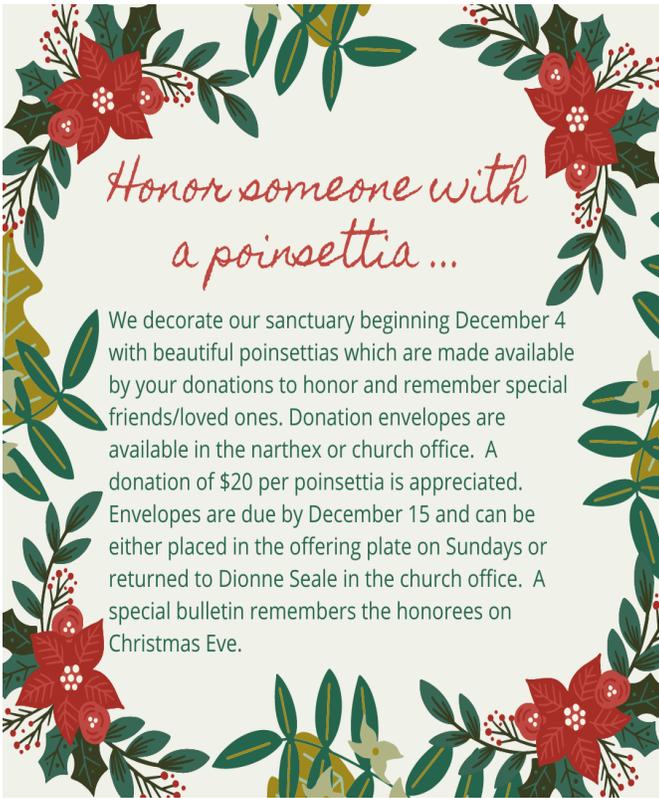
*Blessings,
Pam Gragg*

Communications Deadlines

- We publish the "First Pres" newsletter monthly. The newsletter is either emailed or a hard copy can be mailed to those without email. The deadline to submit information is the third Thursday of each month.
- The weekly email update is sent out via Constant Contact on Wednesday afternoons. The weekly email deadline is noon on Wednesday.

The Presbyterian Women thank all who donated to the October project of providing hygiene products for children and families at Southside Academy. With your generous donations, we were able to present items to the kindergarten and first grade students as well as those who attend the after school program.

*Thank you,
Presbyterian Women*



Honor someone with a poinsettia ...

We decorate our sanctuary beginning December 4 with beautiful poinsettias which are made available by your donations to honor and remember special friends/loved ones. Donation envelopes are available in the narthex or church office. A donation of \$20 per poinsettia is appreciated. Envelopes are due by December 15 and can be either placed in the offering plate on Sundays or returned to Dionne Seale in the church office. A special bulletin remembers the honorees on Christmas Eve.



Sanctuary
Flowers

Honor someone or mark a special occasion in the coming year by signing up by the date you prefer on the flower chart that is posted on the bulletin board

outside the church office. Dionne Seale can place the order on your behalf at a cost of \$75 that will be billed to you or contact her for names of **approved** floral arrangers that you can contact and pay directly. Not only do we enjoy these flowers during worship, but they are made into smaller arrangements and delivered to those in need of cheer or celebration the following day.

****Donations are also accepted to the flower fund so the church can provide flowers on dates that are not assigned.**

These upcoming dates are currently available for flowers to be placed in the sanctuary:

January 1, 8, 15, 22, 29



*Our thoughts and
prayers are with...*

THE FOUNTAINS AT THE ALBEMARLE—Tarboro

- ▶ Tom Dill

CARDINAL AT NORTH HILLS—Raleigh

- ▶ Dick Fountain

ROCKY MOUNT REHABILITATION CENTER

- ▶ Phyllis Goodwin

THE LODGE—Rocky Mount

- ▶ Sandra Luther

BROOKDALE—Rocky Mount

- ▶ Betsy Boddie
- ▶ Mike Braswell
- ▶ Cora Lee Gold

TRINITY ELMS ASSISTED LIVING—Clemmons

- ▶ Nancy Liipfert

ADDITIONAL MEMBER CONCERNS

Sarah Bailey

Logan Barnes

Margaret Barnes

Tucker Carrier (U.S. Army)

Brenda Crocker

Herman Ferguson

Sonny Foster

Earl Goodwin

Tim Hathaway

Char Mather

Georgia Mixon

Phyllis Parker

Jack Perry

Evelyn Reese

Edie Reeves

Nancy Richardson

Maida Sessoms

Mark Stuart

Phyllis Toler

Mary Watson

Kay Wester

Susan Yenney



Holiday Joy

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11 AT 11:00 AM
JOY GIFT PROGRAM DURING
MORNING WORSHIP**

Performances by some of our littlest singers will surely pull your heart strings! Our Handbell Choir and Chancel Choir will also perform.

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18 AT 4:00 PM
CHRISTMAS CONCERT WITH THE
ROCKY MOUNT CHAMBER CHOIR.
RECEPTION FOLLOWING IN LACY
FELLOWSHIP HALL**

The program of sacred and secular music will include American composer Conrad Susa's "Carols and Lullabies - Christmas in the Southwest," accompanied by harp, guitar, and marimba. The second half of the concert will include popular Christmas songs, accompanied by a chamber orchestra: "Have Yourself a Merry, Little Christmas" - "Somewhere in My Memory" (from "Home Alone") - "Jingle Bells." The performance is free and open to the public. A nursery will be provided.

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24 AT 5:30 PM
(PRE-SERVICE MUSIC AT 5:15 PM)
CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE**

Join us for a candlelight, communion, and carol service of worship. A choir of twenty, accompanied by a chamber orchestra, will sing arrangements of well-known carols and new sacred Christmas songs.