

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ROANOKE RAPIDS NC**

*First Presbyterian Church seeks to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ by expressing our love for Him and our neighbors through worship, discipleship, stewardship, fellowship, congregational care, and mission.*

# In Touch



## Sharing Our Gifts

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## A NOTE FROM THE PASTOR

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

There is a concept which is frequently mentioned whenever politics and organized religion come in contact with each other. The concept I am referring to is the “separation of church and state.” One may assume that this concept is one of reciprocity, that the government should stay out of the church’s affairs and the church should stay out of the government’s affairs. But the reality, as far as the law goes, is different.

The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution states that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” This means that the U.S. Government cannot assume control of any established religion or create its own. The exercise of worshiping a deity is to be guided purely by each individual’s conscience. However, there is no law against the church exerting influence upon the government.

If we look at our politics today we can see areas where this is plainly the case. Members of various faiths have used their voices to argue on one side or the other with regard to the legality of abortion, the death penalty, or prayer in schools. Nor is there any prohibition in scripture which would preclude an individual representing a religious affiliation from lobbying government officials or running for public office. So the church, or church members are free to influence the affairs of state as they see fit, but that does not mean it is always wise to do so.

I want to share with you a story from the early church when church and state were up to their neck in each other’s business and the amazing turn of events that resulted. This story happened during the reign of emperor Henry IV of the Holy Roman Empire. His reign was from 1084 to 1105 C.E. (Common Era).

During this time there was a complicated relationship between the empire and the church. The church validated the crowning of an emperor by coronation. The church also had the power to excommunicate those who did not respect the power and influence of the church which greatly hobbled those who hoped to lead the empire. At the same time the monarchy at the time had power to invest and install bishops to be masters over great tracts of church-owned land. This allowed the emperor to make sure these bishop feudal lords were loyal to the emperor.

Sadly the church was not at its best during this time. Simony, the act of selling church offices to lay people, was widespread. Rules against clerical marriage were differentially applied. This meant that bishops, who had no religious training, could have children who potentially would succeed their fathers as feudal lords. The church basically was a corrupt entity.

Pope Gregory VII began attempts to reform the church from within. This put the church in conflict with Henry who believed that he should feel free to appoint bishops in order to guarantee the security of his rule. When a pro-church reform riot broke out in Milan, Henry deposed the bishop there and appointed another in his place. Gregory responded by ordering Henry to appear at Rome by a certain date, declaring that if he failed to appear, he would be deposed and his soul condemned to hell. Emperor Henry called together a council a few days before the date he was to appear and declared that Gregory was deposed. Henry’s deadline to appear in Rome came and passed. Gregory

## A NOTE FROM THE PASTOR

followed through on his threat. While Henry was confident in his decision, his support began to erode, so much so that he decided to reverse himself and, as discreetly as possible, appear before Gregory to beg forgiveness. Henry and Gregory met. Gregory granted the pardon. Henry then quickly returned to the seat of his empire in Germany to quell a rebellion. Gregory believed that the rebellion would serve to replace Henry with an emperor who would better serve the papacy's purposes. Henry however prevailed and secured his throne. Gregory did not trust Henry and chose to excommunicate him again and made predictions of his imminent death. This did not have the same effect as the previous papal sentence. Henry's support stayed with him and he had the empire firmly in his grip.

As soon as the weather allowed, Henry took his Imperial army and marched through the Alps to Rome. This caught Gregory at his absolute weakest point. He had no strong allies. The Romans defended the city as best they could, but when it became clear that Gregory would not sue for peace, they opened the gates of the city. Gregory fled. Henry installed a pope of his own choosing, Clement III. At this point there were two popes each claiming to be the leader of the church.

Gregory eventually died putting an abbot, who had no desire to be pope, in the papacy. This abbot quickly became ill and died. Urban II succeeded the abbot and was able to expel Clement III. Urban encouraged the rebellion of Henry's son, Conrad, who promised that if he were made emperor, he would give up any claim to the right of appointing bishops. Henry wasted no time in defeating his son's rebellion.

Then Urban died. His successor Paschal II hoped that the division of the church would end when Clement III died, but Henry appointed another pope to take Clement's place and the division continued.

Henry then died. This allowed Paschal to negotiate with his son Henry V. The compromise was that the emperor would give up the right to appoint bishops so long as bishops could no longer be masters of feudal lands. Ownership of those lands would revert to the emperor. At news of this bishops who were also feudal lords revolted. What resulted was kind of a "half-reform" where clerical-celibacy became the norm and simony virtually disappeared. The church alone had the ability to invest bishops. But bishops still retained control of feudal properties, with the capitulation that they would not be owners but guardians.

What I think one may gather from the morass that the church and the empire found themselves in at the eleventh and twelfth century was that it is better for the church to do "churchly" things and the state to do "stately" things, mutually respecting the boundaries of each. But this, in my mind, is too reductionist. The church should never back away from its role of calling oppressive regimes to account. At the same time, the church should be vigilant to avoid circumstances in which material interests allow its position as champion of the gospel to be compromised. Of course, this is easier said than done. I hope that this exploration into the concept of separation of church and state has been helpful.

God Bless! -Joe

**MOVIE NIGHTS ARE  
BACK! AND FREE!**

**JOIN US ON  
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17,  
AT 7:00 PM IN THE LOY  
BUILDING FOR THE  
MOVIE,  
SECRETARIAT.**

**POPCORN AND DRINKS  
WILL BE PROVIDED.**

**WE HOPE TO SEE YOU AT  
THE MOVIES!**



## **PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN**



**PRESBYTERIAN  
WOMEN**

**Tuesday, February 7, in the Loy  
Building.**

**Morning Circle meets at 9:30 am  
and Pet Spears will lead  
lesson 6.**

**Afternoon Circle meets at 1:30 pm  
and Ellen Burnett  
will lead lesson 6.**

**Afternoon Circle—We're collecting  
socks for girls & boys, K-2nd grade  
this month.**

**All women are invited to join us!**

**There will be a Presbyterian Women's Council Meeting on  
Tuesday, February 7th, at 3:00 pm in the Loy Building. We  
will be making plans for projects and PW's birthday in May!**

**Please try to be there. We want**

**Prayers for Healing of Friends &  
Families of the Church**

Priscilla Ricks  
Bill Howell  
Glenn & Gayle Garner, @ Meals on Wheels  
Sally Ray and G.C. Warren  
Sandra Stephenson  
The homeless  
Doug Hayes  
Linda Ray  
Roger Fuester  
Jeff Peedin  
Frank Lonesky  
B.T. Brown  
Darlene Kassner  
Sheryl & Wayne O'Neil  
Cathy Hux Keeter  
Sandy Sandoval  
Rev. Mitzi Leshner-Thomas  
Victims of the war in Ukraine  
Jeff Gibson  
Jeff Williams  
Reid Hinson  
Victims of Hurricane Ian  
John Shives  
Doug Thompson  
Lou Ann Clarke  
Kelly Small  
James Spragins  
Michael Shelby  
Bill Graham  
Ellie Parker  
Allyson Johnson  
Grace Fishel, c/o Fountains of the Albemarle,  
200 Trade Street, Tarboro, NC 27886  
Phone: 252-641-0001

**If you have someone that needs to be on the prayer list  
or someone that needs to come off, please contact  
Susan Gaylor at [sdgaylor@embarqmail.com](mailto:sdgaylor@embarqmail.com) or  
call her at 678-4228.**

*With Heartfelt  
Sympathy*



*Our Christian Sympathy is extend to Diana Dillard and  
family upon the death of her mother, Marilyn Hinson*

## **FEBRUARY CALENDAR OF EVENTS**



WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1

7:00 pm Choir

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5

9:30 am Sunday School

10:30 am Coffee Fellowship

11:00 am Worship

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7

9:30 am PW Morning Circle

1:30 am PW Afternoon Circle

3:00 pm PW Council Meeting

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8

3:30 pm Witness Committee

7:00 pm Choir



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9

6:00 pm Finance & Personnel

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12

9:30 am Sunday School

10:30 am Coffee Fellowship

11:00 am Worship

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13

6:00 pm Worship Committee (Parlor)



## **FEBRUARY CALENDAR OF EVENTS**



TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14

*Happy Valentine's Day*



WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15

7:00 pm Choir

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17

7:00 pm Movie Night (Loy Bldg.)

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19

9:30 am Sunday School

10:30 am Coffee Fellowship

11:00 am Worship—COMMUNION

6:00 pm Session Meeting

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22

7:00 pm Choir

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26

9:30 am Sunday School

10:30 am Coffee

11:00 am Worship-Donald Marsden

12:00 noon Covered Dish Luncheon



## **A MESSAGE FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Our congregation continues to amaze here at First Presbyterian Church. With 2022 being a year when the effects of the pandemic were diminishing and our community was coming back to more normalcy, you all continued to give of your time and talents to benefit our church. The Finance and Personnel Committee wants to update you on the financials from 2022, while knowing full well that so much good was done by you in many other ways throughout the year.

The church's pledge income of \$156,969 was only \$1,231 under budget, which means each of you faithfully met the commitment you made to the church. Our total operating income for the year was \$167,513 which was above our budget by over \$3,500 – very good news. While our total income was over budget, our 2022 expenditures were almost exactly on target. Our total expenses of \$163,648 allowed our church to have a \$3,865 surplus at the end of the year. That will position us well for 2023.

Thank you so much for meeting your 2022 pledge commitment and for all the other actions you have taken for our church.

In Christ,

The Finance and Personnel Committee

Let's now turn to the 2023 financials. As we enter into a new year, the Session-approved 2023 budget is printed below for your review. We are pleased that so many of the commitments we make to further the work of Christ in our community and in the world will continue to be strong. The F&P Committee would like to thank each of you for your response in submitting solid pledges for the year – and, as you know, the income from the pledges and other giving provides for our expenditures. Although the income may be down from 2022, we know that each of you will continue to not only match or exceed your pledge, but also contribute with Special Offerings throughout the year.

Please feel free to ask us for any clarification of this very important financial information for our church.



## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 2023 BUDGET

**Operating Income**                      \$164,100.00  
(from pledges, offerings, facility usage fees, etc.)

**Expenses**

|                     |            |
|---------------------|------------|
| Finance & Personnel | 127,200.00 |
| Facilities          | 28,500.00  |
| Witness             | 2,100.00   |
| Worship             | 3,600.00   |
| Christian Ed        | 1,600.00   |
| Stewardship         | 500.00     |
| Session             | 300.00     |
| Congregational Care | 300.00     |

(The figures in the budget above are slightly rounded.  
If you wish to see a detailed budget please contact the office.)

The Witness Committee has an additional \$3,000+  
available to use from money market and special offering funds.

# Happy February Birthday to:

Tom Waring—7  
Margaret Biggs—14  
Ginger Phipps—15  
Rachel Pate—16  
Cheryl White—16  
Jonathan Hayes—17  
G.C. Warren—19  
Cameron Pate—22  
Tammy Spragins—27



## EVENTS AND NEWS FROM THE WITNESS COMMITTEE

Hello everyone!

Mark your calendar and save the date!

Donald Marsden will visit us on February 26!

We haven't seen him since before the Covid shutdown, so it's been a while. He will be with us for Sunday worship followed by a covered dish lunch in the Loy Building. Donald works with Frontier Fellowship, which sends missionaries to non-Christian foreign countries where they help establish new churches. Donald has made friends in Central Asian countries and particularly in Niger. We have even had the pleasure of a visit from Rev. Kadade who is a minister in Niger. Come worship with us on February 26, bring a covered dish, learn more about Donald's work, and share our fellowship!

Pennies for Hunger will be collected on  
March 12! Save those pennies!

Our work with Book Bag Buddies, Guardian Ad Litem and John 3:16 continue with the help of many of our members. As Susan says, "It takes a village." Thank-you for being part of our village. Check out the bulletin board in the Loy Building for thank-you notes. There are some from the children in our community that are really cute.



### **CONGRATULATIONS ELDERS!**

Nancy Crowe, Jack Kiger, Pet Spears, Elders for the Class of 2025 and Jim Small, Elder Class of 2023 were installed on Sunday, January 15th. Ginger Phipps is an Elder Class of 2024, who was ordained and installed in January 2022 but due to Covid didn't have the laying on of hands ceremony. This year that ceremony was able to happen. Ellen Burnett will be installed for the Class of 2025 also on Sunday, January 29th. Thanks to all of you for your willingness to serve! We really appreciate you!

Thanks also to the outgoing Elders Class of 2022, Susan Gaylor, Gary Hackenburg and Nancy Sandoval. We value all the hard work each of you put in to helping our church run smoothly!

**FIRST  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH**

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**FEBRUARY 2023**

**IN TOUCH**

