

In Touch

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.



Sharing Our Gifts

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A NOTE FROM THE PASTOR

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I have been asked to share with you some highlights of my trip to Salt Lake City, Utah for the Presbyterian Church (USA) General Assembly. For those of you who aren't familiar with the term, the General Assembly is the most inclusive governing body of the Presbyterian church, which means it is our denomination's highest level of government. There are no members of the General Assembly, only commissioners. I was elected by the presbytery to be a commissioner from our presbytery alongside 6 other people including one youth. We were each randomly chosen to sit on a committee and vote on the business referred to that committee. My committee was the Polity committee. We met (as did all the committees) via Zoom the week before we traveled to Salt Lake City. Just about all of the business referred to us would involve a change to the Constitution of the Church. Because of that, almost all of the work my committee did and was approved by the General Assembly also requires a minimum of a majority of presbyteries to vote affirmatively. If the General Assembly recommends changes to the Book of Confessions then the affirmative vote must be two-thirds. If the appropriate majority is gathered then the change goes into effect one year after the adjournment of General Assembly that sent the recommendation to the presbyteries. We did not recommend any changes to the Book of Confessions this year, only to the Book of Order.

All of my expenses for the trip were paid for by the General Assembly. I stayed in a hotel room by myself within walking distance to the convention center. We often ate communal meals with all the other commissioners, delegates and support people. All together, there were 1300 of us. We had very little free time. Our day began at 8:30 am with worship and ended each evening at about 9:00 pm or later. I did get to take a trip out to Ogden, Utah on Sunday morning to worship at a small Presbyterian Church at the foot of a mountain. The mountains in the distance were high and still had snow on them, despite the fact that it was 100 degrees in downtown Salt Lake City. After returning from worship and lunch at our respective churches we began our work

on Sunday afternoon. Each commissioner was required to bring some kind of digital device, be it a smart phone, a tablet, or a computer. I brought my phone and my laptop. Each of us were given a place at one of the many rows of tables in the convention hall. We made motions and voted via our devices, which helped keep things going relatively smoothly. If we wished to be recognized we had to indicate that on our device and wait to be directed to one of several microphones disbursed throughout the convention hall. Sometimes the web portal we were all attached to would slow down or freeze. In that even we might have a pause in our business while the technical glitches got worked out.

At the beginning of the General Assembly we elected the moderators for the denomination for a term of two years. Once elected they took over the running of the meetings from the moderators elected at the previous General Assembly two years before. The new moderators are CeCe Armstrong and Tony Larson. They are both Ministers of the Word and Sacrament (not a requirement). They were great leaders of the proceedings, they knew when to be serious and they knew when to interject some levity to our work.

Although our work was serious, I regularly saw people smiling and hugging. When contentious issues came up, amendments were made in order to find a middle

way. Minority voices were heard and their sensibilities honored. There was no crowing or lamenting at the outcome of a vote. But at the same time there were opportunities to celebrate communal achievements with unbridled joy. Even our breaks were opportunities to dance and sing and celebrate the fact that, though only one week before we were strangers, now we were a community, a manifestation of the church of Jesus Christ bound together by the simple desire to be faithful in doing the task that was before us, while at the same time being hospitable and loving to one another. If at one time Presbyterians were called the “frozen chosen” I think my experience at the General Assembly should tell us that we are thawing out.

God Bless, Joe

A Message from the Finance Committee

Greetings from the Finance and Personnel Committee. As we enter the last half of 2024, we want to let you know our financial position through June.

As noted in previous correspondence, several of our members pay their year's pledge in a lump sum early in the year and because of that, pledge income through March was \$83,115 – a monthly average of \$27,705. With a budgeted monthly pledge income of \$12,693, it was expected that our remaining monthly pledge income would be well below the average of the first three months. And that is what happened - in April, May, and June the 3 month total pledge income was \$14,640. However, the overall pledge income through June is \$97,755 and still well above our year to date budget. We will continue to update the congregation on our income and, remember, meeting or exceeding your yearly pledge commitment allows the church to accomplish our mission.

As you may recall, earlier this year we noted that initially our budgeted income was \$4,025 short of our budgeted expenses so we added a Faith Offering of that amount – income above the pledge commitment. We have already received \$5,000 for this faith offering! Thank You. We continue to be a very generous congregation.

Our expenditures through June of \$83,108 are within \$1,000 of our budget. This includes the \$3,884 cost to repair the ruptured sewer line between the Sanctuary and the Administration Building. So comparing our income to expenditures, we are over \$24,000 favorable.

Although not part of our annual operating budget the repair of the Loy Building wall/bathroom and the roof replacements were completed this year with the funds mainly coming from the insurance claims that were filed. Only about \$2,200 was used from our money market to finalize the roof replacements.

Thank you again for your generosity and commitments of pledges, special offerings, time, and of using your talents to further our mission both locally and globally.

The Finance and Personnel Committee

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

Cindy Sherrel
Glenn & Gayle Garner, @ Meals on Wheels
B.T. Brown
Nancy Elias
Grace Fishel
Sheryl O'Neil
Rev. Mitzi Leshner-Thomas
Debbie Allen
Bill Graham
Doug Hayes
Linda Ray
Elliott Boles
Margaret Biggs
Tony Martin, Jr.

Roger Fuester
Lee Cranford
Bev Hummel
Kenny Phipps, Jr.
Matt Savage
Michael Shelby
The Covington Family
Carolyn Crawford
Carol Crawford
James Spragins
Bob and Lisa Patterson
Jeanie White
Ken and Carol Whetzel
Stephanie Rivers
Robin Gupton Clay
Janet & Simmie Isles
Maddie Stauffer
Marie Anderson
Vickie Small Villani
Billy Small

WORLD CONCERNS

Victims of the war in Ukraine/Israel/Palestine
The Homeless
Victims of senseless gun violence
Those effected by natural disasters
Soldiers serving our country

CONTINUED

Bill & Clinton Kiger
Betty Keyes
Martha McCracken
David Dean
Danny Phipps
Noreen & Mike Knudson
Charles & Sandra Marshall
Susan "Teeny" Evans
Beverly Hedspeth
Rhonda Claypoole
Ella Cox

Our Christian sympathy is extended to the family of Judith Clary and Wally & Tammy Spragins on the unexpected death of their granddaughter/niece, Jessica Clements, on July 4th and also to the family of Joe Sandoval on the death of his father, Sandy, on July 8th.

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@outlook.com or call 678-4228.

JOIN US FOR LUNCH BUNCH!!!

Join us each month at 12:30 pm (on a Wednesday) at a different restaurant in town to dine and have fellowship together. Everyone is welcome to join us for this “Dutch” affair.

This month we will meet at Don Juan’s!



Anyone wishing to send cards, notes, etc. to Noreen, her address in Indiana is listed below:



**Noreen Knudson
821 Forest Drive
Anderson, IN 46011**

FLOWERS

Flowers arrangements are needed for the Sanctuary on Sundays.

Dates available are:
August 4, 11, 18 & 25; September 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29; and October 6, 13, 20, & 27

If you can provide an arrangement (from using flowers in your yard or ordering one from Always in Bloom Florist, who has a key) for one or more of these dates please

contact Mary Small at movingmom@charter.net or 541-1265. Please include your name, date of placing flowers and your phone number. If you would like them in honor or memory of someone, please let Tammy know by the Tuesday before your Sunday at firstpresbyterianchurchrr@gmail.com or 537-4018. Thanks!



HAPPY AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Mary Small—14th
Jenny Shives—16th
Sharron Clifton—20th
Riddick Ricks—21st
Summer Shives—25th



AUGUST CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SUNDAY, AUGUST 4

9:30 am Sunday School
10:30 am Coffee Fellowship
11:00 am Worship (Lay Pastor Wally Spragins)

TUESDAY, AUGUST 6

12:30 pm Prayer Meeting

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7

7:00 pm Choir

THURSDAY, AUGUST 8

1:00 pm Witness Committee @ Loy Bldg.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 11

9:30 am Sunday School
10:30 am Coffee Fellowship
11:00 am Worship

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14

12:30 pm Lunch Bunch @ DON JUAN'S
7:00 pm Choir

SUNDAY, AUGUST 18

9:30 am Sunday School
10:30 am Coffee Fellowship
11:00 am Worship (COMMUNION)

AUGUST CALENDAR OF EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21

7:00 pm Choir

SUNDAY, AUGUST 25

9:30 am Sunday School

10:30 am Coffee Fellowship

11:00 am Worship

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 28

7:00 pm Choir

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 1

9:30 am Sunday School

10:30 am Coffee Fellowship

11:00 Worship

CONGRATULATIONS!

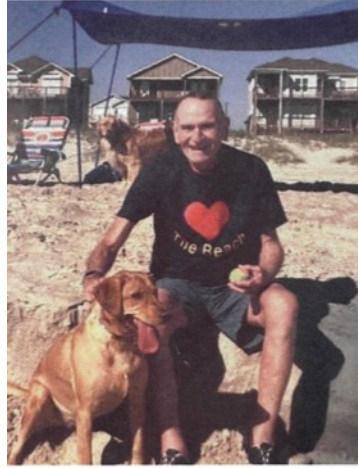


Olivia and Stephen Whitehead were baptized on Sunday, July 14th, during the worship service. They are the children of Helen Wingfield and the grandchildren of Cheryl and Tom Wingfield. God bless this sweet family.

FPC'S OUTSTANDING OLDER ADULT FOR 2024

Jim Allen (88)

The outset of Jim's faith journey began in childhood. He was raised in the Methodist Church, and has fond memories of his grandmother Allen sharing her faith through service and works with him. He said he remembered vividly when he was in high school in Savannah, Georgia thinking that his mission in life as a Christian was, and is to help others. In a pivotal moment he realized that, "I became aware of God's



presence in my life. I believe there is more to being here. "GOD IS HERE" and God put you here for a purpose!" Henceforth as he pursued his faith journey throughout the next 68 years, he has exemplified both being in the present and doing for others. While in college Jim met the love of his life, Margo Anne Colby, fellow Christian traveler and with God's guidance -inspiration for their many good works of service. Their faith-based marriage began in Michigan where he was in the NROTC and then on to active duty as a 2nd Lieutenant. Upon completing active service he enrolled in the Reserves and was promoted to Captain. Following his military service he was instrumental in a ground breaking development and building of a paper mill in Mississippi. He continued to work in the forestry and the "wood business" and moved to North Carolina in 1986 with his wife. He worked at the local paper mill and she taught youth in the local schools. They joined First Presbyterian Church and immediately became active in the life of the church. Jim is a good cook and would joyfully cook for the Men's Prayer breakfasts, Presbyterian Women's celebrations, and many covered dish lunches and Witness suppers. He has served as an officer in the church and as a deacon and elder and Treasurer. During his long tenure as treasurer, he maintained the financial records for the finance and personnel committee on a hand written spreadsheet up until the church entered the age of technology and computerization ten years ago. He also served on the long-range planning subcommittee and was instrumental in helping preserve both the heritage of the church and the long-term maintenance of the facilities. He was heavily supported by his wife during his tenure as an officer, and as they made career moves from California to Florida to Mississippi, Texas, and North Carolina. In 2008 his wife was diagnosed with a debilitating disease having physical symptoms that were affecting her mobility. He was a devoted and dedicated spouse and caregiver up until her death in 2018.

As she lost more and more of her mobility and speech abilities, some of the congregation were deeply touched as his caregiving responsibilities accelerated. He would bring her to church regularly, to Bible studies and to Presbyterian women events and would sit with her and assist her with hymnals and Bibles. Even after she lost her speech abilities, she was able to participate and enjoy worship, because Jim made such a supreme supportive effort. as a member of the choir, this writer can attest to the beatific joy on their faces in worship services that was evident on his and her face as they sat in the pews for worship weekly, and he assisted her with the bulletin and hymnals. It was evident in Bible study also that she was very sharp mentally, and continued to be a strong influence. They were living sacrifices for Jesus and the church's life. Jim's devotion to his family and his wife and to the community is made evident in the establishment of a six digit scholarship for special needs youth to pursue post high school wishes. Jim continues to be involved in the scholarship and other community foundations that support people in need. He is active on the prayer team at the church at this time and continues to be a great advisor regarding future needs and the Witness activities, both domestically and internationally. Jim and Margo have three children and four grandchildren. He enjoys spending time with them, and especially time at Atlantic Beach with their beloved dog, Sandy. He feels the Holy Spirit as he works and worships in church, especially at the beach, and when he is with his children and grandchildren. While he indicated that life is not without its troubles, he said that the experience he had in high school has seen him through over 70 years of many joys and deep sorrow but he has always felt the presence of God.

If he had advice for us in these challenging times, he said, "PARTICIPATE — get involved in a committee and you will benefit. Be active. Support the activities of the committees and officers and if you possibly can agree to help be a leader and be active."





Special thanks to Denise Hackenburg and the Christian Education Committee for a great Music-Drama Camp and production of The King and I!


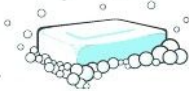
The production of The King and I can be seen in its entirety at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wUn3QCVaJHw>





How to Read the Bible & LISTEN TO GOD

- **Read with a Pen**— Make notes, circle stuff, ask questions. 
- **Hunt for Promises**— underline or highlight the promises.
- **Key Words**—look for those words that make the section make *sense*.
- **Repeat, repeat**—If a word or phrase is repeated, it's important.
- **If/Then or So/That**—look for the cause and effect phrases in the Bible.
- **Therefore**—if there's a therefore what is it there for?
- **Apply it**—ask how this part of scripture applies to me today.
- **Use S.O.A.P.**— 
read Scripture,
make Observations,
find Application,
and Pray.



SPECIAL OFFERINGS

Dear friends of the churchwide Special Offerings,

Grace and Peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ! The 226th General Assembly (2024) approved several changes to the churchwide Special Offerings to take effect January 1, 2026. These changes were recommended by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board through the Special Offerings Review Task Force. Thanks to members of the Task Force for their creative work.

The biggest change you will note is a new lineup of offerings:

- One Great Hour of Sharing
- World Communion Offering
- Christmas Joy Offering

That means:

The Pentecost Offering will be discontinued after the 2025 Offering. However, all current recipient causes will continue to be funded through the churchwide Special Offerings. Specifically, ministries focused on children-at-risk, youth, and young adults will now be part of the Christmas Joy Offering.

The Peace & Global Witness Offering will transform into the World Communion Offering beginning in 2026. Through 2025, congregations and mid councils are invited to retain a percentage of gifts from their Pentecost and Peace & Global Witness Offerings. In 2026, there will be a new grant-making program to support local and regional ministries. Your congregation or mid council will be able to apply for a grant for your own ministries that align with the causes supported through this new Offering. PMA staff are already working to create an accessible grant process that centers equity, creativity, and flexibility.

Overall, causes, rather than programs will receive funds as determined by leadership of the future unified agency. This does not mean currently funded programs will no longer receive funding. Broadening the scope of funding areas will invite more congregations, mid councils, and individuals to support the churchwide Special Offerings while discovering new ways to do God's work in the world.

Over the next year, we will be redefining the Special Offerings experience to encompass this new direction. Be on the lookout for occasional updates on this process while continuing to receive resources, communication, and opportunities for the current schedule of Offerings.

I'm excited that the Holy Spirit led this General Assembly to approve these recommendations. They will bring a renewed spirit of gratitude, compassion, connection and justice-centered giving. It is my prayer that God use these gifts to help us know that We Are the Church...Together!

Please reach out to me or anyone on my team with any questions, comments, or just for further conversation. We look forward to speaking with you!

Yours in Christ,
Rev. Wilson Kennedy, Associate Director for Special Offerings and Appeals

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AUGUST 2024

IN TOUCH

