Bruce Shields, Robert Boon and Bob Giles gather donations during the “Charity & Cheer” Car Parade.
RULING ELDERS
Veronica Allen
Chris Baker
Patti Bates
Allison Bryan
Steve Buckley
Kent Byrd
Chan Chandler
Cindy Cothran
Hugh Cummings
Susan Davis
Trip Durham
Bill Francis
Eddie Gant
Gene Grimley
Bill Haslam
Lavane Herman
Jim Johnson
Toby Jones
Happy Kearns
Susan Kirkland
Wendy Lunsford
Steve Matthews
Mindy Nye
Paul Reeves
Amy Richardson
Barbara Roberts
Bruce Shields
Elizabeth Stanfill
Gavin Stevens
Edith Vann
Hal Vincent
Avery Wagoner
Cathy Wall
Tom Whitaker
Stephanie Williams
Nan Wooten

MINISTERS & STAFF
Ron Shive.
Pastor and Head of Staff
Taylor Barner.
Associate Pastor
Carrie Tuttle.
Parish Associate
Norman Whitney.
Parish Associate
Charlotte Albright.
Church Educator
Patrick Murphy.
Organist/Choirmaster
Daria Hedrick.
Director, Child Development Center
Tracey Barker.
Director, Playschool
Kathleen Seagroves.
Office Administrator
Suzy Schut.
Administrative Assistant
Lacey Way.
Financial Administrator
Jane Cunningham.
Communications Coordinator
Boyce Bishop.
Building Superintendent

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Visit us on Facebook
Dear Friends,

No one would have guessed that on March 10 we would be where we are today. Your staff team envisioned an in-person worship on Easter Sunday, April 12. That seems an ancient dream as we now find ourselves nearly six months later still conducting worship through live streaming.

I am convinced that we have the opportunity to respond in one of two ways. One is to give in and sink into despair and depression—and, my, have I not been tempted to do just that. The other option is to live into hope that by practicing the three W's – Wear a mask, Wait and practice six feet of social distancing, and Wash your hands regularly for 20 seconds—we can see a new normal emerge in the life of our congregation and community where we are all safe. I call it a “new normal” because I believe that our life as a congregation will never be the same again.

Our new normal can be an exciting time for all of us as the Spirit blows through First Presbyterian-Burlington. During this time, we have been forced to look at ministry in a new way. In doing so, we are conducting as meaningful a ministry as we have done in all of our 141 years. It may look and feel different, but different can be good. It can be exciting. It can be expanding in ways we never imagined before.

I believe this magazine will open your eyes to all the ways the Spirit is working even in the midst of a pandemic shutdown.

I want to thank you for allowing the Spirit to speak and work through you even in these difficult days.

Love you all,
Ron
FEED MY SHEEP
THE CALL TO RESPOND AT R. HOMER ANDREWS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Jin-Jin Blackburn

The announcement was made this past spring that schools were closing the buildings to students and community members, including First Presbyterian Church Andrews Partnership members. We were immediately concerned about food insecurity for the Andrews school children and their families. Crises profoundly impact low-income families. If they are not in school, many Andrews’ students go without meals. Ideas on how to respond were discussed within our Local Missions Committee, and the Feeding the Children project was hatched! We put the word out that canned goods and financial contributions were desperately needed. Church members and friends responded with overwhelming generosity. With the contributions, we have been able to purchase, pack and deliver weekly food bags for 40 families at Andrews Elementary School.

As the Feeding the Children project started up, the Burlington Masjid called to say they wanted to partner with us. They contributed canned goods each week from March 26-May 28 and several members volunteered with the packing and delivery of food bags. Next, Ebenezer United Church of Christ asked to partner with us. They chose to make a financial contribution for toilet paper, paper towels and toiletries for the Andrews families. Three delightful ladies from Ebenezer helped us pack and deliver the food bags to Andrews. FPC members thoroughly enjoyed meeting and partnering with the volunteers from
the Masjid and Ebenezer.

We worked closely with Pam Burney, social worker for Andrews, who chose the families each week and distributed the food. Each family received two bags filled with food, such as meat, fresh vegetables, fresh fruit, bread, pasta, canned goods, etc. Families were also given laundry detergent, soap, deodorant, toilet paper, paper towels and toothpaste.

In the beginning, various church members shopped for the food, sometimes making several trips because of limits on per purchase quantities. Eventually, Aldi began accepting bulk orders, which has worked well. Fresh fruit is purchased from Steve’s Garden Market. For nine weeks food bags were packed at the church and then delivered to Andrews Elementary. Pam Burney had other commitments over the summer so June 4 was our last day for delivering food to Andrews.

Food insecurity and the impacts of the Coronavirus did not end with the end of the school year. The question became how could we still get food to families in need? We reached out to Lisa Edwards, outreach pastor for the Dream Center, City Gate Church in East Burlington. The Dream Center is a partner with Andrews Elementary, too. Lisa graciously offered to let us pack and distribute food bags on Tuesdays from June 16-August 11, 2020. The Dream Center truly does want to make dreams come true in East Burlington! Before this pandemic, Andrew’s students participated in after school activities during the week and camps during the summer at the Dream Center. You should check out their indoor soccer field—it’s amazing!

The coronavirus has certainly brought loss, suffering and a great deal of uncertainty. But FPC members have also gained some important things during this crisis. We partnered with and continue to build beautiful relationships with other churches while helping some of our community’s most vulnerable. COVID might get us down, but we are not giving up. This pandemic had a silver lining for all involved in this FPC local mission. Thank you, FPC family, for your incredible generosity towards this project. We couldn’t have done it without you!
MAC’S DINER:
YOUR STEWARDSHIP AND COMMUNITY
OF THE CELTIC CROSS GIFTS IN ACTION

Jim Johnson

In June of 2019 an article from the Burlington Times-News appeared under the headline: “ABSS Slowly Expands Summer Feeding Program.” In the article Pam Bailey, Child Nutrition Director for the Alamance-Burlington School System, discussed the ABSS annual summer feeding program. The federally funded program served 1,200 to 1,550 kids lunch from seven vans traveling to churches, libraries, apartment buildings and other sites. However during a regular school year more than 12,000 ABSS students receive free, or reduced-price, lunches. Thus the summer food program under-served many “food insecure” areas in Alamance County. Bailey had a “dream solution” to this problem: A FOOD TRUCK. “With that food truck, you can reach a lot more because the meal is on there,” she told the Times-News. Here is the reality check on “Bailey’s Dream”: a) staffing / maintaining a food truck and providing food is possible from within the ABSS budget, but b) the cost of a food truck (~$115,000) has no chance of competing for scarce funds in the ABSS budget.

Thus began a community based drive to fund the purchase of a food truck that would be donated to ABSS in support of Bailey’s “Dream Solution.” By late 2019 an organizing committee headed by Margaret Skulnik, a member of First United Methodist Church of Graham, was generating support from a variety of churches, agencies, and foundations. By early January 2020 a fund drive, “Meals for Alamance County Students” (MAC’S DINER), was underway with plans for a spring loaded with publicity about fundraisers, and requests for financial support. COVID-19 and the associated SARS COV-2 virus laid waste to many of these plans, but the drive continued and momentum built. By June 18th of 2020 the fund drive had 121 donors and had raised $127,573. A food truck has been ordered and should be delivered by mid-August. Upon its arrival a celebration will occur, (plans in development at the time of this writing), and a formal dedication of the truck to ABSS will be made.

FPC Burlington contributed $4,500 to the drive ($4,000 from the FPC Burlington Foundation and $500 from the FPC Local Mission Committee). Many thanks to congregation members who have supported the foundation through the Community of the Celtic Cross, and the FPC Local Missions budget through their stewardship pledges. Your gifts make all the difference to hungry children!

Do you have extra lamps, pots, pans and dishes? What about twin, twin XL, full and queen size bedding, mattress pads, blankets and comforters? All are urgently needed for upcoming deliveries.

Donations may be delivered to the Furniture Ministry offices on Mondays from 1–5 pm. Masks and social distancing required! Donations of mattresses and furniture continue to be accepted on a limited case-by-case basis. Monetary donations always welcome.

Call for more information: 336-212-2937.

THE NEED NEVER STOPS…but neither does our Furniture Ministry

Pandemic? COVID-19? Quarantine? Our signature local mission, The Furniture Ministry of FPC-Burlington has had to adapt to new procedures, but it continues to serve those in need here in Alamance County. Strict protocols were researched and implemented for the safety of clients and volunteers, and the mission continued. From March through July 2020, 109 beds, bedding and additional furniture were delivered to 60 families, including 146 children.

A special “thank you” is extended to the Alamance County Community Foundation, which awarded the Furniture Ministry a $1,000.00 grant to help with unexpected expenses due to the pandemic. Many thanks to the FPC-Burlington family for your ongoing prayerful support! You are showing the love of Christ to many of our neighbors through your contributions.
Did you know that our church houses one of Burlington’s licensed, five-star child care centers? The First Presbyterian Child Development Center (CDC) serves children ages six weeks to five years. Our CDC is an excellent option for full-time childcare for working parents. It is a non-profit organization, operated by FPC-Burlington as part of its ministry to this community. It is governed by a separate board of church members appointed by the First Presbyterian Church Session. Says Daria Hedrick, the CDC director, “The children who attend CDC receive quality care from educated, experienced staff. We work with the children on all skill levels, such as cognitive, social/emotional, fine/gross motor. We encourage independence and self-help skills in our children. When they leave the CDC to go to kindergarten, they are well prepared cognitively and socially.”

Parents are confident that they are leaving their child in a safe, loving environment each day. Former CDC parent and FPC member Katharine Frazier recalls how difficult it was to leave her son at daycare, particularly in his early years. “Sending Will off to his first day of ‘school’ at twelve weeks old was naturally an emotional day, but knowing that he was in the care of the CDC at First Pres brought peace of mind. FPC’s CDC was more than a daycare—it was his church home, and I can’t think of a better place to help raise a young child from the very beginning. Though we have moved on, Will still talks about his friends and teachers from the CDC, and he loves seeing several of them at church on Sunday. Looking back, I have no doubts that this CDC was the right choice for Will and our family.”

Even during this pandemic, the CDC continues to serve the community. After a brief closure due to the statewide quarantine, the CDC re-opened on May 18, 2020. The CDC staff and board developed strict policies and procedures to protect children, teachers, staff and families. The teachers and staff, armed with thermometers, hand sanitizer and masks, welcomed children back so parents could return to work. Currently, the center has 60 children enrolled and does have spots open for this fall. For more information, please contact Daria Hedrick, CDC Director at: 336-226-7055 or cdc@fpcburlington.org.
THE GIFT

Bruce Shields

The Gift has no beginning,
Forever abiding in the Divine’s love.
Until the moment of a new life
Then, like breath, is given.

Some call it the soul.
Others the Holy Spirit,
Or simply the spark within.
Whatever, it is the image of God.

The Gift is an invitation
To walk in union with our Creator.
But it is not a demand;
Life is also given a free will.

So we set out on life’s journey,
The Gift always by our side.
And how we come to know it,
Will make all the difference.

For when our numbered days are run,
And the Gift returns to its Source,
Will it be one with us,
Or a stranger we never knew?

Will the Gift have grown with our love?
Two fold? Maybe five?
Enriching the eternal fullness of Love?
Or will it return untouched? Buried.

How then can we recognize the Gift?
How can we learn to love it?
Seekers have pondered this over the ages.
Saints know there is nothing more important.

Could it be that the answer is all around us,
For those who have eyes to see
Through the prism of love,
Guided by the Gift?

When the sun’s gold rays reach across the morning sky,
Tree’s leafy boughs dance with the summer breeze.
When snow flakes fall gently on majestic mountains.
Or a myriad stars twinkle in the vast firmament.

These moments, and thousands more,
When seen through the eyes of the Gift,
Are not just trees, or rays of sun or flakes of snow,
But incarnations of the Creator.

And, as the Gift is given to every life,
The same Gift from the same Source,
Those who are at one with their Gift,
Embrace the oneness of all lives.

So, a oneness with all nature,
And a oneness with all humanity.
But the Gift offers something greater still;
Communion with our Creator.

The Gift invites us into quiet moments.
It leads us in sighs too heavy for words.
It teaches us gratitude for all our blessings.
It assures us that we are loved.

And, though we can now see but dimly,
The Gift strengthens our hope,
That when it returns to the fullness of the Divine.
We will be one with our Gift.
A Different Kind of Summer
Taylor Barner, Associate Pastor for Student and Family Ministries

Though the school year did not end how we thought it would, our youth groups have still been up to a whole lot! We moved our Sunday meetings online, held “Dough Devotions” over Snapchat, and played all kinds of crazy games. Unfortunately, there were some things we couldn’t do, like attend our two favorite summer camps at Massanutta Springs and Montreat. In lieu of our Jamaica Mission Trip, (which has been postponed to next year), we found some unique ways to safely help out in our own local communities, such as picking blueberries for PLS Farms, helping the Greensboro Food Pantry unload 31,000 pounds of food, and making masks for our neighbors in Morrowtown. And we even fit in a kayaking trip!

Though the future still holds a lot of unknowns, we are looking forward to another fantastic year full of fellowship and memories to be made. If you would like to learn more about the FPC youth groups, please contact Taylor Barner: 336-228-1703 or tbarner@fpcburlington.org.

Congratulations to our High School Graduates!

The following students all graduated from Williams High School this spring. Each graduate is listed with the school she/he will attend:

**William Beck**
North Carolina State University

**Garrett Clark**
University of Richmond

**Gray Garber**
Wofford College

**Nathan Garrison**
Appalachian State University

**Katherine Grant**
University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill

**Ike Reeves**
North Carolina State University

**Gui Vasconcelos**
Appalachian State University

**Ian Wagoner**
University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill
I’ve been giving a lot of thought to the concept of space recently. Living in Asia for over 20 years has transformed the way I look at space. Taiwan has almost the population of Australia living on an island the size of Maryland and Delaware combined. Most of Taiwan’s landmass is made up of sparsely populated high mountains, so the bulk of the population lives in tightly packed cities along the west coast. When walking on a sidewalk in Taiwan, it is hard to practice social distancing. Even during this pandemic, with 1.5 meters distancing lines on the floor of the grocery store, there just isn’t room to find adequate space while waiting in line to pay. In spite of the close quarters, the government here has done an excellent job of containing the spread of the virus, and schools and businesses have remained open.

I was talking with a friend from Africa and a friend from the U.S. about how this period of quarantine is affecting introverts. My American friend said that his sister, an introvert, loves it because she lives alone and does not have to spend so much time interacting with others. My African friend said that homes in his country are small and introverts are suffering because they are required to stay at home with so many family members. Space shapes life.
While I live in the teeming city of Taipei, just 20 minutes up the mountain from my home on the campus of Taiwan Seminary is a beautiful national park, called Yang Ming Mountain. Often you can leave congested roads in the city and quickly be hiking on trails where you rarely see anyone. This open space so close to the city is amazing. Many of Taiwan’s aboriginals, from whom I have learned so much, live in the high mountains. One of our former seminary students from a high mountain village never quite adapted to the population density of Taipei. Occasionally, he just had to return to the mountains to breathe the air and walk on isolated mountain trails. His identity was shaped by the space surrounding his village.

When Taiwanese travel to other parts of the island for a weekend trip, they find security if there is a 7-11 convenience store near to the place where they are staying. These convenience stores are much different from the ones in the U.S. You can pay your parking tickets or electric bill and get a good cup of coffee or a bowl of noodles. This “city in the country” brings peace to city dwellers when they travel, for they know that they will find what they are accustomed to eat or drink. For the city dweller, too much open space can be frightening.

The first of four books I have written, which have been published here in Mandarin, is called Giving God Space. Now obviously, this title is somewhat misleading, for we do not first give God space. Space is always a gift from God. Space for beauty. Space for relationship. Space for growth. But in

“Space is where we meet God and where we meet one another.”

(continued on next page...)

Taipei crowds walking by signs reminding them to keep one meter distance.

Taipei high rise apartments at the base of Yan Ming Mountain National Park.
John McCall has been serving in Taiwan for over 20 years. He spends a lot of time on trains, buses, and subways as he travels throughout Taiwan teaching courses on ministry and spiritual formation at the seminaries of the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan.

“I served as pastor of the Black Mountain (North Carolina) Presbyterian Church, and we had about 40 retired mission co-workers in the congregation,” John says. “They had an amazing ability to cross cultural boundaries.” Their commitment to service showed when volunteers were needed to tutor at the local elementary school or fill some other community need.

“I learned a great deal from them, and God used them to cause me to ponder international mission service,” John says. John sensed that God had called him to follow in the mission tradition that had been modeled for him so powerfully. In 1996, he accepted an appointment to serve in Taiwan.

John has become fluent in Mandarin Chinese; taught seminarians preaching, worship, and spiritual formation; and preached regularly in pulpits throughout Taiwan. He also has written four books on spiritual formation that have been published in Mandarin in Taiwan.

“I have fallen in love with Taiwan and its people,” John says. “There are different people groups that bring such rich gifts to Taiwanese society. Their hospitality and welcome of people from afar is amazing.”

While the aboriginal people face many challenges, John finds them to be unselfish and committed followers of Christ. “The generosity of the aboriginal people continues to teach me,” he says.

John worked for 13 years in Taiwan before returning to the United States in 2009 and serving for two years as pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church in Greensboro, North Carolina. A “renewed call to serve again” in Asia led him back to Taiwan, John says. “God has given me a missionary’s heart, and it is such a privilege to learn from and serve with folks in partnership in a cross-cultural setting.”

Montreat Youth Conference in 2018
My best friends’ son, Mu Chi, flew from Taiwan to join the FPC youth at their annual Montreat conference. They were wonderful to him and it was a life-changing experience for him. So, I will always be grateful to Taylor, the youth advisors, and the youth for their hospitality to this Taiwanese Aboriginal young man. These FPC youth gave Mu Chi space and love in his first trip to the US.

the dramatic changes we have seen and experienced around the world this year, space has been closed in lock down. Parks, movie theaters, and churches have closed their spaces. Folks have been limited to the space in and around their homes. But space has also been opened up. Friends, who have not talked for years, suddenly find space and time to nurture relationship. The space in our backyards suddenly seems filled with the beauty of nature. For some, the quiet has led to space for God.

In art there is a term called negative space. In a painting often the space surrounding the main focus of the painting is empty. If all the space in a painting or a room is full, it is hard to appreciate the beauty.

So much of my work here over the years in Spiritual Formation with churches, seminary students, and pastors has been to allow God to open up space for us to see with new eyes. One of my best friends here is an aboriginal school principal. The three schools he has served as principal, including his current school, have largely non-aboriginal students. They are students who come from the majority Han population. And my friend, Libunu, using his aboriginal vision as he enters a school, seeks to create space. Taiwanese work hard under great pressure. The students are focused on getting into a good university even in primary school. Libunu, as he arrives at a new school, looks at the buildings and the campus. He seeks to use local art related to the setting of that school. His first school was near the ocean and he commissioned an artist to create wooden flying fish on the walls of the school. But even more important than the art, is the way he gives the teachers and students space. He is a Christian and his faith shapes the way he creates a culture of acceptance at the school. When a student is sent to his office for punishment, he asks the misbehaving student two questions. First, “did you eat breakfast this morning?” Second, “what time did you go to bed last night?” Many of the students come from challenging backgrounds, and Libunu wants to create space where all are accepted and affirmed.

Space is where we meet God and where we meet one another. Space is where we come to know ourselves as God’s children. May God give you such space in these challenging days.
I love mysteries, especially British ones. You know the ones, they open with a barren landscape covered in fog and howling dogs, perhaps with ocean waves crashing far below the high cliffs...a scream far off in the distance. You might even see way off the lights burning dimly in the countryside church windows.

Once the scene is set, the novel begins...Ya-da-da----da-da-da-da-da-doom...the church organist plays the opening bars of Bach's Toccata and Fugue in d minor. At that moment, a crash is heard. The organist lifts his hands from the keyboard in utter fright! To his left, in the darkness appears a figure shrouded in black. He gasps in horror as he is confronted with…..(wait for it…) the pastor, Pastor Ron, who brings the bleak news that Easter is coming and it will be quite different this year.

So I exaggerate just a bit! Creative license, they call it! But Easter 2020 was truly different.

Think back to March 1. Are you there? Do you recall the final Sunday in the Elijah sermon series? The Chancel Choir singing portions of Felix Mendelssohn's glorious oratorio, Elijah, in worship? Skip ahead to rehearsal the next week, the week of March 8. The Choir is beginning to prepare for the Sundays in Lent, Holy Week services, and the ultimate of all worship services, Easter Sunday. Anthems by Will MacFarlane and G. F. Handel, festive hymn setting for brass, organ, timpani, choir and congregation are in the folders. At the end of rehearsal, I discuss with the Choir “what ifs” about the coming weekend. “What if” services move online during this pandemic? “What if” we must isolate from one another to curb the spread of this virus? “What if”…..

The mystery of Easter Sunday 2020 unfolds in ways I have never experienced in over 35 years of music ministry in the Church. But Easter Sunday 2020 at First Presbyterian Church of Burlington is NO mystery. Easter Sunday 2020 at First Presbyterian Church of Burlington is filled with a message of hope in our troubled times. Easter Sunday 2020 at FPCB is filled with glorious music sung by gifted and generous singers. Our wonderful Schantz Organ, trumpets and timpani and voices accompany Easter Sunday 2020 at FPCB. And Easter Sunday 2020 at FPCB is filled with the generous reminder that God is a God of power and strength, of love and compassion, of joy and comfort, of the promise of resurrection!

There is no mystery here!
The death of George Floyd on Memorial Day, happening as it did during a pandemic and at a time when we are physically distancing and arguably, less focused on being busy with going and doing, galvanized a nation and even the world. Add to that distinct horror of murder in the street, the more abstract but no less horrible, daily morbidity and mortality burdens of COVID-19 disproportionally born by communities of color, and America’s promise of a nation where all are equal, free, and have the same access to opportunity and justice falls far short.

Many of us have responded with what are we to do? How can we engage? As Christians, we are called to address the social and structural ills of our community. We are called to be actively responsive to the Gospel imperative to love God, neighbor and self, working with Jesus Christ toward the Great Ends of the Church. We are called to be disciples.

Our denomination’s most recent response, through the work of the 224th General Assembly, which met virtually in the last week of June 2020, is to issue a call to all Presbyterians to actively engage in acknowledging, understanding and deconstructing structural racism in our churches, secular institutions and communities.

Along with reflection and repentance, Presbyterians are challenged to engage in the “hard work of repair necessary for reconciliation”, much of which means engaging deeply to understand our history — both in the church and beyond — in the creation of a nation that “never has been yet.”

A mechanism affording this type of engagement is the Matthew 25 Racial Justice Task Force.

The Racial Justice Task Force includes:
- Loy Campbell
- Stacie Dooley
- Karen Garrison
- Beth Hooten
- Logan Garrison Savits

As Christians, we are called to address the social and structural ills of our community. We are called to be actively responsive to the Gospel imperative to love God, neighbor and self, working with Jesus Christ toward the Great Ends of the Church. We are called to be disciples.

O, let America be America again—
The land that never has been yet—
And yet must be—

Langston Hughes

Stepping onto the path and undertaking the “hard work”
THE CHRISTIAN CALL TO RACIAL JUSTICE

Beth Hooten

Add to that distinct horror of murder in the street, the more abstract but no less horrible, daily morbidity and mortality burdens of COVID-19 disproportionally born by communities of color, and America’s promise of a nation where all are equal, free, and have the same access to opportunity and justice falls far short.

Many of us have responded with what are we to do? How can we engage?
Initiative of the PCUSA. Inspired by Matthew’s Gospel (verses 25:31-46) in which we are called to actively interact with the world and care for ‘the least of these’, the PCUSA has put into action programmatic efforts endorsed by both the 222nd and 223rd General Assemblies (2016 and 2018). Officially initiated in April 2019 and housed within the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the program calls churches, presbyteries, synods and other organizations to build congregational vitality, dismantle structural racism and eradicate systemic poverty.

The FPC Session approved our church joining the Matthew 25 Initiative in April of 2019, one of the first four churches in Salem Presbytery to do so. Salem Presbytery will vote to join at the August 2020 Presbytery meeting. The Mid Atlantic Synod voted to participate in September of 2019. To date, 529 congregations, 34 presbyteries, five synods and 14 other groups have joined the initiative.

Many efforts of our church address these three foci, including our work with Andrews Elementary and the Furniture Ministry. The Racial Justice Task Force provides the direct locus for activities aimed at addressing structural racism and indirectly, helps to build congregational vitality by encouraging discipleship and lifelong learning. Most recently, our efforts included the 21-Day Challenge (14 June - 12 July 2020) as well as the congregation-wide viewing of Just Mercy on June-sixteenth. The content of the 21 challenge including the links to Debby Irving’s Waking Up White website will remain accessible on the FPC Website. We encourage you to explore the content and work on broadening your own perspective about racial inequity in the US.

We seek to build bridges and the capacity for a more just Alamance County. We are committed to teaching classes and facilitating presentations and discussions about Racial Justice here at First Presbyterian Church. Additionally, we seek opportunities to visit museums and historic sites. We also represent the church in our work with several organizations and efforts throughout the community, including the Alamance Racial Equity Alliance (which sponsors workshops provided by The Racial Equity Institute), Racial Justice Alamance County, the Morrow Town Task Force, the Saxapahaw Social Justice Exchange, and the Alamance County Community Remembrance Coalition. There is always more to learn about the history and implications of racial inequity in the United States, and regardless of where you may be with your own explorations; we invite you to join us in our conversations.

RACIAL JUSTICE TASK FORCE

THE GREAT ENDS OF THE CHURCH ARE:

- the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind;
- the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God;
- the maintenance of divine worship;
- the preservation of the truth;
- the promotion of social righteousness; and
- the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world

- Book of Order, F-1.0304
It is said that John Fawcett wrote *Blest Be the Tie That Binds* in 1772 to recognize his attachment to his congregation in the English countryside village of Wainsgate. He had taken a call to a wealthy, well-known congregation in London and preached his farewell sermon. On the day that his family began their trek to London, they realized that they couldn’t bear to leave, and they turned the wagons around and John served churches in the area for the rest of his ministry. Since that time, the hymn has served as reminder that the love of Christ holds us together, even when we are apart.

In this strange time, in this time when we at First Presbyterian have to be apart physically, we have constantly been reminded that we are bound together in the love of Christ and the love for one another.

In the beginning of March, as local hospitals and retirement communities began closing to visitors, we realized that we would need to change our typical ways of congregational care. Our Deacons and Presbyterian Women Visitors sprang into action with plans to make calls and to send more cards. The pastoral and program staff immediately embarked on a plan to call the congregation, which we have continued to do for months.

As a pastor, I can say that it truly pains me to NOT be able to be at someone’s bedside, hold someone’s hand while praying, or just to see someone’s face to know how he or she might really be feeling. That is what we DO. That is what we DO as a community of faith when we comfort one another, when we mourn with one another, when we bear each other’s burdens. “Fellowship of kindred minds” looks a little different right now, but it doesn’t mean that we haven’t found ways to connect and care for one another.

My heart has swelled with gratitude each time I have spoken with a member of First Presbyterian and heard stories of care that have taken place.

You have called one another, written notes, dropped food or flowers or other treats on porches. You have prayed on the phone or on Zoom with one another. You have offered a “virtual” hug. Our Presbyterian Women worked with me to figure out a way to take the Easter lilies to the security gates at several local retirement communities to be distributed as a reminder of Christ’s love, the congregation’s love, to our members who live in the healthcare or assisted living at each place. Often, when calling to check on a health issue with one congregation member, I found that you were much more interested in how someone else was doing. You have brought chairs and worn masks and stood at a distance at graveside services. You have prayed from home and wrote notes when you knew it wasn’t possible for you to make it to such a service.

COVID-19 has upended our lives in so very many ways. It certainly hasn’t given us many “gifts,” but I have seen a silver lining, a ray of hope, in the ways we have been able to care for one another and connect with one another during this time. It has been a gift to connect through conversation with so many of our members, in a longer conversation than we’d ever be able to have at the church door or a fellowship meal. It has been a gift to learn about your families and your hobbies and even what makes you frustrated during quarantine. It has been a gift to shed a tear or pray or “hug” you over the phone.

One of you recently said to me, “It’s funny what I have learned in this time about worship and about being part of a community of faith—you take them for granted until you can’t do them. I can’t wait to be back in those doors and with those people…” I most certainly agree.

But until that time, I say prayers of gratitude for the ways that we have figured out how to be community of love and care, even when physically apart. I will say prayers of thanks for the ties that bind us together in Christ and for the ways we continue to share our mutual woes and bear each other’s burdens.
MEET THE STAFF

There’s a lot that goes on “behind the scenes” at FPC! We don’t always interact with all the staff on a regular basis. So that you may get to know them a little better, each edition of this magazine will feature a brief profile of a different staff member.

Boyce Bishop, Building Superintendent

Keeping FPC-Burlington in prime shape requires much work and oversight. Boyce manages all the maintenance and upkeep of our church campus, both grounds and built structures. His work runs the gamut from replacing light bulbs to supervising sub-contractors to serving on the Buildings & Grounds Committee. In pre-COVID times, he also did all the meeting and event set-up, (tables and chairs), as well as the teardown, (cleanup and re-set).

How long have you been at FPC-Burlington?
It will be 11 years this October

Hometown?
Brevard, NC. My father was a Baptist minister and our family moved several times. We wound up in Mebane where I graduated from Eastern Alamance High School. I’ve stayed in this area ever since, although my parents moved back to Brevard. My son Tanner and I love to visit them and go fly-fishing in the mountains!

Favorite thing about FPC?
Working with the staff and church members. During my first week on this job, Stephen “Smoke” Danieley, (my predecessor), told me, “These are the best people you’ll ever work for.” And it’s true!

Favorite flavor of ice cream?
Vanilla

Thank you, Boyce – we appreciate your excellent work in maintaining our FPC home as a beautiful, safe and well-functioning space for all our church activities!

Welcome, Suzy!
FPC welcomes Suzy Schut, Administrative Assistant

Suzy joined the staff of FPC as our part-time Administrative Assistant this past spring. She works the reception desk in the church office.

Suzy comes to us after having a 30-year sales career in the hosiery industry having worked for local hosiery mills as well as other domestic mills. She has been a Burlington resident and local volunteer for the last 24 years. Originally from Michigan, Suzy is a graduate of Western Michigan University. She enjoys gardening, gym time, walking and cooking in her free time.

Please introduce yourself and welcome Suzy if you haven’t already met her.

“In response to the call for submissions to this question, Carolyn Langley submitted the following:

1) Rainbow Bird of Paradise (colored pencil)
2) Into the Depths (mixed media); which won first place in the Senior Games Virtual Art Show this year!
Sanctuary Construction… Coming Soon!

Bill Moser, Buildings & Grounds Committee

While sitting in the sanctuary waiting for worship to begin, did you ever look up? Really up? Like at the sanctuary ceiling? Did you notice the dark marks around the air conditioning diffusers?

The ductwork in the sanctuary attic has served the church well for almost 70 years. Back in 1951, the standard practice was to place insulation inside of ductwork. Over the years this duct liner insulation has deteriorated and it has become friable. Small pieces of insulation have been falling out of the diffusers and in the summer months condensation has been forming where the insulation has delaminated from the metal wall of the ductwork.

The Buildings and Grounds Committee is addressing that issue. Based upon several cost estimates, it was determined that the most cost-effective approach was to abandon the deteriorating existing ductwork and to extend new ductwork above the side aisles of the sanctuary. New diffusers will be located in the ceiling of the side aisles and the existing circular diffusers in the center of the sanctuary ceiling will be re-painted and will remain although they will not be functional. Provisions to protect the instrument from construction activities.

We are taking this opportunity to replace and improve the lighting in the sanctuary with the replacement of antiquated fixtures with LED units. A new lighting control system will also be installed. Then the ceiling will be painted. It was last done in 1997.

All of this work is scheduled to be performed in October and November during a period when the temperature in the attic space above the sanctuary is more conducive to construction activity. Streaming of Sunday morning worship services will continue throughout this period from the chapel while scaffolding and lifts are being used in the sanctuary.

Fall Worship will be live streamed from Williams Chapel

You have made a difference these past several months. Let us rejoice and give thanks for the generous spirit that abounds at FPC-Burlington!
Vacation Bible School 2020

Join Us for Virtual VBS 2020
June 22-25, 10:00 a.m.
VISION STATEMENT

First Presbyterian Church recognizes that God is on the move, and our church, inspired by God’s Holy Spirit, will continue to grow in God’s love and the example of Jesus Christ as we minister to each other, the community, and the world. Guided by God’s calling for our church and each of us as individuals, we will advance God’s mission more fully by:

■ Cultivating a nurturing community,
■ Discovering new expressions of faith through worship and music while preserving holy traditions,
■ Regularly assessing how we need to change in order to sustain our partnership with God’s mission for years to come, and
■ Engaging in the spiritual, physical, and emotional work of God’s mission.

For calendar events and the latest FPC-Burlington news, visit us online: www.fpcburlington.org or on Facebook