

# THE CHURCH FAMILY

*Presenting Everyone Complete in Christ*

## BETWEEN-TIMES BLESSINGS By Pastor Dan King

I don't suppose anyone in a church likes the time between senior pastors. As with any change and its accompanying uncertainty, these "between times" are a bit unsettling. I want to suggest to you, however, that between times also can have their benefits. I mention five.

1. Between times rid a church of any tendency to become a personality cult. I've known churches that appeared to be a lot more about the pastor than they were about Jesus. Take the pastor out of the picture, and the truth about where allegiances actually lie is soon uncovered.
2. Between times allow for gifts to be tested and developed. Even when pastoral staff is reduced, ministry still must go on. Between times call church members and volunteers to rise to the challenge of providing that ministry. In the face of such demand, people often discover spiritual gifts and ministry ability they might otherwise have never known they had.
3. Between times provide a fertile environment for strengthening relationships. These times of perceived weakness and vulnerability can actually produce increased unity, as church members support and rally around one another. Body life of a congregation can flourish as members face and overcome challenges together.
4. Between times create greater dependence upon the Holy Spirit for guidance and direction. Experiencing some reduced measure of human leadership may serve the very worthwhile purpose of driving a church to more earnest pursuit of Divine leadership. And isn't that really where hopes should be focused all along?
5. Between times can (and should) shift a congregation's priority and orientation from expecting to be served to finding ways to serve.

We are deeply grateful for the ministry and leadership of Pastor Steve, our other remaining church staff and our officers. From my vantage point, it's been excellent. But the fact is, our staff is down by two full-time positions. Staff-generated ministry cannot be maintained as if nothing happened. This is not a time to grumble about any little tell-tale sign of reduced strength you might notice in FPC's life and ministry. Rather, this is a time for "all hands on deck." This is a time for every member and friend of FPC to rally in support. Pray for and encourage our two search committees. Be in church. Come to Sunday School. Keep up with your financial giving. Look for additional ways to help.

With the right attitude, and maximizing these between-times benefits, our church can emerge from this interim stronger than ever, and more dedicated to following Christ under the guidance of whatever new pastor and new youth director the Lord will, in his time, provide.

Dan

## STAFF POSITION UPDATES

### Senior Pastor Search Update

The Pulpit Committee has been meeting regularly since being elected. The committee's first assignment was to put together the FPC Senior Pastor Search Document which includes a detailed Church Profile. If you are interested in seeing the profile you may view it at the church web site, [www.fpcstanley.org](http://www.fpcstanley.org). Click on *About* and then *Church Profile*.

This document has been circulated to key members of our domination asking for recommendations for potential candidates.

The committee has reviewed a number of candidates, listened to many sermons, and conducted several interviews so far. The Pulpit Committee continues to solicit congregational prayer as they seek the Lord's will. Please pray that God's calling would be made clear to the man, the committee, and the congregation of First Presbyterian. We will keep you informed as we move through the search process.

### Youth/ SOAR Director Search Update

The committee searching for our new director of Youth and SOAR ministries has finalized the job description. If you would like to see the job description or pass it along to someone who might be interested, please contact the church office.

They have been in contact with key church and ministry leaders asking for names of potential candidates. Some names have been suggested and the committee is in the process of following up with those contacts and will be setting up interviews for promising candidates. Please be in prayer for God's direction and leading.



### FPC P-MAIL IS BACK IN BUSINESS!

Send Christmas cards through the FPC mail system. As you address your cards, please consider if the recipient has been attending. This system only works for our church family that is active. For those folks that have not been attending, we hope that you will still send some Christmas cheer their way via the postal service, or better yet, hand deliver it to them!

Boxes can be found in the main hallway. Just place cards in the boxes based on the first letter of the recipient's last name. Remember to check your appropriate box for cards addressed to your family!

## CHRISTMAS SCENES UPDATE

The opening of “A Christmas Journey” is just around the corner! Here are a few important things for you to know:

1. **DRESS REHEARSAL: Sunday, Dec. 10 at 5:15pm.** Our only chance to do a full run through of the production. This is critical for **all drama participants, all greeters, parking lot/ security crew, basically everyone who will be involved.** A light meal will be provided.
2. **PRODUCTION TIMES:**  
Thursday, Dec. 14 - Scenes run 6:30 - 8:00 pm.  
Friday, Dec. 15 - Scenes run 6:30 - 8:00 pm.  
Saturday, Dec. 16 - Scenes run 6:30 - 8:00 pm.  
**\*\*\*Participants should arrive by 5:45 pm each night to get dressed and to enjoy some finger foods and drinks.**
3. **CLEAN UP DAY: Sunday, Dec. 17 after church.** Help pack everything away until next year!

### **OTHER IMPORTANT NOTES:**

**PRAYER TEAM:** There are still 1/2-hour slots available for our “prayer chair” during the event. Email SaDara at [sadarast@att.net](mailto:sadarast@att.net) to sign up.

**FOOD TEAM:** If you are baking cookies/brownies/other treats (4 dozen) please have them in a disposable airtight container or bag labeled "Christmas Journey" and deliver them to Founders Hall no later than Thursday morning December 14.

### **FINALLY:**

**TAKE A CHRISTMAS JOURNEY FLYER AND INVITE A FRIEND SO THAT...**

*"Those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand."* Romans 15:21



**All Senior Adults are invited to a**

**CHRISTMAS BREAKFAST  
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19  
6:00 - 9:30 AM**

**at**

**CHRIST'S LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**\*Sponsored by the Stanley Police Department!\***

## **With Loving Thanks**

*Thanks for your prayers, cards, calls and encouragement in my recovery from knee replacement surgery. I greatly appreciate the contribution of my FPC brothers and sisters to my progress.*

*Mike Gamage*

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*Thank you for the care of my Dad and us during the past months while he battled cancer. We welcomed your calls, visits, prayers, cards and food. I appreciate the care we felt and received during this time. We are blessed by His mercy and grace and comfort. Thank you for your ongoing prayers, they are felt. May God also give all of you peace, comfort, mercy and grace.*

*Love,  
Judy Lucas and family*

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The following is a note of thanks from the school to which we donated our organ:

*On behalf of the music department at the Crosscreek Charter School in Louisburg, NC, I thank you so very much for the generous donation of your sanctuary Allen Organ to our school. As we are delighted to announce that a new building plan is in progress, our delight is increased substantially with the anticipation of this grand organ being a part of our performance facility.*

*The organ will be used for school assemblies, public recitals, band performances, and silent movie performances. The Allen Organ will add much dignity to our graduation ceremonies as well. It is my hope that this instrument can be a catalyst in connecting our school and its various programs with the greater Louisburg and Franklin County communities.*

*I will be playing this fine instrument and will let you and your congregation know when a dedication recital will be held. The completion of the building is anticipated during the 2018-2019 school year, and I will update you on its progress. Be assured that your gift will be cherished and used in a magnificent way. Already, our faculty, parents, and students are excited about hearing their new organ!*

*On a personal note, my heritage is in Gaston County; my grandfather spent the first five years of his life in Stanley before moving to the Flint-Groves community in Gastonia. I am doubly proud that our new organ came from my native area!*

*May God bless you and your work there in Stanley and Gaston County!*

*Sincerely,  
Brian Miller  
Band Teacher/Humanities Teacher  
Crosscreek Charter School  
Louisburg, NC*

## WITH OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our condolences are offered to **Jimmy and Terri Fowler and family** following the death of Jimmy's mother in South Carolina. **Mrs. Mary Lee Medlin Fowler**, 93, passed away Wednesday, November 22, in West Union, Oconee County, SC.

We also offer our condolences to **Jerry and Janet Ratchford**. Janet's mother, **Mrs. Ethel Phillips Trotter**, 84, passed away Saturday, December 2 in Bessemer City.

Christian sympathy is extended to **Ailene Friday** in the death of her brother-in-law, **Burette "Doc" Mullis** who passed away on November 16. The deceased was also the uncle of **Wayne Friday**.

A former member of our church family, **Jean Fisher Robinson**, passed away unexpectedly Saturday, November 25, at her home in Iron Station. Jean came into membership at FPC-Stanley soon after she married **George Robinson, Jr.**, a life-long member here. She remained until after his death, at which time she returned to Alexis Baptist Church, where she formerly belonged. We extend sympathies to the **Bill Robinson family**.

**Buddy Cavin** is doing well following his recent cataract surgery.

### FAITH PROMISE UPDATE

Anyone wishing to make a Faith Promise for 2018 can 1) submit a commitment card to the Treasurer, Gary Neely; 2) leave your card in Gary's mail box; or 3) submit your promise by email to gmneely@bellsouth.net. Commitment cards can be found on the literature display in the main hallway. The campaign is extended until Christmas. As of December 3, commitments total \$157,920.

### 2018 BUDGET



The 2018 Budget has been approved by the Session. You can find copies of the budget on the brochure display in the main hallway.

### PRAYING FOR OUR MISSIONARY FAMILY



We praise God for **338 people** who have made commitments to pray regularly for one or more of our missionaries in 2018! If you are one of those, you will find a packet with a prayer bookmark and missionary refrigerator magnets in your P-Mail box next week. If you haven't signed up yet, remember there is still opportunity to turn in a prayer commitment card between now and December 31.

Pray for **Garry and Anita Chambers** as they head to Haiti on December 9 to lead a marriage retreat for 30 pastors and their wives and to take part in a training and formational meeting for the first step in seeing a Presbyterian denomination formed in Haiti. Praise God for the 35+ years the Chambers have been serving with MTW and for their 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on December 17.

Pray for **Michael and Lindie Wadhams** as they continue to minister among the Native Americans in the state of Washington. They have already experienced their first snowfall as the wet, cold winter season begins. One of their upcoming outreach projects is to develop a soccer clinic at the Lummi Indian Business Youth Center for 25 kids starting in March.

# Birthdays to Celebrate in December

16 Caitlin Bumgardner  
David Griffin

17 Bebe McMinn

18 Craig Mesimer  
Jerry Ratchford

19 Mona Kelly

20 Bobby Blackman, II  
Hannah Mosely

22 Janice Barton  
Mark Hicks  
Patrick Rhyne  
Skip Ribbeck



23 Hailey Rutkowski  
Roxi Rutledge

26 Ellen Beam  
Joe Treat

28 Julia Treat

29 Michael Ham  
Rhys McAllister  
Phyllis Withers

30 David Rust

31 Carly White

The Church Family is a twice-monthly publication of First Presbyterian Church  
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Assistant Pastor, Steve Jessen  
Worship 10:15 AM • Sunday School 9:00 AM



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED