

THE CHURCH FAMILY

Presenting Everyone Complete in Christ

FROM YOUR PASTOR'S DESK

This week we celebrate the life and legacy of Martin Luther King Jr., the influential preacher and civil rights activist. Several years ago, when we were in Washington DC, we visited the memorial built in his honor at 1964 Independence Avenue, (the address corresponds with the year the Civil Rights Bill was passed.) The centerpiece of this powerful memorial is a 30 foot statue of Dr. King that appears to have broken away from two large boulders standing behind it. Inscribed on the statue is a line from his famous "I Have a Dream" speech that says: "*Out of a Mountain of Despair, a Stone of Hope.*" The two boulders that you walk through to see the statue symbolize the mountain of despair, and the stone of hope is Dr. King and all that he represented.

This powerful image reminds me of the gospel. We are being crushed under a mountain of sin, we are desperate and in need of a Savior. But out of that despair the Rock of Salvation emerges, Jesus Christ, who brings us eternal hope. This idea of a stone of hope is drawn from Biblical passages like Psalm 61:2 "*from the end of the earth I call to you when my heart is faint, lead me to the rock that is higher than I.*" And Psalm 18:2 "*The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.*" Jesus is the one who levels the mountain of despair (Isaiah 40:4) and becomes for us a "living hope" of salvation. (I Peter 1:3)

The hope that we have in Christ changes us so we can change the world. In our I John sermon series examining "The Christian Walk," we will discover the importance of loving others. "Whoever loves his brother lives in the light" (2:10) and "Whoever loves God must also love his brother." (4:21) Loving God means loving our brothers and sisters who are different from us racially, not just talking the talk, but walking the walk.

As we remember Martin Luther King Jr. this week, let us be reminded of two things. First, we have been called by our denomination, to actively pray for and seek racial reconciliation in our congregations, and to pursue in our churches a crossing of racial boundaries in the name of Jesus. And second let us be reminded of the hope that we have in Jesus, a hope that can change the world as Dr. King's life so powerfully demonstrates.

Walking in hope,

Steve



SHOE LACES AND THE WALK OF GRACE

by Pastor Thad

Of all the various ways of being in my shoes and walking through life, I often overthink the type of shoes needed for the upcoming activity. Hiking boots or running shoes, mucking boots or crocs, flip flops or house slippers. (And yes, I have too many options.) But what I don't think about enough until a problem arises is the fit of the laces.

Too tight and my feet get angry; too loose and blisters bring their revenge. A famous UCLA basketball coach, John Wooden, even took time at the start of each practice season to illustrate the importance of shoes that fit with good socks and snug laces. To extend the analogy of this sermon series on the Christian Walk from 1 John, we can never forget the importance of the basics of the gospel, the laces that bind the grace of Christ to each and every step we take. We need the reminder of the grace of Christ's substitution on our behalf that washed away our sin (1 John 1:9). His perfect atonement for our rebellion that removed God's wrath from us (1 John 2:2). And the same Spirit-empowered grace that carries us from temptations as slaves of sin into the freedom to live lives of love for Christ and our neighbors (Galatians 2:20).

It is in those daily moments of struggle and striving for obedience that the snug-fit of God's grace proves more than sufficient for the need at hand as our hearts rest in Christ's work on our behalf so our feet can walk further in His light (2 Corinthians 9:8). Sure, any strap of leather can get us a few feet across a carpeted room, but God wants to demonstrate His steadfast love and faithfulness through generations of those who are called by His name and whole-heartedly follow Him. Let's continue in prayer for the basics of the Gospel to remind our hearts of the goodness of following Christ wherever He leads.

**CRISIS PREGNANCY CENTER OF GASTON COUNTY
INVITES YOU TO THE 25TH ANNUAL
CELEBRATION OF LIFE
THURSDAY, MARCH 14
AT
FIRST ASSEMBLY OF GOD, GASTONIA**

There will be a FREE Buffet Bar-B-Que Meal served from 5:00 - 6:30! The program will begin at 7:00 pm.

The guest speaker will be Stephanie Fast. Abandoned too young to remember, Stephanie wandered the war-town countryside of Korea. She was abused and violated in every way. Finally she was discarded and left to die in a garbage dump. She was miraculously rescued by a World Vision Nurse and placed in an orphanage. Around the age of nine, Stephanie met a missionary couple that decided to adopt her. Stephanie has been an advocate for orphans her whole Christian life, believing there is an orphan in each person without Jesus.

Make plans to enjoy a delicious, FREE meal and hear Stephanie's story. If interested, see Alice Jessen or call her at 704-263-4983 ASAP for your complimentary meal tickets.

WIC NEWS

THE FEBRUARY CIRCLE MEETINGS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Monday, February 4, 7:00 pm:

Elizabeth Circle meets at the home of Tommi Rust .
Readers Circle meets at the home of Martha Sue Mitchell.
Ruth Circle meets in the Church Parlor.

Tuesday, February 5, 7:00 pm:

Denver Circle meets at the home of Karen Ensley.

The next WIC Council Meeting will be this Sunday, January 27 in the Church Parlor.

PICTORIAL DIRECTORIES

It's that time again! Our church family has grown and we need to publish an updated pictorial directory. We would love to have ALL of our church families included in this new directory! We plan to have appointment times for pictures on various days at various times beginning February 18.

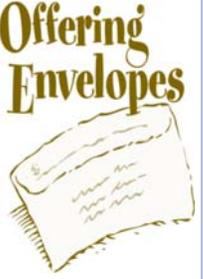
Look for sign ups in the very near future!



GIVING STATEMENTS NOW AVAILABLE

Please stop by the table in the main hallway to pick up your 2018 Year End Giving Statement.

We still have **2019 Offering Envelopes** available on the literature display in the main hallway.



WITH LOVING THANKS

Dear Pastor Steve,

How can we possibly thank you and the congregation for your love, prayers and support for our family. Your visits and prayer meant so much to dad. He said so numerous times. Your kind and understanding support during dad's celebration of life was so appreciated. And please express our thanks and appreciation to the ladies who provided the wonderful meal for the family. It was so kind of them. Dad loved God and his church and it's easy to see why. Thank you again. God bless you.

Rudy and KuYon Ribbeck

February 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 2:00 Men's Open Basketball
3 AM Communion 6:00 Children's Ministry, Youth, Care Groups	4 Newsletter Deadline 6:30 AHG Room 13 7:00 Elizabeth, Readers & Ruth Circle Meetings	5 6:30 Barton Care Group 7:00 Burrell Care Group 7:00 Denver Circle Mtg.	6 10:30 Wed. Morn Care Grp. 6:30 Abernathy Care Group 7:00 Safety Committee Mtg	7 6:30 CE Committee Mtg. MTW Committee Mtg. 7:00 Adult Open Volleyball	8	9 7:00 Deacons' Meeting-CR 11:00 Best Years Valentine Party 2:00 Men's Open Basketball
10 6:00 Children's Ministry, Youth, Care Groups	11 6:30 AHG Room 13 6:30 Outreach Comm Mtg	12 6:30 Barton Care Group 7:00 Burrell Care Group	13 10:30 Wed. Morn Care Grp. 6:30 Abernathy Care Group Tech Team Mtg.	14 6:30 AHG Unit Meetings	15	16 8:00 Man Day 2:00 Men's Open Basketball
17 Pastor Thad's Installation	18 Newsletter Deadline 6:30 AHG Room 13 7:00 Facilities Comm Mtg	19 6:30 Barton Care Group 7:00 Burrell Care Group	20 10:30 Wed. Morn Care Grp. 6:30 Abernathy Care Group	21 7:00 Session Meeting-CR	22 Volleyball Tournament & Ice Cream- gym and FoH	23 2:00 Men's Open Basketball
24 <i>Gideon Presentation</i> 4:00 WIC Council Mtg. 6:00 Children's Ministry, Youth, Care Groups	25 6:30 AHG Room 13	26 6:30 Barton Care Group 7:00 Burrell Care Group	27 10:30 Wed. Morn Care Grp. 6:30 Abernathy Care Group	28 6:30 AHG Unit Meetings		

LIVE CHRISTMAS SCENES WIDELY APPRECIATED

“The scenes made Christmas come alive!”

That was the response of one of the guests who toured this year’s presentation of “The Journey of Joy,” our Live Christmas Scenes. Greeters and cast members heard many encouraging comments from those who came to see and hear our depiction of the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

“Wonderfully done!” one visitor said. “Such a special way to celebrate Christmas!” said another.

Over two cold, soggy nights in December we hosted 302 visitors to the Scenes. Snow and cold rain were far from ideal conditions for an outdoor, walk-through event. One performance of the three originally scheduled was canceled due to the weather. But on the nights we were able to go ahead, we heard expressions of gratitude like this one: “Thanks for not letting the weather hold back the production.”

Kevin Rhyne, Rick Herd and other leaders from our Outreach Events Committee estimate more than 140 FPC members and friends participated as characters, greeters, costumers, and safety and technical support personnel. And the response? Listen to some quotes gathered from guests:

“A highlight for the church family!” “Costumes were great!” “Wonderful experience!” “Well done!” “Y’all were awesome!”

One lady went out of her way to make the point: “I have been to 13-15 of these productions and this was the best I’ve ever seen!”

In an effort to continue meeting standards like those, and after a careful evaluation of this year’s experience, organizers already have several improvements in mind for the future.

One of the most telling comments from those who visited the Scenes was the one from the departing guest who said, “Looking forward to coming back again next year!”

FINANCIAL PEACE UNIVERSITY

The money class that will change your life!

Nine classes will be held at
CommonGround Family Life Center, 5481 Hickory Grove Road, Stanley
4:40 - 6:00 pm, Sundays, February 10 - April 7

Cost for the 9 sessions is \$109.

For more information or to sign up and order class materials,
visit their website at <https://fpu.com/1074244>.

FEBRUARY RESPONSIBILITIES



NURSERY (Volunteers should be in place at 10:00 am.)

- February 3:** **Babies:** Debbie, Lauren and Emma Harper
Toddlers: Heather Roberts; Olivia Fox
- February 10:** **Babies:** Alice Jessen; Joel Jessen; Olivia Fox
Toddlers: Lee and Kristen Henderson
- February 17:** **Babies:** Lauren Henderson; Ashleigh Fox; Anna-Kathryn Lamb
Toddlers: Scott, Suzy and Emma Deneen
- February 24:** **Babies:** Tracy and Bebe McMinn; Robin and Taylor Mundy
Toddlers: Lauren Henderson; Ashleigh Fox

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

- February 3: Communion**
February 10: Ron Smith
February 17: Chris Baker
February 24: Ken Dake

*Train a child in the way he should go, and
when he is old he will not turn from it.*

Proverbs 22:6

WITH OUR MISSIONARY FAMILY

Sid Druen writes: This semester I am preaching through Isaiah, in our RUF large group meetings at Davidson. We are looking at the character of God. This is personal for me, as trusting who God is got me through my bout of cancer (when it was and is difficult to know what He was doing).

Please pray for the Lord to continue to use his Word preached to profoundly challenge and comfort the hearts of students. And would you pray for God's wisdom and direction as I prepare messages on some of the more beautiful and difficult passages in the Bible?

Liviu Lepadatu writes: Pray for:

- Unity between Presbyterian Reformed Churches in Romania
- Opportunities to engage in a mission abroad, especially amongst Romanians in Europe
- Identification and equipping workers

HAPPY BIRTHDAY IN FEBRUARY

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 03 – Zoe Piteo (2017) | 21 – Diane Bakelaar |
| 04 – Krista Babel | 23 – Emanuel Lepadatu (2004) |
| 12 – Kyle Nachtergaele (1990) | 24 – Anita Chambers |
| 13 – Charles Davidson | 26 – Katelyn Comer (2010) |
| 20 – Eden Wadhams (2000) | 27 – Kenton Wood |

WITH OUR CHURCH FAMILY

In Memoriam



Jimmy Ray Abernathy
March 13, 1933 - January 15, 2019



Carolyn Rutledge
June 10, 1929 - January 22, 2019

Condolences are offered to **Brian and Anne Abernathy** and family in the death of Brian's dad and our fellow member **Jimmy Abernathy**. Jimmy suffered a heart attack in October and was never able to fully recover. He was 85 years old.

We also extend sympathies to **Roxi Rutledge** and family in the death of her mother and our fellow member **Carolyn Rutledge**. Carolyn has battled Alzheimer's Disease for several years. She was 89 years old.

Bill Digges, a PCA ruling elder and former member of the FPC Session, died January 20 in Saratoga, NY. He was 91. Bill and his wife Leona have remained in close contact with many of our members since they moved back to New York.

Charleen Schrum is doing well following surgery to place a stent in a blocked artery found during a heart cath on January 14. After spending one night in the hospital, she is staying with her son's family for recovery.

Daughter of **Chris and Danielle Abernathy**, **Kirsten Abernathy** had to spend one night in the hospital last week after she had a seizure. Kirsten is continuing treatments with Duke Medical.

Jerry Barton is at home recovering after scary complications following a heart valve implant last week. She underwent a 2nd surgery on Monday of this week to implant a pace maker.

DECEMBER FINANCIAL REPORT

Needed monthly for budget	65,149.24
Received in December for budget	73,131.16
Needed to date for budget	781,790.88
Received to date for budget	850,974.08
Needed monthly for Faith Promise	13,156.67
Received in December for Faith Promise	18,077.00
Needed to date for Faith Promise	157,880.04
Received to date for Faith Promise	158,228.00

Birthdays to Celebrate in February

- 1 Jake Fox
- 3 Chris Ham
Justin Jurina
- 5 Isaac Jessen
Dan Ormsby
- 6 Grace Kopka
Leslie Smith



- 7 Jack Revels
- 10 Howard Graham
- 11 Thad Davis
- 12 Naomi Treat

The Church Family is a twice-monthly publication of First Presbyterian Church
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e-mail: info@fpccstanley.org ♦ web site: www.fpccstanley.org

Senior Pastor, Steve Jessen ♦ Assistant Pastor, Thad Davis
Sunday School 9:00 AM ♦ Worship 10:15 AM



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

ARMORBEARER

Prayer Calendar – February 2019

First Presbyterian Church • Stanley, NC

Armorbearers were personal attendants of a warrior chieftain who accompanied him in dangerous missions; they held huge shields sometimes surrounding their leader to protect him. **Intercessory prayers** by church members can **protect** their leaders from “the flaming arrows of the evil one” and uphold them “that words may be given to me [Paul] in opening my mouth boldly to **proclaim** the mystery of the gospel” (Eph 6:16, 19)

A Prayer Prompter from God’s Word for February (Jonah’s Prayer Chap. 2, Sel.)

Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish, ² saying, “I called out to the LORD, out of my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice.³ For you cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas...all your waves and your billows passed over me.⁴ ...‘I am driven away from your sight; yet I shall again look upon your holy temple.’⁵ The waters closed in over me to take my life; the deep surrounded me; I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me forever; ...yet you brought up my life from the pit, O LORD my God.⁷ When my life was fainting away, I remembered the LORD, and my prayer came to you, into your holy temple...⁹ But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; Salvation belongs to the LORD!”¹⁰ And the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land.”

Pray for Pastors: Steve Jessen, Thad Davis, Dan King, & Chaplain Ivan Davis (TLC)

Pray daily as the Holy Spirit guides you in thinking about, and praying for our pastors. Some suggestions for prayer are included, but pray also as you are aware of other particular needs and concerns they may have.

Monday: To love God with all their heart, and to love others as themselves. (Matt. 27:37-39)

Tuesday: To trust the Lord completely for their wisdom, so that he will direct their daily path. (Prov. 3:5,6)

Wednesday: To pray always, putting on the armor of the Lord to stand against the wiles of the Devil. (Eph. 6:11ff)

Thursday: To love their wives and manage their family in ways that honor Christ. (Eph. 5:25, I Tim. 3:4,5)

Friday: That God’s word will be their reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. (II Tim 3:16)

Saturday: To care faithfully for the flock and have compassion for lost sheep. (John 10:16, Lk. 15:4)

Sunday: To empower them to preach and teach the Gospel in the power of the Spirit. (Matt. 4:23, Rom. 10:15).

Prayer for Our Ministry Leaders and Staff

Pray daily as the Holy Spirit guides you in thinking about, and praying for, our ministry leaders and staff:

Monday: Debbie Smith, Director, Child Development Center

Tuesday: Jimmie & Martha Sue Mitchell, Global Outreach

Wednesday: Lauren Henderson, Director of Christian Education and Children’s Ministry

Thursday: Lisa Revels, SOAR Director

Friday: Sandra Taylor, Administrative Assistant

Saturday: Eric Beam, Music Director

Prayer for Our Elders and Deacons

- 1 **Lynn Burrell:** A prayer of thanks to all at FPC that every year we have been able to meet or exceed our Faith Promise goals.
- 2 **Dean Chaney:** Pray for Libby's full recovery from some recent health challenges.
- 3 **Ken Dake:** Pray for Thad Davis as he works with our ministry with FPC youth and young adults.
- 4 **Ron Ensley:** Pray that God would give direction and bless the Personnel Committee in the work planned for 2019.
- 5 **Andrew Deese:** Please pray that my family and I would be good stewards of all God has given us.
- 6 **Ed Faggart:** Pray for God's protection and safe travels over the next few months.
- 7 **Mason Friesenhahn:** That my hand keeps healing, and that I get full motion with it soon.
- 8 **Mike Gamage:** Pray that God works through me, and all volunteers in SOAR youth volleyball, to touch the hearts of the players and parents, and encourage all of us in our walks with Jesus.
- 9 **Chris Graham:** For continued wisdom and Godly action regarding our aging parents.
- 10 **Mark Harper:** Pray that God will continue to give Debbie and myself wisdom as we navigate life with three teenagers and that all of our choices will be pleasing in His sight.
- 11 **Rick Herd:** Pray for a sibling that has health issues.
- 12 **Dillon Lamb:** Pray for Anna Kathryn and me as we prepare for our little girl coming in June.
- 13 **Matt Ormsby:** Pray for SOAR to have a successful volleyball season with a strong witness for Christ.
- 14 **Kevin Rhyne:** Pray for me to love others as myself.
- 15 **Robert Rhyne:** Pray for God's grace on my daily walk that I would truly trust Him to help me balance the following priorities in the right perspective: Faith, Family, Vocation.
- 16 **Will Robinson:** Pray for my many responsibilities with family, work, and business.
- 17 **Ronnie Smith:** Continue to pray for my son-in-law, David Griffin, and his family as they deal with the recent loss of his dad.
- 18 **Tracy Withers:** Please pray for my upcoming cataract surgeries being done in February.
- 19 **Jeremy Abernathy:** Pray for the people in our government that they look to God for the wisdom to make the right decisions for our country.
- 20 **Ryan Abernathy:** Pray that our CDC staff and teachers continue to have strength to share God's word and love with children that come each day.
- 21 **Chris Baker:** Please pray for a good number of my coworkers that will be laid off on 2/1. May they look to the Lord for guidance and comfort.
- 22 **Mark Beatty:** Please pray that I will be diligent and consistent in my Bible reading and prayer.
- 23 **Lynn Burrell:** Pray that our congregation will continue to grow in both faith and numbers in 2019.
- 24 **Dean Chaney:** Pray for families who have lost loved ones and for those who are unable to worship with us because of illness or limitations of aging.
- 25 **Ken Dake:** Pray for the Tech Team/Office staff as we explore using Church Management Software.
- 26 **Ron Ensley:** Pray that during my prayer time God would clearly show me my sin and convict me to confess and repent.
- 27 **Andrew Deese:** Pray that I would recognize, take advantage of, and have the wisdom to be a better witness to people I work with.
- 28 **Ed Faggart:** That God would protect our daughter, Sarah, and keep her safe in Chicago.

Praise and Thanksgivings

- Praise for finishing our year meeting our local and global financial needs and commitments.
- Praise for our new Asst. Pastor, Thad Davis and his family, Laura and children Lilli and Koen.
- Praise for the large group who are attending the Newcomers class.