

THE CHURCH FAMILY

Presenting Everyone Complete in Christ

FROM YOUR PASTOR'S DESK

We are starting 2021 with a sermon series called “Church Matters.” The goal is to describe the various organizational elements (matters) of the church. What are the ingredients that when mixed together form this entity known as the church? This encompasses matters such as worship, discipleship, leadership, partnership in missions, fellowship and membership just to name a few. Church matters are complex and multi-faceted, and trying to capture the essence of the church in a few descriptive words or even in a sermon series is near impossible.

But perhaps the best and simplest way to describe the church is a word picture that can found both in Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12. In these chapters we are called “*the body of Christ, and each one of you is part of it*” and “*The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ.*” The church is a living, breathing organism designed to carry out God’s purposes here on earth.

Last fall I read an excerpt from a book that helped me understand better how the body of Christ is designed to function. The book is called “*The Sacred Overlap: Learning to Live Faithfully in the Space Between,*” by J.R. Briggs, (Zondervan.) Here is the concept that struck me: “We are called to gather in Jesus’ name and also scatter in it. If all we do is gather, singing our songs and saying our prayers and listening politely to sermons without any intent to live all of it outside the church, it would be like taking a deep breath and never exhaling. It’s exhausting, unhealthy and eventually we’d turn blue and die. If all we do is scatter, busying ourselves with service projects, community events, and other meaningful endeavors, it would be like we’re exhaling and exhaling until there is nothing left in the tank. Eventually, we’d turn blue and die.” (From Christianity Today, October 2020, pg.76.)

A healthy church rhythm consists of breathing in through worship and the study of God’s Word, then breathing out into the world around us the hope of the Gospel through outreach and missions. My prayer for our church in 2021 is that our body would have vibrant life through a healthy balance of being filled with the Spirit, and then reaching out in the Spirit.

The second purpose of the series is to emphasize that Church does Matter. We reap wonderful spiritual benefits, and those around share in God’s blessings, when we participate in the Church - the inhaling/ exhaling body of Christ. As the New Year begins let’s all take a deep breath, and then breathe out the name of Jesus to a world suffocating in sin.

Church Matters!



FROM YOUR WORSHIP DIRECTOR

Linda, Madelyn and I are so happy to be here at First Presbyterian. From the personal welcomes, the cards and the additional blessings of homemade goodies we have been well received. I am getting to know people and have already enjoyed the fellowship of staff and musicians that I am getting to know. We look forward to what the Lord has in store for us as we co-labor here together for His glory. My goal is to see us all worship Him for who He is, while recognizing the blessing we have to be used by Him in order to share this wonderful gospel to a world that now more than ever needs it!

Blessings,
The Miskellys

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY UPCOMING EVENTS

Children's Ministry SOUPERBOWL Party! Sunday, February 7, 6:00-7:30 pm

Bring your favorite snack to share and an item for our food pantry.

Children's Ministry Valentine's Party! Sunday, February 14, 6:00-7:30 pm

Bring valentines for ALL of our Image Bearer friends. Dinner provided. More information coming and a list of friends will be provided at the end of January. Quarantine kiddos can be included in this! Send your valentines ahead of time and Ms. Lauren will deliver your box of goodies to your doorstep.

COMMUNITY BAG PROGRAM

Remember, you still have until January 31 to purchase a reusable Community Bag at the Stanley BI-LO for \$2.50. Buy a bag, fill it with non-perishables and drop it off at the church. Through the end of January, our Food Pantry will receive \$1 from each bag purchase. Thank you for supporting this ministry!

UPDATED DIRECTORY

Remember to send Sandra any updated information you want included in the church directory for your family. We are planning to distribute updated copies by the end of January.

You may email Sandra at info@fpcstanley.org or call the church during office hours.

WOMEN'S FEBRUARY CIRCLE MEETINGS

Monday, February 1, 6:30 pm:

Ruth Circle meets in the Parlor

Monday, February 1, 7:00 pm:

Elizabeth Circle meets in the Conference Room

Martha Circle meets at the home of Kathy Lineberger

Readers Circle meets in Founders Hall

If you are looking for a women's group to join, please see Lauren Henderson or simply pick one to visit.

BEST YEARS VALENTINE'S LUNCH THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 11:00 AM

We would like to show our love to the Best Years group in February with a little treat for Valentine's Day. We were certainly hoping to resume our in-person gatherings in 2021 but that is just not possible. So we hope you can participate in our Drive-Through Lunch!

We are providing a boxed lunch, drive through style, for those who sign up. The meal will include grilled chicken, fries, tossed salad and garlic bread. Drink will not be provided.

You can contact Sandra by email (info@fpccstanley.org) or phone (704-263-4275) to RSVP now. Sandra will send out a One Call Now automated message in a couple of weeks to remind you to RSVP if you haven't done so already. We must have a head count by February 4 so make sure you get your RSVP in if you want to enjoy lunch on us!

GASTON COUNTY COVID-19 VACCINATION

Gaston County is now scheduling appointments for the COVID-19 vaccination for those age 65 and older. The clinics are being held each Friday at the Gastonia Farmer's Market.

Appointments are required! Please visit this website for more information on how to register: gastonsaves.com/covid19vaccine/ or call 704-866-3170.

WITH LOVING THANKS

Our “over 80” senior adults were blessed by the church with a gift bag full of goodies at Christmas. Based on all of the notes and calls we received, they were more than excited! We don’t have room to print all of the thanks that were sent in but we wanted to share this one from FPC’s oldest living member:

Many thanks to our dear church family for continuing to remember us during this busy season. The holiday gift basket was a clever and much appreciated thought as the 6 of us gathered for a few days to celebrate.

As always, the many nice cards were enjoyed over and over as we read them and then looked up your pictures in the church album and reminisced. These are treasured moments to someone who is staying close to home these days so please know that we are grateful to still feel a part of FPC!

Most sincerely,

Helen Lieurance and Family

WITH OUR MISSIONARY FAMILY

Joel McCall has been team teaching on zoom, leading church leaders in Rwanda through the book of Hebrews. He asks for prayer for continuing prevention of zoom glitches and that when they encounter hardships to help them remember that the Father is always teaching His people to lean not on their own understanding and strength, but rather to lean into Him harder.

Bill and Pam Schweitzer write from the UK: For reasons both negative and positive, 2020 has certainly been a year to remember! It was both strange and difficult, yet we are thankful for the Lord’s many blessings nonetheless. May the Lord grant us all much strength and help for the new year before us.

Happy Birthday in February

04 – Krista Babel	23 – Emanuel Lepadatu (2004)
13 – Charles Davidson	24 – Anita Chambers
20 – Eden Wadhams (2000)	26 – Katelyn Comer (2010)
21 – Diane Bakelaar	27 – Kenton Wood
22 – Arklie Hooten	

WITH OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Charlotte Riopel is doing well and continues to recuperate at home following knee replacement surgery on December 29.

We are happy to see **Karen Ensley** doing well following outpatient surgery she had on New Years Eve.

We extend our Christian sympathies to **Ashley Abernathy** on the death of her grandfather. **Bill Watts** passed away on January 18!

We celebrate with 2 of our families who recently welcomed new grandbabies into their lives. **Essie Virginia Gillespie** was born on December 26, 2020 to **Michelle and Richard Gillespie**. Michelle is the daughter of **James and Marianne Magill**. **Jerry and Janet Ratchford** are so excited to announce the arrival of their first grandchild. **Amelia Jo Hines** was born January 8 to the Ratchfords' son and his wife, **Mark and Kaylee Hines**.

FEBRUARY NURSERY VOLUNTEERS

January 24th: Ashley Abernathy & Lauren Henderson

January 31st: Josh and Stacey Hall

February 7th: Robin & Taylor Mundy

February 14th: Lauren Henderson & Ashleigh Fox

February 21st: Greg & Amanda Huss, Maelin & Emery

February 28th: Lauren Henderson & Ashleigh Fox

(Volunteers should be in place at 10:15 am.)

DECEMBER FINANCIAL REPORT

Needed monthly for budget	60,967.16
Received in December for budget	80,617.29
Needed to date for budget	731,605.92
Received to date for budget	721,723.31
Needed monthly for Faith Promise	13,750.00
Received in December for Faith Promise	21,617.30
Needed to date for Faith Promise	165,000.00
Received to date for Faith Promise	188,210.93

You can find the full **2020 Financial Report** at fpstanley.org/giving.

Copies of the **2021 Budget Summary** are available on the literature display in the main hallway.

Birthdays to Celebrate in February

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| 1 Jake Fox | 16 Jeremy Burrell
Lee Henderson | 23 Julie Black |
| 3 Chris Ham | Brooklynn Stewart
Jake Teague | 24 Anita Chambers |
| 5 Isaac Jessen
Leith McAllister
Dan Ormsby | 17 Will Robinson | 25 Madeline Drenth
Janet Redding |
| 6 Grace Kopka
Leslie Smith | 18 Andrew Deese | 26 Wyatt Foster
Steve Jessen
Lauren MacDowell |
| 7 Jack Revels | 19 Claire Childers
Alice Jessen
Max Rust | 27 Mike Kelly |
| 10 Howard Graham | 20 Jared Hamrick
Matt Ormsby | 28 Kelsey Smith |
| 12 Naomi Treat | 21 Tamara Burrell
Kaitlyn Mesimer | |

The Church Family is a monthly publication of First Presbyterian Church
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E-mail: info@fpstanley.org • Website: www.fpstanley.org
Senior Pastor, Steve Jessen • Pastoral Care, Dan King
Worship-Mask Required 8:30 AM • Sunday School 9:30 AM • Worship-Mask Optional 10:30 AM



512 Old Mt. Holly Road
Stanley, North Carolina 28164

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

ARMORBEARER

Prayer Calendar – February 2021

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 in opening my mouth boldly to **proclaim** the mystery of the gospel.” (Eph 6:16, 19)

Looking to the Lord Enthroned Forever - Psalm 9

*“I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds. ² I will be glad and exult in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High. ³ When my enemies turn back, they stumble and perish before your presence... ⁷ But the **Lord sits enthroned forever**; he has established his throne for justice, ⁸ and he judges the world with righteousness; he judges the peoples with uprightness. ⁹ The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. ¹⁰ And those who know your name **put their trust in you, for you, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek you.** ¹¹ Sing praises to **the Lord, who sits enthroned** in Zion! Tell among the peoples his deeds! ... ¹³ Be gracious to me, O Lord! See my affliction from those who hate me, O you who lift me up from the gates of death, ¹⁴ that I may recount all your praises, that in the gates of the daughter of Zion may rejoice in your salvation... ¹⁵ The nations have sunk in the pit that they made; in the net that they hid, their own foot has been caught. ¹⁶ The Lord has made himself known; he has executed judgment; the wicked are snared in the work of their own hands... ¹⁸ For the needy shall not always be forgotten, and the hope of the poor shall not perish forever. ¹⁹ Arise, O Lord! Let not man prevail; let the nations be judged before you! ²⁰ Teach them to fear you, Lord. Let the nations know that they are merely human. Selah” Psalm 9 (sel)*

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

Pray 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)

Pray 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: Brian Miskelly, Worship/Choir Director

Pray for Our Elders and Deacons

- 1 **Matt Ormsby:** Pray for everyone in our church dealing with COVID-19 within their family.
- 2 **Grady Rhyne:** Pray for the TLC staff and residents as they continue to need God's help in this difficult time of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 3 **Kevin Rhyne:** Pray for the Lord to quell the level of hatred for other people that exists in the hearts of so many of our fellow countrymen.
- 4 **Robert Rhyne:** For my family as we adjust to life without Mom/Mamaw Barbara. I still catch myself almost picking up the phone to call her, to see how her day is going and if she watched the ballgame.
- 5 **Will Robinson:** Pray for the new worship director as he guides our worship and praise team.
- 6 **Ron Smith:** Pray for Debbie's brother Butch dealing with a number of health issues.
- 7 **Tracy Withers:** Pray for me as I adjust to trying to live a healthier lifestyle due to some health issues I am having.
- 8 **Ryan Abernathy:** Pray that the Lord continues to strengthen and protect Elizabeth as we are expecting in June.
- 9 **Jeremy Abernathy:** Pray for the ministry with our Sunday school children and Image Bearers.
- 10 **Chip Beatty:** Pray for help and guidance for the deacons moving forward with new projects in 2021.
- 11 **Lynn Burrell:** Pray that I will make Jesus a larger part of my everyday life.
- 12 **Ken Dake:** Pray for Ethan's Eagle project of creating a path around the church property. We hope to get that back on track this month.
- 13 **Ron Ensley:** Pray that God would give me relief from the continuing back pain I am experiencing.
- 14 **Mason Friesenhahn:** Pray for my fire department family that the Lord keeps us safe and healthy through all this difficult time.
- 15 **Mike Gamage:** Pray for the health of all those volunteering and participating in SOAR Volleyball ministry this year.
- 16 **Chris Graham:** Pray for complete recovery from a long illness in January.
- 17 **Don Hensley:** Pray for those who have lost their jobs during this pandemic including my nephew.
- 18 **Joel Jessen:** Pray that I would make the best use of my time and use it to honor Christ.
- 19 **Dillon Lamb:** Pray for all the new elders and deacons who are starting terms of service.
- 20 **Dan Ormsby:** Pray that God will give me wisdom and guidance serving as an elder this year.
- 21 **Matt Ormsby:** Pray that our country and its leaders will look to God for His help and guidance.
- 22 **Grady Rhyne:** Pray for our country in this time of transition and division; that leaders will seek the Lord's help and direction to lead us aright.
- 23 **Kevin Rhyne:** Pray daily for God to reveal my personal sins and move me to repent once shown them.
- 24 **Robert Rhyne:** For both spiritual and physical health to be able to stand firm in my witness as a Christian leader for my church and my family.
- 25 **Will Robinson:** Pray for the new staff director leading our worship and praise team.
- 26 **Ron Smith:** Pray for the healing for our nation.
- 27 **Tracy Withers:** Pray for our son, Chris, and his family as they transition to moving into a new house.
- 28 **Ryan Abernathy:** Pray that God will use all the challenges in the world to present opportunities to share His word.

Praise and Thanksgivings

- Praise God for the provision of our new worship/choir staff person.
- Praise God for exceeding our Faith-Promise Goal for giving in 2021 in spite of the many issues of 2020! And also for the positive report of our finances overall during the testing of 2020. Thank God for those overseeing our finances!
- Thanks and praise for a good restart of Sunday School and Youth and Life groups.