

THE CHURCH FAMILY

Presenting Everyone Complete in Christ

FROM YOUR PASTOR'S DESK

You have heard the expression “absence makes the heart grow fonder.” I have experienced that in a very personal way. I asked Julie to marry me our senior year of college, but with a condition: “I want you to be my wife, but you will have to wait.” Prior to our engagement God had called me to serve for 15 months with the Spearhead Mission project in Mexico City. Now this was long before FaceTime, Skype, cheap international calls, texting, and email. We were limited to occasional letters and quick 5-minute phone calls that cost \$20. But in that absence our hearts did indeed grow fonder for each other. The goodbyes and time apart were heart wrenching, but the reunion at the end was oh so sweet! Our relationship was strengthened by the distance, and our commitment to each other deepened despite the physical separation.

Paul writes his letter to the Philippian church from prison in Rome. He has been physically separated from them but his love for them has not diminished. *“I thank my God in all my remembrance of you... It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.”* Philippians 1:3,7-8 (ESV) In this time apart from one another physically, we can still enjoy closeness as we rest in our bonds of love forged by God’s grace.

In a matter of days all of our plans for being together as a church have been put on hold. And I have to admit I felt disappointment because God has been at work in exciting ways and we seemed to be gaining momentum in many areas. But, just as Paul’s ministry continued from the isolation of prison, God’s work will continue, even with the separation and social distancing necessitated by the COVID-19 virus. Paul puts this “interruption” to our church ministry in perspective when he writes, *“And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”* Philippians 1:6 (ESV) God’s work will not be thwarted, He is working now, He will work in the future until His purposes are fulfilled in and through us.

I believe one of the positive outcomes of this unprecedented situation in our world and in our church is that it can help our hearts grow fonder for each other. Instead of damaging our sense of community it can enhance it. And think how sweet it will be when we can be together again. In the meantime, don’t hesitate to call if you need anything and know that *“In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.”* Philippians 1:4-5 (NIV)

With the affection of Christ Jesus,



Sermons &
Online
Worship
Services

Tune in to our online worship at www.fpcstanley.org
each week starting at 10:15 AM Sunday morning.

Even in our separation we can be united in worship!

FROM YOUR ASSISTANT PASTOR'S DESK

HE WHO SHOUTS LOUDEST...

If you've ever been in a large group waiting for something important to happen, like a middle school field trip right before lunch time, then you've heard someone trying to get everyone's attention with 'hey, listen up.' Maybe they've whistled, clapped, or even yelled. But at some point the loudest voice cuts through the cacophony with a definitive call to pay attention.

This week there have been many voices vying for attention, emails explaining companies' concerns for Covid-19, memes pointing out the various ironies of this pandemic, and constant talking heads reviewing the proper response to this serious situation.

So let me suggest listening to God and His wisdom (Proverbs 1:7). His might not seem the loudest voice, but the more we listen to that "still small voice" (1 Kings 19:12) the more our ears are tuned to listen both in the calm and the storm (Mark 4:35-41). We need reminders to tune in to God's Word, the teachings of believers throughout history (in peacetime and during global plagues), our parents and pastors who care more about us, and hearing how other Christians apply God's Word in trying times (see below). And David's proportional guidance, "Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God," (Psalm 62:11) will help inform our thoughts and guide our hearts to our heavenly haven of hope.

Cameron Cole's Article, "How to Talk to Children About the Coronavirus":

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/children-coronavirus/>

Paul Tripp's article on healthy fear:

<https://www.paultripp.com/wednesdays-word/posts/its-okay-to-fear-coronavirus>

Article World Magazine's Latest Updates:

<https://world.wng.org/magazine/latest>

World Magazine's Biblically grounded podcast:

<https://world.wng.org/radio/worldandeverything>

Thad

NEED HELP?



Your church family is here to help you. Please contact the church office, your elder, your deacon or one of the pastors if you have a need. If you are in the Best Years category and need food, medicine, supplies, etc. please do not hesitate to let us know!



A WORD FROM OUR CHRISTIAN ED DIRECTOR

“What does this mean, Mom? We aren’t going to church?” The disappointment in Ashleigh’s voice was thick when she asked me this question. I am so grateful that she loves her church and church family.

If you are like me, you not only LOVE your church family, but you NEED them. When I miss worship for illness or other issues, I find that it drags my body and spirit to a low place. First Presbyterians also value their Sunday School classes and Life Groups as well. Both adults and children alike are used to sitting back and allowing others to pour God’s Word into our hearts and minds. Times like this are going to require that we actively pursue opportunities for spiritual growth that may not come as easily as attending a class once or twice a week.

What does this mean? This means that you are going to need to add some things to your thought processes in preparation for another odd Sabbath.

As a leader in your family, there is no time like the present to begin these things:

- 1) **Look around at the souls in your family.** Remember that regardless of whether or not we meet as a church body, the responsibility of your family’s spiritual growth has been placed by God into your hands. Each of their souls matter deeply, and they will need to be taught!
- 2) **Choose a dedicated place and time to teach their hearts and minds.** Find the place in your house that makes the most sense to gather together. If you are using technology, the living room might be key. If not, a kitchen table works well. Let your family know that you expect them all to be present at that particular time with their Bible in their hand and their hearts in the right place.
- 3) **Set your heart to the right posture.** We as your teachers and staff work really hard to set our hearts to a humble dependency upon the Lord before we walk into teach our students. You can do the same. Spend some time in prayer before your family gathers, asking the Lord to use you and open their hearts.
- 4) **Explore and use your resources.** We hope to give you technological access to our worship service (stay tuned!). We will be offering Image Bearer lessons online that ANY child can use (stay tuned!). You have full access to all of the material on Right Now Media. (Contact Sandra if you can’t remember your log-in information.) Email Lauren and ask for help. Whatever it takes! There is an endless source of material at your disposal.
- 5) **Pray, Read and Dwell.** Incorporate different elements into your time together. Pray as a family. Ask your children what they would like to pray for and about. Read the Word. Discuss it as a family.

“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” – Deuteronomy 6:5-9

In His service,





All of our normal church services and activities have been cancelled until further notice. As you can see, this newsletter edition follows a little different format from our usual. With the cancellation of in-person meetings and activities, we want to specifically point out the postponement/cancellation of the following special activities previously planned for the upcoming weeks:

- ◆ Ladies' Spring Outing to Sims BBQ
- ◆ Children's Easter Egg Hunt
- ◆ Best Years April Event
- ◆ Maundy Thursday Worship/Communion Service

Listen for announcements in the future for the rescheduled dates of the ladies' outing and the children's egg hunt.



HELEN LIEURANCE IS CELEBRATING 100 YEARS!



On March 29th, our long-time member **Mrs. Helen Lieurance** will celebrate her **100th birthday!** Unfortunately, the celebration planned for that afternoon here at the church has been cancelled.

The cancellation of Helen's public birthday celebration is a big disappointment to Helen and her family. Since we are unable to fellowship with Helen on her special day, her family would like to encourage our FPC family to send her birthday cards and notes. Receiving mail is something that brings Helen great joy! Helen's address is 1111 Stanley-Lucia Road, Mt. Holly, NC 28120. Let's make this time special for Helen and remind her how much we love her and miss her at church each week.



COLLEGE GIFT COLLECTION CONTINUES

Monetary donations to be used to purchase gift cards for our college students continue to be collected during the month of March. There is no shopping for you to do. All you have to do is make a donation (check or cash) and we'll do the rest!

Although we are not currently meeting on Sundays, you have several options for contributing:

- ⇒ Mail in your check with "College Gift" referenced on the memo line.
- ⇒ Stop by the church office and give your donation to Sandra.
- ⇒ Place your donation in the black lock box in the window of the SOAR office.

SUMMER CAMP SCHOLARSHIPS

Every year our CE Team helps our children and youth with their summer camp expenses! The only requirement is that you are going to a “faith-based” camp. Please send a copy of your camp registration form along with the total price for your stay to Lauren Henderson and she will submit it with the others. The amount of the scholarship will depend on the requests that we receive. The deadline for submitting a request is May 31st. Lauren will be in touch with you after this date.

WITH OUR MISSIONARY FAMILY

Members of our missionary family are serving in many countries around the world. Pray for God’s protection and peace during this time of concern over the spread of the Coronavirus.

HAPPY APRIL BIRTHDAY

02 – Katy Janicek	06 – Michael Cochran
03 – Ana Santana	09 – Karen Weaver
04 – Carrie Dirks	22 – Garry Chambers
Anna F. (2007)	24 – Robin White
Michaela Wadhams (2007)	26 – Suzanne S.
05 – Melissa Hunt	27 – Jonathan J. (2013)
	29 – Fox Cochran



DO YOU HAVE THE MISSING PIECE?

One of our Church History books is missing from its home in the Library. If you borrowed the book containing the 2000-2009 history, please return it to the church office as soon as possible.

Our history books include a lot of irreplaceable documents and even the replaceable items would take a lot of time and energy to gather or re-create. We welcome our church family to view these books but ask that they not be removed from the library. Thank you for helping us keep this information safe.

WITH OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Christian sympathies are extended to **Mark, Debbie, Emma, Lauren and Clay Harper** in the death of Mark's mother. **Velda Harper** passed away on February 20 after a long battle with Lymphoma.

Charlie Stewart had gall bladder surgery on February 28 and was released shortly afterwards for recovery at home. After being admitted to the hospital on February 29 for testing, **Robert Billings** was released for treatment at home for damage caused by high acid reflux. On March 2, **Garry Lucas** underwent outpatient knee replacement surgery. Garry was actually the one to call the church on his way home to give us an update. We are glad to report **Ann R. Smith** (Phyllis's mom) is doing much better after spending a week in the hospital for treatment of pneumonia and other viral infections.

As many of you are aware, **Ann Featherstone** is battling dementia. She continues to live at home but spends a lot of time alone while her family works. Ann's family would love for more people to visit with her. She is missing conversation and interaction with others as she is no longer able to drive, basically home bound. At least while the Coronavirus is an issue we would ask that you call the church office before you visit so we can verify with Ann's family that she is well. At the same time, please do not visit with Ann, or any of our members, if you have any reason to believe you are not well.

Our church has many shut-ins in nursing homes that are unable to receive visitors at this time. If you are able, now is a great time to drop them a note to let them know you are thinking of them.

WITH LOVING THANKS

Margaret and I would like to thank all of the Friends of First Presbyterian Church who so generously prayed for us, sent us cards, visits and most of all prayer after Margaret's accident. It really relieves a lot of pressure knowing that all of you wonderful people were thinking about us. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts. It is great to be associated with such wonderful people.

Doug and Margaret Gladden



COMMUNITY VETERAN'S DAY EVENT

We would like to gather information on all of our FPC church family who are veterans. This information is being gathered for a special community Veteran's Day event being planned. If you are a veteran, active or inactive, please contact Sandra in the church office. You can call her at 704-263-4275 or email her and she can respond back with the needed information.

ONLINE GIVING NOW AVAILABLE

We have now added a new secure option for you to contribute financially to FPC. There is a “Giving” link now available on our website. In order to access it just follow these simple steps:

- Visit our website at www.fpcstanley.org.
- Click on “GIVING.”
- Click on the “Give Online” Icon 
- Enter the amount of your gift and, from the drop down menu, select where your offering is to be designated. Select the frequency of your gift. Complete this page by providing your email address and full name.
- Click “Continue.”
- Complete the final step by entering your offering source details. Please note there is a fee which varies depending on your method of payment. You will be given details and the option to cover the fee if you desire.
- Click “Give \$<amt> now” to submit your gift.

We hope you will find this option convenient at any time, but especially during this period of not gathering for worship. Please note that you can still bring your offering to the church office or mail it in. If you bring your offering when the church office is not open, you may drop your offering in the designated box behind the door in the mailroom.

If you have any questions, please contact the church office.

GIDEONS’ LOVE OFFERING

The Gideons International sent a note of thanks for the love offering that was given last month. The total received for the Gideons from FPC was \$2,576.00. Thank you for your gifts!

FEBRUARY FINANCIAL REPORT

Needed monthly for budget	60,967.16
Received in February for budget	49,833.29
Needed to date for budget	121,934.32
Received to date for budget	107,812.23
Needed monthly for Faith Promise	13,750.00
Received in February for Faith Promise	38,575.00
Needed to date for Faith Promise	27,500.00
Received to date for Faith Promise	55,944.00

Birthdays to Celebrate in April

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| 1 Keith Black
Fletcher Drenth | 10 Bentley Beatty
Doug Lamb
Sydney Underwood | 17 Hadley Rumfelt | 24 Johan Vandepoll |
| 2 Terri Fowler | 11 Casey Ham | 19 Ellen Deese | 26 Monnie Blackman
Joseph Deese
Lisa Grice
Liam Robinson |
| 3 Sallie McAllister | 12 Rachel Baker
Mary Rankin | 20 Brent Grice
Gavin Hare
Emery Huss | 28 Sharon Herd
Emily Revels |
| 4 Tony Beam
Brad Heath
Chris McAllister | 15 Alyssa Lowery | 21 Aubrey Brooks | 30 Selena Little |
| 5 Cathy Rhyne | 16 Courtney Greeson
Dorcas Murphy
Jacob Rhyne
Charlie Stewart | 22 Garry Chambers
Nathan Chitwood | |
| 7 Chip Beatty | | 23 Karen Ensley | |
| 8 Tommy Deese | | | |

The Church Family is a 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 ♦ Pastoral Care, Dan King
Sunday School 9:00 AM ♦ Worship 10:15 AM



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

ARMORBEARER

Prayer Calendar – April 2020
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)

Prayer Prompt for the Lenten /Easter -- Colossians 1:15-20

1 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.

17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. 19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Pray for Pastors Steve Jessen, Thad Davis, 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sun.: 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

Prayer for Our Elders and Deacons

- 1 **Will Robinson:** Pray for Sarah's pregnancy as she is due this month.
- 2 **Ronnie Smith:** Pray for more teachers to support the Men's Sunday School class.
- 3 **Tracy Withers:** Pray for my family as we struggle to deal with many illnesses and health issues.
- 4 **Ryan Abernathy:** I pray that God will continue to bless our men's study and allow it to work in our lives to grow us into better men.
- 5 **Jeremy Abernathy:** Pray for our family as my Grandmother is in hospice.
- 6 **Chris Baker:** Pray that our family and church family will make the most of remembering the cross and celebrating the resurrection.
- 7 **Chip Beatty:** Pray that Deacon/Elder shepherds can find ways to help those who may need it during these difficult times.
- 8 **Lynn Burrell:** Pray for positive outcome from upcoming surgical review appointment.
- 9 **Ken Dake:** Pray for the continued treasurer software process as we work to make it more streamlined and useful for the future.
- 10 **Ron Ensley:** Prayers for my sister Pat Howard as she recovers from removal of her spleen; for her healing and a good report on post surgery tests.
- 11 **Mason Friesenhahn:** Pray for daily strength to serve at work, home, and with my family and church.
- 12 **Mike Gamage:** Please pray for fruit from the seeds planted during SOAR Volleyball season.
- 13 **Chris Graham:** For the gospel seeds planted in SOAR Volleyball to blossom by the power of the Holy Spirit!
- 14 **Mark Harper:** Please pray for safety for our kids, as well as those in our church family and our local schools. Grant them wisdom and guidance to make good decisions in all they do.
- 15 **Don Hensley:** God's healing hand to be upon our grandchildren to get them through this cold and flu season and also the children of our church.
- 16 **Dillon Lamb:** Pray that God will guide Anna-Kathryn and me and give us wisdom to raise Audrey to love Jesus.
- 17 **Dan Ormsby:** Pray for wisdom in deciding if I should move my studio to my home or continue to work in Charlotte.
- 18 **Matt Ormsby:** Pray that Sam and all the children of our church learn more about Jesus and trust Him.
- 19 **Grady Rhyne:** Pray for my grandson Nathan to get involved with our youth programs.
- 20 **Kevin Rhyne:** Pray for revelation of the Lord's will to the officers on how the church may best use the next door property for His kingdom building.
- 21 **Will Robinson:** Pray for our family with a new arrival expected.
- 22 **Ronnie Smith:** Pray that I would make more time to pray for and visit those on my shepherd lists.
- 23 **Tracy Withers:** Pray for our son Maxton as he is in Europe where this virus seems to be worsening.
- 24 **Ryan Abernathy:** Pray that God continues to protect my family and our church through this troubling time.
- 25 **Jeremy Abernathy:** Pray for our Deacon ministry to those in our church family and beyond.
- 26 **Chris Baker:** Pray that I look for God's guidance during transitions I am having to make at work.
- 27 **Chip Beatty:** Pray for the ongoing work of the music team as we help with Sunday worship
- 28 **Lynn Burrell:** Pray for my siblings that they will receive Christ.
- 29 **Ken Dake:** Please pray for Eric as he considers the next steps in his education.
- 30 **Ron Ensley:** Pray for God's guidance and blessings in my preparation for teaching in the Fellowship Sunday School class.
- 31 **Mason Friesenhahn:** Pray for wise use of time to serve faithfully at home, with my family, and in our deacons work at church.

Praise and Thanksgivings

- Praise for God's goodness in making the next door property available for church purchase!
- Praise for God's work with our men: the 40 Day Challenge and the "Man Day" projects that build fellowship among the men, provide help for those who need it, and complete needy projects at FPC.