



FIRST WORDS

MARCH 2024



Loving God.
Loving our neighbors.
Because Christ loves us first.



Friends,

A clergy colleague asked me, “How’s it feel to be back in your old church?” I answered, “The church is doing well and I’m having a great time.”

Both responses are true. It does my heart good to see the church doing well. I continue to meet with various councils, committees, and the session. Positive things are happening! Church leadership is determined to proceed forth with a robust ministry during this time between pastors. To that end, important news is unfolding in March:

- The Session has called a congregational meeting for March 10 to hear a report from the church’s nominating committee and to elect a Pulpit Nominating Committee (PNC) who will carry out the search for a new senior pastor. At the congregational meeting, a slate of names will be presented, placed in nomination, and voted upon.
- The Session heard from the interim search committee the progress of their work. There are some necessary procedural steps that are in process. If all goes well, I believe the Session will be making an announcement about a permanent interim pastor sometime in March.

- The Session appointed a Transition Team whose purpose is to ensure that the mission and ministry of the church is being fulfilled during the transition period and to ensure that the congregation is being informed about the work of the church, including information surrounding the process of calling a new senior pastor. This team will work with the Session, the interim pastor, and Elizabeth, our covenant associate pastor.
- The Session, understanding that now is the time to make decisions about the manse, appointed a Manse Committee to evaluate the current condition of the manse and to bring forth (1) a detailed description of minimal necessary repairs with cost estimates and (2) a detailed description of a plan to renovate the manse with cost estimates.

During Lent, we are heading toward Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter. Lent is a time for us to take stock of our spiritual life and refocus our heart, mind, and soul toward Jesus, our Christ.

Blessings,

Sid



As the month of March begins, we find ourselves deep into this season of Lent: a time of penitence and repentance, all with the promise of Easter on the horizon. One of the spiritual practices of Lent is self-reflection, intentional times when one may stop and take a moment to consider not only who they are, but who's they are. It is the practice of being intentional with our reading of scripture, our practice of hospitality, and our time spent in devotion. It seems most appropriate then, that during this time of year, our 6th and 7th graders have begun the process of discerning what they believe so that they may be ready to present their personal statement of faith before the session as they are confirmed into the church. It is always a joy of mine to discuss the whole idea of what we believe. I discover something new about my own beliefs every time I take part in such a discussion and it is an honor to be able to do so with our young people. While it is good to slow down and focus on a spiritual practice, it is also good to engage in all the ministries that the church has to offer. And we offer a lot!

Here's what to look forward to this month:

Storytime with the Littles: Preschool

We will meet for a Bible lesson and craft for 3 Sundays this month (3/3, 3/10, and 3/17) at 5:15 pm. We meet in the first preschool room on the right as you enter from the parking lot or in the library.

Bible Club: K-5th Grade

We will meet for a Bible Lesson focused on a different word for Lent, Handbells/chimes, and choir at 5:15 pm for 3 Sundays this month (3/3, 3/10, and 3/17).

On Sunday, March 3rd, our Bible Club kids will sing and play handbells/chimes during the worship service. Kids need to be in the sanctuary that morning at 9:30 am to rehearse.

Confirmation: 6th and 7th Grade

Our confirmands have begun writing their own statements of faith. We will meet for 2 more Sundays (3/3 and 3/10) at 5:15 pm as we continue to talk

about what we believe. Confirmands will meet with their elder mentors this month and will work with me as they finish their statements.

On March 17th, the session will convene that morning at 8:30 am to have breakfast and hear each confirmand present their statement of faith.

After Easter, the youth will start Youth Sunday planning, which is scheduled for Sunday, April 21st.

High School Youth: 8th-12th Grade

We meet 3 Sundays this month (3/3, 3/10, and 3/17) at 5:15 pm in the youth room. We'll fellowship and have a discussion around one of the 10 commandments on 3/3 and 3/10. On 3/17, we'll play games. After Easter, the youth will focus on planning for Youth Sunday, which is scheduled for Sunday, April 21st.

Holy Week Events for Children:

Palm Sunday Worship, 3/24

Children from PreK up through 5th grade will process into worship waving palms and will sing Hosanna.

Egg Hunt, 3/24, 3-4:30 pm

Children from PreK up through 5th grade will gather at the church to hear the Easter Story, enjoy a snack, and of course, go on an egg hunt. Everyone who hunts for eggs will receive their own bag of Easter treats. Registration begins at 2:45 pm in the fellowship hall.

Important Upcoming Dates:

3/3—K-5th grade kids sing in worship

3/17—Confirmands present their faith statement during a called session meeting

3/24—Palm Sunday processional in worship

—Annual Easter egg hunt for K-5th graders

3/31—Easter flowering the cross and breakfast

4/21—Youth Sunday

Our Women's Ministry continues to meet each month as well. Here are upcoming women's study dates:

3/4: Women's Afternoon Circle in the Parlor at 1 pm

3/7: Bible Journaling in the library at 6 pm

3/21: Women's Evening Circle off campus at 5:30 pm

I'll see everyone soon!

Pastor Elizabeth



Special Music and Events in March

Sunday, March 3rd - K-5 Kids will be playing chimes, handbells and singing during the morning worship service.

Sunday, March 10th - Adult Handbells will be playing during morning worship.

Sunday, March 17th - Emily Pope will be singing "Man of Sorrows" written by Steffany Gretzinger and Mitch Wong.

He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. (Isaiah 53:3)

The singer/songwriter, Steffany, began the song as a prayer in her journal following her father's death. Still feeling the sorrow of losing her father, who had been a pastor, she realizes that Jesus, was associated with sadness and

pain as he ministered to the throngs of desperate people, knowing that He himself would be facing the cross. The prophet Isaiah was the first to call him the "man of sorrows" but the songwriter invites us to get to know this man of suffering.

Sunday, March 24th Palm Sunday

K-5 Kids will bring in the palms during the Introit. The choir will perform a powerful new anthem, "Mercy" with Mia Alvarez as the soloist.

Thursday, March 28th Maundy Thursday Service at 7:00 pm

Living Last Supper (Ruth Elaine Schram) will be presented by a cast of disciples, the sanctuary choir, and string accompaniment. Nick Townsend, vocalist, will be performing "Requiem" by Rhett Barnwell during the presentation. Blair Chance is serving as the director of the program.

Sunday, March 31st Easter Sunday

Brandon Lucas and Walter Chavez, Trumpets

Justin Murphy, French horn

Brass players from Campbell University will be coming to accompany the choir on "Crown Him" by Dan Forrest.



February was a busy and fun month for the 5-day class. The



children learned about dental hygiene and how important it is to take care of our teeth. They practiced writing their names and the letters D & R. We also talked about Punxsutawney Phil and Ground Hog Day. We learned about shadows and made some on the wall. Friendship Week was one of our favorites so far. The children talked about what makes a good friend. They made a friendship quilt and had a Fancy Friendship Feast. Community Helper Week was packed full of fun things. We had a special visit from the Dunn Police Department.

The 5-day class also celebrated their 100th day of school by dressing like 100-year-old people. Oh, and who could forget the Rainforest? This was such an interesting week. We put a crocodile in water and watched him over the process of the week grow 60 times his size! As always, we are both so grateful for the privilege to spend time with these amazing people every week.



Announcements

March Upcoming Sundays

3 MEN OF THE CHURCH BREAKFAST
TWO CENTS A MEAL

10 DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME - SPRING
FORWARD

17 FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

24 PALM SUNDAY
EASTER EGG HUNT

31 EASTER SUNDAY
COVERED DISH BREAKFAST
FLOWERING OF THE CROSS

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

**Men of the
Church
Breakfast**

March 3rd at 8:30 AM



Help us give them a Happy Easter!

Our church family has been asked by the Harnett County Department of Social Services to help provide 75 Easter baskets this year to the children in foster care.

The Deacons will be purchasing the baskets, candy, and grass but we are asking the congregation's help in providing ***non-candy items such as small stuffed animals, books, crayons, coloring books, play dough, small toys, bubbles, or anything that a child might enjoy.*** Some additional ideas for tweens and teenagers: **personal hygiene items, toothbrushes, body wash, ear pods, pens, pencils, etc.** Monetary donations for this project are also very welcome.

We need all donations by Sunday, March 17th.

There will be a box for donations in the Narthex and outside the church office for the next few weeks.

Thank you very much for sharing God's love.

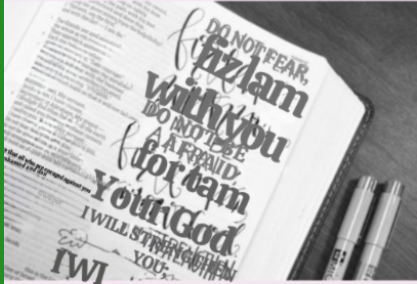
The Board of Deacons



SMALL GROUP FOR WOMEN

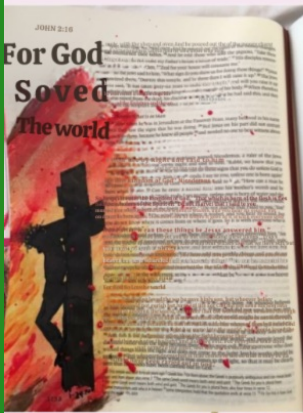
Bible Journaling

A time for devotion and Biblical journaling, which seeks to inspire creativity in art or other expressions.

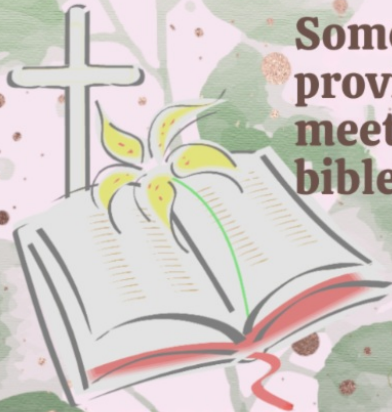


Thursday, March 7th
@ 6:00
CHURCH LIBRARY

Bible journaling is not just about drawing, but it's about reflecting on scripture and our study of it through images and symbols and other artistic expression.



Some supplies will be provided; for first meeting bring bible/journal with you.

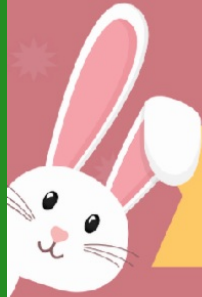


**FOR MORE INFORMATION: CONTACT EITHER
PASTOR ELIZABETH OR ELYSE JOHNSON**



EASTER EGG *Hunt*

THERE WILL BE CRAFTS, THE EASTER
STORY, SNACKS, EASTER PHOTO BOOTH,
A HOT DOG LUNCH
AND EGG HUNT!



SUNDAY, MARCH 24
2:45 PM



All children (5th grade and under) are invited to join in on the fun. Children 4 and under need a parent present. Make sure to bring your own Easter Basket!



HOLY WEEK AT FPC

Palm Sunday – March 24

**Palm Sunday Service at 10:30 am
Family Easter Egg Hunt at 2:45 pm**

Maundy Thursday – March 28

The Living Last Supper at 7:00 pm

Easter Sunday – March 31

**Covered Dish Breakfast &
Flowering of the Cross – 9:00 am
Easter Worship Service – 10:30 am**

Praying for Our Church Family

Cora Sue Beasley
Barbara Byrd
Barbara Godwin
T.C. Godwin
Elease Hodges

Ligon Holder
Dave Mason
Wayne Smith
Rick Stephenson

Praying for Others

Stephen Bath (Pam Kelly)
John Beasley (Rick Stephenson)
Thomas Corbin (Linda Grisier)
Emily Cottle (Janet Mobley)
Arlene Duff (mother of Michelle Powell-Duff)
Phillip Gaines (Morgan Colmenero)
Becky Glover (Betty Byrd)
Susan Grissom (Betty Byrd)
Floy Hamilton (Si Harrington)
Paula Harman (Patsy Powell)

Skippy Jackson (Butch Warren)
Justin Johnston (Keith Williams)
Perry & Pam Lewis (Pam Strickland)
Mitch Mason (Harry Byrd)
Sarah Shields (Butch Warren)
Laura Tyndall (Cora Sue Beasley)
Steve Watson (father of Melissa Stevens)
C.B. Williams (Harry Byrd)
Donna Williams (sister of Bonnie Bayles)



Nursery Attendants

March 3 - Paula Pope
March 10 - Paula Pope
March 17 - Ryan & Trina Brackman
March 24 - Jason & Millie Jones
March 31 - Ligon Holder

Acolytes

March 3 - Hudson White
March 10 - Maggie White
March 17 - Lincoln Jones
March 24 - Piper Smith
March 31 - Ella Williams

Broadcast & Sound Team

March 3 - Cole Stevens & Bryant Pope
March 10 - Andy Wermel & Bryant Pope
March 17 - Jason Colmenero & Bryant Pope
March 24 - Wesley Johnson & Bryant Pope
March 31 - Jason Jones & Bryant Pope

Ushers

March 3
Lynn Godwin
Lynda Turner

March 10
Chris Smith
Cindy Smith

March 17
A.C. Williams
Lee Herring

March 24
Will Gage
Kevin Allen

March 31
Rob Kelly
Brad Brown

March Birthdays

Laura Dailey	2	Betty Byrd	14
Wiley Pope	2	Jennifer Roach	15
Savannah Davison	3	Landers Pope	16
Karsyn Dickens	3	Kay Sasser	16
Jerry Hartgrove	3	Jack Easter	17
Leon Lane	3	Colton Allen	22
Blythe Tart	3	Mary Hunter	22
Allison Taylor	3	Grace Gaster	23
Gavin Warren	3	Paula Pope	23
Erin Harrington	6	Meredith Harper	24
Noah Godwin	10	Emily Pope	26
Helen Harrington	10	Robert Tart	26
Mac McCaskill	12	Kayla Green	30
Ryan Easter	13	Nicholas Verity	31

First Presbyterian Church | 910-892-4121 | fpcdunnoffice@gmail.com | www.fpcdunn.org

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