



FIRST WORDS

JULY - 2023



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



By the end of July, First Presbyterian will look like a brand-new church!

Next week, construction work will begin on our long-anticipated Columbarium and Memorial Gardens project. This new feature will be installed in the courtyard between the Sanctuary and the Education building on the front side of the church. A brick memorial wall will extend from the corner of the Sanctuary to the brick walkway leading up to the double doors outside of my office. This memorial wall will include 75 niches, each of which will hold the remains of up to two people; and create a mostly enclosed space for meditation and prayer. The aim is to dedicate this new space by November.

If you are interested in purchasing a niche in the columbarium, you still can. You can also participate in this project through contributions to the landscaping of the gardens. For more information, contact the church office or a member of the Columbarium Council.

Then, starting on July 17th, our Sanctuary will receive some new flooring. This project has been in the works since last summer, with a memorial gift made in honor of the late Granville Tilghman. The carpet in the Sanctuary will be

replaced, and the parquet floors under the pews will receive a new finish. The chancel area where the baptismal font and communion table rest will no longer be carpeted and be changed to hardwood. The session elected to make this change for two reasons: first, it'll be easier to keep clean, and second it'll allow for just a bit more resonance for choral singing. If you have any questions, you can ask the facilities council.

Because of these renovations, we expect to be out of the Sanctuary for Worship on Sunday, July 23rd, which is also the Sunday we're kicking off Vacation Bible School. Since our VBS theme this year is outer space, I hope you'll be ready to worship in a spaceship!

I, for one, am excited about the new construction! But I ask you for patience and understanding as we contend with all the work.



VBS!

The theme of our VBS this summer is "Stellar: Shine Jesus' Light" and we are working on the space-themed decorations which will start showing up over the next few weeks. I am so grateful for all the folks who have agreed to volunteer to help make this an incredible week for all the kids who will be running through our church.

Here's some important information you may need:

When:

- Sunday, July 23rd, 5 pm: Kick-off event (hot dog dinner, water games outside)
- Monday-Wednesday, July 24th-25th, 9:30 am-12 pm (kids can be dropped off at 9:15 am)

Where: All over the church, front lawn, and playground

What: We will start each day all gathered in the fellowship hall as Pastor Elizabeth and Pastor Howard introduce the Bible story of the day.

- Monday: Jesus comes as a baby to be king (Luke 2:1-20; Matthew 1:18-2:12)
- Tuesday: Jesus accepts Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-9)
- Wednesday: Philip helps the Ethiopian (Acts 8:26-39)

After hearing the story and dancing to some music, each of our space crews will go off to their first station.

Stations: Recreation, Snack, Craft/Imagination Station, Kidvid cinema, and music

At the end of the day, everyone will gather back together in the fellowship hall to hear more from the Bible story and depart.

A helpful note: Since everything is hands-on, kids might get a little messy. Be sure to send them in play clothes and sturdy shoes.

Don't forget to register your child (PreK-rising 6th grade) at the following link:

How can you help?

Planning and executing VBS can be a huge undertaking. Even if you can't help during VBS, there are some other ways to support this important ministry. Here are some of those ways:

Donations needed:

- kiddie pools (to be used for decorating)
- clear plastic sheeting
- sheer black material
- masking tape

Donation of your time:

- help to decorate and set up on July 15th at 9 am
- help to break down on the last day of VBS, July 26th at 12:15 pm
- help with crafts during the week of VBS (support for our leaders)
- help with snacks during the week of VBS (support for our leaders)
- help guide our crews from station to station

Contact Pastor Elizabeth if you're able to help in any way:

Elizabeth.l.c.mcguire@gmail.com



The graphic features a dark space background with stars. At the top center is a purple oval with the word "STELLAR" in white, bold, sans-serif font, and "SHINE JESUS' LIGHT" in smaller white text below it. To the left is a blue, glowing cartoon character with a large eye. To the right is a smiling sun with a face and arms. Below the oval, the text "VBS 2023" is written in large, green, sans-serif font. Underneath that, the schedule is listed: "When: July 23rd - 5 pm, Kick-off event" and "July 24th-26th - 9:30 am-12 pm, VBS". Below the schedule, the text "Who: Children aged 4-yrs-old through rising 5th graders" is written in green. To the left of this text is a pink, glowing cartoon character with a large eye. To the right is a green cartoon planet with a ring and a face.



“I was always afraid to sing here, but there it doesn't matter. Everyone sings.”

Joining in is easier if everyone is doing it.

Sometimes that can be a scary thought. But In this case “everyone” is the people of Africa, and they are simply singing in worship.

While listening to the thirty-something missionary tell of her worship experiences in Rwanda, I was cheering inside, like standing up and waving my arms. That kind of cheering. She couldn't see that, of course, as I sat mostly still to hear a

former piano student share about her work. The once nervous teenager on the recital stage is now a grown woman living out the real reason we sing, to glorify the Giver of our voice, our bodies, our very breath.

I was thankful that she got to experience the freedom of singing together without the choking feelings of not being good enough. That nagging feeling paralyzes the would-be singer, instrumentalist, volunteer, etc. The understood standard of performance and the perception of being judged is so gripping that it robs the participant of the freedom and joy that should be experienced in worship music.

In our America, the home of the free, I am trying to imagine a group that is actually totally free to sing out in worship the very works and wonder of the Lord God. It seems easier to visualize in a foreign country. The very thought of it seems foreign to an American group. Not only is "everyone watching me" in church, but now it's everybody online too. Scary!

While order is not to be abandoned posing as total freedom, I do wish for a spirit of freedom in the hearts of the worshippers in all churches to sing and play for the honor and glory of God without the shackles of not feeling good enough. No one is good enough, yet He loves us anyway, and we cannot help but sing.

Who's singing in July?

The Choir is meeting each Sunday morning to rehearse before worship. No Wednesday night choir practices during July. New singers are always welcome to join. Simply meet in the choir room at 10:00 a.m. The choir will be wearing the new robes each Sunday.

On Sunday, July 9, 2023, the Divine Street Men's Quartet will be singing during the morning worship service at 10:30 am. Hank Bethea, Larry Nunnery, Mike Ennis, and Rick Stephenson will deliver a message of hope in four-part harmony, mostly a cappella.

On Sunday, July 16, 2023, two special guests are coming. Abigail Kolb, a former Campbell scholar of First Presbyterian Church, will be singing. Colton Barber, an organ major from East Carolina will be sharing his talent on the organ.

The VBS Kids will be singing on Sunday, July 30. They will share the vocal hits from the VBS Stellar worship music. You'll be inspired by their energy and freedom to sing.

Announcements

Session Highlights

The Session of our congregation met for a called meeting after worship on Sunday, June 25th to both welcome new members and conduct our regular stated business. Here are some highlights from that meeting:

1. The Session approved \$1500 from the mission grant fund to the Presbyterian Collegiate Ministry of North Carolina, which is an organization

that supports the network of college and campus ministries across the state.

2. The Session approved a budget for July-December of the coming year. As was anticipated in the congregational update in May, this budget is a deficit budget of about \$5,500.
3. The Session approved the plans for the long-planned reflooring in the sanctuary. This is a project funded by special contributions and is scheduled to begin work, alongside some organ maintenance, in mid-July.
4. The Session reviewed the working calendar for the 2023-24 church year.
5. The Session elected Linda Hayes to serve as vice-chair of the nominating committee, meaning she will serve as chair next year. This year's chair is Bryant Pope. A congregational meeting will be held on August 27th to elect the rest of the nominating committee.

New Members

In June, we are pleased to welcome seven new members to the life of our church:

- **Meredith Harper**, the wife of Zachary Harper and mother to Grayson Harper, joining by reaffirmation of faith.
- **Debbie & Butch Warren** joining by transfer of letter.
- **Willie & Judy Hobson** joining by transfer of letter.
- **Alan & Patti Hargis** joining by transfer of letter.

If you're interested in learning more about what it means to be a member of our church, plan on joining us for the next Starting Point gathering on August 20, 2023.



Willie & Judy Hobson



Phillip "Butch" & Deborah Warren

Columbarium and Prayer Garden

The Columbarium and Prayer Garden Council has plans for the continued purchase of Columbarium niches and for Memorial Gifts and Honorariums. If you would like to Memorialize someone with a gift or honor someone with an

Honorarium some of the options are:

Benches
Lighting
Fountain
Prayer Garden Landscaping
Perpetual Maintenance
General Donations.

Please contact a member of the Columbarium and Prayer Garden Council if you are interested.

Linda Hayes linda@harnettlaw.com
Jane Tart janeatart@me.com
Clem & Kathy Medley clemmedley@yahoo.com
Robbie Tart Robbiet.rethouse@gmail.com
Billy & Patsy Powell dunndealmaker@gmail.com
Andrew McLean Agmclean81@icloud.com

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS



Nursery Attendants

July 2 - Derek & Julie Easter
July 9 - Ryan & Trina Brackman
July 16 - Paula Pope
July 23 - Ligon Holder
July 30 - Rob & Stephanie Wood

Acolytes

July 2 - Winnie Smith
July 9 - James Williams
July 16 - Ella Williams
July 23 - Story Wermel
July 30 - Henry Lawson

Broadcast & Sound Team

July 2 - Jason Jones & Bryant Pope
July 9 - Cole Stevens & Bryant Pope
July 16- Andy Wermel & Bryant Pope
July 23 - Blair Chance & Bryant Pope
July 30 - Jason Colmenero & Bryant Pope

Ushers

July 2

Will Gage
Eugene Chance

July 9

Glæe Tart
Kevin Allen

July 16

David Bradham
Lee Herring

July 23

Rob Kelly
Lynn Godwin

July 30

Brian Foster
Brad Brown

 IN OUR 
Thoughts and Prayers

Eva Graceann Allen

Rodney Godwin

Mitch Mason

Cliff & Ruby Artis
Bryan Avery
Stephen Bath
Joyce Dorman
Arlene Duff
Nell Frank
Wayne Franklin
Phillip Gaines
Eva Garcia
Barbara Godwin

Jim Gray
Susan Grissom
Floy Hamilton
Nick Harmon
Paula Harmon
Becky Hartley
Elease Hodges
Justin Johnston
Dave Mason
Mitch Mason

Becky Peele
Roger Pierce
Will Pope
Mary Alice Reece
Kenneth Rosenquest
Melissa Stevens
Steve Turnage
Melissa Ward
Steve Watson
Garrett Winder

July Birthdays

John Midgley	1	Emily Powell	14
Harris Pope	1	Trina Brackman	16
Henry Lawson	2	Jackson Pope	19
Doris Suggs	4	Jerry Rawls	20
Hugh Bradham	5	Mary Myres Pope	21
Will Pope	5	Page Jackson	22
Adeline Brackman	6	Jackson Warren	23
Leonidas Graham	6	Ryan Godwin	25
Adam Byrd	7	Lindsey Malone	25
Maggie Stewart	7	David Lawson	26
Susan Hodges	8	Kendall Wooten	27
Jason Colmenero	9	Tanner Sasser	29
Ligon Holder	9	Winnie Smith	29
Jodi May	10	Barbara Godwin	30
Billy Ray Godwin	11	Reid Johnson	31

Upcoming July Sundays

2 TWO CENTS A MEAL

9 MONTREAT COMMISSIONING
MEN'S QUARTET

16 SUMMER SUNDAY

23 VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL KICK-OFF

30 KIDS CHOIR SINGING

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