

APRIL 2024

FIRST NEWS

A PUBLICATION OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SPARTANBURG



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MONTREAT WOMEN'S
CONFERENCE

2022 CHURCHWIDE DAY OF SERVICE

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PASTOR

You know what I love most about our church? The people. Yes, we have a beautiful facility and inspiring worship and engaging programs, but ultimately what makes First Presbyterian *First Presbyterian* are disciples like you.

This month's edition of *First News* is a case study in what I am talking about. Inside you will find stories of Christ at work in and through the people who call FPC home. Whether responding

to the needs of neighbors or dreaming up opportunities for connection and learning, we are a body of believers seeking to answer God's call to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our Lord.

So, as you read, take a moment to pause on the faces you see. Notice all the different ages, backgrounds, passions, gifts, etc. Each one represents the risen Christ at work in the world. After all, that is what we

proclaim in this Eastertide Season – that the tomb is empty, and that God is now loose in the world working in and through people like you and me.

What isn't there to love about that!?

Peace,

Rev. Alan F. Dyer
Senior Pastor



Welcome

OUR NEW MEMBERS



AMY, JAMES,
& KAY BALLARD



CHARLOTTE, HUNTER,
MAITLAND, & CLAIRE
DAWKINS



ANNETTE GARNER



KRISTIN, MATT
CHLOE & HARPER GILL



MARGARET & ROB
HINES



ELIZABETH
HUDDLESTON



OLGA & JIM MUNN



TRAVIS MUTHIG



MERRIT, ROD,
COLE & ASH RAY



DONNA TERRY



ANNE VICKERS



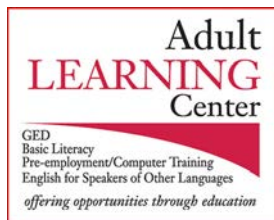
MARGARET WALLIS

HELPING NEIGHBORS IN NEED

Local Missions Ministry

Each day, members of the Spartanburg community are in need of physical, spiritual, and financial support. Following the Biblical command to love our neighbors, First Presbyterian strives to care for those around us in ways that truly make a difference and spread God's love. Our missions provide critical care to people who are most vulnerable and often overlooked—from the hungry to the homeless to the heartbroken and beyond.

The Local Missions ministry at First Presbyterian supports nonprofit organizations throughout Spartanburg each year. All organizations are vetted by a team of committee members, and the main criteria is that the organization must align with the mission and vision of the Faith Initiative to End Child Poverty. Each winter, the Local Missions Committee prayerfully and diligently reviews grant applications for organizations that have requested funding. The following local organizations are our partners for this year:



Following this page, you will read about three impact ministries established and run by First Presbyterian Church members to address many needs in our community: CAST, Neighborhood Meal Ministry, and Hand in Hand. Each of these ministries relies on the generous support of individual and family donations.



Care. Accept. Share. Teach.

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF MINISTRY FOR GOD'S HOMELESS CHILDREN

In March of 2014, members of First Presbyterian Church learned there were children living in motels who had to utilize parking lots for playgrounds and television sets for recreation. The realization that this was happening right across the street from the church, as well as in communities throughout the county was alarming. Gloria Close began to bring food, clothing, and basic necessities to families living in motels, and FPC members offered children three week-long day camps during the summer. Through participating in the camps, long-term relationships between church volunteers and homeless families were forged and all their lives were changed.

“
**I can truly say ya'll have made a
great impact in our minds,
lives, and family.**”
”

Over the course of 10 years, hundreds of volunteers have shared their time, talent, and resources to help CAST families and to facilitate summer camps. Children are able to learn about math, language arts, science, music, visual arts, recreation, cooking, communication skills, citizenship, nutrition, hygiene, life skills, and much more. Church staff and pastors also provide a worship service with music each week. Volunteers serve as mentors, teaching and encouraging families as they strive to grow.

While the primary mission of the ministry is to improve the lives of some of the most vulnerable children in our community (those living in motels, homeless shelters, and sleeping on floors), a second and important mission is to support families as they move out of those conditions.



It is difficult for families to save enough money for a deposit and/or the first month's rent needed to "get out" of living in a motel. When they find a home they can afford on their salary, CAST helps with the move-in costs. Gloria has utilized her own Facebook page and word of mouth to communicate needs like furniture, bedding, household items and food...and the items simply show up thanks to the generosity of our community. Many donate what they have, and they help put together beds, stock cabinets, and simply join in the excitement of move-in day at a family's new home. This simple day means so much to the families supported by this ministry. One child told his teacher that he had the best weekend of his life because he had food and a bed.



Teresa, a mother of four children, writes, "CAST has been a blessing for me and my children. They have helped us get into a great home and helped with bills, furniture, household items, and groceries and also taught us how to budget. The kids love the summer camp. They get to meet wonderful people, learn things, and go on trips. I can truly say ya'll have made a great impact in our minds, lives, and family."



Anthony has participated in summer camps and is grateful for the time and resources poured into him, his family, and his friends. He writes, “I want to say thank you to all the volunteers who helped throughout the years. Camp gave me something to do over the summers and helped keep me out of trouble. CAST took a chance on me and my family. There were multiple times when my family and I were in motels and came very close to the verge of total homelessness. CAST pulled us out of that situation and helped my family into the home where we live now.”

CAST took a chance on me
and my family.

Celebrate 10 Years of CAST

Care. Accept. Share. Teach.

Join us to thank Gloria Close for her decade of leadership
and look ahead to the next season of this ministry

**Sunday, April 28, 2024 during Traditional Worship
11:00am in the Sanctuary**

NEIGHBORHOOD MEAL MINISTRY

A PLACE WHERE EVERYONE IS WELCOME



Since 2011, the Neighborhood Meal Ministry has served our friends who are homeless or in need of assistance on Thursday evenings in the Arthur Center. Initially, the ministry served meals twice per month. Today, under the leadership of Betsy Burrell and Mary Lorick Thompson, this ministry serves 50 to 75 guests every Thursday.

Many things make this ministry special - quarterly communion for guests, monthly birthday recognitions, a friendly face and a non-judgmental environment, a prayer box, frequent visits from church staff and pastors, a weekly thanks to God for what he provides, and the tremendous number of people who have participated or contributed to the welfare of guests.



When the Meal Ministry resumed post-pandemic, there was one monthly sponsor and just four guests showed up on reopening day. This time posed challenges for several reasons. Since those trying days, many volunteers and groups have joined to sponsor and serve our neighbors. Volunteers from several area churches now come together to serve, making this a true community outreach ministry.



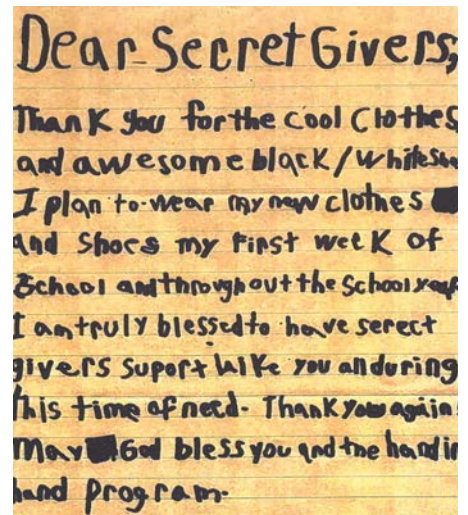
While there are many hands to help the Neighborhood Meal Ministry, Betsy and Mary Lorick are always in need of new sponsors, servers, or shoppers.

"We welcome anyone who would like to participate in this meaningful ministry. Come give it a try, and we hope you will be as drawn to helping our neighbors as we are as you see God's hands in action," said Betsy and Mary Lorick.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Sponsor a meal, Volunteer to serve, Donate food, Give financially,
Shop for serving supplies and pantry staples (list and funds provided)

Visit fpcspartanburg.org/neighborhoodmealministry
for more information.



A HELPING HAND

Many of our neighbors—including families with children—face food insecurity and a severe lack of resources. In Spartanburg, the poverty rate for children ages 6 to 17 years is 42%.

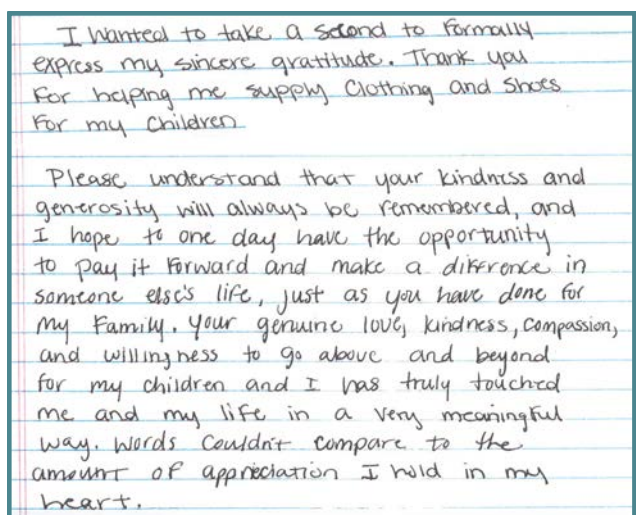
Realizing the urgency of this issue while driving near her neighborhood in 2020, Melissa France began working with school social workers in District 3 to identify families in greatest need. With a simple ask to friends, Melissa's front dining room began to fill up with non-perishable food items, paper and hygiene products, and cleaning supplies.

What began as an accidental discovery has now grown into much more. Melissa and many volunteers partner with social workers in Spartanburg School Districts 3, 6, and 7 to provide basic necessities and clothing. They have served to over 200 children to date.

Hand in Hand was founded on the belief that the well-being of each community member

affects the well-being of the community as a whole. The ministry has always operated under the principle that all human beings deserve dignity and respect, and that a lack of basic resources should not diminish this dignity.

To read the complete history, donate, or volunteer with Hand in Hand, visit handinhandspartanburg.org.



"We strive to provide the ability for students to stay in school, to increase their self esteem and to ultimately better their prospects. The illusion of charity, or one person being beholden to another is strenuously avoided—hence our name, Hand in Hand."

- Melissa France



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

June 3-6 from 9am-12pm
Rising 4k-6th Grade

Go on an adventure this summer to Camp Firelight!
Our VBS will teach children to trust God no matter what
situation life brings, know God is always with them,
and feel confident sharing the good news of
God's love through Jesus Christ.

Registration is open! Scan the QR code or
visit fpcspartanburg.org/vbs to sign up.



MONTREAT PLAY DATES

June 22 and July 20
Rising 4k-6th Grade

Spend the day rock-hopping in the creek, playing on the
playground, and enjoying games in the Youth Center
during our Montreat Play Dates!

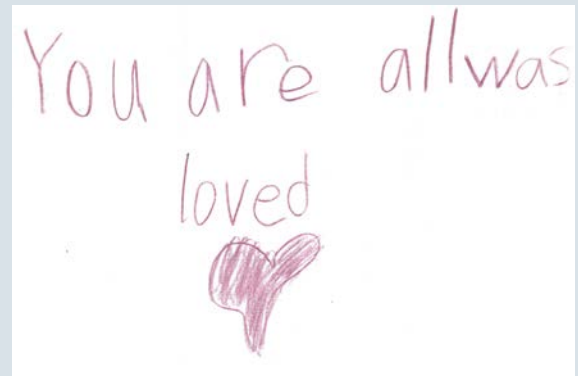
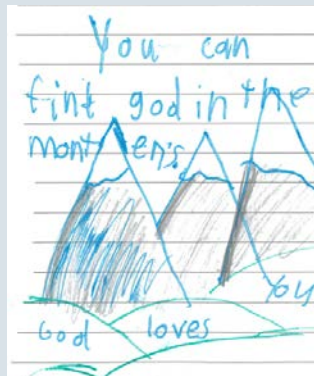
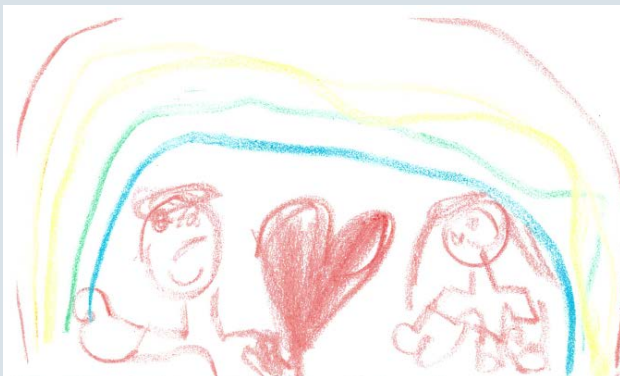
\$10 per child

Registration is open! Scan the QR code or
visit fpcspartanburg.org/montreatplaydate.



Notes from the Offering Plate

The FPC staff loves receiving drawings and notes in the offering plates from children during Worship!
Thank you for sharing your talents and spreading joy with others.





THE YOUTH CONNECTION

Get to Know the Youth of First Presbyterian Church

SCHOOL

Freshman, Spartanburg High School

ACTIVITIES

Troop 2 Boy Scouts, SHS Cyber Patriots Team, Viking Men's Choir, Beta Club, and Viking Fine Arts Theater Crew

FAVORITE FOOD

Chicken Fettuccini Alfredo

FAVORITE PLACE YOU'VE TRAVELED

Banff, Canada

FAVORITE CHURCH ACTIVITIES

Wednesdays at First, Youth Group, and Java & Jesus

FAVORITE BIBLE STORY

David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17)



In his free time, David Millinor enjoys traveling and designing/building. He is helping to build theater sets for the District 7 musical, *The Music Man*, and has even built his own computer. A few of his favorite travel memories include walking on Athabasca Glacier in Canada and hiking the Narrows in Zion National Park.

David is a member of our 2024 Confirmation class, and Dr. Greg Colbath is his mentor. After the Confirmation retreat at Montreat, David was inspired to become more involved in church activities, helping him grow in his faith journey. He enjoys Wednesdays at First and running the livestream cameras for Contemporary Worship Service.

David is looking forward to the High School Mission Trip this summer to Cedarkirk near Tampa, FL. One of David's favorite parts of Confirmation has been getting to know more members of our church.



"Singing in church helps me to connect in praise and worship with the Lord. This past December I was able to experience the Candlelight Service in a different way as I sang in choir at the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service with my brother, Charlie. It was a unique way to see our entire church lifting their candles as we sang *Silent Night*."

SUMMER DATES

SUMMER KICKOFF

JUNE 2ND

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

JUNE 3RD-6TH

HIGH SCHOOL MISSION TRIP

JUNE 9TH-15TH

CAROWINDS DAY TRIP

JUNE 26TH

MIDDLE SCHOOL MISSION WEEK

JULY 8TH-11TH

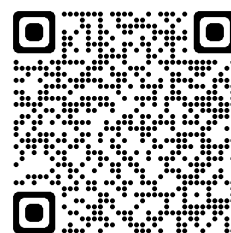
MONTREAT YOUTH CONFERENCE

JULY 20TH-27TH

SIGN UP NOW FOR SUMMER PROGRAMMING!

Scan the QR code below to register for the HS mission trip to Cedarkirk, Middle School Mission Week, Carowinds, and Montreat Youth Conference! More registration links for additional summer activities will be in next month's *Youth Beacon*.

Questions? Email us:
youth@fpcspartanburg.org



SOWING SEEDS

Andy Mayfield has been caring for the grounds of First Presbyterian Church for 15 years. His steady and hard work ethic shows, especially this time of year, when the grass is lush and green, and the flowers are in full bloom. Through both rain and shine, Andy can be found working diligently on the nine acres of church property or at Mobile Meals, which he also tends to on a weekly basis.

Lee Raines, facilities administrator, says he's known Andy for years, even when he worked for the Spartanburg City Police Department. He says the spring is the busiest time of year for the facilities team, especially on the grounds of the church.

"Most landscape companies employ three to four people to do the work that Andy does by himself. It's amazing what he can accomplish in a week and how he maintains nine acres so beautifully," says Lee. "Andy takes a lot of pride in his work, and it shows. We have the best looking lawn in downtown Spartanburg!"

Julia Burnett is a member of the Beautification Committee and helps (along with others) make sure our church, both inside and out, looks its very best. Julia is an avid gardener herself, so she knows the hours it takes to showcase beauty in nature.

Julia says, "Andy keeps our campus grounds neat, green, flowering, and always with a smile and wave of the hand. Thank you, Andy."



Andy greets everyone he sees entering the church. He is always there to lend a hand even when it isn't on his to-do list. As Julia said, he is rarely without a smile, he is genuinely concerned about the wellbeing of others, and he loves to share stories about his daughters. Not only does Andy spend each weekday working at the church, he and his family are also members and actively involved in several ministries.

The time and skill put into the grounds of First Presbyterian Church is an incredibly important job. The exterior and lawn are the first thing people see before they enter the church. It sets the tone for all our guests, members and visitors alike. We are very lucky to have Andy Mayfield at the helm of this responsibility!

SPEND TIME IN THE GARDEN!

JOY Fellowship Hatcher Garden Tour & Lunch April 18

Join the JOY (Just Older Youth) Fellowship on Thursday, April 18 for a tour of beautiful Hatcher Garden and Woodland Preserve.

Boxed lunches will be provided from Blue Moon Specialty Foods.

Cost: \$12 per person

Visit fpcspartanburg.org/joytour or scan the QR code to register by Monday, April 15!



May 7, 2024
10:30am and 7:00pm

Night Talk
by Elizabeth Cox

Elizabeth Cox tells a moving story about two girls who, though they grew up in the same house, reflect the alternate realities of white and black society. They are influenced by both the massive social changes sweeping the country during the Civil Rights years, and by our extraordinary human capacities for fear and hate and love. But in the end, it is the world they share under cover of darkness, through their candid nighttime conversations, that proves to be the strongest force of all.

Elizabeth Cox is a local author and First Presbyterian Church member. She will be joining us for BBC in May!

Montreat Women's Conference

August 9-11, 2024

Women's Connection 2024 will be a time for women to connect with old and new friends, a time to care for yourself, a time for space and Sabbath. As in years past, we will do this together through powerful and authentic worship led by women, space for honest and faithful conversation, and time for discernment and renewing rest. Our hope is you will experience spiritual nourishment, inspiration, and discernment.

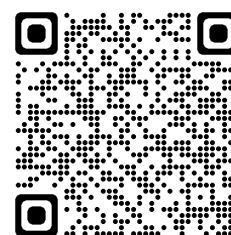


This year's keynote speaker is Becca Stevens, a nonprofit leader, entrepreneur, priest, survivor, and founder/president of Thistle Farms. She has founded 13 nonprofits and justice enterprises, mentored another 70, and has raised \$75 million to support them.

First Presbyterian has secured 3 adjacent houses, rooming 21 women, that are close to everything.

The cost is \$425, which includes housing and the conference registration.

Register now at fpcspartanburg.org/womensconnection or scan the QR code.



GOD'S LOVE IN ACTION

Interview with Neely Bailey Darr

Young adults play a vital role in the growth and future of the church. Whether you're navigating your 20s or settling into your 40s, single or married, with or without children, the Young Adult ministry meets you where you are. It can be challenging today to find your place, to build lasting relationships, and to develop a caring support system. This group strives to fulfill all those needs.

First Presbyterian offers a Young Adult Sunday School called Abide, several opportunities for young adults and families to serve the community around us, and fellowship throughout the year.

Neely Darr is not only a member of the Young Adult Committee, she has been engaged in this ministry for a long time. She says her favorite thing about the Young Adult ministry is fellowship with others through Sunday School, Wednesdays at First, mission projects, and anytime this group comes together.

"Being a part of the YA ministry has benefitted my life as well as my family's by being a constant and steady reminder of God's love and presence. Whether worshipping or learning together, being prayed for when you're going through a tough time, having a meal dropped off - our church, and specifically the YA ministry, is God's love in action. That's an amazing thing to feel and be a part of!"

The Young Adult ministry connects people ages 22-40(ish) and welcomes anyone post-college through parents of early elementary school children.

"I would encourage others to become a part of the YA ministry to strengthen their faith and to develop fellowship that makes life much easier and more enjoyable," says Neely.

For more information on Young Adult programs, contact Leslie Lang, Associate Pastor for Young Adults and Missions, at llang@fpcspartanburg.org.



"Our church, and specifically the YA ministry, is God's love in action."





THE BEAUTIFUL SOUNDS OF WORSHIP

by Mary Dixon

I've been involved in First Presbyterian's music ministry for as long as I've been a church member; since 1995. The music program was one of many exceptional things about First Pres that appealed to our family as we looked for a new church home.

I love how our music program welcomes everyone, regardless of prior experience, and how Holt and Marcia have established an environment where we learn together to make excellent, beautiful music for worship while enjoying fellowship with others. Everyone, from the youngest child to the most senior adult, finds a musical home to share their best vocal or instrumental expression in praise to God.

It has been a privilege to be part of many wonderful moments in almost 30 years of First Pres music. Two that stand out as special for me were *The Cry of Jeremiah*, by Rosephanye Powell, which the Chamber Singers sang in 2014; and Dan Forrest's *Requiem for the Living*, which our combined adult choirs and orchestra performed last spring. In both cases, we were privileged to have the composers with us for the program.

This year's Chamber Singers concert, *A Day in the Life*, will be another lovely musical experience. The pieces selected represent times or events in a day in God's creation, beginning with *Light of a Clear Blue Morning* by none other than Dolly Parton!

The program includes a few pieces from an arrangement with the same title, which we sang at Piccolo Spoleto festival in Charleston in 2018, plus several beautiful works that are new favorites for us. We're excited about *A Day in the Life*, and we hope that church members and friends will come out Thursday, May 2 at 7:00pm to enjoy it with us!

First Presbyterian Church
Chamber Singers Spring Concert

A Day in the Life

Thursday, May 2, 2024
7:00pm in the Sanctuary

This program will take you on a journey through the joys, sorrows, and wonder of the everyday, beginning at dawn and concluding at bedtime. There will be time in the outdoors, a little romance, sorrow but also hope, the warmth of a summer evening and more. All the music is from living composers, with soloists from the group and a guest string quintet to help accompany several of the pieces.



Wednesdays@FIRST

FAITH, FOOD, & FELLOWSHIP

5:00pm - Dinner in Fogartie Hall
6:30pm - Programming

Why Jesus? Book Discussion April 3 and 10 at 6:30pm in Fogartie Hall

We will conclude our book study of Will Willimon's *Why Jesus?* this month. What an incredible journey we have had exploring the life of Jesus and how he continues to show us the true meaning of our lives by challenging and inviting us into service for God.

***There will be no Children's Programming on April 3.
Happy Spring Break!***

Cookout and Games on the Lawn April 17 and 24

Don't miss this time of fellowship with your church family and fun games for all ages! Both outside and inside dining tables will be available. Bring your own chair if you'd like!

Visit fpcspartanburg.org/waf or scan the QR code to register for dinner and to sign up as a WAF volunteer.



April 3

Meatloaf
Squash Casserole
Roasted Potatoes
Salad Bar
Bread
Dessert

April 10

Chicken Salad Casserole
Homemade Cranberry Sauce
Green Beans
Caesar Salad
Bread
Dessert

April 17

Grilled Burgers & Hot Dogs
Chili
Corn on the Cob
Slaw
Chips
Dessert

April 24

BBQ Pork
Baked Beans
Slaw
Tater Tots
Bread
Desserts

Children's Menu

April 3 & 10

Chicken Tenders
Homemade Mac & Cheese
Fruit Cup
Dessert
Juice Box

PASTORAL CONCERNS

THROUGH MARCH 17, 2024

In Memoriam

Marilyn Murray Kelley
Thursday, February 15, 2024

Walter Bazil Mathes, Jr.
Husband of Mary Mathes
Wednesday, February 28, 2024

John T. Tatham
Husband of Pat Tatham; Father of Pam Tatham
Wednesday, March 13, 2024

Births

Congratulations to
Stephanie and Jordan Kyle,
on the birth of their daughter,
Kayla Nicole Kyle,
on Saturday, February 17, 2024

Becky and Jeff Berry,
on the birth of their daughter,
Marywin Olivia Berry,
on Tuesday, March 12, 2024

Baptisms

The Sacrament of Baptism was administered to

Katherine Adele Caggiano
Daughter of Sidney and Chris Caggiano
March 17, 2024



**STEPHEN
MINISTRY**

***Are you looking for a place to sow your seeds for Christ at
First Presbyterian Church?***

Stephen Ministers provide one-to-one Christian caring to someone experiencing challenges in life; by serving one hour a week either in person or on the phone and attending one group meeting per month.

A Stephen Minister is a good listener and no experience is required.

For more information, contact Dana Halliday at danahalliday1@charter.net.



CONFIRMATION SUNDAY *APRIL 21*

Confirmation is a safe space where youth and mentors embrace questions and explore the depths of spiritual wonderings, cultivating a mindset of imagination and resilience as they grow in faith and understanding.

On April 21, we invite everyone to celebrate with 25 Confirmands who will take their vows for membership in the church.

First Presbyterian Church
393 East Main Street
Spartanburg, SC 29302-1917

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