

FEBRUARY 2024

FIRST NEWS

A PUBLICATION OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SPARTANBURG

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LOOK FOR THE HELPERS
ASH WEDNESDAY

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BETHLEHEM CENTER

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PASTOR

On a rainy Tuesday last month, I joined nearly 120 community members participating in this year's first quarterly gathering of the Faith Initiative to End Child Poverty. Seeing that many people together in one place learning, collaborating, and seeking to address important issues affecting neighbors here in Spartanburg was incredibly inspiring. More inspiring still was how many of those in the room were members and friends of First Presbyterian.

We do so many things well here at FPC: inspiring worship, engaging education opportunities,

intergenerational fellowship, eating... lots of eating. But a big part of our DNA as a congregation is our shared sense of call to be the hands and feet of Jesus Christ for the community and world around us. This has been true since our earliest days as a church and it continues to today. February is the month on the calendar each year when it feels like that piece of our church identity is most on display.

As you will read in this edition of First News, the month ahead is full of opportunities for us to "practice what we preach."

Foremost among those is our Witness Season which this year, is supporting the Bethlehem Center and its critical ministry of enriching lives of our neighbors in the Highland community. I hope you will join me in learning about and supporting this important effort!

Peace,



Rev. Alan F. Dyer
Senior Pastor



Wednesdays@FIRST

FAITH, FOOD, & FELLOWSHIP

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

Pipe Organ 101
February 7 in the Sanctuary

Join First Presbyterian's musical duo, Marcia and Holt Andrews, in the Sanctuary for a demonstration of the new festival trumpet and a discussion of how the organ works.

Ash Wednesday Service
February 7 in the Sanctuary

Why Jesus? Book Discussion
February 21 and 28 in Fogartie Hall

Will Willimon has been a leading pastor, author, professor, and bishop in the United Methodist Church for decades and is a household name for many. His book Why Jesus? explores the life of the fascinating preacher from Nazareth and how He continues show us the true meaning of our lives by challenging and inviting us into service for God.

Will Willimon will be leading the WAF program February 21!

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



February 7

Baked Greek Pork Chops
Roasted Greek Potatoes
Greek Salad
Bread
Dessert

February 14

Coconut Curry Chicken
Brown Rice
Asian Salad
Fresh Fruit
Dessert

February 21

Pulled Pork with BBQ Sauce
Rice and Gravy
Succotash
Roll
Dessert

February 28

Hamburger Steak with
Mushrooms and Onions
Fried Okra
Mashed Potatoes and Gravy
Coleslaw
Roll
Dessert

Children's Menu

Chicken Tenders (Feb. 7, 14, 28)
Pizza (Feb. 21)
Mac & Cheese
Applesauce
Dessert

THE BETHLEHEM CENTER

Witness Season 2024

The Local Missions Committee unanimously voted to support The Bethlehem Center during this year's Witness Season.

The Bethlehem Center has been supporting, strengthening, and inspiring individuals and families in the Highland community for nearly 95 years. Their current model operates under the following statement - "The Bethlehem Center envisions a world in which all of God's children are recipients of the basic necessities for a fruitful and enriched life. Toward this goal, we provide services including educational and supportive programs for all individuals in our community."

As the Witness Season 2024/2025 project, The Bethlehem Center requests funding to complete an outdoor play space with a natural playground at the Highland Early Learning Center (HELC).

The HELC welcomed its first students in 2021. Two 4k classes have graduated and over 80 students have been served through the Center. They currently hold a four-star rating with Quality Counts, a community-based strategy designed to build and sustain high quality early care and education programs.

The outdoor play space would include a gardening area, amphitheater, and water play areas. The project's goal is to provide more accessible green space for the Highland community, foster learning and imagination, promote social and emotional growth, and provide creative engagement. This project fits into the Faith Initiative to End Child Poverty's vision "to build a thriving community for all of our children, and thus for all."

We look forward to sharing more information with you throughout February. Come learn how you can help make this vision a reality!



WAYS TO GIVE TO WITNESS SEASON

You may give cash or check in the offering plate. Please make sure your check is noted "Witness Season" and place cash in an offering envelope with a designated note.

Give online by scanning the QR code or visit fpcspartanburg.org/give and click "Give Online."



CHURCH & COMMUNITY

ASH WEDNESDAY

February 14

Ash Wednesday marks the first day of the Lenten season.

The Chapel will be open from 8:00am-1:00pm.

A pastor will be present during those hours for you to receive the imposition of ashes and for prayer.

The Ash Wednesday Service will be held in the Sanctuary from 6:30-7:15pm.

This is a family-friendly worship service that will include the imposition of ashes. Nursery will be provided for infants through age two, and the service will be livestreamed.



GOD'S TROMBONES

February 17 at 6:00pm

**Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church
502 South Daniel Morgan Avenue
Spartanburg, SC 29306**

Sweet Gilliard Productions and New Day Baptist Church proudly present James Weldon Johnson's *God's Trombones: Seven Sermons in Verse* on February 17 at 6:00pm at Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church. James Weldon Johnson was a noted author, educator, lawyer, civil rights activist, and a leading figure in the creation and development of the Harlem Renaissance.

His work, *God's Trombones*, was published in 1927 and is seven sermons, written in verse, and inspired by the memories of sermons by black preachers heard by Johnson in childhood.

This production of his iconic work will include eight local pastors preaching through each of the seven sermons.

Tickets are \$50 and can be purchased at fpcspartanburg.org/gods-trombones.

SWEET GILLIARD PRODUCTIONS & NEW DAY BAPTIST CHURCH
Proudly Present
James Weldon Johnson's

God's TROMBONES
7 Sermons in Verse

17th FEBRUARY 2024

 DR. M. KEITH MCDANIEL, SR. Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church	 BISHOP CHARLES JJ JACKSON, III Cornerstone Baptist Church	 REV. AUDREY V. HAILSTOCK New Day Baptist Church	 REV. SCOTT NEELY Unitarian Universalist Church
 DR. THOMAS MASSEY, JR. New Day Baptist Church	 REV. ALAN DYER First Presbyterian Church	 DR. MICHAEL BRIDGES Concord Baptist Church	 REV. ALLEN RECTOR Harrison Grove Baptist Church

SAT. FEBRUARY 17 ~ 6:00pm

VENUE:
MACEDONIA MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
502 SOUTH DANIEL MORGAN AVENUE
SPARTANBURG, SC 29306

Tickets Prices
\$50 Adults
\$25 Ages 12 & under

DOORS OPEN @ 4:30pm

TO PURCHASE TICKETS:
\$64-575-9734 newdaybaptist@gmail.com
Law Office of Jamia D. Foster
215 Magnolia St.
Spartanburg, SC
New Day Baptist Church
2090 S. Church St. Extension
Spartanburg, SC

LOOK FOR THE HELPERS

The First Presbyterian Church Weekday School serves preschoolers ages six months to four and is guided by a child-centered Christian philosophy of education. Our teachers genuinely love the students in their classroom, and it shows.

Mr. Rogers once said, "When I was a boy and I would see scary things on the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.'"

Alongside the teachers, director, and support staff, there are other "helpers" who provide a safe, clean, and nurturing environment for all Weekday School students.

Tiffany Long is on the custodial team at First Presbyterian Church. She is responsible for cleaning each Weekday School room and the hallways after class is dismissed everyday. Miss Tiffany, as the kids call her, is a favorite and goes above and beyond her facilities duties without being asked.

Director Kris Graham recalls a time when a student walked around the school barefoot, she left without a spot of dirt on the bottom of her feet. The child's mother was impressed, and the fact that she could walk around on a spotless floor at a preschool spoke volumes for Tiffany's hard work.

Tiffany provides more than a clean environment for the students and staff of the Weekday School. She makes an effort to get to know the children, teachers, and even helps to fill in if Mrs. Kris or Ms. Shannon have to step away from their desks. If anyone has an issue in the Weekday School, Miss Tiffany is the first call. The hallways are much brighter with her in them!

Another helper of the Weekday School is Lee Raines, Facilities Administrator for First Presbyterian Church. Each morning, Lee dons a yellow vest and serves as crossing guard for parents and children entering school. Every child gets a high five and is greeted by name.

Lee served over 30 years as a police officer for the City of Spartanburg and knows how important it is to keep people safe. Chestnut Street is busy in the mornings, and his crossing guard duties are appreciated!

The FPC Weekday School is a special place, and it takes a lot of people working together to create an environment of unconditional love and acceptance for all children who attend. If you want to become a WDS helper, there is a need for substitute teachers. Please contact Kris Graham at kgraham@fpcspartanburg.org to begin enriching the lives of our littlest friends.



When I was a boy and I would see scary things on the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.'

- Fred Rogers



2024/2025 REGISTRATION INFORMATION

February 5-6
Currently enrolled children and their siblings

February 7
Church members seeking new enrollment

February 8
Open enrollment



BOY SCOUT TROOP 2: 100 YEARS OF DEVELOPING LEADERS

First Presbyterian Church holds Scout Sunday each year. This special service, led by the young men of Boy Scout Troop 2, showcases their honor to the Scout Oath and Law. This year, Scout Sunday will be held on February 4, a celebration that will mark 100 years of Troop 2 at First Presbyterian Church. Many boys have participated in Scouts over the years, and their experiences have made a lasting impact on their lives.

Thomas Van Vleet is a former scout of Troop 2. Currently, he is a freshman at the University of Alabama and a member of the Million Dollar Band. Thomas credits his time in Scouts for many attributes needed to participate in his collegiate activities.

“My time in the University of Alabama Million Dollar Band has thoroughly tested me throughout all the areas of Scouting. From being loyal and helpful to the section in times of need, to serving my duty to my community by cheering on our team in

California, to being physically strong enough to march in the 5.5 mile Rose Parade, Scouting has trained me to be ready for all of that. Even though my time as a scout has come to an end, I have continued to recite the Scout Law, Scout Oath, Scout Motto, and do my best to live up to the Scout Slogan and do a good turn daily. Now that my first semester with the Million Dollar Band has come to an end, I hope to keep finding ways to do my duty as a member of multiple other groups, including the video production team and as a leader of an on-campus outdoor club!”



For the Pickens brothers, Scouting is a family affair. Benjamin Pickens earned his Eagle Scout in 2018 in Troop 2, graduated from The Citadel in 2023 with a degree in Biology, and plans to attend Presbyterian College's School of Pharmacy this fall.

"As a recent graduate of The Citadel, I can say that the values of the Scout Oath and Law set the foundation for my time there. While some peers were just beginning to learn how to be physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight, this was something I had already incorporated into daily life. Scouts taught me to embody the facets of the Scout Law, such as trustworthiness. It prepared me to live by the school's honor code in which cadets do not lie, cheat, or steal, nor tolerate those who do, and to live by the school's motto of Honor, Duty, Respect. I aim to exemplify these values not just at The Citadel, but in everything I do."

Charlie Pickens carrying Golf Company flag at the Citadel



Charlie Pickens earned his Eagle Scout in 2020 in Troop 2 and is a junior at The Citadel majoring in business finance where he serves as Golf Company Drillmaster. He will be a commissioned officer in the Army National Guard upon graduation from The Citadel.

"The phrase in the Scout Oath 'to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight' is one that I did not recognize the importance of during my scouthood. I have learned through my time



William Pickens and his brother, Benjamin, celebrating his graduation from basic training at Fort Leonard Wood, MO

at The Citadel, in Army ROTC, and in the Army National Guard, that doing your duty to oneself is crucial in doing your duty to God and country. As a cadet and future Army officer, I am expected to exercise regularly, lead others effectively, and follow the honor code. Becoming an Eagle Scout helped me build the foundation I needed."

"Scouting has helped me in all aspects of my life."

-William Pickens

William Pickens earned his Eagle Scout in March of 2023. In the summer of 2023, William graduated from Army National Guard basic training at Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri. William is a senior at Spartanburg High School where he is captain of the lacrosse team. He plans to attend The Citadel this fall.

"Scouting has helped me in all aspects of my life. The leadership skills I learned in Scouts are skills I continue to use as captain of my lacrosse team. The focus on loyalty and duty to country inspired me to enlist in the Army National Guard. I will continue to use these principles, not only throughout my military career, but for the rest of my life."

YOUTH



“

Last year I was honored to preach and represent the youth in our church. While at times it was stressful, I felt like my relationship with God grew. I was overwhelmed with the kind responses; from comments to letters and gifts. It was a rewarding experience that helped strengthen my faith.



Abby Edwards, 9th grade

”

“



FPC Youth has been a great influence on my emotional and spiritual development for the past six years. Despite the multiple pastor changes that I've seen, I'm very thankful for Carrie, who's been a great friend and mentor to me and all of the youth. I'll never forget all of the great trips and experiences I've gained from being a part of the youth group, most memorably my time at Montreat.

Foster Neely, 12th grade

”

CHILDREN



BRING-A-FRIEND SUNDAY



FEBRUARY 18

ATTENTION 5TH GRADE!
BRING A FRIEND (OR TWO!) TO CHURCH AND JOIN US AT 12 NOON FOR PIZZA AND GAMES IN THE GYM!

PASTORAL CONCERNS

THROUGH JANUARY 17, 2024

In Memoriam

Edythe Craig Hendrix
Monday, December 18, 2023

Charles Eugene "Gene" Rickell
Husband of Anna Rickell
Monday, January 1, 2024

Kitty Nottingham Keith
Mother of Kim Keith and John Keith
Monday, January 1, 2024

Christian Sympathy

Jim Anderson, on the death of his sister,
Cecilia Anderson Caton

Jane Breeden, on the death of her mother,
Perrine Baker Johnson

Laura Hollar, on the death of her mother,
Nancy Amelia Robinson Plowden

Births

Thomas Franklin Gamble, Jr.
Son of Courtney and Frank Gamble
Born Monday, December 18, 2023

Shepherd Harrison Cecil
Son of Melanie and Harrison Cecil
Born Wednesday, December 27, 2023

Baptisms

The Sacrament of Baptism was administered to:

Henry Elston White
Son of Kate and Taylor White
January 14, 2024

Welcome OUR NEW MEMBERS



CALLIE BERLINE



BILL & ANNE
CRAFT



JOE CROWTHER



SCOUT EASTON



SUSIE JAMES



PAUL VERTICCHIO

WAYS TO CONNECT

CONGREGATIONAL RETREAT

May 3-5, 2024
Montreat Conference Center

Join your church family in beautiful Montreat, NC, for a weekend of relaxation, fun, and spiritual growth. There will be programming for all ages (including nursery) and plenty of free time to hike and explore Black Mountain, play games, or take a nap.

Accommodations will be in Assembly Inn and Winsborough, with single rooms and two-room suites available in each.

Visit montreat.org/accommodations to get information on each lodge and choose the right one for you and your family. Please note that room sharing is possible and scholarships are available.

For complete information and to register by March 15, visit fpcspartanburg.org/retreat.



Comprehensive Costs (Room, Meals, and Supplies)

Winsborough Room (max occ. - 2) \$300
Assembly Inn Room (max occ. - 2) \$400
Winsborough Suite (max occ. - 4) \$500
Assembly Inn Suite (max occ. - 4) \$600

For those using other housing, meals and supplies for ages 12+ is \$100, ages 5-11 is \$50, and ages 0-4 are free!



THIRSTY THIRD THURSDAY

February 15 at 5:30pm
Fretwell (101 Fretwell St. Spartanburg)

Thirsty Third Thursdays are BACK!
Parents of teens & college students (and new empty nesters) are invited to join us at Fretwell for a chance to hang out, decompress, and encourage one another!

Questions? Contact Ansley Page (apage@fpcspartanburg.org) or Molly Colbath (colbathmb@gmail.com).

THANK YOU!

for Decking the Halls

First Presbyterian Church's Sanctuary Guild did a fantastic job of decorating and un-decorating the church for Advent and Christmastide.

Thank you to the following individuals:

Rhonda Dickerson, Jean Palmer, Brenda James, Joy Shackelford, Mary Dixon, Jan Williams, Alden Enger, Linda Kiehl, Sally Shuford, June Uhler, Margaret Lee, Kathleen Ford, Linda Harrison, Lynn Cogdill, Thea McLellan, Carolyn Crenshaw, Charlie Burns, Ed Holcombe, and LeAnne Thurmond Holcombe

The Sanctuary Guild will need help decorating for the Lenten and Easter seasons.
Stay tuned for more information!

AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

ACTS 2 DINNERS Supper and Service

February 25

Spend time around the table, breaking bread with friends to strengthen your faith family ties through conversation and serving others! Acts 2 Dinners are for adults ages 22-102.

February's Acts 2 Dinners will include a service project along with dinner to honor Witness Season and to serve The Bethlehem Center.

Scan the QR code or visit fpcspartanburg.org/acts2 to register by February 12 or let us know if you'd like to host a group in your home.

Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts. Acts 2:46 (NRSV)



BALANCE CLASS FOR SENIORS

**Wednesdays Beginning February 7
11:00am in the Activity Room**

Balance Class for Seniors is back!

This class is great for those looking to improve balance, strength, and mobility. Starting Wednesday February 7th at 11am in the Activity Room of the Family Life Center.

Balance Class will last four weeks, and there is no fee for church members.

Pre-Registration is required.

Please contact Colleen Darrall at cdarrall@fpcspartanburg.org to register.

INTRO TO PICKLEBALL

**Tuesdays from 12:00-1:00pm
Gym Court**

Have you ever wanted to try pickleball?

Intro to Pickleball is a great way for brand new players to learn the sport! Players will learn all the basics, and we will cover unique lingo, score-keeping, court position, as well as the fundamentals of serve, return, and the volley.

Pickleball paddles are provided, come and try it out!

WITNESS SEASON

2024

The Bethlehem Center requests
funding for a natural
playground to benefit children
attending the Highland Early
Learning Center and the
surrounding community.

Witness Season Sunday
February 25

Give online at
fpcspartanburg.org/give
or scan the QR code.



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

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