

FPC FIRST PRESS

First Presbyterian Church

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Dear Church,

I woke up this morning singing the hymn, "What a Fellowship, What a Joy Divine." I know, that's weird or at least deeply uncool. Maybe it's a job hazard that I wake up singing hymns, or maybe it's that hymns get inside you and won't let go—and that's why we sing them.

The first line of the hymn is:

What a fellowship, what a joy divine, leaning on the everlasting arms.

And that is exactly how it felt to gather with you again this past Sunday after not meeting for the previous two weeks. What a fellowship! What a joy divine!

If Covid taught me anything, it was how important it is to physically gather together as the church. We can send out videos of sermons and liturgy, but there is something different about gathering together. I think that difference is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is with us in a very tangible way when we gather together. The Spirit uplifts and supports us. It is a joy divine.

I know we all are negotiating a series of demands on our time and attention. But I hope we all will make a commitment together to gather together for worship on Sundays. The church is not the same without you!

In faith, hope, and love,

Tara

Sunday Worship Times

Early Service 8:30 a.m.
Late Service 11:00 a.m.

Sunday School 9:45 a.m.

Lectionary

February 15:

Ex. 24:12-18

Ps. 2

2 Pet. 1:16-21

Matt. 17:1-9

February 22:

Gen. 2:15-17, 3:1-7

Ps. 32

Rom. 5:12-19

Matt. 4:1-11

The Pastor on Call

Rev. Dr. Tara W. Bulger

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Ash Wednesday Services

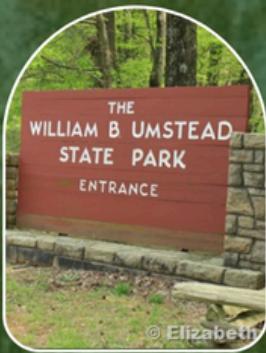
As we begin the season of Lent on Ash Wednesday,
let us reflect and draw closer to God.

FEBRUARY 18

Midday Service at 12:00 P.M. | Evening Service at 6:00 P.M.

As we begin the season of Lent on Ash Wednesday, let us reflect and draw closer to God. Traditionally, people of faith have marked this beginning with the imposition of ashes. We invite you to receive the ashes and blessing at one of our worship services on Wednesday, February 18. There will be a midday service at 12:00 P.M. and an evening service at 6:00 P.M.

FPC TAKES A Hike



SATURDAY | FEBRUARY 21 | 9:00 AM

Come join our pilgrims walking the Camino as
they begin their training! We'll meet at the
Visitors Center at Umstead State Park

Visit fpcraleigh.org/events for more information

BOOK CLUB



Our next read for anyone who wants to join will be *Sipsworth* by Simon Van Booy. This lovely novel tells the story of Helen Cartwright, whose life is unexpectedly upended by a little something she finds.

We'll discuss the book in person on Tuesday, February 24 at noon (bring your own lunch).

We will also meet at 7:00 P.M. on the 24th over Zoom for those who prefer to meet in the evening. Contact Jean Suber at 919-821-5750 if you would like to sign up for the zoom meeting. Hope you can join us.



Come see high school musicians play arrangements of rock and pop songs on February 21st. Students come from schools around Wake County, including Enloe, Leesville, Athens Drive, and more! Program highlights include I Want It That Way by The Backstreet Boys, Livin' on a Prayer by Bon Jovi, and Sweet Caroline by Neil Diamond among others. A portion of the profits goes to support the Raleigh Music Collective, a local non-profit dedicated to promoting music education.

Tickets are \$12 through February 20th, and \$18 day of. Learn more about Chamber Pops at chamberpops.com, and the Raleigh Music Collective at theraleighmusiccollective.org. Concessions available in the lobby!



Join us on Sunday, March 1 at 12:00pm in Memorial Hall for lunch and a practical program led by church member and elder lawyer, Bill Alexander. He'll cover some of the financial and legal things you can do now to protect you and your loved ones as you age.

There is no cost for lunch, but we do need you to register. Please call Jean Suber at 919-821-5750 to register today!



Join us on Sunday, March 1, 2026 at 7:15pm for a service of exploring themes of prayer, pronouncements, and promises for the Lenten season, with an emphasis on our united voices in song and praise. A variety of readings and poems will reflect the messages of the hymns. All ages are welcome.

MARTHA MINISTRY NEWSLETTER

There they made him (Jesus) a supper; and Martha served...John 12:2

Judy Pidcock let us know that Carole Baxter suffered a fall and is at UNC Rex. Sadly, Carole broke her hip and the plan is for hip replacement surgery. Carole seeks our prayers and we send them along with our great love and care.

We also learned that Brenda Johnson was diagnosed with pneumonia and is at home receiving great care (and medicine) from Jerry and Kathy. We wish Brenda a speedy recovery and we pray for a speedy recovery.

Dear Friends,

One need only to look at the timeline outside of Memorial Hall that former Outreach Director, Carol Anne Moehring created, read about the history of First Presbyterian Church Raleigh, or learn about the legacy of former member, Mrs. B. H. Bunch, to recognize that Mission and Outreach are core tenets of this congregation's DNA. Your commitment to serving others is remarkable and inspiring.

The Mission and Outreach space has lived in many locations: the old Christian Education building, Cairn Hall and even in 124 S. Salisbury St. In the year 2000, Temple and Carol Sloan led the Stock Building Capital Campaign Committee to raise money to create a multi-purpose building that could simultaneously and safely house a child development center, Sunday School classes, a gym, administrative offices and a Mission and Outreach Ministry wing. The Stock building opened and was dedicated in 2001.

To obtain ideas for the desired layout of the future Stock building, Carol Sloan and former Outreach Director, Carol O'Briant Shackelford made several trips to visit similar facilities across the United States. The result of the Capital Campaign and Building Committee's hard work is a building that First Presbyterian Church can be proud of. It houses a vibrant Child Development Center, FPC Sunday School classes, Mission Partner Office Space, and Outreach Ministry wing, a full size gymnasium, bathrooms, showers, and small chapel.

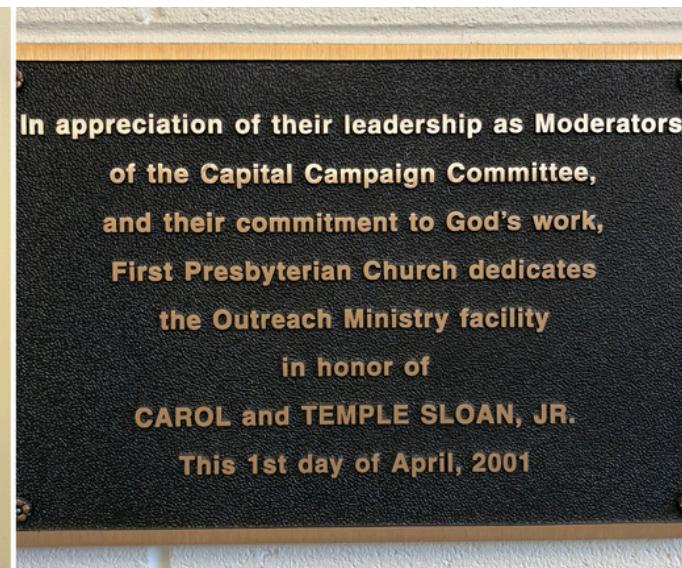
In any given week, the Stock building is used by the FPC CDC, basketball leagues, St. David's school, Raleigh Youth Mission, FIGS, The Encouraging Place, Pride for Parents, Raleigh Youth Choir, and NAMI. On Sundays, Nat Sparrow leads our children in a music sing-along, there is a nursery for young children during worship services, the Confirmation class meets, as well as, children and youth Sunday school classes. The church basketball league uses the gym, and youth groups use the upstairs classrooms. The last two weeks, Betsy and Beth have invited children and youth to come play and hangout during the inclement weather days. And every week a team of FPC volunteers helps me conduct Friendship Fund appointments and interviews in the Outreach wing. Additionally, I assist, talk and pray with neighbors in need of a listening ear, outreach resources, a snack bag, bottle of water, hygiene items, or a warm coat. A lot goes on in the Stock building each week.

For many years not too long ago, we partnered with Family Promise (formerly WIHN) to offer shelter and meals four times a year for a week at a time to unhoused families. The upstairs classrooms were transformed into small apartments. We no longer do that because Family Promise changed their housing model. But, did you know three of neighboring downtown churches (First Baptist, Edenton Street UMC, and Church of the Good Shepard) have opened their doors this winter and served as White Flag Shelters for the unhoused during the extreme cold weather. Unfortunately, we don't have free space that we could dedicate and join in that effort. But, I do have great news.

Last week, the Session approved a 3-month trial period of offering showers to our unhoused neighbors. We will partner with new FPC Mission Partner, ReNew Mobile Showers to host a shower day on the third Thursday of the month from 11:30 am to 2:30 pm. Oak City Cares can no longer meet the needs of people who need showers. We will be able to offer a shower, new underwear, socks and a fresh t-shirt. All participants will sign a waiver and showers will be disinfected between each use. If the trial is successful, our hope is to offer showers one day per week. Much like we need food and water for survival, a regular shower is important for hygiene, mental well-being, as well as for body, skin and respiratory health.

This is not our first foray into offering showers to the unhoused. In early 2018, we partnered with Love Wins and used the upstairs Stock building showers as a shower center. That program was successful and only ended because Oak City Cares officially opened.

To responsibly and safely pull off this endeavor, I need your help. ReNew Mobile Showers will supply volunteers. But, I need two to three FPC members to help serve as welcome ambassadors and ensure that the process runs smoothly and safely. It would be great to have at least one male volunteer onsite. I also need volunteers to take home towels to be washed, dried and returned for use the following month. We will begin this new ministry on Thursday, February 19th. If you feel called to help out, please sign-up [here](#). Please feel free to reach out with any questions at kjohnson@fpcraleigh.org. Once we get up and running, Maryanna Johnson is going to spearhead this volunteer ministry.



Many thanks for all you do to support Outreach and Missions at First Presbyterian – I am grateful for every one of you.

With gratitude and rejoicing!
Kathy

Mission Highlight



In 1990, Souper Bowl of Caring began with a simple prayer: "Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those who are without a bowl of soup to eat" was delivered to a small youth group at Spring Valley Presbyterian Church in Columbia, SC led by Brad Smith, who was serving as a seminary intern at the time. This gave birth to an idea. Why not harness the energy and enthusiasm of Super Bowl weekend, a time when people come together for football, food, and fun, to unite the nation for a higher good? Individuals and groups could collect dollars in soup pots for those in need and send every dollar and food donation directly to a local charity of their choice. The first year, they invited 22 area churches to join the team and collected \$5,700, with 100% of donations distributed to local-area charities. That was 1990. Since then, Souper Bowl of Caring has become a national, grass-roots, youth-inspired movement where ordinary people are doing extraordinary good. To date, over \$220 million has been generated while benefiting thousands of soup kitchens, food banks, meal programs, and other hunger-relief charities in local communities.

Each year during the Big Game, thousands of participants, including churches, schools, youth groups, community partners, grocery partners, local businesses, media partners, NFL teams, and passionate individuals, have experienced for themselves the joy and satisfaction of giving, serving, and inspiring people across the country to follow their generous example.

Souper Bowl of Caring's Mission is "Uniting All Communities to Tackle Hunger". For over 30 years, the Souper Bowl of Caring movement has been inspiring young people across the nation to tackle hunger in their local communities. Join with our own FPC Youth this afternoon as they unite to tackle hunger. After worship, they will be collecting donations in the Gathering Space, and all proceeds collected will go to support Farm Church in Durham. Or, join them for soup and wings in Memorial Hall after the 11 am worship service. All are welcome! Visit farmchurch.org to learn more about their ministry.

Farm Church is a PCUSA congregation that meets on a farm in Durham, NC and leverages the resources of the farm to address food insecurity by asking the question: How might we love and honor people with good food?

They don't have a building, but rather, a small urban farm on the corner of Watts and Green Streets in Durham (1102 Watts St.) that is the main location for Sunday (and Wednesday) gatherings. Occasionally—and with a heads up—they meet at Trinity Avenue Presbyterian Church or S.E.E.D.S (a nonprofit garden school). So, no official "Farm Church" building, but they do have a sanctuary! That word, "sanctuary," means "sacred place," and it's a reality that they celebrate whenever and wherever they gather together.

Why Farm? Why take things outside?

Farm Church's mission is to gather a Christ-centered community around elements of soil and food, to break bread together, and to leverage all the resources of a farm to address food insecurity in our community.

Simply put, can you think of a better place to be in touch with God and with each other than on a farm? There's something about sinking your fingers into the soil, of nurturing the lives of plants and animals, of harvesting the gifts of creation and sharing them with others... There's just something about it all that feels like, well, worship.

That's the "Farm" in "Farm Church" --the excitement shared about worshiping God in a barn, in an orchard, or outside under a beautiful sky - the thought of children taking care of chickens and harvesting eggs to be shared with a local food pantry--the chance to respond to God's love with an overwhelming desire to do what Jesus did and feed people. Why Church? It's a good question, isn't it?

Why not just have a farm, grow a ton of food, and give it all away, right? Why add what is, for many, a religiously problematic layer to a really cool idea? The truth is that they are striving to follow Jesus, a person who was pretty clear about how important it is that people have enough to eat.

They also believe in the good and wonderful power of church—not church as a building or a list of dos and don’ts, but rather church as a come-one, come-all community of seekers committed to connecting neighbors, dispelling isolation, and sensing God’s direction in the world and in our lives.

Farm Church grew out of a wild, imaginative question: "What could church really be?" As a community, they are hoping to answer that question as they worship God, harvest vegetables, and show up in the world in ways that make a real difference.

Farm Church's Sunday morning schedule adapts to the agricultural calendar. As the season changes, their worship and gathering schedule adapts accordingly. They currently gather on Sunday mornings between 10 am and Noon. All are welcome to go and experience Farm Church.

Farm Church is a Mission Partner of FPC Raleigh. Previously, they were led by Kristen Sommerfeld, a child, youth, and young adult of our own congregation. Kristen is now the Farm Director for Interfaith Food Shuttle. Currently, Katherine Matthes, also a child, youth, and young adult of our own congregation serves on the garden team and Council of Stewards for Farm Church.

Ann Poisson and her family, on a whim, decided to register for Note in the Pocket's 13th Annual Socks and Undie 5K Rundie on Saturday, April 25th at 9:30 am. Ann invited her Journey Sunday School Class to join the Poisson family in raising awareness for this clothing ministry, and ultimately, she created an FPC Raleigh team. If you would like to get in on this fun, you can register [here](#). They would love to have you join them. And, there are prizes for the biggest team. The run will take place at the Crossroads Fellowship campus at 4730 Hargrove Road – Raleigh, NC 27616.

Note in the Pocket's mission is to provide quality clothing to homeless and impoverished children and families with dignity and love. It was started by a teacher who noticed many of the children in her classroom lacked seasonally appropriate clothing. It started with a coat and a loving and supportive note placed in the coat pocket and has blossomed into so



Do you love to play Mahjong or have you ever wanted to learn? Hope Carmichael, Anne Otersen, and Kathy Johnson are starting an FPC Mahjong Group. Our first session will be on Sunday, February 15th, after worship. Lunch will be provided in Memorial Hall immediately following worship for those playing. We will play at the Edge Lobby tables from 1-3 pm. 2025 Mahjong cards will be provided to those who don't have one. 2026 cards are not yet available. Hope to see you there! Call the church at 919-821-5750 to register.





HELP US END HUNGER

February

Canned or Dried Beans



Bring this item and/or your favorite non-perishable food donations to the church. There are FPC Shares receptacles on both sides of the Edge Lobby and in the Lisa Ham Gathering Space outside the sanctuary. Thank you!



First Baptist Church at 99 N. Salisbury Street is currently taking donations at their back door, off the Edenton Street parking lot. Ring the bell and place clothing in the bins located just inside the double doors. They request that donated items be sorted and labeled as "Women", "Men", or "Children". There is a big need for children's clothing.

First Baptist Church Clothing Ministry
Monday - Friday 8:30 am - 5:00 pm
For questions, call FBC at 919-832-4485



Did you know that it takes about 100 volunteers each day to deliver meals to the homebound seniors Meals on Wheels serves? They have 11 home delivered meal sites to volunteer from across Wake County. Whether it's North Raleigh, Wake Forest or Zebulon, they are looking to add to their team of volunteers!

You can deliver every week or once a month - whatever suits your schedule. Meal delivery takes about 60-90 minutes and brings so much joy to homebound seniors, as well as provides a nourishing meal and wellness check. [Click here](#) to volunteer today!