

FIRST NEWS

Reverends Josh and Lara Musser Gritter, Co-Senior Pastors

March 2024



Deeply Rooted

Bearing The Cross Of Grief

Be still, my soul; the Lord is on thy side

Lent is a season where we attempt to give spiritual practices a bit more attention. We give things up that we love like chocolate and buying new clothes. We give things up that we know aren't good for us like alcohol and social media. And, perhaps best of all, we take on new practices to deepen our faith like Centering Prayer or daily Scripture reading. All of our Lenten practices are invitations find renewed peace in God's loving care. Lent is an invitation to still our souls and trust that the Lord, the Creator of all, cares even particularly for us.

Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain.

Lent is also a season where we intentionally make space for those pains and griefs that stalk us: the old scar, the quiet place at the dinner table, the estranged relationship, the early diagnosis, the empty piano bench. This Lent, all of First Presbyterian Church is patiently bearing the cross of grief and pain as we lament the death of our new but much beloved Music Director Tim Waugh. As the children's book says, we can't go over it, we can't go under it, we have to go through it. We have to go through this grief together.

Leave to thy God to order and provide;

Inevitably, we should ask the terrible but necessary question about Tim's death: why? God, why would you give us such a clear sense of calling to shared ministry with Tim and then allow him to die? Surely, God did not plan out Tim's untimely death. Surely, God's heart was the first to break when Tim breathed his last. Of course, the exact answer for why will always remain a mystery for us mortals. The best we can do is to continue to ask the question and, at times, shout, nay, rage it to the heavens in lament.

In every change He faithful will remain.

While at some unknowable level God is indeed in control of this world, it is wise to tread lightly with a phrase like "God is in control" in a tragic death. Still, we can stand firmly upon one statement: God is faithful. God is faithful. God is faithful to God's people in the midst of lament and grief. God is faithful to God's people when they cry out in rage. God is faithful to God's people when it seems all that was familiar around us has vaporized into a strange new world. God is faithful. In every change, in every season, God is faithful.

Be still, my soul; thy best, thy heavenly Friend, through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

We are Christians walking through the season of Lent in grief and lament. Still, we do not walk alone. It is our heavenly friend, Jesus, who walks alongside of us. In grief, in questioning, in tragedy, in loss, Jesus is with us because he, himself, has borne these blows of human experience. It is Jesus who makes our small crosses bearable because it is Jesus who already bore it for us. He has already walked to Calvary and faced the worst that death could deal him. And yet, three days later, he arose again to a joyful end. A joyful end that he promises for us and an end that be promises for our dear departed Tim too.

--Pastor Lara Musser Gritter

March 2024

Inside This Newsletter

- **Holy Week Schedule**
- **Upcoming Blood Drive**
- **Handbell Festival**
- **Trevor Eppehimer Series**
- **Easter Sunday Activities**

And much more!

You Are Invited...

Lenten Sunday Sermon Series

"People of The Passion"

Feb 18: High Priest's Slave

Feb 25: Judas Iscariot

Mar 3: Peter

Mar 10: The Accompanying Women

Mar 17: Criminals on the Cross

Mar 24: Pontius Pilate and the Centurion



Church To Host Red Cross Blood Drive In April

First Presbyterian Church will host a Red Cross blood drive on Tuesday, April 23, in Lewis Hall from 2:00 to 6:30 pm. Sign up to donate blood using the QR code.

To volunteer to help on April 23 with sign-in, logistics, etc., contact Rev. Bill Hoyle at drputtswell@gmail.com or Mike Drinkard, mikedrinkard@gmail.com.



American Red Cross Blood Drive
@ First Pres Salisbury

on
Tuesday, April 23
from 2-6:30pm



Register Now to reserve your appt




Deeply Rooted

From Pastor Randy...

Let's talk about Grief

Right after the announcement of Tim Waugh's death, someone asked when I was planning to do another "Grief Group." I was reminded of how all of death is connected. When someone we know dies, whether they are acquaintances, dear friends, or beloved family members, it has a way of awakening unresolved grief that we have hidden away in our hearts.

Scripture has much to say about the experience of grief. 2 Corinthians 4 is a case in point. *The Message* translates one verse: "We've been surrounded and battered by troubles, but we are not demoralized."

*The Phillips New Testament* translates one verse: "We are always facing death, but this means that you know more and more of life." These are both great truths about trouble and grief but often come down the road after much reflection.

In his observations about his own grief experience, C. S. Lewis wrote: "No one ever told me that grief felt so like fear. I am not afraid, but the sensation is like being afraid." Other descriptions use words like "puzzled," "knocked down," or "persecuted," all images connected to fearful experiences. The death of someone we love strikes us at the most vulnerable part of our lives. The death of someone we love is not only an attack on them but on us at the deepest level. Grief wounds us. Wounds require healing. Healing takes time and often help.

Grief expert Alan Wolfelt says that while you may bandage the wounds of grief and isolate to protect yourself for a while, "not sharing your grief will stunt your healing process." Eventually, we all need someone with whom to share our grief. Again, the apostle Paul encouraged the early Christians: "Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep (Romans 12:15)."

So, *let's talk about grief.* Beginning in May, I will be leading a short-term grief group. We will meet weekly 10-12 times. The day of the week and time are to be determined by those who are interested. I plan to hold an orientation meeting at 5:00 pm on Sunday, April 28, at the

church. In the meantime, I invite you to contact me at the office so I will know how many books to order. Even if you are wondering if this could be helpful in your journey, give me a call. *Let's talk!*

--Pastor Randy Kirby

Share

Thank You! For The Winter Coats

The Embracing the Unchurched Team thanks our congregation for the generous donations of winter coats. Since the end of November, we have collected 61 coats that were, in turn, given to both Rowan Helping Ministries and the Community Care Clinic in the name of our church. Both organizations were very happy to receive the coats, and more than that, we are sure that there are some very thankful individuals in our community who are staying warmer this winter. If you have some coats and didn't get around to bringing them to be donated, don't worry, we plan to collect coats again next winter. THANK YOU!

Facilitate

Parking For Visitors and Handicapped

Parking is at a premium around our block, so we lovingly ask that everyone be considerate and welcoming to those who need to park close. If you are able to walk, please leave spots in our parking lot for visitors and those who are mobility-challenged. On Sundays, please consider parking on W. Fisher St., S. Jackson St., or in the South State Bank lot, but please do not block the drive-thru. This way, we can enable all who want to worship the accessibility they need to do so.

Grow In Friendship

Upcoming Activities for JOY Group

March 26 - Our First Presbyterian Day School had invited anyone 50+ years old (JOY Group) to come to an Easter reception with refreshments and an activity with the preschool students. It will be held on Tuesday, March 26, from 10:00 - 11:00 am in Lewis Hall. Call the church office to let us know you will be attending. Please join us for the fun and fellowship.

Dewberry Farm April 2

Want to see 100,000 tulips blooming in April at a farm near Kernersville? Dewberry Farm is famous for its spectacular tulips, and the JOY Group (any member over 50) is invited to lunch and a tour of the tulip farm. You may even cut tulips for \$1.25 per stem. The tour will be on Tuesday, April 2, or a rain date on Thursday, April 4.

The tour is \$8.00 per person. Please bring either cash or checks made out to First Presbyterian Church to the reception office in the Education Building by March 26. We will meet at 9:45 am at the church parking lot on April 2 and use both church vans and members' cars to carpool to the farm. Golf carts are available at the farm for a limited number of people who are not able to walk far. We should return to the church around 3:15 pm. Lunch will be at a restaurant in Kernersville, and the tour will follow from 12:00 - 2:00 pm. We hope you can join us.

Deeply Rooted

Charged with Surrender: Why you Should come Worship during Holy Week

Have you ever attended a Maundy Thursday or Good Friday worship service? If not, why? Maybe this year could be your first! Let me tell you why I think these services are the most powerful we do all year—along with Christmas Eve, of course.

Reason 1) A New way to Take Communion

On Maundy Thursday we offer a service with two distinct parts. The first is where we get the word “Maundy” from. Maundy is from the Latin, *Mandatum*, which means commandment. On Maundy Thursday we remember that at the end Jesus gave his disciples his new commandment—that they would love one another. During this service we re-enact Jesus’ final meal with his disciples. What we know as “The Last Supper.” If you’re reading this, you’ve likely experienced taking communion before at one of our worship services. But on Maundy Thursday, we do something different. We gather you in groups of 12, and we tell the story. Again and again, I have heard from people that this is the most meaningful part of this service. So come taste and see, and taste and see in a different way.

Reason 2) You’ll feel the story all around you:

The latter half of our Maundy Thursday service is called a “Service of Shadows.” You may even hear a Latin word thrown around (apparently we love Latin during Holy Week), “Tenebrae.”

Tenebrae means “darkness.” It is actually a word we have etched onto the top of the front of our sanctuary. Go out to the courtyard, stand at the fountain, and look up toward the Sanctuary. What you’ll find are the words, “Lucet et Tenebris,” *the light conquers the darkness*. On Maundy Thursday you’ll experience something not often felt in worship—total darkness. To say it’s powerful is an understatement. Perhaps the best way to understand the darkness into which Christ descends is to sit in it.

Reason 3) Come be a part of Something New at First Pres

We’re a 200-year-old church, so I always use the word “new” with great hesitation. That notwithstanding, to my knowledge First Pres has never held a service of “The Seven Last Words.” This service will be held on Good Friday, and will offer up meaningful reflections on the seven last words Jesus speaks from the cross. That evening we will have seven different preachers, some pastors, some not.

I’m especially excited this year to hear from our College Intern Salem Fleming, and our High School Senior Andrew Mead. This diverse group of voices spanning the generations will bring us into all the night has to offer. Our music will be set to a contemporary setting.

4) Reason 4: Come see the Best of what God does for us

The last but most important reason to attend a Holy Week service this Lent is that these services remind us of the goods of the gospel. If the gospel were a meal, Holy Week would be the main course—without it, we’re left hungry for something more. During this week we remember that God in Jesus Christ did not leave us to our perils alone. We remember that God is with us but also deeply and profoundly for us. We remember in the taste of communion, in the washing of our feet, in the enveloping darkness, and in Jesus’ words from the cross, that there is one who can heal and save us. And that’s the kind of good news we need to hear again and again.

****See the complete Holy Week Schedule at First Pres on the back page of this newsletter.**





Congratulations TO OUR HIGH ATTENDANCE SUNDAY WINNERS!

Drum roll please...

The Sunday School class with the high attendance (based on percentages of those enrolled)who wins the trophy??...

- First Place goes to Discovery with 65% in attendance!
- Second Place goes to Contemporary Christians with 62%!
- Third Place goes to Everyman's Bible Class with 53%!
- Our Elementary Sunday School class won BREAKFAST on Sunday, MARCH 10. They had the most visitors in their classroom!

75 YEARS |  ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING
SPECIAL OFFERINGS
HUNGER • DISASTER • DEVELOPMENT

Hey First Pres Salisbury...

IT IS TIME TO GO FISHING

Feed the Fish 2024
Sunday, Feb 18 - Sunday, March 24
Who will have the biggest fish?



Bell Tower Ringers Handbell Festival

The Bell Tower Ringers will hold their 9th handbell festival on Friday,

March 8th

and Saturday,

March 9th.

Choirs from the area will join clinician,

Greig Ashurst, for the event. The congregation and greater community is invited to attend a culminating concert in Lewis Hall on Saturday, March 9th at 4:00 pm.



A Note Of Sincere Thanks

First Presbyterian Church Family, Thank you all for the many prayers, telephone calls, visits, blue cards, and get-well cards I've received since my fall and subsequent recovery. It's been a long six

months, but I'm gradually recovering with the assistance of many physical and occupational therapies.

Your flowers and the many visits from our church pastors and dear friends have brightened my days. The beautiful prayer shawl is a constant and daily reminder of God's continuing love and caring. What an awesome church family!

Nick and I look forward to returning to worship and other church activities as soon as possible.

We miss you all,
Sincerely, Gail Langdon

Media & Communications

Upcoming Newsletter Deadlines

<u>Edition</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
April	March 20
May	April 17
June	May 22
July & August	June 19
September	August 21
October	September 18
November	October 16
December	Nov. 18 (Monday)
January 2025	Dec. 16 (Monday)

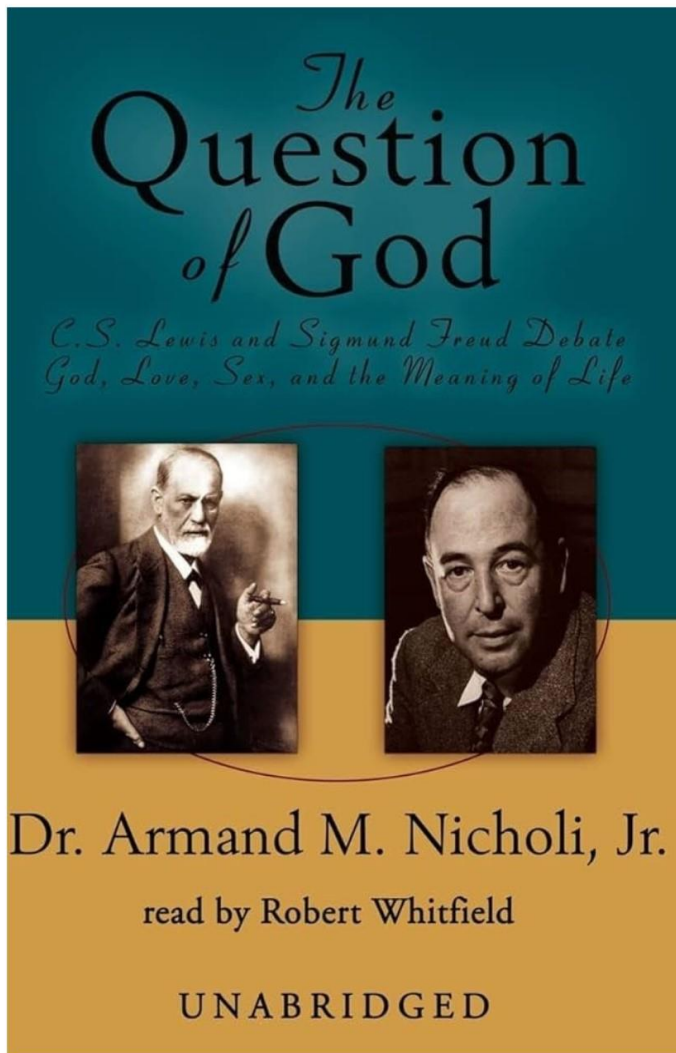
HE IS RISEN

CELEBRATE THE RESURRECTION

Professor Trevor Eppheimer

The Questions of God

Thursdays, February 29 - March 28
9:00-10:00 am in the First Pres Conference Room



Week 1: February 29

Is There an Intelligence Beyond the Universe?

Week 2: March 7

Is There a Universal Moral Law?

Week 3: March 14

What is the Source of Our Greatest Enjoyment in Life?

Week 4: March 21

How Can We Resolve The Problem of Suffering?

Week 5: March 28

Is Death Our Only Destiny?

Week 5: March 28

Is Death Our Only Destiny?



Register:
Use the QR Code or
email: teppheimer@hoodseminary.edu



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

January 31, 2024

OPERATING		GIVING		
YTD Income	98,829.62	YTD Budgeted Giving	98,727.42	
YTD Expenses	<u>75,229.29</u>	YTD Actual Giving	<u>90,263.33</u>	
Cash Flow - Positive	<u>23,600.33</u>	Under	<u>8,464.09</u>	
	Budgeted Income	102,769.08	YTD Pledged	90,102.42
Actual Income	<u>98,829.62</u>	YTD Actual	<u>85,043.58</u>	
Under	<u>-136,634.49</u>	Under	<u>5,058.84</u>	
	Budgeted Expenses	111,574.00		
Actual Expenses	<u>75,229.29</u>			
Under	<u>36,344.71</u>			
	DAY SCHOOL			
YTD Gain	<u>3,155.90</u>			

4 WAYS TO GIVE



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WWW.FIRSTPRES.SALISBURY.ORG



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308 W. FISHER ST.
SALISBURY, NC 28144



TEXT 2 GIVE
704.286.1055



IN PERSON



Please join us to Celebrate Easter on Sunday, March 31

Easter Sunday School Hour

Join us in Lewis Hall at 9:45

- Flowering the Cross
- Feed The Fish Winner Announcement
- Easter Egg Hunt
- (Be sure to bring your basket)
- Resurrect the Alleluias

Easter Sunday Services

6:30 am at Bell Tower Green Park,
8:30 am & 11:00 am in Lewis Hall



SAVE THE DATE

Welcome to the Table

SUNDAY APRIL 14 | 11AM
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN SALISBURY

JOIN OUR FIRST KIDS AS THEY CELEBRATE COMING TO
THE TABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN HOLY COMMUNION



Day School Good News

The Day School had many visitors this month to help us on our learning adventure! First we had Dr. Hudson teach us about germs and the children learned the "Germ Boogie". We had Jake and Ms. Karen read us a book about therapy dogs going to school. We, also, had many guest readers from church and many parents! We had Dr. Stacye, our friendly dentist, teach us how to take care of our teeth. Finally, we have Pastor Lara visit us every week for Praise Time. We are so thankful for all of our guests especially during the winter months.



The Day School children learned all about LOVE during February. The children made cards for the staff and delivered them. The older classes memorize a bible verse each month and can recite John 3:16 all by themselves. Some classes learned how to say "I love you!" in different ways. And all the classes had Valentine Day celebrations to show our classmates love and for the children know who always loves them.



Registration update:

The Day School is almost completely full for the 2024-2025 School year and we are in the process of adding more classes. Thank you for sharing to your friends and neighbors about us.



Save the Date

OUR CHURCH
Retreat

August 23-25, 2024

@ Caraway Conference Center and Camp

Save the Date for a very special weekend!

We have programming for all ages.
Join our Pastors and special guest speakers,
Drs. Priscilla and Jack Levison.

Registration information
coming soon.



Please join us for Holy Week

Palm Sunday Worship

Sun, March 24 @ 8:30am & 11am in Lewis Hall

Lenten Prayer Breakfast

Wed, March 27 @ 7am in Fellowship Hall

Maundy Thursday Service

Thurs, March 28 @ 7pm in Lewis Hall

Seven Last Words Worship

Good Friday, March 29 @ 7pm in Lewis Hall

Easter Sunday Services

Sun, March 31 @ 6am at BTG Park,
8:30am & 11am in Lewis Hall



Lenten Prayer Breakfast Speakers in March

Join Us Each Wednesday at 7 a.m. during March in the Fellowship Hall. Cost is \$7.00.

Here are the speakers for the month:

Mar 6: Romar and Chelsea Morris, Next Generation Academy

Mar 13: Rev. Dan Joyner Miller, St John's Lutheran Church senior pastor

Mar 20: Harry McLaughlin, Jr - Salisbury City Council

Mar 27: Dr. Vergel L. Lattimore - Hood Seminary president

First Presbyterian Church
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Sunday Worship Schedule (Effective 11-5-2023)

- 8:30 am Life Center Worship Lewis Hall
- 9:45 am Sunday School
- 11 am Worship - Lewis Hall