

FIRST NEWS

Reverends Josh and Lara Musser Gritter, Co-Senior Pastors

January 2024



Deeply Rooted

10 Reasons To Attend Worship in 2024

1. **Worship forms us weekly.** It wasn't until I was required to go to worship weekly as a pastor that I discovered what God can do through the weekly practice of worship. Bit by bit, worship forms us as Christians. It grows our ability to confess shortcomings, trust God, and get caught up in something larger than ourselves. You don't have to understand it all. You don't have to agree with it all, but week by week it will shape you for the better.

2. **Always room for more hypocrites.** Some critique the church by saying, "It's full of people who don't live up to what they believe." To that, I say, "Uh, duh!" We're the first to admit we don't live up to the call of the gospel. That's why we confess our sins every week. Your failures, your messes, and your hypocrisy are released here. The world insists that we wrap ourselves in the veneer of accomplishment and success. The church invites you to come on in and be wrapped in grace.

3. **Write it on your heart.** I have no doubt that my phone has made me dumber. I expect that AI will do more of the same. When infinite information is accessible at our fingertips, we no longer have reason to store things in our brains. Yet when we are in crisis, google will not help us. We need God's word and wisdom written on our hearts. In weekly worship, we repeat scriptures, songs, and prayers so that they migrate from our heads to our hearts. They'll be ready for us when we need them most.

4. **Community not of your choosing.** With the internet and increased social mobility, you can curate who you are around with razor-sharp precision. Church ain't that place! Church is a community of very different people, all drawn to the same Lord week by week. Church is one of the last places in our society where you can regularly be in relationships with people different from you. It's good for your soul. It's good for our society.

5. **Sing-alongs are fun.** I'm in the Disney parenting stage. That means our house has become sing-along-central. I am a terrible singer. I genuinely do not know what pitch is. But singing, even terribly, is a blast. Singing communally is a means of sharing emotions with others—joy, lament, gratitude. Sing-alongs open the spirit. Worship is a weekly sing-along to the one who created music.

6. **Your momma.** When you come to church, people genuinely seek to know something authentic about who you are. If you're struggling, if your family is struggling, people will genuinely care and pray for you. Church is one
(Continued on next page)



January 2024

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10 Reasons to Attend Worship in 2024

(continued from front page)

of the only places where acquaintances will ask about your momma, truly care about the answer, and bring you a casserole later.

7. **Live is living!** In worship, you get to hear free live music. Live music contains a beauty and mystery unparalleled by prerecorded music. These people are coming together to create something beautiful in your midst. It has never sounded this way before, it will never sound this way again. You are present for the moment of creation. What a wonder!

8. **Tap into reality.** Staying on the couch in jammies with a cup of warm coffee is tempting on a Sunday morning. But week by week, we confess that there is a reality beyond what we can see—God. We confess that the universe is not meaningless material but a beautiful cosmos created by God for love and redemption. Everything we do in worship taps into this bigger reality. The couch, the soccer pitch, and the vacation home are nice, but they'll never be as real as this.

9. **It's not about you.** Most messages in our culture are inward-facing. Your life is a movie; you are the lead character, and you better have a story worth watching. But your life is not a movie. You are not the lead character. Worship frees us from the constant pressure to be the lead because it reminds us that there are people and communities beyond ourselves. Worship is about a community of people gathering to speak and sing a shared story that is beyond them. We can just be beloved children worshipping the one who gives life, sustains our world, and saves us from ourselves.

10. **It's about God.** God is our creator. Without God, nothing, nothing, would exist. God created us. Saves us. Sustains us. Draws close to us in suffering. Holds our lives. Promises us a future. At the name of Jesus, every knee shall bend, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord!
--Pastor Lara Muser Gritter



First Pres Driving Ministry!

We call it "Presbyterian Pick-up," its primary objective is to provide rides to Sunday worship services or appointments for members who no longer drive. Drivers will be matched with riders on an as-needed basis. If you would be willing to help by volunteering to be a driver or need a ride to worship or an appointment, please call Anne Saunders, the Care Team Presbyterian Pick-up coordinator, at 704-640-4546.

Facilitate-Property Maintenance

Sanctuary Waterproofing Project Progressing Well

The major waterproofing project on our sanctuary building is well underway and making good progress. Beginning back on November 1, the contractor, R&L Glover Enterprises, under the supervision of Bryce Evans, has been excavating down some 20 feet all around the exterior of the church building to repair and replace waterproofing materials.

The total budget for the extensive work is about \$580,000, which is being funded by our Church Maintenance Reserve fund.

The process also includes replacing the courtyard steps to the sanctuary as well as rebuilding the elevated porch on the Innes Street side. Completion of the work is scheduled for some time in March 2024. One setback was the discovery of asbestos in the original waterproofing material on the foundation walls, which may extend the project by several weeks. The asbestos must be professionally removed and disposed of by an asbestos abatement company.

The project is being monitored by our Facilitate committee leadership, our maintenance supervisor Archie Tucker and our architects, Ramsey and Burgin.

The Facilitate committee is grateful to our congregation and church staff for their patience during this lengthy process. It is a short-term inconvenience, but the long-term benefits will ensure the integrity of our beloved sanctuary building for years to come.

SHARE

Coat Donations Pouring In

The *Embracing the Unchurched* Team would like to thank the congregation for the generous donations of winter coats so far. Rowan Helping Ministries is seeing a real need for coats for men and women, so they have been very pleased to receive our donations. Additionally, the Community Care Clinic was in need of more coats, so some of the coats have been given to them as well. We will continue to keep the red tub in the lobby outside Lewis Hall to collect more new or gently used coats that anyone may be willing to give. Thank you!

Worship Services

A BIG THANK YOU to all who helped decorate our campus for Christmas. Lewis Hall, Fellowship Hall, and offices and hallways looked beautiful! Thanks to all who hung wreaths, put up trees, tested lights, and used their special touches to make everything look so warm and welcoming! Special thanks to Carr Garner for leading the decorating team.

--Karen & Dan De Graaf, Worship Services
LCW Team Captains

From Pastor Randy...

The Courage to See

"It has seemed to me sometimes as though the Lord breathes on this poor gray ember of Creation and turns it to radiance—for a moment or a year or the span of a life."

Marilynne Robinson, *Gilead*

The Courage to See begins with these sparkling words from Marilynne Robinson. It is a powerful first step for a book of daily inspiration gleaned from some of the world's greatest literature. In the first few days of the New Year you encounter quotes from *A River Runs Through It*, *Ecclesiastes*, *Ernest Hemingway*, and Rainer Maria Rilke:

"My eyes already touch the sunny hill/ going far ahead of the road I have begun. So we are grasped by what we cannot grasp; it has inner light, even from a distance..." Rilke

The foreword invites us to a bit of nostalgia as Sabrina Fountain acknowledges her preference for physical books and remembers as a child surrounding herself with her favorite volumes in bed the way most children are surrounded by their stuffed animals. But the direction of the devotions is engaging and even transformative. We are reminded that the God who created the world by calling things into existence is still calling us to exist in God's world.

"This is a profound and radical seeing, taking all of our courage to embrace" what God may be calling us to see and do in the New Year. Which is, after all, the point. Are we open to the Word that became flesh and dwelt among us? Do we have the courage to see and have our vision changed in the New Year?

If you are intrigued, *The Courage to See* may be just the reading companion you are looking for in the New Year. You may see old friends. You may make new ones. If you have the courage to read. Happy New Year! I hope to see you in church.

--Pastor Randy Kirby

Commitment

The Season Of Giving Coming To Close

As we close our SEASON of GIVING, we are also celebrating the SEASON of MIRACLES. Let us remember the miracle of the birth of the Christ Child and the amazing, unconditional love He brought to the world. There is no more special example of giving than the sacrifice He made on the Cross. He died to save each of us so we can live eternally with Him. We are so blessed to know His love, grace, and mercy.

As we look around our community and the world, many do not know Jesus's love and saving grace. As believers, we have a responsibility to share His love with others and help them understand His saving grace and love. Your generosity will help us share His love with those as we pray for folks to accept His saving grace.

As of today (12/19/23), we have met 81% of our budget goal through 182 pledges. Eighteen children

**Commit to the Lord
whatever you do,
and he will
establish your plans**

Proverbs 16:3

made pledges to pray, participate in church, and share Jesus's love with others. We have 11 new pledges and 59 increased pledges! THANK YOU for sharing your treasures to support our Ministry Teams as they share Jesus's love throughout our community. Remember, it is not too late to join the First Presbyterian Good News Team and be a part of sharing Jesus's love with others!

As we reflect on this SEASON of MIRACLES, remember the gift of Jesus's love that you received. Prayerfully consider how you will use your time, talents, and treasures in 2024 to share the MIRACLE of JESUS's unconditional love and saving grace with others.

More All In Group Opportunities

Our Grow in Friendship Ministry Team is happy to report another very successful **All In Group** series this fall. They are so grateful for our hosts: Del and Carol Denny, Steve and Robin Fisher, Keith and Carr Garner, and Tricia Johnson and Cristi Musser. Please offer them words of thankfulness for stepping up to support this incredible fellowship ministry of our church.

We are very excited to announce a "special" **Lenten All In Group Series**, beginning Sunday, Feb 18. We will follow and discuss our pastors' sermon series through Lent. While we have several hosts secured, we are still in need of a couple more. If you are interested in learning more or perhaps would be willing to be a host or even a co-host, please reach out to Rhonda Shaw, chair of our Grow In Friendship Ministry Team. Or simply, call the church office and we will gladly pass along the information.

News From Meals On Wheels

We offer congratulations to Missy and Henry Brown who were honored as Outstanding Volunteers for the Salisbury/North Rowan area at the recent MOW Volunteer Service Award Luncheon. We are pleased to welcome Martha Bostian as a new First Pres MOW volunteer, who will be delivering each month.

We also wish to recognize our recent volunteers: Tony Shaw, Carol and Del Denny, Wayne Hayworth, Tracy Smith, Beffie and ED Cook, Paula and Bill Troxler, Randy Lassiter, Dianne Scott and Tony Blackwell, Lyn Beaver, Tricia Johnson, Elizabeth Bergsma, Mary Greene, Teresa Williams, Jim Mitchell, Missy and Henry Brown, Kim Johnson, Anne and Frank Saunders, Linda Jones and Buddy Farnan, Eleanor Sandifer, Helen Kichefski, Linda Bartlett, Fredna Farris, Martha Bostian, Sherry Beck, Adair Doran, Ed Lewis, Bobby Williams, and Nancy and Frank Eason.

GROW IN FAITH

An Exciting Transition Coming To Christian Formation Welcome Amanda Hathcock!

Greetings to First Pres!!

When I "retired" from working at Sacred Heart Catholic School in June 2022, little did I know that I was closing one door... only to open another door as your interim Director of Christian Education...for 18 months. Time goes by fast!?! I have sincerely enjoyed re-engaging with you, and especially our children. They are my joy and my energy! I am very thankful for the trust and grace that you have shown me as I tried to re-organize, re-energize, and promote our church through Christian Education and Discipleship. I am also very grateful for the tremendous volunteers that our church is so fortunate to have.

In addition, I have enjoyed and valued my role in helping our church develop a new brand and a new look. Our church is full of energy and good cheer, and we love Jesus! Our world can be so hard, but I believe that the GOOD message is seeping into our community. We are #deeplyrootedbranchingout!! Yeah!

After a long search, I am so pleased to welcome Mrs. Amanda Hathcock as our NEW Director of Christian Formation and Discipleship. She, too, is energetic, faithful, and has a tremendous love for all people. As a mother of 3 boys who all grew up in this church (Banks, Max, and Jack Fisher), I, personally, am so excited to tell you that Ms. Amanda is also a mother of 3 little boys. What joy as we will get to watch those boys grow up too!! Please take a few moments to read Ms. Amanda's welcome letter, and please welcome her with open arms!! She officially begins on Wednesday, January 3.

So where am I going? LOL - not too far and really just down the hall! I look forward to helping transition Ms. Amanda into her new role. Then, I will begin to focus more and more on communications and marketing in a supportive role. While we have our new brand...we still have much to share...and next up is our NEW website!

- Stay Tuned! Robin Fisher



A Message from Amanda, Director of Christian Formation and Discipleship

"Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise"- Philippians 4:8

Have you ever heard of a glimmer? It's the opposite of a trigger. A glimmer is looking at the world for small moments that spark peace and joy in your life. I am blessed to have many glimmers in my life.

One such glimmer is the new adventure I will be embarking on at First Pres Salisbury as your Director of Christian Formation and Discipleship. I look forward to seeing all the ways you support and grow one another in faith, and I hope to bring some new ideas to strengthen our ministry.



A little background on me; I grew up not far down the road in Misenheimer, NC. I have two wonderful parents, Dan and Beth Huber, and an "okay" older brother, Bart Huber. I attended Gray Stone Day School and then Lenoir-Rhyne University, where I received a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education. After teaching for several years, I felt led to work as the Director of Congregational Life at First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lexington, NC. I have served in that capacity for the past 6 years. I am now looking forward to working closer to home and supporting the growth of God's word in our beloved Salisbury.

Perhaps not a glimmer but more of a firework in my life is my family. I am happily married to Kevin Hathcock, my high school sweetheart, and we have built a wonderful life complete with three rambunctious boys. Amos is 7 years old and attends Isenberg Elementary in the Dual Language Immersion program. Amos loves cars and telling jokes. Simon is 4 years old and attends First United Methodist Preschool. He loves animals and keeps us on our toes. Our third son, Felix, will be 1 year old at the end of January and is the happiest baby you will ever meet. We have two pets: a big, loveable black lab named Frank and the heartiest goldfish on the planet, Mr. Fish. We recently moved into a new home and combined houses with my mother, Beth. My father's health has prevented him from living at home, and he is a resident at Autumn Care in Salisbury. Our new house is certainly a glimmer in a season of change for our family, and we look forward to hosting an open house soon and sharing our world with you all.

I live my life by the glimmers and blessings that God shows us each day. In a world of change, a strong faith and community of believers are vital to happiness. I look forward to working with you all in the New Year to strengthen an already vibrant community and grow our faith together.

--In Christ, Amanda Hathcock

Christian Formation & Discipleship News

Christian Formation is an important ministry of First Presbyterian Church. Our overall goal is to teach the biblical meaning of our faith and the way we live in a faithful response to God's love, as revealed to us through Jesus Christ. We offer a wide variety of programs, in addition to Sunday School, to reach individuals of all ages. While developing friendships through learning and fellowship, these programs also equip and enable our members to reach out to each other, our community, nation, and world in Jesus' name.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

As normal, Christmas was a whirlwind of food, fellowship, incredible worship services, beautiful music, and GREAT Christian cheer! Many thanks to all our faithful volunteer "elves" who make all our Christian Formation programming HAPPEN! As we head into January, many of our Sunday School classes are BEGINNING new curriculums. It is the PERFECT time to find a Sunday morning class to inspire and support you, to help you grow spiritually, and to find new church friends.

ADULT CLASSES

Contemporary Christians led by Karl Hales - Meets downstairs in Room 103 - Stay Tuned for Winter Curriculum

Discovery Class led by David Potts - Meets upstairs in Room 215 - Beginning a new study entitled "Door Knobs" Come and Discover...

Everyman's Bible Class led by Tony Almeida, Dan Cagle, and Vic Bost, Meets downstairs in Room 107
The Present Word Curriculum from PCUSA

Mary & Martha Women's Class led by Kathy Tart - Meets downstairs in Room 101 - *The Present Word Curriculum from PCUSA*

Open Door & New Horizons led by Stephen & Andrea Bullock, Meets upstairs in Room 221 Stay Tuned for Winter Curriculum

Presbyterian Outlook led by Barrie Kirby, Kathy Vestal, Trish Dunn, and Duane Galloway - Meets upstairs in Room 219. New book study: Brian McLaren's "the Great Spiritual Migration: How the World's Largest Religion is Seeking a Better Way to Be Christian"

Sisters In Christ led by Robin Fisher - Meets upstairs in Room 202 - New DVD study "When You Pray" by seven incredible women of faith.

NURSERY & YOUTH CLASSES

Our Nursery (Infant – 4 years old) is open from 8:15 am-12:15 pm every Sunday. Our little ones play, read bible stories, and talk about God. They use the "Play & Worship" curriculum that centers on Bible Stories. Meets in the Basement Room B30

Our Elementary Sunday School (K-3rd grades) meets Sundays upstairs in Room 206. This winter focuses on David, Jonathan, Abigail, and Solomon. They also have a special Lent curriculum.

Our Pre-Teen Sunday School (4th – 7th grades) meets Sundays upstairs in Room 208. Our "Be Bold" curriculum gives our pre-teens exactly what they need—validation of their faith questions, and a place to connect as they explore those questions together with their adult leaders.

Our High School Youth (8th – 12th grades) meets with Pastor Josh in our High School Youth Room 223. They will meet in January on Sundays 7 & 21.

All classes meet from 9:45-10:45 am on Sunday mornings. EMBC likes to start early!!

FIRST KIDS CLUB It is possible – First Kids are higher energy in the weeks before Christmas! They could all explode! In December, our Wednesday club evenings were filled with



Advent lessons, Christmas crafts, the Nativity story, and practicing songs and speaking parts for our Christmas Eve pageant! Thank you to Cathy Adams, who designed and helped our children create their own Advent tree – full of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love! Also, many thanks to our Sisters in Christ Sunday School classes who fed our crew TWICE in December. When we return from Christmas break on Wednesday, Jan 10, our lessons will focus on worship, baptism, and communion. We are ready!

With Joy and Peace!

Robin Fisher, Interim Director of Christian Formation & Discipleship



DAY SCHOOL GOOD NEWS



The Day School is ending 2023 with a birthday party for Jesus! We made a large donation to Life Choices of Rowan County of baby items that the children brought as presents to the “baby”. The children sang beautifully and practiced their Spanish by singing “Feliz Navidad”. The children have been learning sign language, too, and can sign The
B I B L E song.

Please put January 28th, 2024 on your calendars and join us downstairs for an Open House and tour of the Day School after church.

We will be opening up early registration to church members and current families on January 29th. We had a long waitlist last year so please send anyone interested in teaching our way!

Celebrating the 250th Anniversary

Amazing Grace

Join Us this January
for this special
sermon series on **GRACE!**
Sundays at 8:30am/11am



What is so amazing about grace?

250 years ago, the Rev. John Newton reflected on his life as a slave trader. Despite advocating for the end of the slave trade in Brittan, he knew he'd directly done abhorrent things to human beings created in the image of God. He knew the greatness of his sin yet he knew that God's grace was even greater than even his horrific sins. In humbly giving thanks to God for this grace, he penned the words of the hymn Amazing Grace.

250 years later, his words still bring tears to the eyes of Christians. This January, we are going to explore the theme of Amazing Grace in scripture, sermon, and song during worship. This series will culminate in Youth Sunday on January 28th and with the Lewis Preaching Series on February 4th. Join us this winter to learn what is so amazing about God's grace.

Deeply Rooted - Grow in Friendship

Upcoming Events For Our JOY Group

Monday, February 12 – 3:00-6:00 pm - Fellowship Hall - Games Day and dinner! Bring cards or a board game to play in the afternoon followed by everyone bringing their favorite soup or chili dish to share. Salads and drinks will be provided. RSVP to the church office.

Late March or early April – 2:00-4:00 pm, \$8 per adult. Visit Dewberry Farm in Kernersville to see 100,000 tulips, gardens, and more.

April - (date and time TBA) - Day trip to Greenville, SC, to visit the Bob Jones University Art Museum with the largest collection of religious art outside of the Vatican. We will have lunch in Greenville followed by a one-hour tour. Tour cost: \$20. We will have 1 1/2-2 hours to shop or see the beautiful waterfall and bridge downtown. Church vans and carpooling will be provided. RSVP to the church office. Let them know if you need transportation.

May - Winery visit with details to follow later.

A Special Event:

JOY - Put in your reservation NOW!



Saturday, January 20 – 5:00 pm – Limited to 40 guests. RSVP quickly to the church office. Brighten up the winter by wearing your colorful or “Sparkle” and a lot of bling!! Please bring a heavy hors d'oeuvres to share for dinner. Hosted at the home of Dennis and Elayne McCoy (3105 Winged Foot Dr).

Core - Fund Management FINANCIAL SUMMARY

November 30, 2023

OPERATING		GIVING		
YTD Income	1,088,222.94	YTD Budgeted Giving	1,014,333.83	
YTD Expenses	<u>1,104,917.04</u>	YTD Actual Giving	<u>996,797.78</u>	
Cash Flow - Negative	<u>-16,694.10</u>	Under	<u>17,536.05</u>	
	Budgeted Income	1,056,958.83	YTD Pledged	950,625.50
Actual Income	<u>1,088,222.94</u>	YTD Actual	<u>888,886.59</u>	
Over	<u>-31,264.11</u>	Under	<u>61,738.91</u>	
	Budgeted Expenses	1,144,325.42		
Actual Expenses	<u>1,104,917.04</u>			
Under	<u>39,408.38</u>			
	DAY SCHOOL			
YTD Gain	<u>2,062.32</u>			

4 WAYS TO GIVE



ONLINE & RECURRING
WWW.FIRSTPRES.SALISBURY.ORG



MAIL IT IN
508 W FISHER ST
SALISBURY, NC 28144

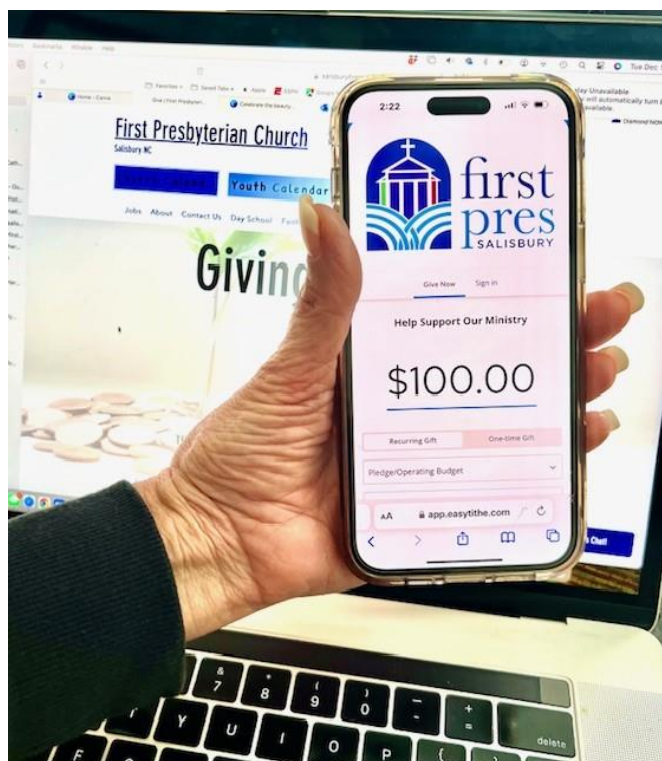


TEXT 2 GIVE
704.286.1055



IN PERSON

2024 Online/Automated Giving



If your pledge is changing in 2024, and you currently have a recurring gift set up, either through our giving portal or through your bank, don't forget to log in or notify your bank to make that change to ensure a smooth transition. Interested in online giving?

Visit our giving page (<https://www.salisburyfirstpres.org/give>) and click the Give Online button to make a one-time gift or create an account. For any questions about editing your recurring gift or creating an account, please contact Christina Lewis at the church office.

Lifetime Planning (Financial, Health, & Estate)

You are NEVER too young to plan!

Join Attorney Jennifer Flynn on Sunday, January 7, during the Sunday School hour. You will have the opportunity to engage in discussion and ask questions as we consider the topic of Lifetime Planning. Jennifer is a long-time member of First Pres Salisbury and has practiced law for over 30 years, with a concentration in Estate Planning.

Perhaps two questions just came to mind. Why an estate plan? And why is the church initiating this conversation?

Do you want to be in control of the distribution of your assets upon death, or let the state, (and therefore the laws of North Carolina) decide for you? Do you want to choose who administers your estate, or again, let the law determine who that will be? Estate planning allows you to be in control and make your own choices about the answers to these questions.

While First Pres hopes you remember the church as you consider the distribution of your assets upon death, the church's main priority is to

encourage this kind of planning in order to provide for your family's well-being when you can no longer do it in person, and that the person you want to handle it is in place--to give you peace of mind while looking ahead.

You are never too young to do this kind of planning. Engaging in this process gives that wide-angle lens, enabling you to think about what's important, helping you focus on your goals, and be discerning about the impact you can have on your family, your church, your community, and the world.

While the need for a will is a primary component of planning for the future, it is also important to consider a financial power of attorney and health care power of attorney. Their titles are self-explanatory, but in each, you have the opportunity to designate who will make these kinds of decisions for you in the event you cannot.

I so look forward to further conversation about these important topics on Sunday, January 7 from 9:45-10:45 am in Fellowship Hall! Come prepared to learn something you did not know and with any questions you may have.



News For Our Youth Groups

This fall was a great season for the youth ministry. We regularly had up to 20 kids on the porch for Wednesday Bible Study. On Sunday nights we did everything from serving at RHM to packing care packages and from playing hide and seek in the Sanctuary to having a white elephant Christmas gift exchange. Breakfast and Bible and Middle School Breakfast at Juice Life have been well-loved new additions.

Pastor Lara has loved spending time with the youth these last two months. Pastor Josh returns in the New Year. Here's a sneak peek at what is coming:

Sunday 1/7 - Breakfast and Bible is BAACK! *Reminder, B&B is for 8th graders and up.*

Sunday 1/7 - Rock Climbing at Cliffhangers Gym. Time TBD (For middle and high school).

Sunday 1/14 - 5:00-6:30 Movie Night at Church - Remember the Titans.

Sunday 1/21 - Breakfast and Bible. *Reminder, B&B is for 8th graders and up.*

Sunday 1/21 - Youth Group at Church.

Sunday 1/28 - Youth Sunday! *Seniors, get ready to preach.*

Sunday 2/4 - Lewis Preaching Series with Dave Zahl founder of Mockingbird Ministries. Youth plan to attend and check out his podcast The Mockingcast.



Deeply Rooted - Care

Congratulations To:

- John and Anne Cave on the birth of their granddaughter, Eva Hargrave Cave, on Dec. 7. Eva's parents are Elliot and Darden Cave

Our Deepest Sympathy To:

- Fred and Marjie Aggers on the death of their brother-in-law, Dave Clingensmith
- Steve and Melissa Butler on the death of her brother, Mike Wilson, on December 2
- Anne Marie Martin on the death of her grandfather

PW Inc Online Study

Presbyterian Women, Inc. has announced the 2024 Book Study to promote awareness of Justice and Peace issues in our world. Please consider registering to join the Book Discussion Group on Zoom which meets every other month beginning in January. See the website or flyer for titles, times, and dates. Registration is open to everyone. You may read and discuss any or all the books that appeal to you. Participants will receive study guides that include questions for discussion and reflection.

To register, please go to presbyterianwomen.org/justice, click on the Register picture, which will take you to Sign Up Genius, and then choose from the Available Slots.



JUSTICE and PEACE

- DISCUSS THE BOOKS WITH OTHERS VIA ZOOM
• The J&P Book Discussion Group is open to all!
- DISCUSSION GROUP MEETS EVERY OTHER MONTH
• Read and discuss any or all books that appeal to you. Registration will be needed to join the discussion on Zoom.
- RECEIVE STUDY GUIDES TO INFORM YOUR READING
• Questions for discussion or reflection will be sent with your registration confirmation.



To register, scan the QR code with your smart phone or go to presbyterianwomen.org/justice.

Reading Selections
(6:30 PM – 8:30 PM Eastern Time)

JANUARY 8
THE IMMORTAL LIFE OF HENRIETTA LACKS
REBECCA SKLOOT

JULY 8
A PLACE CALLED HOME
A MEMOIR
DAVID AMBROZ

MARCH 11
Our Missing Hearts
Celeste Ng

SEPTEMBER 9
POVERTY, BY AMERICA
MATTHEW DESMOND

MAY 13
transforming
The Bible & the Lives of Immigrant Christians
Austin Hartke

NOVEMBER 11
SEARCHING FOR SAVANNA
THE MURDER OF ONE NATIVE AMERICAN WOMAN AND THE VIOLENCE AGAINST THE NANY
MONA GABLE

Selections are recommended by the Justice & Peace Committee of PW's Board of Directors.

Branching Out

Black History Month Book Discussions

The Race Task Force discussion groups plan to focus on trailblazers during Black History Month, starting a little early on Jan. 17. As this newsletter goes to press, we've yet to narrow down the possibilities to one or two books. Be watching Thankful Thursday emails and the church bulletin for more information.

We'll keep to our usual Zoom schedule, with one group meeting on Sundays and the other on Wednesdays, both at 7 pm. Meanwhile, if you have questions, please email Barrie Kirby at barrie.m.kirby@gmail.com or Beffie Cook at egravescook@yahoo.com.



Showing Up:

Be Ready To Feed the Fish!

First Presbyterian's response to the PC(USA)'s annual One Great Hour of Sharing fundraiser has been our Feed the Fish campaign that runs throughout the season of Lent.

The three programs supported by One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) — Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self-Development of People — all work in different ways to serve individuals and communities in need. From initial disaster response to ongoing community development, their work fits together to provide people with safety, sustenance, and hope.

This year we will once again have our friendly competition between Sunday School classes beginning on February 14 and culminating with our celebration on Easter (March 31). Let's grow some huge fish to help those in need across the globe!

Overton Staff Appreciation

Thanks to the generosity of you, the members of First Presbyterian, the Showing Up Team was able to deliver gift cards to all 43 staff



members of Overton Elementary School prior to their Christmas break. As these cards were being delivered, staff members expressed sincere appreciation to the church for this show of support.



NEW

Join our Outlook Sunday School Class
in a NEW Book Study beginning Sunday, Jan 7

**Brian McLaren's "the Great Spiritual Migration:
How the World's Largest Religion is Seeking
a Better Way to Be Christian"**

This class is led by Barrie Kirby, Kathy Vestal, Trish Dunn and Duane Galloway and meets upstairs in Room 219 from 9:45-10:45am.



Grow in Friendship

Save the Date! New Members Class

Interested in becoming a First Pres member? We would love to have you join our family of faith. Join us in the Fellowship Hall in the Educational Building on Sundays, January 21 AND January 28 at 9:45 for a New Members class. Please call the church office at 704-636-1321 to let us know you are interested!

Media & Communications

Upcoming Newsletter Deadlines:

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
February	Jan. 17
March	Feb. 21
April	Mar. 20
May	April 17
June/July	May 22
August	July 17
September	August 21
October	September 18
November	October 16
December	November 18 (Monday)
January 2025	December 16 (Monday)

SAVE THE DATE for...Lewis Preaching Series 2024

Sunday, February 4

Guest preacher: David Zahl, Executive Director - Mockingbird Ministries
College and Adult Education Minister at Christ Episcopal Church, Charlottesville VA

February 4 - Schedule of events

9:30 AM Sunday School Hour in Fellowship Hall, including breakfast.

11:00 AM - Unified Worship Service in Lewis Hall

5:00 PM - Dinner program (complimentary dinner catered by the Smoke Pit)



David Zahl was born in New York City and brought up on the East Coast and in Europe. He graduated with honors from Georgetown University in 2001. He then served for five years as a para-church youth minister in New England before starting Mockingbird Ministries in 2007, an organization devoted to connecting the Christian faith with the realities of everyday life in fresh and down-to-earth ways. He remains its executive director today. David is also a licensed lay preacher in the Diocese of Virginia. He is the author of several well-received books:

* *A Mess of Help: From the Crucified Soul of Rock N' Roll*

* *Seculosity: How Career, Parenting, Technology, Food, Politics, and Romance*

Became Our New Religion * *What To Do About It* * *Law and Gospel: A Theology for Sinners (and Saints)* (co-author).

His most recent book is *Low Anthropology: The Unlikely Key to a Gracious View of Others (and Yourself)*. He and his wife, Cate, have three boys. Get to know David by visiting the Mockingbird website (mbird.com) where you can also listen to his podcasts!

As part of our LPS on Sunday, Feb 4, Mr. Zahl will discuss his newest book: *Low Anthropology: The Unlikely Key to a Gracious View of Others (and Yourself)*. "A lighthearted yet high-minded exploration of failure's ability to serve as a gateway to grace. Readers will find this a balm." Publishers Weekly. Many of us spend our days feeling like we're the only one with problems, while everyone else has their act together. But the sooner we realize that everyone struggles like we do, the sooner we can show grace to ourselves and others.

In *Low Anthropology*, popular author and theologian David Zahl explores how our ideas about human nature influence our expectations in friendship, work, marriage, and politics. We all go through life with an "anthropology"--an idea about what humans are like, our potentials and our limitations. A high anthropology--thinking optimistically about human nature--can breed perfectionism, anxiety, burnout, loneliness, and resentment. Meanwhile, Zahl invites readers into a biblically rooted and surprisingly life-giving *low* anthropology, which fosters hope, deep connection with others, lasting love, vulnerability, compassion, and happiness.

Zahl offers a liberating view of human nature, sin, and grace, showing why the good news of Christianity is both urgent and appealing. By embracing a more accurate view of human beings, readers will discover a true and lasting hope. More information and rsvp details are coming soon...

--LeeAnna Hoskins & Charlotte Hall, Seasonal Outreach Ministry Team

First Presbyterian Church
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Salisbury, NC 28144

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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