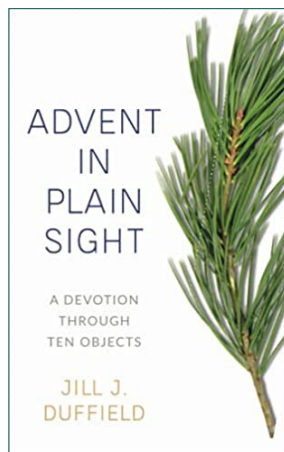




first notes



AN ADVENT CALENDAR



REFORMATION SUNDAY SCRAPBOOK



RIGHT: Tartans on the chancel table in Rejoice! ... Church-or-Treaters head down the Life Center stairs.

CENTER: Nancy Bray strikes a pose with Martin Luther ... Rev. Newton Cowan does his Father Paisley impression.



BOTTOM: Robert Wells leads the Chancel Choir in a pre-worship rehearsal ... Jill Duffield dressed as the Light of the World on treat duty in the Tower Room.



The end of the world as they knew it

When we gathered to begin planning Advent 2021, we engaged in an exercise of discernment. We used a white board to adapt an exegetical exercise sometimes used in sermon preparation. We considered what's going on liturgically in Advent, what events are impacting our world, what are the biblical themes present in the texts for the season, and, finally, what's going on in us and in our church. Let's just say our reflections did not exactly scream "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year."



JILL DUFFIELD
Senior Pastor

SAVE THE DATE – Jill will lead a Women's Retreat at FPC with a Zoom option on January 22. Bring your friends!

Of course, the pandemic and all the upheaval that accompanies it featured prominently. We also named our fresh and ongoing grief in the wake of Dolly's untimely death. We couldn't help but talk about the transitions past and upcoming in our congregation. We weren't shy about naming the high anxiety present in every quadrant of our lives and world. All in all, when we surveyed the board, it looked almost apocalyptic. Our conversation was sobering, but necessary. Maybe even cathartic and, ultimately, it brought us back to our unquestionable need for the Incarnation, for Emmanuel, for God with us.

We went back to the Bible. We read the texts appointed for Advent, noticing that the people present for Jesus' birth were wrestling with what they might have called unprecedented times, too. We realized that the Incarnation was the end of the world as they knew it, even if they didn't know it yet. The birth of the Messiah upends everything. The Word becoming flesh transforms the worlds of not only Mary and Joseph, the shepherds and the Magi, but all creation, including our corners of it. Advent, Jesus' incarnation and promised second coming, transforms everything, for good.

So, join us as we consider how it would have felt to show up to worship one Sabbath and meet Jesus, even as we remember that when two or three of us are gathered, Jesus is among us now. What might it have been like to be John the Baptist, admonishing people to make way for the Messiah (and maybe how it felt to holler, "You brood of vipers!")? We'll spend some time with Zechariah and Elizabeth and ponder where we see God unexpectedly at work in our daily living. We will wonder how Mary and Joseph found the courage to make their way to Bethlehem and believe in divine providence even though their plans had been totally upended. Throughout the Advent season we will pray to see the holy inbreaking into our reality, too, no matter how unprecedented it may be.

Jesus' birth marks the end of the world as we know it. Nothing will ever be the same again. The incarnation ushers in the beginning of redemption for all of creation. May Advent 2021 remind us that nothing, no one, no time, place or person, is excluded from the grace upon grace made know to us in the Word made flesh. Come, Lord Jesus. We need you. Now.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jill".

Many voices march for one Earth

Greetings from a *dreich* (gray, rainy, chilly) day in Glasgow where I and other Scotland YAVs joined a coalition of people from around the world, marching for climate justice.

The United Nations Conference of the Parties, the UN's climate change conference, was held this month in Glasgow. The world's governments discussed changes in infrastructure, energy investment, and reducing deforestation and the use of fossil fuels.

BY VICTORIA ALEXANDER The climate justice march happened outside, more than 100,000 people from all walks of life gathering to send a message to governing bodies about the importance of making significant strides to curb climate change. The march centered the voices of indigenous peoples, especially those from North & South America. The original caretakers of our lands were left voiceless in the COP26 discussions as most are not granted official status by their governments and were not part of official delegations, despite the fact that they live at the frontlines of climate change.

While indigenous groups led the march, we were farther back in the 2-mile-long crowd, within the Church of Scotland delegation as part of the Faith and Beliefs bloc of the march. We made up a wonderful group of many beliefs, united in our support of climate justice and caretaking of God's creation. We marched with Baha'is, Methodists, Catholics, Buddhists, Muslims, Quakers, and Christian relief organizations such as Tearfund and ChristianAid.

People from many different countries with many different beliefs were marching, but it was so meaningful to me to see the intergenerational nature of the event, too. Young children strapped to their parents' backs or sitting atop their shoulders, holding homemade signs. People such as us, who have been learning about climate change since elementary school. I was especially moved to see older folks in the crowd. A lot of media attention has, rightfully, gone to young organizers and faces of the climate justice movement. But young people have to be involved – it's our future that will go up in flames and rising sea levels if we don't. It means more to me to see older folks taking the time and investing the energy in protesting for policy changes to protect our planet, the effects of which they might not see. That hope and determination to fight for a better future, the future of their children and grandchildren and generations beyond, that selflessness and compassion for God's creation, made me more resolved to do my part to take care of our Earth.

A chorus of different languages flowed around us as we marched, and a large cheer went up the first time the sun peeked out. A second, louder cheer broke out as we turned a corner through the center of Glasgow and were greeted by a huge rainbow arcing through the sky. It felt to me like God was shining his light on us all, together marching as one body.



Victoria (second from right) and other YAVs with Church of Scotland moderator Lord Jim Wallace (center) at the march.

FPC member Victoria Alexander is serving in Dundee, Scotland, for a year with the PC(USA) Young Adult Volunteer Program.

Here is where my life changed

Hi, I'm Newton. I'm really Daniel Newton Farnell Cowan, yes this is a lot. I have been known as Fig, Neutron, Newt and yes even called Pastor Noodles.

But more importantly than these names or nick names is being known as a child of God. To be named and claimed by God, in the waters of



NEWTON COWAN

Transitional Director
of Pastoral Care

Baptism, is humbling and brings tears to my eyes even as I write this.

Here I sit today, in this place, this church of Jesus Christ, First Presbyterian Church. Here I went to preschool, here I was confirmed, here is where my wife Carrie and I got married, here is where our children were baptized and raised and here is where my life was forever changed.

FPC raised and nurtured me. I sat in these pews pretty much every Sunday, in my

clip-on tie, hearing the words of Dr. Joe Mullin wash over and in me, but truth be known mostly just staring off looking at the massive beams and windows. But here we came. This is what we did as a family. My parents having gotten divorced when I was 3, my mother knew the importance of faith and church and the larger family, the church family.

Sunday school and youth group, roller skating in Redhead Hall, children's choir (where I was an expert of mouthing the words), these are but some of the memories.

My journey included graduating from Guilford College and starting a career in sales, setting up incentive programs for companies, selling marketing materials. Along the way meeting Carrie in 1992, marrying two years later.

Life went on as one might call usual. Carrie and I took up tickets at Wednesday dinner and volunteered in the nursery (before having our own children).

Life was moving along, perhaps the way we think it should. I was elected an Elder and was part of a Wednesday morning Bible study, working, family, church. Until ... until that morning in a Lenten Bible study when time stood still. I felt the call to ministry. I began the discern process with lots of prayer.

At another time, perhaps I will share more about the journey, but in the meantime, I went to seminary, served on staff at FPC for a bit, served at Pine Hall Presbyterian, associate at Jamestown Presbyterian for six years, a year of Chaplain residency at Cone Health and two years as a Chaplain with AuthoraCare (Hospice) and part time here in Pastoral Care. Each of these experiences is where God was leading me, and I learned so very much about journeying with others in all of life's circumstances.

As I have gotten older, I have realized the importance of the rear-view mirror perspective. The looking back on life and seeing where God was all along, even though I did not really know where I was going.

I don't think we give enough significance to life experience. I affirm that my life experience has led me to where I am today, the ups and down, the many times of uncertainty and even some doubt.

Today I sit in this seat, in this space, where if truth be told, I would rather not be. I would rather Dolly Jacobs be sitting here, doing the work of Pastoral Care. Dolly touched more lives than any of you will ever know, because she did not make a big deal about it. She helped so very many on this journey of life and for that we should all be grateful.

But here I am, as your Transitional Pastor for Pastoral Care. I am honored, I am humbled to serve you all and be part of this staff. Yes, much has changed. I would no longer consider roller skating in Redhead Hall, I gave up the clip-on ties, but I give thanks to God for this place. This church of Jesus Christ, First Presbyterian that, in many ways, raised me, and helped shape my life and the lives of so many others.

*Reach Newton at 336-478-4737
or ncowan@fpcgreensboro.org.*

Giving Matters

'We want the church to **be there** for us and for our children's children'

'Our giving can compound with the fidelity of others to **move far greater mountains.**'

'There is glory upon glory happening within the walls of our church and extending out to our community, and it is our desire to **keep that glory going.**'

The information below shows the bottom line about giving and the annual budget. That's one bottom line, but our giving is also about:

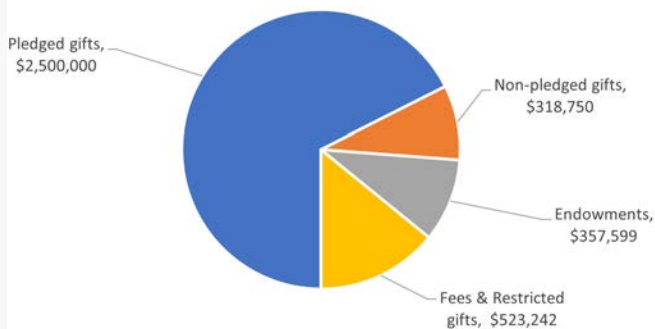
People: The ones who come to worship and watch from home. The ones who polish sermons and floors. The ones who line up at the doors with hungry stomachs and souls. The ones who worry and weep. The ones who cuddle and teach. The ones who see all this going on and wonder what it's all about.

Places: The sanctuary – our glorious, sacred sanctuary, steeped in 90+ years' worth of prayers. Mullin Life Center, where we worship, serve and play. The closet with hats, gloves, blankets, and more made by the Community Service Group. The children's libraries in rural Peru. GUM's food pantry.

Spiritual Things. Feeling God's pleasure in our decisions. Being free from what wears us down. Letting go of expectations. Doing something life-giving.

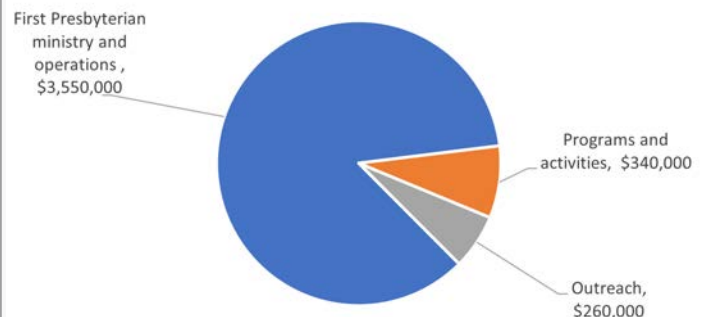
Commitment Sunday is November 21. We pledge individually, we minister as a community of faith. Join us in doing something that matters.

First Presbyterian Church Revenue Sources



- 60 to 70 percent of the church's revenue comes from the generosity of members through pledged and non-pledged gifts. Pledged giving is the single best way to support our church and its mission. Pledged gifts allow us to project our financial situation for budgeting, and budgeting helps us be good stewards of what you give.

First Presbyterian Church Expenses



- The number of families pledging has gone from 782 in 2014 to 469 in 2021.
- Our pledged goal for this year was \$2,500,000, pledges came in \$150,000 short. The Session passed a deficit budget in hopes that we would see additional gifts. Along with good management on the expense side, we are working toward a balanced budget by year end.

The day my life & faith changed

First Presbyterian Church is just about the only church that I have ever known. I was baptized here, married here, and grew up listening to the sermons of Dr. Joe Mullin. Clyde Cook officiated at my wedding 25 years ago, and it was a day he will never forget. Just ask him sometime about the day he married two doctors. It is quite a story.

My family attended church regularly, but other than confirmation, I was never really involved. In my house, Christian values were instilled over the dinner table, and I remember well lectures on hard-work, honesty, and self-reliance. My dad's father passed away when he was 17, so these moments were filled with as much emotion as there was dogma. My dad's mother was the one who taught me that each and every day is a gift. She reveled in God's creation and could find beauty and grace in any situation. How appropriate that we sang "Morning is Broken" at her memorial service. This hymn always reminds me of her.

So it was with this foundation that I went to Chapel Hill where I completed undergrad, medical school, and four years of residency training in Obstetrics and Gynecology. Those four years, also the first four years of my marriage, were both extremely intense and physically exhausting. I would like to say that my faith got me through. The truth is that I rarely thought about God, except for the occasional "God give me strength" or "God help me get this baby out."

I returned to Greensboro and to this church as an expectant mother knowing that I wanted my child to be baptized here. First came a daughter, then a son three years later. I loved my obstetrical practice and my patients, but it seemed as though I was working all the time. We had a wonderful nanny for more than 3 years, and she was the glue that kept our family together. I tried reducing my hours with limited success and finally stopped delivering babies. This allowed us to at least start coming to church on Sundays, and I joined a Church School class.

And so it went until August 8, 2000. I remember its being a hot day, and I was very tired from working in the operating room most of the night before. Nonetheless, I wanted to take the kids



BY LEIGH HALEY JONES

continues, page 12 ►

WORSHIP

NOVEMBER 28: THE PEOPLE IN THE PEWS

Rachel Fitch preaching. Scripture: Luke 21:25

Think about the average person hearing Jesus preach the end of times words in Luke. Was this good news? Confusing? Frightening? How does this feel to us at the end of 2021?

DECEMBER 5: THE MAN FROM THE WILD

Jill Duffield preaching. Scripture: Luke 3:1-18

The crowd takes his message to heart and wants to respond. John the Baptist tell them exactly what to do. This is not soaring poetry but rather like instructions for assembling Ikea furniture. John's world as he knew ends as he fulfills the call he was born to fulfill.

DECEMBER 12: THE VOICELESS COUPLE

Jill Duffield preaching. Scripture: Luke 1:5-24

One day you go to work, get a visit from an angel, are rendered mute and become a late in life father. Your spouse comes home speechless and you become a late in life mother, to the cousin of the Messiah. The inbreaking of the holy can happen anytime, anywhere to anyone.

DECEMBER 19: THE UPENDED ENGAGEMENT

Jill Duffield preaching. Scripture: Luke 1:26-38

You have a plan: engagement, marriage, children, growing the business, a vacation now and then, religious pilgrimages, making a better life for the kids. Your plans are upended by an encounter too strange to share, even with those closest to you. But share you must because soon there will be outward signs of an invisible, heavy, life-altering grace.

CHRISTMAS EVE: THE NECESSARY WORKERS

Jill Duffield preaching. Scripture: Luke 2:1-20

Necessary workers are invisible until it is evident they are necessary and without them none of us eat. God sees those the world often ignores or derides and makes them critical to furthering salvation history, to beginning the spread of good news to all people that would transform creation.

DECEMBER 26: THE RADICAL NEW CREATION

Newton Cowan preaching. Scripture: John 1:1-14. *One service, 11 am, Sanctuary*
Recognizing the light no darkness can overcome causes us to become children of God. We are born again, a radical new creation in Christ, the old life has come to an end, a new life has begun. How do we see, hear, taste, touch, smell, hear this transformation?

JANUARY 2: THE NEWFOUND WISDOM

Jill Duffield preaching. Scripture: Matthew 2:1-11

The wise men's experience of the Messiah causes them to go another way, disregarding what might have been in their earthly best interests. Our encounter with Christ moves us to rearrange our path, our loyalties, and our priority of self-preservation.



The birth of the Messiah
upends everything. The Word
becoming flesh transforms
the worlds of all creation,
including our corners of it.
Advent, Jesus' incarnation
and promised second coming,
transforms everything, for
good. Nothing will ever be
the same again.

ADVENT 2021

A SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE

December 2, noon in the sanctuary. Gather as a community of faith to remember those we have lost in the past year. While this has been a tradition at FPC for many years focusing on families who have lost loved ones, this year includes anyone who wishes to come. The past year and a half have been challenging in many ways. And so we are opening the doors and saying, come. Together we will hear Scripture, sit in silence, pray, and light candles in memory of those we love. The doors will open early if you would like to come and just be in this majestic space. Pastors will be available following the service to offer prayer and a time of listening.

STUDIES



Join Jill Duffield in a small group study of her newly published Advent devotional. Wednesdays, December 1, 8, 15, 22, noon to 1 pm in the Garden Room with a Zoom option. Purchase book (\$10) at reception desk. *Please register by November 28 with Yolanda Baxter, ybaxter@fpcgreensboro.org or 336-478-4722.*

SUNDAYS AT 10 AM

CELEBRATING ADVENT THROUGH CHRISTMAS WITH SCRIPTURE AND ART:

After the Crucifixion, the most widely-recognized image of Christianity is the Birth of Jesus. Think about the Christmas story in fresh ways by seeing how artists have interpreted it through the ages. Led by The Rev. Dr. Jerry Beavers, hosted by the Commitment Class.

November 28 – The Annunciation

December 5 – The Holy Family

December 12 – The Shepherds

December 19 – The Magi

*December 26 – Enriching Your Faith
through Nativity Sets*

January 2 – The Baptism of the Lord

WACKY ADVENT WORDS led by Matt Logan and Kevin Murray, November 28 - December 19 in the Solarium.

A SHEPHERD'S PSALM: Led by Erwin Fuller in the Agape Class, December 5, Garden Room.

DR. JOHN REDHEAD REVISITED - AN ADVENT SERMON: December 12, led by Steve Fogarty in the Agape Class, Garden Room.

CHRISTMAS MUSIC SPECIAL: December 19, led by Lane Ridenhour, Janice Wells and Friends, YMBC and Agape Class, Redhead Hall.

OUTREACH

FILL THE STABLE!

Share the light of Christ by filling our nativity stable in the hallway outside the Life Center !

December 5: Canned food

December 12: Diapers

December 19: Coats for kids

RING THE BELL FOR THE SALVATION ARMY! December 16-18 at DSW at Friendly Center. A great family & friends activity! Choose a two-hour shift; link at fpcgreensboro.org/signup.

HOT DISH & HOPE GIFT BAGS for men, women & children. Return items to the church by December 13. See the list at fpcgreensboro.org/advent-outreach.



Hot Dish & Hope has gone multimedia with this year's honor card! A QR Code will take your recipient to a video with a special greeting from HDH volunteers & guests. Available at the reception desk, suggested donation \$5 per card.

CHILDREN

FAMILY PROJECT: Gifts for 40 immigrant/refugee children through Faith Action. Lisa Witherspoon has sent a sign-up to families with children. Deliver wrapped toys to the church by December 1. Info: lwitherspoon@fpcgreensboro.org.

FAMILY ADVENT WREATHS, December 5 – Families with children 5th grade & under are invited to make a wreath to take home! Meet in the back of the Life Center at 10 am. Supplies provided; please sign up so we can accurately gauge supplies, fpcgreensboro.org/signup.



DECORATE THE GINGERBREAD CHURCH, December 12. Preschool-grade 2, Life Center, 10 am, then head to Corl 301 for Advent games. Grades 3-5, 10 am in Corl 303, at 10:25 head to the Life Center to finish the gingerbread church! Face coverings required. Children receive a treat bag to take home!

JOURNEY TO THE MANGER, December 19. Families with children 5th grade & under meet at the back of the Life Center at 10 am. We will travel throughout the church, hearing scriptures and hymns as we collect nativity figures. At the final stop, we will assemble the life-sized nativity! Families will also receive a Birthday Party for Jesus take-home kit!

No church school or nursery on December 26 & Jan 2.



A LITTLE ADVENT MUSIC



December 5, 7 pm
UNCG Brass & John Alexander



December 12, 5 pm
Robert Wells, baritone
Teri Bickham, soprano



December 19, 5 pm
A Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols



And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. And Joseph went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn..And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

10 am Family Service
5 & 8 pm Candlelight and Communion Services
11 pm Candlelight, Communion and Contemplative Service

Life changed

from page 7

to the pool, something that I did not often get to do with them. It was on this day that I rescued a 16-month-old child floating face down in the pool ... only to realize he was my very own Davis. I initiated CPR but soon stopped when Davis started making noises. Unsure of what to do next, I carried him into the shade where a crowd had gathered. Then, like out of a dream, a young man said to me "Ma'am. I hear you are a physician, but I am an EMT." Without hesitation, I handed my son over to him. The young man assisted Davis in expelling an alarming amount of water, after which Davis started to cry. This was music to my ears, but I still worried that he had suffered damage from lack of oxygen. We were taken to Cone hospital where he was admitted for observation.

In the middle of the night, while Davis slept in his hospital room, I was overcome with a feeling of peace and joy unlike any I had ever experienced. I felt God's presence with me, and I thanked him for letting me keep my son. As for the young man at the pool, I never got to thank him nor did I ever see him again. I guess that is how it is with angels.

My life was changed forever on that day. That feeling of peace stayed with me in the days and weeks to come. I realized that I had been putting my work before my husband and my children, and as a result, my life was headed toward a dark place. I also realized that I was not in charge. God was in charge and always had been. He was responsible for those who had crossed my path, including our wonderful nanny who resigned 3-4 weeks after Davis' near-drowning. She was a young lady of profound faith, and when I told her I was leaving my practice, she was not surprised. She was a part of my story, another angel, and like Mary Poppins, it was time for her to move on. I had no idea where God was taking me, but it had to be better than the road I was on. Playgroups and craft activities did not come naturally to me, but I was determined to redirect my focus.

Then something else pretty remarkable happened. In the spring of 2002, I was elected to the elder class. Go figure. You see, back then, the congregation still elected 20 elders from a slate of about 30. For me

I felt God's presence with me, and I thanked him for letting me keep my son.

to have been elected was clearly a case of dumb luck and name recognition, much unlike the very intentional process we have today. Before I knew it, I was not only on the Session, but also a deer in headlights on the Appointments Committee. Much to my surprise, I fell in love with Church polity and all that goes on behind the scenes.

My favorite parable and one that I have enjoyed teaching is the Parable of the Prodigal Son. At the time, I did not even realize how lost I was in 2000, but God with his gracious love and mercy forgave me for losing sight of Him and welcomed me home. Then he pointed me on a path of service to this church so that he would not lose me again. Just to let me know that I was on the right path, he blessed Drew and me with the birth of a second son, Cameron, when I was almost 40 years old, which by the way was right in the middle of my first term on Session.

I have done a little bit of everything in this church, and I have loved it all. I have been inspired by the faith and passions of my fellow church members and have been involved in making some difficult decisions. My passion has been working with the children, and they have given me so much in return. I could never have had the confidence or ability to do this work without the wisdom and inspiration of Donna Chase. Our church is lucky to have Donna, and I am truly blessed to call her my friend.

Lastly, I want to thank this Session and this Church for your prayers back in 2012 when I had to undergo open thoracic surgery for a benign mass in my chest. I was told up front that I would be in the hospital 5 days including 2 days in the surgical ICU. Your prayers, visits, cards and flowers meant more to me than you will ever know. Thank you also for the prayers for my father when he underwent quadruple bypass surgery. You are truly my church family.

Spiritual but not religious. That may work for some, but not for me. I will leave you with Matthew 18:20: "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

in addition to advent ...

DECEMBER – JANUARY EVENTS

SEE PAGES 8-10 FOR ADVENT EVENTS

adult formation

SUNDAY MORNING SMALL GROUPS, 10 AM

YMBC: Redhead Hall. December 5 & 12: Guest speaker John Willet; December 19, Christmas carols with Lane Ridenhour; December 26, FPC member Chip Bristol on "What If?" January: Professor Sandie Gravett returns with new insights to the Bible. Contact John Sullivan, jon554sull@aol.com.

AGAPE: Garden Room. December 5, Erwin Fuller on "A Shepherd's Psalm;" December 12, Steve Fogarty on Dr. John Redhead revisited: An Advent Sermon; December 19, join YMBC for Christmas party. No meeting December 26.

COMMITMENT: Joining Celebrating Advent through Christmas with Scripture and Art in December.

FAITH BUILDERS: Joining Celebrating Advent through Christmas with Scripture and Art in December.

SEEKERS: Parables of Jesus. Main 125, with conference call option. Contact Gerard Davidson, gdavidson@wardblacklaw.com.

TED TALKS FAITH returns in January and February, Cannon's Solarium.

WEEKLY SMALL GROUPS

MONDAYS: LECTIO DIVINA & CENTERING PRAYER, led by Rev. David Partington, 11 am-noon on Zoom. Exploring the early letters of Paul. Contact David Partington, dcpsbw197@gmail.com.

TUESDAYS:

- **PEACEHAVEN FARM SMALL GROUP,** 6:30-7:30 pm on Zoom. Contact Rachel Fitch, rfitch@fpcgreensboro.org.
- **STUDY OF REVELATION,** biweekly on Zoom, 5:30 - 6:30 pm. Contact Doug Key, doug@dougkeyartist.com or Walt Howell, walthowell1@gmail.com.

WEDNESDAYS:

- **MEN'S LECTIONARY,** 7:30-8:30 am on Zoom. Contact Jack Harrington, jackharrington44@gmail.com.
- **COMMUNITY SERVICE GROUP,** 10 am - 11:45 am. Contact: B.J. Williams (336-288-8601) or Hannah Britt (336-288-9289).

GRACE ON FRIDAYS: 9:15-10:30 am, Garden Room. (December 3 & 17) Led by Lisa Witherspoon, lwitherspoon@fpcgreensboro.org.

MONTHLY SMALL GROUPS

MONDAY BOOK CLUB: 10:30 am, Garden Room. December 13, *There, There* by Tommy Orange, One City One Book, facilitated by Donna Chase. January 10, *The Things We Cannot Say* by Kelly Rimmer, facilitated by Betty K. Phipps. February 14, *The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek* by Kim Michele Richardson, facilitated by Hannah Britt.

TUESDAY BOOK CLUB: 1:30, Garden Room. December 14, *There, There* by Tommy Orange, One City One Book, facilitated by Donna Chase. January 11, *This Tender Land* by William Kent Krueger, facilitated by Nancy Kenerly. February 8, *Underground Railroad* by Colson Whitehead, facilitated by Cynthia Gray

SHEROES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, women's Bible study. Videos posted second Mondays, Zoom discussion third Mondays. Led by Rachel Fitch in December and Leigh Curl-Dove in January. Contact Yolanda Baxter, ybaxter@fpcgreensboro.org, for links.

HEARTS AND MINDS women's group, December 20 and November 15 at 10 am on Zoom. Led by Betty Jo Forney. Studying *What My Grandmother Taught Me*.

MARY AND MARTHA women's group, December 13 and January 10, 10:30 am, Blair Hagan Room, led by BJ Williams. Studying *What My Grandmother Taught Me*.

SALLIE HUSS women's group, 10:30 am, December 13 and Myers Loyalty Room. Led by Gail Derkasch. Studying *What My Grandmother Taught Me*.



Confirmands volunteered at Backpack Beginnings in November.

pastoral care

SPIRITUS – A CAREGIVERS' SUPPORT GROUP:

FPC has many members who care for a loved one experiencing illness, disability, or mental health issues. No matter your age or stage of life, caregivers have the same concerns and challenges in the midst of your selfless care for another, and you still need time to care for your own spiritual life. Wednesdays, December 15, and January 12, at 2 pm in the Virginia Gilmer Room.

LAMENTATIONS: As Presbyterians, we affirm that "Christians do not bear bereavement in isolation but are sustained by the power of the Spirit and the community of faith. The church offers a ministry of love and hope to all who grieve" (The Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church USA). Within the past year, you and your family have experienced the death of a loved one. Our pastoral staff is keenly aware that while the world has gone back to its somewhat "normal routine," life has been forever altered for you. We would like to invite you to attend our bereavement care group. Wednesdays, December 15, and January 12, at 10 am in the Virginia Gilmer Room.

outreach



24,000⁺

pounds of canned food delivered to **Greensboro Urban Ministry's** food pantry! The Wednesday Food Drive-by teams needs more folks to greet for two hours (especially 10 am -noon), and it's a beautiful time of year to sit outside! Link at fpcgreensboro.org/signup. Drop off donations 10 am to 2 pm. (No collection December 29; resumes January 5, 2022).

FPC's **Meals on Wheels** teams delivers meals to homebound seniors on third Wednesdays & fifth Mondays. We need five more volunteers! Share your smile for a couple of hours each month, training provided. Contact Linda Allen, 336-549-3367 or lkwallen70@gmail.com.



Each Friday watch Jill's one-minute video. Available on the church's Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube accounts.

children

KIDS CLUBS: December 5 and February 6, 4:30-5:30 pm. Mixed-grade K-5 clubs, choose Yoga Club or Lego Club; Preschool Club for ages 3-4. Parents connect in the Welcome Center during clubs. Register: Lisa Witherspoon, lwitherspoon@fpcgreensboro.org.

CHURCH SCHOOL, 10 AM SUNDAYS

WINTER MILESTONES CLASSES, during 10 am church school January 9, 23, 30, February 6, 13, 27:

- *Preschool*, Bible Superheroes, Life Center 101
- *Kindergarten*, Getting to Know My Bible, Corl 304
- *First Grade*, Worship Education, Corl 301
- *Second Grade*, Communion Education, Corl 300
- *Third Grade*, Catechism Education, Corl 303
- *Fourth Grade*, Bible Skills, Memorial 200
- *Fifth Grade*, Spiritual Practices, Corl 306

MOVIE DAY for preschool-grade 5, January 16 (MLK weekend) in Corl 305 (Biblemax Theater)

VALENTINE'S FUN for grades K-5 meet for post-Valentine's minute-to-win-it fun! February 20. Preschoolers will have regular Sunday School in Life Center 101 with some Love-themed activities.

DIAPER BANK OUTREACH: We will continue collecting diapers and go to the diaper bank December 12, January 16, February 20. Pick your dates at fpcgreensboro.org/signup.

youth

CHURCH SCHOOL starts at 10 am Sundays in the Spencer Love Room, Memorial 303.

BASKETBALL, Sundays, 2-4 pm in the Life Center.

SMALL GROUPS: Six groups by age/gender. Need adult volunteers for Middle and High School groups!

WEEKLY BOOK STUDIES: *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis (January); *When In Romans* by Beverly Roberts Gaventa (February)

SERVICE: Diaper Bank (monthly), Backpack Beginnings (monthly), Adopt-a-Stream (February)

YOUTH RACE TASK FORCE: Monthly via Zoom

BIG EVENTS: Christmas Party/Broomball (December 17), Snow Tubing (February)

CONFIRMATION 2022: Begins January 9

SIGN-UPS for summer Montreat & High School Mission Trip (December-February)

Contact Kevin Murray, kmurray@fpcgreensboro.org.

Christmas Memorial & Honor Gifts



Honor family and friends this season with a contribution to Hot Dish & Hope or a poinsettia in our Sanctuary December 19 and Christmas Eve, December 24. Gifts will be acknowledged in a booklet at worship December 19 and available online.

Hot Dish & Hope allows us to put our faith into action as we serve dinner and a measure of hope to those in need. Take-out meals are served Tuesdays & Thursdays and include a message of God's love.

Poinsettias donated as honor or memorial gifts make our worship space warm and bright throughout Advent and Christmas, beginning with the worship services and through the Service of Lessons and Carols December 19. Poinsettias are \$15 each and may be picked up after the 11 pm Candlelight, Communion and Contemplative service on December 24.

MEMORIAL GIFTS

☐ Hot Dish & Hope

☐ Poinsettia

The acknowledgement of my gift to appear in the December 19 booklet should read: *(please print)*

Given by: _____

In Memory of: _____

HONOR GIFTS

☐ Hot Dish & Hope

☐ Poinsettia

The acknowledgement of my gift to appear in the December 19 booklet should read: *(please print)*

Given by: _____

In Honor of: _____

Deadline is Monday, December 6, 2021. Payment must accompany forms. Make checks payable to First Presbyterian Church and designate Hot Dish & Hope or Poinsettia. *Please make a separate check for each fund.* Do not include your pledge in the same check; funds must be accounted for separately. **Mail to: First Presbyterian Church, Attn: Christmas Memorials, 617 N. Elm St., Greensboro, N.C. 27401.**

Preparing for Neil's retirement

Saying goodbye to a long-serving, respected, and well-loved pastor is never easy for a congregation. The guiding principle for Presbyterian Churches

BY PENNE
PRIGGE

is to allow time for members of the congregation and staff to grieve the loss of the retiring pastor and reflect on the future of the church.

To that end Transition Committees are appointed by Sessions to search for an interim pastor to step in for a designated period of time taking over duties of the retiring pastor while helping the congregation move forward in their search for a permanent called and installed pastor. FPC's Transition Team is made up of the following individuals: Rev. Jill Duffield, Tim Cook, Jean Goodman, David Hammer, Jack Harrington, Maddie Lowman, Penne Prigge, and Larry Hooker as our liaison of Salem Presbytery.

Our committee has been meeting for several months with expectations to fulfill the following tasks: Develop a job description and recommend a compensation package to Session for the interim

pastor, search and recommend an interim to Session, write a Mission Statement outlining the nature of our church for candidates, organize a retirement celebration for Neil, and recommend a slate of members to serve on the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) who will be voted on by the congregation and begin the actual search for the called and installed Pastor to replace the "irreplaceable" Neil Dunnivant.

At this time the committee has revised the FPC Mission Statement completed in 2019 for the search for Rev. Dr. Duffield and is prepared to present a job description and compensation package for an interim to the Session at their November meeting. If approved we will immediately begin to advertise and then interview candidates for an interim to join the staff after Neil's retirement at the end of February, 2022.

The Transition Team will keep the congregation updated on our progress and is confident that the entire congregation will want to take part in celebrations for Neil in February, 2022.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Greensboro, NC 27401
336-373-0445

ON THE WEB

fpcgreensboro.org

SOCIAL MEDIA

[Facebook.com/fpcgsonc](https://www.facebook.com/fpcgsonc)
[YouTube.com/fpcgreensboro](https://www.youtube.com/fpcgreensboro)
Instagram: 1stpresgso

THANK YOU

to contributors of this issue of
First Notes:

Victoria Alexander
Keith Bowman
Donna Chase
Newton Cowan
Jill Duffield
Jim Hoeger
Leigh Haley Jones
Chuck Norman
Penne Prigge

LOOK FOR THE LENT PREVIEW
IN FEBRUARY 2022

Associate music director search

A group has been formed to look for our new Associate Director of Music for Rejoice! After some time exploring the position and what is needed for the future of the service, a job posting will be sent out to find the best fit to help take us into the future of the service. We welcome your prayers in this important discernment and search process. The team is: Jill Hare, chair; Tim Cook, Bubba Judy, Brenda Keys, David McDonald. Staff members involved include Jill Duffield, Anne Albert, and John Alexander. We are very thankful for Betsy Hyslop's continued leadership in Rejoice! while we complete the search.

Appointments Committee update

The Appointments Committee is about to begin its work in January, and is seeking your suggestions for potential members of the 2022-2023 Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee proposes a slate of Elders for election by the congregation as its leaders. The committee is comprised of 15 church members: seven members are Elders elected by the Session, and eight are at-large members elected by the congregation. It is essential to have a strong and representative Nominating Committee to recommend a slate of potential Elders that reflects the gender, age, and experience in our congregation.

The deadline for nominations is January 2. You may: mail or email to Debby Foster: dfoster@fpcgreensboro.org