

FIRST PRESS

VOLUME 38 | ISSUE 3 | MARCH 2026

First Presbyterian Church, Fayetteville N.C.

Open your eyes to

*God's
saving
presence*
in our world.

Worship with us this Season of Lent.



PALM SUNDAY CELEBRATION DETAILS | EASTER SUNDAY SERVICES

MAUNDY THURSDAY MEAL & TENEBRAE SERVICE

LISTENING GROUPS - LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!

LENTEN JOURNEY THROUGH MUSIC | YOUTH FOOD DRIVE RESULTS

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY PHOTOS | FAMILY FUN OPPORTUNITIES

PICKLEBALL LEAGUE PHOTOS

A PASTORAL MESSAGE

from Dr. Mike Garrett

*If it hadn't been for the Resurrection,
we would never have heard of the Crucifixion.*

– Fleming Rutledge

Easter is a promise. As one theologian has noted "there has never been anything like the Resurrection before, and there will never be anything like it again until the last trumpet." Do you see where we are standing? Somewhere between the beginning of the end, and "the end".

Living between one thing and another can be hard duty. One job ends and we must persist until another begins. We leave the home of our birth to make a new home somewhere else. But it often takes a long while until we ever feel "at home" again. A cherished relationship ends and nothing seems to fill the void. We are in that gray space that is neither the sure thing nor the next thing. What gets us through? What sustains us in our times of uncertainty?

The Christian faith doesn't offer certainty for the moment. It offers a promise for the future. It doesn't promise that all is well, only that all will be well. It tells us not to be anxious about this life, but it doesn't promise to remove the causes of our anxiety from life. The bad news is still bad news, and heaven knows there is plenty of it.

What our faith offers, and promises is resurrection. Resurrection is God's promise made to Jesus, his vulnerable Son, kept. And because God kept his promise to Jesus, we can come to Jesus, trusting that he will keep the same promise to us. Jesus promised he would never leave us, be with us till the end of this world, and bring us and everything to a final resurrection called eternal life. That is the promise made, and that we believe will be the promise kept.

Easter isn't only about having hope for the end. It is the hope that let's us live differently in the middle, where we stand today. Its promise gives us courage to face opposition, strength to build today what God tells us will last tomorrow, and a glad faith that whatever happens the best is yet to come.

Once again, I invite you to gather for Easter and be reminded of the promise. We'll meet for worship on Sunday, April 5 at 11 am in the sanctuary. A Community Sunrise Service will also be held at 7 am in the park across the street from the sanctuary. There will be an Easter breakfast served beginning at 9:30 am in the Activity Room for our congregation.

God's blessing to you in these days of holy hope and anticipation!

Mike

CROSSING THRESHOLDS

Visioning Journey

As FPC continues the Crossing Thresholds Visioning Journey, two important opportunities are coming up for you to be involved.

Listening Groups will be held March 20–22. Our consultant, Rev. Mark Tidsworth, will be on campus to lead each session. Everyone who calls FPC home is invited to sign up for a one-hour group. During these conversations, Rev. Tidsworth will ask for your thoughts on the strengths of our church, as well as your hopes and dreams for FPC's next season of life and ministry.

You'll also have the opportunity to participate in the Crossing Thresholds Church Survey, available online March 25–April 10. A survey link will be shared as those dates approach.

These two opportunities for congregational input and discernment will help shape the direction of our church for years to come. The future Pastor Nominating Committee will also be deeply grateful for your participation, as your feedback will help equip them to serve faithfully and effectively.



Please sign up for a Listening Group by visiting bit.ly/FPCListening or by scanning the QR Code.

Scan Me



ALL IN FELLOWSHIP MEALS

with potluck sides, family & friends.

The church will provide the main entree. You can bring a salad, side, dessert or bread that will serve 8 to 10 people or pay \$8 per adult (age 13+) and \$3 per child (age 5-12). The meal cap is \$20 per family. Childcare available upon request—contact Wanda (wanda@firstprez.com) no later than the Sunday prior. **Vegan & Gluten-Free options are available!**

March 11 - Chicken, Mixed Vegetables & Rice from Hong Kong

Breaking bread together - Eastern Style!

March 18 - Meatloaf, Mashed potatoes & Gravy - St. Patrick's Day Celebration

Clothed in Christ. Guided by faith.

March 25 - BBQ Chicken & Corn - Southern Cooking Night

Gathered in faith. Served with Southern hospitality.



Congregational Song and the Lenten Journey

Dr. Marcia Mervin

Our church entered the Lenten Season on February 18, with the imposition of ashes on Ash Wednesday. This solemn celebration heralds a season of penitence and prayer for us. This is the commencement of a spiritual Lenten Journey.

The annual Lenten Journey invites us to deepen our walk with Jesus, to open our hearts to those around us, and to reflect on Christ's deep love for us. Many of us view this as an individual journey, and we add extra times of prayer and devotion to our days or we give something up for Lent. Yet, ancient worship music traditions, such as "Burying the Alleluia", invite us to experience both a personal journey and a corporate journey.

Beginning on Sunday, February 22, and throughout the six Sundays of Lent, our church music will reflect a season of contemplation. In keeping with church musical tradition, we will bury the "Alleluia" to rejoice with it on Easter Sunday as we celebrate the risen Christ. We will fill our worship with songs of contemplation, meditation, and reflection.

Our Glory to God Hymnal, published in 2013, contains a variety of traditional, new texts to familiar hymn tunes, paraphrases of the Psalms, newly composed hymns and choruses for contemplative worship as well as favorite traditional Lenten hymns.

As you worship on Sunday morning, pay close attention to the texts of the Lenten hymns. As you sing, pray that the Lord will lead you into a deeper relationship with Him. If you would like to borrow a hymnal for home devotional use, please contact the church office. Many of the hymns are available online at hymnary.org/hymnal/GG2013





A Sample of Lenten Hymns for Devotional Use

Traditional Lenten Hymns:

- #166 - "Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days"
- #209 - "My Song is Love Unknown"
- #649 - "Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound"
- #215 - "What Wondrous Love Is This"
- #829 - "My Faith Looks Up to Thee"
- #213 - "In the Cross of Christ I Glory"

New Texts to Familiar Hymn Tunes:

- #53 - "O God, Who Gives Us Life"
- #217 - "On a Barren Hilltop"
- #410 - "God is Calling Through the Whisper"
- #694 - "Great God of Every Blessing"

Psalms:

- #211 (Psalm 17) - "Hear, O Lord, My Pleas for Justice"
- #214 (Psalm 31) - "You Are My Refuge, Faithful God"
- #421 (Psalm 51) - "Have Mercy, God, Upon My Life"
- #847 (Psalm 49) - "Our Hope, Our Life"

New Hymns:

- #314 - "Longing for Light, We Wait in Darkness"
- #423 - "Create in Me a Clean Heart, O God"
- #433 - "Sign Us With Ashes"
- #769 - "For Everyone Born"
- #543 - "God, Be the Love to Search and Keep Me"

Contemplative Worship (Taize style):

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| • #204 - "Stay with Me" | • #205 - "Live in Charity" |
| • #227 - "Jesus Remember Me" | • #544 - "Bless the Lord" |
| • #654 - "In the Lord I'll Be Ever Thankful" | • #814 - "In God Alone" |





CREATION

Dan Forrest

Saturday, March 14th at 4 p.m. in the sanctuary.

Join us for a splendid musical journey celebrating the beauty of God's creation!

The program begins with the ancient Gregorian chant, *Veni, Creator Spiritus* ("Come, Creator Spirit"), and unfolds into an exuberant praise of all creation. Accompanied by a chamber orchestra featuring harp, flute, oboe, clarinet, horn, violin, cello, percussion, organ, and keyboard, light, sky, gardens, planets, oceans, and humankind itself come alive in sound.

Beginning with the fourth movement, each act of creation concludes with the stirring refrain:

"And God saw that the work was good.

Wholly beautiful are you, entirely,
and there is no stain in you. Alleluia."

Joining soloists Emily Bledsoe Holloway, soprano, and Mark Ream, baritone, are 31 dedicated singers—community friends, special guests, and members of the Celebration Choir—who have worked for months to bring this beautiful new work to life.

Invite your friends and neighbors and experience this inspiring celebration of creation!

**Mark your calendars now and join us
for this inspiring Lenten celebration!**

Admission is free.

Donations are appreciated.

Childcare will be available.



H³F

Home & Hearth Holiday Fellowship Easter Potluck Luncheon Sunday, April 5

Your family looks forward to having you join them on Easter!!

Feel free to invite and bring a friend!

The H3F Program is a special gathering designed to create connections, build relationships, and foster a sense of community during the holidays. It's for anyone who might be spending the season away from family or simply wants to share the day with others.

You may find this event especially meaningful if you are:

- Military—single or with family—stationed away from home,
- New to the church,
- Grieving a recent loss,
- Living alone or without family nearby,
- Feeling overworked, tired, or stressed,
- A parent needing a break from holiday meal prep,
- Part of a small household not wanting to cook for just one or two,

***or if you simply want to enjoy good company,
great food, & the joy of being together!***

There's no fee—just bring a side, salad, bread, or dessert to serve 8–10. The main entrées (ham and turkey), dinnerware and drinks will be provided by Food Service.

Let us know what you'll bring—salads, sides, or desserts (store-bought or homemade).



**Sign up in person in Eller Hall.
Sign up online at bit.ly/H3FEaster
or scan the QR Code.**



For planning purposes, please sign up by Monday, March 30 at 9 p.m.

Palm Sunday

Hosanna to the King

March 29

9 a.m. Worship Service in the Chapel

10 a.m. Sunday School

A Palm Processional will take place during the 11 a.m. worship service. If your children would like to participate, please bring them to the Sanctuary at 10:30 a.m.

11 a.m. Worship Service in the Sanctuary featuring the Church Orchestra and Palm Processional

Congregational Potluck Luncheon will follow the 11 a.m. Worship Service.



Scan Me

The Children's Easter Egg Hunt will follow the meal.

Please bring your favorite dish to share.

To RSVP sign up in Eller Hall, call the church office, scan the QR code or visit bit.ly/PalmSunday2026

Please sign up by March 24.



Maundy Thursday, April 2

5:30 p.m. All In Fellowship Meal - Smothered Tenderloin, Potatoes & Gravy

The church will provide the main entree. You can bring a salad, side, dessert or bread that will serve 8 to 10 people or pay \$8 per adult (age 13+) and \$3 per child (age 5-12). The meal cap is \$20 per family.

7 p.m. Maundy Thursday Tennebrae Service with Communion

Childcare will be available.

Friday, April 3 - Flowering of the Cross

A barren cross will be moved to the Sanctuary porch in observance of Good Friday on April 3. Fresh flowers may be brought beginning Saturday, April 4, or on Easter Sunday morning to transform the barren cross into a beautiful celebration of the Resurrection of Christ!

Feel free to take photos at the cross and post on social media using the hashtag #Easteratfirstprez. Tag @1stprez on Facebook and @firstprezfay on Instagram.



Easter Sunday

Sunday, April 5

7 a.m. Easter Sunrise Worship Service

in LaFayette Park.

**Remember to bring your lawn chair*

9:30 a.m. Congregational Breakfast

in the Activity Room.

Please register for breakfast by April 1. Call the church office, scan the QR Code or visit bit.ly/FPCEaster26



10 a.m. Sunday School

for all ages.

11 a.m. Festive Easter Worship Service

with communion in the Sanctuary.

12 p.m. H3 F Easter Sunday Potluck Luncheon

in Fellowship Hall

Please sign up in person in Eller Hall, online at bit.ly/H3FEaster or scan the QR Code.



He is Risen!



Help Us Prepare for Our Annual Easter Egg Hunt!

We need nut-free, individually wrapped candy and help stuffing 1,000 eggs.

Pick up empty eggs and prizes in Eller Hall, fill the eggs at home, and return them to Eller Hall by March 22.

Candy donations may be dropped off in Eller Hall by March 22.

Thank you for helping make this event special!

Children's Easter Egg Hunt

**Sunday March 29
following the Potluck Meal**

**Bring your
Easter Basket &
a friend!**



**VBS at First Prez
June 15 - 18**

Step through the mist into Rainforest Falls, overflowing with wild waterfalls, towering trees, and colorful creatures. Beneath a canopy of chattering birds and howling monkeys, kids plunge into a lifelong adventure of discovering the nature of God. They'll explore what it means to be rooted in relationship with God, their creator, a safe place in life's storms.



Be a Vacation Bible School Volunteer!

***Rising 6th through 12th*
College Students & Adults***

**Be a crew leader, help make snacks,
lead games, crafts, or help decorate!**

***Student volunteers must attend a volunteer training either in person or via zoom.**

Registration is open!

Open to:

**FPC & First School families:
rising PreK 4 to rising 5th grade**

Volunteers & campers -

Register online at:

bit.ly/VBSatFPC

or scan the QR code



Kingdom Kidz Calendar

Mar 15

Mar 22

Children sing during
worship on March 29



Kidz Enjoyed Watching "David"
During Parent's Night Out



CHILDREN'S SUNDAY

March 1 was Children's Sunday. Our children led worship through song, prayer and Scripture. They reminded us that all ages have a place in God's story.



S.U.R.G.E. CALENDAR

Mar. 1

Mar. 8 -

Family Bowling Night

Mar. 15

Mar. 22 -

Car wash 3 - 5 pm

Lenten Family Devotionals & Practices for Families

Now available in Eller Hall!



SUPERBOWL OF CARING FOOD DRIVE



THANK YOU TO ALL THOSE WHO GENEROUSLY
SUPPORTED OUR YOUTH FOOD DRIVE.



We exceeded
our goal of
500 items!

Boys: 384 Girls:246

BOYS WIN!!!





Children's Ministry needs your help!

We are hoping to collect enough items to donate 15 Easter baskets to the Children's Center at Cape Fear Valley Health Foundation. They will distribute the baskets we make to the children in the hospital around Easter.

Please bring brand new items to Eller Hall by Sunday, March 15.

NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT

Socks - Newborn or 0-3 Months
Onesies
Baby Blankets [30" x 30"]
Baby Wipes

*Please note that any size clothing newborn size and larger is fine.

PEDIATRIC INTENSIVE CARE UNIT AND PEDIATRIC EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

Blankets [40" x 60" for toddlers or larger]
Light-up and musical toys
Hair ties or headbands
Socks [children & youth sizes]
Stuffed animals (small)
Books [appropriate for all ages, including teenagers]
Journals/Coloring books & Crayons
Character action figures
Hotwheels
Legos/Duplo



CAPE FEAR VALLEY HEALTH
FOUNDATION



March Birthdays



1 Marshall Barnette
1 Charlotte Boyette
1 Hudson Boyette
1 Cynthia Russell-Sippel
2 Mark Nordwall
2 Sarah Szopinski
3 Tricia Baker
4 Chris Blue
4 Andrea Horosko
5 Joshua Barkman
5 Janae Pitakwa
5 Barbara Ursich
7 Gary Hardin
7 Cohen Mosley
8 Molly Alderman
8 Gus Sherrill
9 Devon Campbell

9 Emma McCauley
9 Ann McRae
10 Jackson Gutierrez
10 Olivia Herring
12 Wade Byrd
12 Claire Self
14 Lulie Harry
14 Linda Tillman
15 Bob Bleecker
16 Ralph Huff
16 John O'Keefe
17 Olivia Hammill
19 Andrew Foster
19 David Reid
19 Ann Rowell
19 Jim Young
20 Suzanne Heflin

20 Justin Williams
23 Joyce Borum
23 Ever Leigh Brown
23 Merritt Ciccone
24 Brandon Hammond
26 Lou Brooks
26 Bowman Smith
26 Mary Ann Tally
27 Patrick Strong
28 Amelia Chan
28 Benjamin Deaton
29 Matthew Enfinger
29 David Spivey
30 Annaliese Rocker
30 Carol Short
31 Mary Acker
31 Paul Haddow-Green

Memorials

Dan Nickell

Jimmy & Betsy Patterson
Olivia Herring
Milo & Lorene McBryde

Carolyn Herndon

Linda Huff
Patsy Markham
Gillie Revelle
Martha Circle
Ann Eller
Ann Rowell
Fred & Eliza Williams

Melanie Strickland

Catherine Wilt

Kay Aubry

Bill & Linda Deaton
Milo & Lorene McBryde
Linda Huff
Debra Chestnutt
Patsy Markham
Joann Pearce
Gillie Revelle
Sammy & Carol Short
Ann Eller
Ann Rowell
Fred & Eliza Williams

Ferry M. Herndon

Fred & Eliza Williams



UPCOMING EVENTS

- Mar 15 • The Gathering: Foundations
- Mar 16 • Personnel Committee Meeting
- Mar 17 • Finance Committee Meeting
 - Stated Session Meeting
- Mar 20 • Crossing Thresholds Listening Groups
- Mar 21 • Crossing Thresholds Listening Groups
- Mar 22 • MomCo Meeting
 - Crossing Thresholds Listening Groups
- Mar 23 • David's Mighty Men
- Mar 24 • S.A.L.T. Halifax State Historical Tour
 - VBS Committee
- Mar 26 • Property Committee Meeting
- Mar 28 • Palm Sunday Orchestra Rehearsal
- Mar 29 • Palm Sunday Celebration
 - Palm Sunday Meal & Egg Hunt
- Mar 31 • COAP Meeting (Zoom)
- Apr 2 • Maundy Thursday Meal & Service
- Apr 5 • Easter Sunday
 - Congregational Breakfast
- Apr 6 • Church Office Closed
- Apr 7 • S.A.L.T. Breakfast at JK's
 - Worship Committee Meeting
- Apr 9 • Hannah Circle
- Apr 13 • Mission Committee
 - CE Committee
- Apr 14 • Martha Circle
 - Stated Deacons Meeting



Prayer:
BEYOND THE EMOJI 6

**Practical
Christian
Living**

Mondays
March 9 to April 6
at 7 p.m.

Meetings are held at various homes. Call the church office for more information.



\$10

SUGGESTED
DONATION
PER CAR

Cash/Check only please

**YOUTH
CAR WASH**

SUNDAY, MARCH 22
3 - 5 P.M.

**Support youth mission trip
and projects by stopping
by to get your car washed!**

