

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SALISBURY, NC

FIRST NEWS

Reverends Josh and Lara Musser Gritter, Co-Senior Pastors

October 2022



To Walk Humbly With Our God...

John Calvin, our theological forefather began his two volume *Institutes on the Christian Religion* this way, "True and sound wisdom consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves." Through Scripture, reason, tradition, and experience, we know God in the person of Jesus the Christ. Through him we know that God is loving and just. God is Triune, three persons and one God. God is merciful and gracious abounding in steadfast love. God's majesty is greater than we could ever grasp, deeper than we could ever plum, higher than we could ever reach.

But what about us? What do we know about ourselves as human beings? Scripture tells us that we are made in the image of God. We speak languages, create works of art, organize complex social societies, and more. We are made to delight in God's creation and glorify God with our lives. We are made good. We are made good. We are made good.

At the same time, we are also broken with sin. The moment we are born, we inherit generational patterns of sin in societies mired in inequity and injustice. The world is not whole or righteous. Not only are we born into this legacy of sin, but we also are sinners ourselves.

Despite our best intentions, the impact of our



actions can harm others. We all miss the mark of the lives God would have for us. We go left when we know we should go right. We treat other people as pawns to be controlled rather than as fellow image bearers. We take too much responsibility for other's actions and abdicate our responsibility to care for ourselves. We fall into habits that hurt us and the ones we love. We can be selfish and mean and judgmental and addicted and lost.

Sin is sin.

We all struggle with sin; we all need to be freed from its clutches. True and sound wisdom requires that we remember our own sinful ways with humility and vigilance. True and sound wisdom requires that we trust in the loving and gracious mercy of the Lord.

--Pastor Lara Musser Gritter

October 2022

Inside This Newsletter

- Christian Education news

- Pastor Randy Kirby

- A New Church Van

- Overton School Mission

- Disciple 365 Awards

- Lewis Preaching Series

And much more!

Congratulations To:

- Acey and Carol Worthy, on the birth of their granddaughter, Anastasia Kerr, on September 4. Anastasia's parents are Acey and Vicki Kerr

Deepest Sympathy To:

- The family of Carol Lapp who died on August 20
- Drew Weant and family on the death of his mother, Nancy Weant
- Lawana Ford and family on the death of her brother, Steven Hunter
- Mike Fuller and family on the death of his mother, Elaine Fuller
- The family of Rip Kersey, who died on September 10
- Tony Almeida and family, on the death of his brother, Mike Almeida
- Paula Troxler and family, on the death of her sister, Carol Glichenhouse

Notes Of Appreciation

Dear Church Family,

Thank you, church, for your prayers, concerns, cards, and blue cards during my illness this summer. I truly appreciate all of you.

Eleanor Sandifer

Dear First Presbyterian friends,

Thank you so much for the outpouring of love and sharing for our family at the time of David's passing. As unexpected as it was, we feel at peace in the fact that he will not have to face more health challenges and is now at rest in his Father's arms. Thank you for the kind thoughts, cards, food, flowers, memorial gifts, and warm hugs that you gave us. We are blessed to be a part of such a special church family.

With love and blessings,
Charlotte, Brian, and Jason

Contemplative Prayer with Pastor Lara – Wednesdays at 7:30 am, in the Sanctuary

I love contemplative prayer practices. They center on the abiding love of God in all seasons and circumstances. They're a beautiful contrast to our busy and frenzied world. Join me for mid-week Morning Prayer in the Sanctuary at 7:30 am on Wednesdays starting October 6th. I will lead a brief contemplative prayer practice, often Centering Prayer. We will be done and off to work or school by 8:00 am. Come weekly. Come when you need a midweek reset. Come just because you're curious. Hope to see you there!

--Pastor Lara

Pastor Lara Attends CREDO Conference

One of my favorite things about being



Presbyterian, other than the doctrine of Total Depravity (see cover article) is the Board of Pensions. This is the organization within the PC(USA) denomination that provides benefits and support to clergy. For example, they helped Josh and me pay off our student loans.

One of their major initiatives is called CREDO. Based on the Episcopal program of the same name, CREDO is a week-long conference that invites clergy to live faithful, healthy, balanced lives. I recently attended a CREDO conference with 17 other newly ordained clergy. Our facilitators included a spiritual director, a therapist, a financial advisor, a doctor, and a vocational coach. Together they invited us to pray about and create a Rule of Life or a guide to our health and faith in ministry. Some people chose a Scripture to guide their rule, others an image, still others laid out values and goals to live by, and others wrote out their weekly calendar.

It was a gift to spend time with other clergy and be fed. I return to First Pres with deep gratitude for time like this and great joy for the gift of ministry. Thank you for your support of me as I went to CREDO and thanks be to God for our denomination who cares so deeply for pastors as whole persons.

--Pastor Lara

Race Task Force looks ahead

About 20 people from our church and the community are participating in the Race Task Force's current discussion groups on Zoom. Our look at "The Color of Money: Black Banks and the Racial Wealth Gap" (in book and video form) continues through early November.

Newcomers are welcome to join at any point. For more information, contact Beffie Cook at egravescook@yahoo.com.

Other Race Task Force news:

- **Freeze:** At the task force's September meeting, Dr. Gary Freeze shared his research on Rowan County's racial history.

- **Meet:** Our next meetings are on Oct. 18 on Zoom and Nov. 15 in Fellowship Hall. All are welcome to attend as we discuss raising awareness and considering inclusivity in everything we do.

- **Illusion:** Last February's gatherings to view and discuss "Race: The Power of an Illusion" went so well that we're repeating that experience in February 2023. Some new video clips may be used as well. Mark your calendar for the evenings of Feb. 14, 21, and 28.

Heavenly Blessings Await

The Personnel Committee says thank you to the people who stopped by our Rally Day table to sign cards of appreciation for church staff members. We have a fine group at First Presbyterian.

Sincere words of encouragement show that we're paying attention and we care.

"The unthankful heart discovers no mercies; but the thankful heart will find, in every hour, some heavenly blessings." — Henry Ward Beecher

From Pastor Randy...

“Invitation to Commitment”

This fall the Wednesday morning Bible Study is on the book of Job. It is interesting what is familiar and what is unexpected. I am familiar with the idea of Job's patience. It was unexpected when one of his friends accused him of impatience. More unexpected was this week's discussion about “commitment.” Job had hoped for committed, faithful friend that would stand by him in his time of difficulty.

Instead, the “friends” who come to comfort him simply want to tell him what he has done to cause his own suffering. Job accuses them of



being like the black ice under a pile of snow—it is treacherous and slippery and will simply melt away in the heat of the day. Job needs real commitment. The word used is the Hebrew for “steadfast love.”

He was hoping they would show the steadfast love of God that remains committed in the good times and the bad. The story of Job is really about Job's confidence that in spite of appearances to the contrary, God is still a God of “steadfast love.” So, Job will remain committed to God in the good times and the bad.

These are good times at First Presbyterian Church. In spite of the challenging times of the pandemic, we have come out the other side and are experiencing a sense of renewal. TWAM was able to travel and serve in Mexico this summer. We had a wonderful church retreat in August. September brought a wonderful “Hands On Rally Day” where many people signed up to be directly involved in the work of the church, particularly in the Overton Project that focuses on tutoring reading at Overton Elementary School. So much good is happening!

October brings Commitment Season. It is an opportunity for you to reflect on how you will respond to the steadfast love of God shown to us in Jesus Christ. The challenge is for our commitment to reflect God's commitment to us.

Soon you will receive a letter from the church describing the many ways your commitment is needed.

We are inviting you to be a part of our Commitment Sunday on October 30th as we response to God's steadfast love for us. The church will be serving breakfast and lunch that day. Please let us know which meal you will be attending. We look forward to you joining us as we commit ourselves to praying with humble hearts, giving with grateful hearts, serving with willing hearts, and reaching out with open hearts! See you there! --Pastor Randy Kirby

Do You Have Stephen Ministry Gifts?

Stephen Ministry training only comes around about every three years, and we are hoping to begin our 5th class of Stephen Ministers in early 2023. Do you have the gifts of compassion and listening? Would you like to learn more about what Stephen Ministry is and how it works?

Our Stephen Ministers are a committed lay group of caring disciples who are trained to walk one-on-one alongside another disciple who is going through a difficult time. Maybe the person is grieving a death or going through a divorce. Maybe they're struggling with a child, or burned out caring for an aging family member. Stephen Ministers are not counselors, but caring and trained supporters who generally meet weekly with the care receiver for as long as needed, always confidentially.



Becoming a Stephen Minister includes commitment to in depth training in a class setting with other new trainees, with a commitment to serve for at least two years. Most choose to serve much longer, or to take a break and then return, because they see it as such an important and rewarding ministry.

The training is once a week for 2 ½ hours for the first several months. Then the new Stephen Ministers join the other Stephen Ministers meeting only twice a month for 1 ½ hours. Stephen Ministers often look back on the training as a valuable time of learning skills for every relationship in life.

If this sounds interesting to you, or if you know someone else at First Presbyterian you would recommend, please call, or email Dr. Randy Kirby. revrandy@fpc-sal.org

Christian Education News



Ready...Set...GO!

Our “Hands On” Rally on Sept 11th was a great success! Many thanks to all our FPC committees, FPC groups, and Sunday School classes who decorated their “RALLY” tables with great purpose and style! Our FPC Hunt was a fun way to make sure you visited all the tables. We had a few HONORABLE mentions for FAVORITE table design: First Kids, Sisters In Christ Sunday School, and the FPC Commitment Committee. Great job everyone!

On Sept 18th, we KICKED OFF our FPC Sunday School classes with record attendance since the Covid Pandemic. It was incredible seeing our classrooms full of PEOPLE - with smiles and fellowship - diving into God’s Word. We had 43 youth back in our classes on Sept 18th. AMAZING! If you don’t have a Sunday School HOME at FPC, we encourage you to branch out and find one. There are so many choices!!



CHILDREN AND YOUTH CLASSES

Nursery (Infant – 4 years old) is open from 8:15am-12:15pm every Sunday. They play, read bible stories, and talk about God.

Elementary Sunday School (K-3rd grades) meets from 9:45-10:45am. This fall, they are studying Creation, Noah’s Ark, Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph.



PreTeen Sunday School (4th – 7th grades) meets Sundays from 9:45-10:45am. Our **BE BOLD** curriculum gives our preteens exactly what they need—validation of their faith questions and a place to connect as they explore those questions together with very seasoned adult leaders.

High School Youth (8th – 12th grades): Meets with Pastor Josh on the 3rd Sunday of the month at 9:45am for Bible Study and then attends worship together at 11am.



*Sunday***SCHOOL**
ROOTED IN GOD'S WORD
Growing in Faith Together

ADULT FALL OFFERINGS

Contemporary Christians Class: Finishing their study on the Book of Mark, then "The Mothers and Daughters of the Bible Speak," by Shannon Bream.

Open Door Class: Max Lucado's "You Are Never Alone"

Sisters In Christ Class: Kelly Minter's "Encountering God"

New Horizons Class: "Fear of the Other" by Wil Willimon

Discovery Class: Select topics and will begin "The Journey" by Adam Hamilton for Advent.

Mary and Martha Class: The Present Word

Everyman's Bible Class: The Present Word

All classes meet from 9:45-10:45am Sundays and EMBC likes to start early!!

FIRST KIDS AND JUNIOR FIRST KIDS ARE BACK!

...and on Wednesday nights! We are so excited to be back together! Our goal is to share God's love with our FPC children and their friends. We are high energy and learn through activity and play! Our focus this year for our First Kids and Jr First Kids Club will be learning to serve others, worshiping through music, AND learning some of our BIBLE basics (prayers, scripture, commitment). We will continue to reinforce our Sunday School lessons learned too!



Meet our leadership team!

Robin Fisher – A true veteran of 1st Kids as part of its original creation in 2002 and led for about 10 years. She is excited to be BACK and a part of this incredible team and program! Robin will be the director and main

communicator.

Noel Adams and Stewart Adams - LEAD chefs! We are so fortunate to have their willingness to prepare and organize HOMEMADE healthy kid meals. YUM!!

Allison Adams - Recreation Mastermind! She has tremendous experience in learning through play and activity.

Bob Coleman - FK Receptionist and secret Guard Dog! With his fun personality, he will make sure your little ones get to where they need to be safely!

Lauren Fisher - Sweetest Song! She has a big background in voice and music and will be leading our sweet young voices! Jr 1st Kids and 1st Kids! Look for our voices in Worship on Oct 9th at LCW, Nov 20th at LCW, and Dec 18th at Traditional Sanctuary Worship.

Alan Fowler and Johnny Behrooz - Ground Control! We love our Dads and love that they reinforce how COOL Jesus is!!

Katie Meness - Artist Extraordinaire! Katie brings creativity to our team! She has passion for intergrading service projects into First Kids.

Elizabeth Calvert – Leader of our Jr First Kids – Elizabeth has been taking care of our little ones for over 20 years – on Sunday mornings and at First Kids. We are blessed to have her.

Ella Coleman - Leader of our Littlest - She will be one of our Junior First Kids Leaders. She has much experience with this group as she is a regular Nursery worker (Infant to 4 y.o.) at FPC on Sunday mornings.

Maddie Capel - Leader of our Littlest - Back by popular demand! As a recent Catawba graduate, Maddie made a BIG impression on us during VBS 2022. We are so happy that she is joining us again for Junior First Kids.

Look for our First Kids and Junior First Kids leading the way with Pastor Appreciation Month, helping with Commitment, collecting for an RHM Can Food Drive, and singing in Worship! We will be busy!!

Here, the "boys" are **Post A Note Flocking** our FPC Pastors doors for Pastor Appreciation Month.



Dayschool Good News



The school has been having so much fun!

Last month we had a Meet-N-Greet Pizza Party, started our Praise Time with Pastor Lara, walked to the Library for Story Time and had an awesome visit with Mr. Robert for another Story Time!

This upcoming month we have lots more planned!

Our first Picture Day is this week, a visit from the local fire house, Donuts with Dad, decorating a bulletin board at the library and we will have our first Field Trip to Patterson Farms!

And check out our new shirts!



*****We still need substitutes! Please contact Christy if you are interested or know anyone (704)909-8085 or dayschool@fpc-sal.org**

SAVE THE DATE!!!
LEWIS PREACHING SERIES
FEBRUARY 4-5, 2023

Mark your calendar to be here and welcome Dr. Scott Black Johnston, Senior Pastor at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York, NY, as our guest speaker for the Lewis Preaching Series. Details to follow!!



Church Acquires A New Van!

The Property Committee recently purchased a new 2022 Ford passenger van for the Church. This was accomplished partly by a substantial donation from the Lomax family. We would like to thank them for their generous gift.

Disciple 365 Award Goes To Five Seniors

Discipleship is our call 365 days a year. Each year, an anonymous church disciple provides funds to remind high school seniors that discipleship is a daily lifestyle.

All high school seniors received a letter with an application for the "Disciple 365 Award," a gift of \$365. In addition, seniors were asked to give the names of two people who inspired them and encouraged them to be disciples of Christ.



This year, five seniors applied for this award. Here are the seniors and the disciples they chose who have encouraged them on their faith journey:

- Megan Dailey – Leigh Drye & Pastor Josh
- Hannah Galloway – Pastor Lara & Troy Creamer
- Jack Heilig – Bob Harris & Pastor Josh
- Steven Lescoe – Stephen Bullock & David & Charlotte Hall
- Noah Loeblein – Blaine Smith & Stephen Bullock

Thank you to the anonymous benefactor for providing these funds and reminding us that discipleship is a daily call within our faith journeys.

And a very special thank you to each person chosen for supporting, teaching, inspiring, and encouraging a high school senior disciple in their daily walk of faith!

The North Carolina Presbyterian Historical Society's **Fall Meeting** will be held on Saturday, October 8, in Hillsborough at the lovely Presbyterian Church, built in 1816. The meeting will include history of the church and cemetery, and a program on "Presbyterians and the Founding of the First State University." Registration is \$22 including lunch. More information and the registration form are in the newsletter on our website, www.ncphsociety.org.

Important October Dates For Our Youth

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Sunday Night, October 2 | No Youth, Lock-in |
| Wednesday Night, October 5 | Porch Bible Study |
| Sunday night, October 9 | Eating @ Monterrey |
| Wednesday Night, October 12 | Porch Bible Study |
| Sunday Night, October 16 | No Youth, Fall Break |
| Wednesday Night, October 19 | Porch Bible Study |
| Thursday Night, October 20 | Mission Night @ RHM |
| Sunday morning, October 23 | Breakfast and Bible Study |
| Sunday Night, October 23 | Escape Room |
| Wednesday Night, October 26 | NO Porch Bible Study |
| Sunday Night, October 30 | Graveyard scavenger Hunt and S'mores. Meet @ 117 Maupin at 5:00. Pick-up at 6:30. |

Overton Elementary Mission Opportunities

I want to thank everyone who has volunteered to be an **Overton Reading Tutor**. Your willingness to be part of this local mission opportunity is much appreciated. Our goal, however, was to have 10% of First Presbyterian disciples supporting Overton children and families. We have not yet reached this goal. If you want to participate in this powerful ministry, please let me know. You can volunteer one day or more per week. You choose the day and time that is best for your schedule. As Robin Fisher once said, "It's never too late to help a child."

Can you help build the foundation for a swing set? When the Overton teachers were asked what they needed for children with special needs, the top item was a swing set. Witness Committee is looking for a small group of individuals who would be willing and able to **build a wooden foundation for a swing set**. If you are interested in this project, please contact a committee member. Witness Committee members are Frank Adams, Bob Harris, Ozzie Reynolds, Kent Roberts, and Kathy Sang.

Swing Set Fund – Instead of participating in Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Program this year, we are asking disciples to make donations so that we can purchase materials for the swing set foundation I

mentioned above and purchase special swing seats. Since the swing set we're building is for special needs children, we will need to purchase special swing seats that come with a safety harness. We will be collecting donations through November. We'll order the special seats in December so that we can have the swing set completed over the school's Christmas break. When the children return in January, they will have a new swing set. If you'd like to donate to this fund, please write "swing set" on the memo line of your check.

We encourage you to review the opportunities above and prayerfully consider how you can be part of our hands on local mission at Overton Elementary School.

I also want to add a HUGE THANK YOU for all the backpacks that were donated to Overton Elementary this fall. We have collected backpacks for several years for the children whose families may not be able to get a new backpack for school; however, this year, over 130 backpacks were donated. With the backpacks, over \$1,400 was given to help buy school supplies, including 280 sets of flash cards, for the children to use. Your kindness and support is so appreciated. Thank you!

Kathy Sang, Witness Committee



**First Presbyterian
Church 308 West Fisher
Street Salisbury, NC
28144**

NON-PROFIT ORG.
US Postage
PAID
Salisbury NC 28144
Permit No. 62

Sunday Worship Schedule

■
8:30 am Life Center Worship
Lewis Hall

■
9:45 am Sunday School

■
11 am Sanctuary Worship