

# FIRST NEWS

Reverends Josh and Lara Musser Gritter, Co-Senior Pastors

April 2024



## Deeply Rooted

## Remembering Tim Waugh With A Special Service

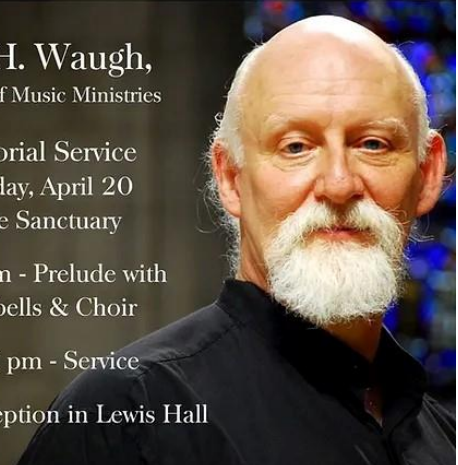
Though Tim was only with us a short 9 months, his impact at First Pres will last much longer. He brought global expertise to the Bell ensemble, passion for the choir, enthusiasm to children's music, and love to everything he did. **On April 20**, we will gather to worship God and entrust Tim into God's care. While this will be a time for First Presbyterian to grieve, it will also be a time for us to host many beyond our church who loved Tim.

Here are the following ways you can help us be hospitable as we host this funeral:

1. **Welcome and guide new faces** - You are a warm and welcoming congregation. Let our visitors experience that warmth as they make their way to the funeral.
2. **Come early** - This will prevent last-minute bottlenecks and shuttle service overwhelm.
3. **Carpool** - The fewer cars around downtown that day, the better.
4. **Take note of the parking plan.** Fisher Street and Jackson Street will both be closed due to Earth Day Jam. The First Pres parking lot will open at 9:30 am only for those with limited mobility. The South State Bank parking lot will be reserved only for musicians playing in the service. Everyone else is encouraged to park in one of the following three places: 1. The St. John's Child Development Center parking lot, which includes the gravel area behind the building. 2. The Lower First Baptist Parking lot on the corner of Jackson and Council. 3. The First Baptist Parking Lot next to the old YMCA. All of these parking lots are easily walkable to the church; however, if needed, the two First Pres Vans will be providing shuttle service to each of these lots. **See the parking map on the next page.**
5. **Volunteer** - We are still looking for van drivers, greeters, parking lot shuttle stop guides, and more. Contact Keith Garner or Pastor Lara if you'd like to volunteer.

Our hosting of this funeral will be a gift to many beyond our church and a service to the kingdom of God.

--Pastor Lara Musser Gritter



**Tim H. Waugh,**  
Director of Music Ministries

Memorial Service  
Saturday, April 20  
in the Sanctuary

10:30 am - Prelude with  
Handbells & Choir

11:00 pm - Service

12:00 - Reception in Lewis Hall

## Funeral Parking Map



## Look What God Has Done - Baccalaureate 2024

When I first arrived at First Pres there was a *lot* that was new. New town, new faces, new job, new house (for the first time), new *everything*. Chief among the new things was my hybrid title, “Co-Senior Youth Director.” Or something like that. I had never been a senior pastor before. But more to the point, I’d never been a Youth Director before! I remember those first weeks of youth planning and youth events. I had no idea what I was doing. Fake it till you make it, they say. Well, I must’ve really made it because, in the beginning, I had to really fake it.

It’s now been almost 6 years. In youth ministry, you’re supposed to count your time in dog years. So, I’ve been the youth pastor for...33 years! God has seen this youth ministry through a global health crisis and through the ups and downs of living life alongside young people. And it’s not an easy time to be a young person. Their world is on fire. Political turmoil, the constant reminder of an ecological crisis, the moors of social media, and skyrocketing mental health issues.

What word does God have to speak to such a world? But if I had to sum up all of this time with our young people, the word I would use would not be crisis or turmoil or difficult; it would be “relationships.”

You can be the best planner in the whole universe, but if you don’t know how to build relationships, your youth ministry is going to have the same population as the North Pole—zero. Relationships take time to build, especially with youth. Trust is hard to gain and easy to lose. But at the end of the day, the biggest gift we have to give is our time.

It’s hard to believe that the wonderful group of seniors graduating this year were 7<sup>th</sup> graders when I arrived. In case you don’t remember, a lot of new things happen between 7<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade. I’ve watched them grow up before my very eyes; I’ve watched them grow in their faith, ask a mountain of questions, and become young adults.

On Sunday, May 19, we will celebrate this group of young people with our annual Baccalaureate service. This year, we’re putting a new and exciting spin on things. We’re going to do something that we all love to do at church—eat lots of food. Following worship at 11, we’re going to celebrate our graduates and have a church-wide picnic in Lewis Hall.

I hope you’ll be there to see all that God has done.

--Pastor Josh Musser Gritter



[From Pastor Randy...](#)

**Sabbatical Leave 2024**

*“Sabbatical Leave is an extension of the Biblical concept of a Sabbath day and a Sabbath year for renewal. It is both an act of faith that God will sustain us through a period of reflection and changed activity and an occasion for recovery and renewal of vital energies.”*

--A Rationale for Sabbatical Leave

I am deeply appreciative of the elders and congregation of First Pres for embracing the concept of pastoral sabbaticals. The extended breaks that I have been able to take during my ministry have enabled renewal vital to sustaining a long-term pastorate. I am writing to update you on my plans to take a three-month sabbatical this Fall.

As with any sabbatical, the overall goal is spiritual, emotional, and physical renewal through rest, study, and adventure in order to reengage ministry with more “energy, intelligence, imagination, and love.” However, the focus of this time away is to think about retirement and plan the process of retiring.



Plans for this sabbatical began over a year ago and were approved by both the Personnel Committee as well as the session last June. We agree it

could benefit both the church and me to explore how to conclude a long-term pastorate in the most positive manner. I turn seventy in 2026 and will retire at the end of 2026, if not before. I want to be ready, and I want to leave the church ready to move on. To that end, I will be away August through October to explore how to do just that.

I will begin by attending the Board of Pensions annual retirement seminar at Montreat. Then, I will develop a plan based on their wisdom. I also plan to visit colleagues who have retired or are in the process in order to find out what worked for them. I have a reading list. I hope to travel and see family and friends, and yes, retirement locations. I will post things on Facebook; in case anyone wants to follow along. When I get back, I will share what I have learned with the church in as many ways as possible. Maybe we will even do a class about making the most of your retirement years. I am

not there yet, but I can see it on the calendar and want us all to be ready. May God bless us all as we continue this journey together!

--Dr. Randy Kirby

## 2 Cents a Meal Update

If you ever wondered where our “2 Cents a Meal” offering goes, here is the update for you. This is an excerpt from a recent Salem Presbytery Newsletter. Let me know if you have any questions.

-- Pastor Randy

“These pennies become nickels, dimes become dollars, and hundreds become thousands. Collectively, we can magnify our impact and serve more of our neighbors in need as the body of Christ than we can do individually. Thank you to the members of the Salem Hunger Committee who meet throughout the year, review grant applications biannually, and strategize about how to keep our domestic and international partners serving food-insecure populations that need it.

Through their hard work and your generosity, the Salem Hunger Committee was able to grant” \$33,000 in their Spring 2024 cycle to a dozen projects from Chatham County to Alamance to Reidsville. Last year’s recipients included Rowan Helping Ministries and Meals on Wheels Rowan.

“Beyond just keeping our local neighbors fed, the Hunger Committee has allocated \$38,000 of its International funds to our partner, Sister to Sister in Kenya for 2024. This will feed 175 food-insecure elementary-age children daily. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Salem Presbytery has allocated \$20,000.00 of its international funds to feeding sites where 278 children that are 6 months to 6 years old receive meals three to four times weekly.” Empowered by Salem Presbytery’s vision of living out the Matthew 25 initiative, the Salem Hunger Committee believes we emulate Jesus and follow his directives when he says, “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me.”

Thank you for making this happen! God bless you and Christ’s church!”

## Scholarship Deadline April 26

First Pres offers three scholarships to our active members graduating high school and one for our active member undergrad students. Students received forms in the mail, or they can be found on the church website under Policies & Forms-Youth Forms. All applications and supporting documents are due to the Business Administrator no later than **Friday, April 26**. Forms can be dropped off at the church office or mailed to 308 West Fisher St, Salisbury, NC 28144.



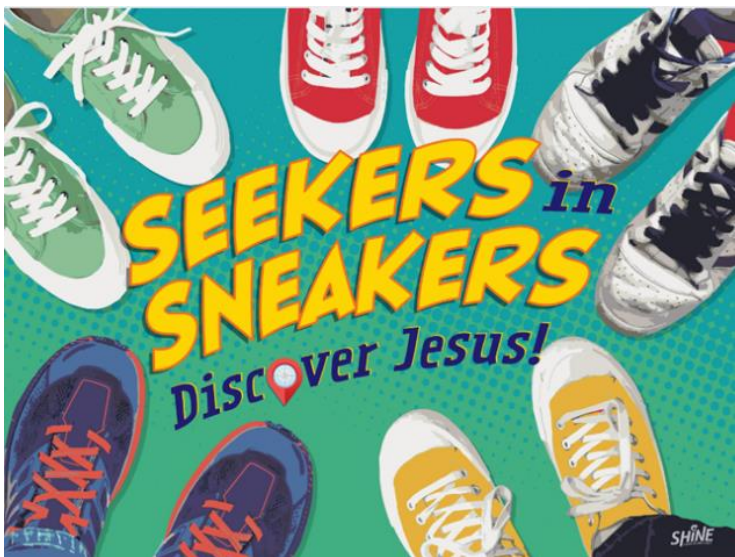
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# Welcome to the Table

SUNDAY APRIL 14 | 11AM  
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN SALISBURY

OUR FIRST KIDS HAVE BEEN LEARNING ABOUT WORSHIP AND COMMUNION. JOIN OUR YOUNGEST SAINTS AT THE COMMUNION TABLE ON SUNDAY, APRIL 14. PLAN TO STAY AFTER WORSHIP FOR A SMALL RECEPTION TO CELEBRATE THIS MILESTONE IN OUR FIRST KIDS FAITH JOURNEY.



Vacation Bible School  
Save the Date!

June 2- June 9  
5:00- 7:30

Supper served nightly

Registration coming soon!



## SUNDAY SCHOOL - Join us on Sunday Mornings!

EMBC: The Present Word - Downstairs Rm 107

Mary & Martha: The Present Word - Downstairs Rm 101

Presbyterian Outlook: Book Study "The Great Spiritual Migration" -  
Upstairs Rm 219

Sisters In Christ: Bible Study "When You Pray" - Upstairs Rm 202

Discovery: Bible Study "Door Knobs" - Upstairs Rm 215

Open Door & New Horizons: Weekly "Wired Word" curriculum -  
Upstairs Rm 221

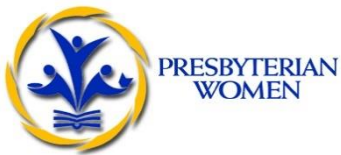
Contemporary Christians: Study on Modern-Day Theologians -  
Downstairs Rm 103

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

**Elementary Sunday School** (K-3<sup>rd</sup> grades) meets from 9:45 to 10:45. This class focuses on Bible stories that connect with the liturgical season. Upstairs Rm 206

**Pre-Teen Sunday School** (4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> grades) meets Sundays from 9:45 to 10:45. 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 incredible adult leaders.  
Upstairs Rm 208

**High School Youth** (8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grades) meet with Pastor Josh at 9:45 (twice per month) for Breakfast & Bible Study, and then they attend worship together at 11:00. Upstairs Rm 223



PRESBYTERIAN  
WOMEN

All women of the church are invited to a time of fellowship and Bible Study, Monday, April 8 at 11:00 AM in the fellowship hall. Please see Denise Fink ([denisefink@carolina.rr.com](mailto:denisefink@carolina.rr.com)) for more information



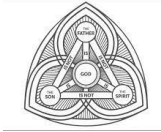
The Grow in Faith team will meet on Monday, April 22 at 6:30 PM in room 202. This team will be beginning to look at Vacation Bible School planning as well as other opportunities to grow our faith through programming, prayer, and Christian fellowship. If you would like to know more about this team or help in development of Christian Education opportunities, please see Robin Fisher or Amanda Hathcock ([ahathcock@firstpressalisbury.org](mailto:ahathcock@firstpressalisbury.org)) and express your interest.

## Join Everyman's Bible Class

Everyman's Bible Class invites the entire Church family to join us in Fellowship Hall on three Sundays (April 21, 28, and May 5) at 9:45 am for an excellent educational series on

The Doctrine of the Trinity: History, Theology, and Future

- April 21: Who is Jesus? God's own life or something less? (April 21)
- April 28: If Jesus is God, who, then, is God? (April 28)
- May 5: Do Today's Christians Still Need the Doctrine of the Trinity? (May 5)



Taught by our good friend Professor Trevor Eppheimer, Academic Dean and Messenger-Williams Family Associate Professor of Theology and Ethics at Hood Theological Seminary.

This series will start promptly at 9:45 am with the singing of a couple of hymns, a prayer, and Trevor's class starting at 10 am. We should finish by 10:40 am each Sunday; coffee and refreshments will be served.



This has become an annual Spring series that EMBC sponsors and many members of the congregation look forward to it! Mark your calendars! A Zoom option will be available as well.

## FIRST KIDS

First Kids will meet on April 10 and April 17 from 5:00-7:30.

All children 3 years old through 5<sup>th</sup> grade are invited to attend for supper, and a lesson. We will be learning more about communion



and our sanctuary. Please see Robin Fisher or Amanda Hathcock (for more information.

Save the Date to Celebrate our Graduates! Baccalaureate Sunday May 19 A church-wide picnic is planned following worship to be in fellowship and celebrate the accomplishments of our youth.



*Be Bold! Be Brave! For the Lord thy God is with you!*

*Be Bold! Be Brave! For the Lord thy God is with you!*

*Be Not Afraid.*

*Be Not Dismayed.*

*Walk in faith and victory for the Lord thy God is with thee.*

This old camp song has been on my mind these days as we look away from Lent and toward the celebration of our Lord's Resurrection. As we begin planning for Vacation Bible School, adult Sunday School summer opportunities, the fall retreat, and yes, even beginning to think of Advent. These refrains ring in my mind as we look to the coming weeks.

How can we be Bold in our programming? How can we walk in faith? As we plan for discipleship opportunities and growth in our Christian education, it is important to remember we are not amassing knowledge of God's word for our Jeopardy! debut. But instead, we are building our knowledge of God's word to support our growth as Christians. So we may put on the armor of God and go into the world bravely and boldly proclaiming *He is Risen! Alleluia!* That changes things! We serve a living God who is moving in our world. Let us use our knowledge of the Bible to make a difference in this fallen world.

As you engage in discipleship opportunities, fellowship opportunities, and faith formation, I challenge you to not hold on to your knowledge as a badge but instead to see how we can put our faith in action. Where can you be bold in the world and reach out to others?

Some ideas to consider:

- Invite your neighbor to our summer Sunday School Offerings
- Get involved with the projects happening in our embracing the unchurched team
- Volunteer for Vacation Bible School
- Engage in your daily devotions and then share what you learned with others
- Pray boldly, ask God for big things, and then have the faith to be his hands and feet in our world.

I have felt so welcomed and loved by this congregation in the weeks I have been with you all. I have experienced your giving spirit with the Feed the Fish campaign and your rally of love in mourning a friend and musician, and I have seen first-hand the joy you all have together in learning about God and his grace. May you usher in the spring season, boldly proclaiming that God is with us and inviting others to learn about God's goodness through the many wonderful things happening at First Pres.

"He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance!" - Acts 28:31

Grace & Peace,  
Amanda Hathcock

## Community Ministries **Forum to Focus on Education**

Racial Equity Rowan will hold a public forum in April dedicated to the topic of education — a topic near and dear to the hearts of our Overton tutors and many others. The gathering will be held 5:30-7 pm Monday, April 29, at the Wallace Educational Forum, 500 N. Main St. The building is the headquarters of the Rowan-Salisbury School System.

The meeting is free and open to the public. Look for details about speakers in the Salisbury Post. RER was formed in 2019 to support the good work already going on in Rowan County around racial equity and create a platform for further anti-racism work to thrive.

### **Race & Justice Ministry Team News**

- Two seats remain available for the April 23-26 trip to Montgomery and Selma, Ala., to follow the Civil Rights Trail. For more information, contact Beffie Cook at 704-239-0011 or [egravescook@yahoo.com](mailto:egravescook@yahoo.com).

- Groups discussing "Buffalo Soldiers" and "Black Fortunes" weekly on Zoom will finish those books at the end of the month and in mid-April, respectively. Look for details soon on our next topics. This is an easy way to expand our knowledge and our circle of friends. All are welcome.

- The Peace & Justice Task Force of Salem Presbytery also hosts Zoom book discussions that you can participate in. Titles coming up soon include "Dear White Christians" on April 9 at noon (use the QR code to sign up) and "Poverty, By America," tentatively set for Tea May 21 at noon.



### **Israel and Palestine – A Report from Our Presbyterian Delegation Zoom Meeting on Monday, April 15, noon-1:00 pm**

Ron Shive and Bill Hoyle, members of Salem Presbytery, were a part of a national, grassroots delegation February 15-22 to Palestine and Israel. The name of the delegation was "Solidarity with Suffering: a P.C.(U.S.A.) Delegation to Palestine and Israel."

The delegation was planned in response to a call from our Christian partners in Palestine and Israel. The 34-member delegation met with numerous leaders of civil society and religious leaders – Christian, Jewish, and Muslim.

Join Bill and Ron to hear first-hand what they learned about what is happening in Palestine and Israel and actions our churches and members can take. Use the QR code.



A report on the trip can be found on the [presbyterianmission.org](http://presbyterianmission.org) website by searching for Israel/Palestine.

## Facilitate-Property Maintenance

### **Sanctuary Waterproofing Making Strong Progress**

The major waterproofing project on our sanctuary building continues to progress very well and is on schedule for key components of the work. 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 waterproofing portion of the project is wrapping up on the parking lot side and should be completed by the first week of April. That will allow use of the sanctuary for two special events: a wedding and the memorial service for Tim Waugh on April 20. Two other aspects of the work will take longer to complete. Preformed concrete steps for the Courtyard entrance are due here in early April. The current steps will be removed with the area under the porch to be waterproofed as well. The work will begin after the April 20 memorial service and take about three weeks to complete. If all goes well, we should be able to occupy the sanctuary on a more permanent basis in mid-May.

The second longer term aspect of the project is delivery of matching brick, primarily for the steps and porch for the Fulton Street entrance, plus the reconstructed steps and elevated landing for the Innes Street entrance. The brick will not be manufactured and delivered until late summer delaying completion until approximately October. The final step of the project is landscaping all around the building.

The total budget for the extensive work is about \$580,000, which is being funded by our Church Maintenance Reserve fund. The project remains on budget, possibly a little below budget. The project is being monitored closely by our Facilitate Team leadership, our maintenance supervisor Archie Tucker and our architects, Ramsey and Burgin.

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

### Media & Communications

#### **Upcoming Newsletter Deadlines:**

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

## **Continue The Conversation, RISE Participants Say**

Bright stickers told the story. About 20 people came together at First Pres on March 12 to break bread and follow up on a January workshop they'd shared, Race: An In-depth Spiritual Examination (RISE).

Black and white, they came from churches across the community and shared where their passions lay in working toward racial justice. Then participants put green stickers beside the passions they agreed with most.

A swarm of green dots came together around "improving early childhood education." Also popular were "racial healing" and "seeing Black congregations survive and thrive." The stickers indicated considerable consensus in the group.

But the overriding message was the desire to continue the conversation, bring more people into the discussion, and build meaningful relationships. Then, go beyond talk and take action.

The group decided to meet every other month to carry out that mission and discern what actions to take.

Monica Green, an elder from Trinity Presbyterian Church, helped lead the discussion.

Debbie Collins, captain of the Race and Justice Ministry Team, outlined three change models. Solutions may not lie in big, dramatic action, she said, quoting historian and author Jemar Tisby, but in "small, consistent acts of courage."

The January RISE Workshop was held at Hood Seminary and was sponsored by First Pres, Trinity Presbyterian, Soldiers Memorial AME Zion, Salem Presbytery, and Racial Equity Rowan. Nine people from First Pres were among the 31 participants. The Race and Justice Ministry Team supported the RISE Workshop and organized the March 12 reunion meeting.

The January workshop highlighted the biblical emphasis on equality, from God's creation of mankind in his image in Genesis, through Revelation's gathering of the multitude "from every nation, tribe, people, and language."

RISE attendees were also reminded of Paul's directive from Romans 12:2 — "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

## **Lenten Prayer Breakfasts Another Great Year!**

We want to express our heartfelt thanks to all of the cooks, set-up and clean-up crews, greeters, check-in people, and all other volunteers led by John Grubb, who helped with

the Lenten Prayer Breakfasts. We had great food, great speakers, and fantastic fellowship.

## **Deeply Rooted - Care**

### **Congratulations To:**

- Ian and Brooke Swaim, on the birth of their son, Hampton Lee Swaim. HL's grandparents are David and Marianna Swaim
- Welcome to Scott, Marcie, & Bowie Leary to our First Pres family!
- Welcome to Alexandria Paul and the Paul family to our First Pres family!

### **Our Sincere Sympathy To:**

- Joe and Susan Sember on the death of his brother, John Sember
- Elizabeth Calvert on the death of her friend, Frankie Query
- Tootie Ross and Carol Worthy on the death of their brother and uncle, respectively, Wesley Boyer

## **Notes of Appreciation**

Heartfelt appreciation for my First Pres church family. I wish to thank my church family for the prayers, telephone calls, blue cards, "missing you" cards, the Blessing Bunch, my Sunday School class, Mary & Martha, and the Joy Group.

The thoughtfulness each of you expressed was heartwarming. The beautiful flowers, get-well cards, and phone calls were blessings from each of you. Three months of recovery, and I'm looking forward to seeing everyone on Sunday mornings.

Thank you, once again, as I return to my church and its many activities.

Sincerely, CC Crofton



### **Thank you!**

Thank you so much for the prayers and the meals after my surgery in February. And a special thank you for the ways that you all love me and Caleb all the other days! I thank God for allowing us to be a part of such a special church family.

With love, Christina Lewis



## **Core - Fund Management**



# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

February 29, 2024

<b>OPERATING</b>		<b>GIVING</b>		
YTD Income	230,215.23	YTD Budgeted Giving	197,454.83	
YTD Expenses	<u>207,174.26</u>	YTD Actual Giving	<u>214,631.88</u>	
Cash Flow - <b>Positive</b>	<u>23,040.97</u>	<b>Over</b>	<u>-17,177.05</u>	
	Budgeted Income	205,538.17	YTD Pledged	180,204.83
Actual Income		<u>230,215.23</u>	YTD Actual	<u>201,721.13</u>
<b>Under</b>		<u>-24,677.06</u>	<b>Over</b>	<u>-21,516.30</u>
	Budgeted Expenses	223,148.00		
Actual Expenses		<u>207,174.26</u>		
<b>Under</b>		<u>15,973.74</u>		
	<b>DAY SCHOOL</b>			
YTD Gain		<u>2,578.79</u>		



Running for a Cause – Supporting TWAM

One of the great traditions of this church is our TWAM mission trip. I am convinced that this trip is even more important now than it was 30 years ago when it began. It truly changes lives. It is a weeklong advanced course in Christian discipleship and formation.

And yes, this trip has gotten expensive. As with discipleship, so with travel, there is a cost. With rising flight costs and inflation raging, some might even



comment, “How can we afford this?” I think the better response is one that I heard a TWAM leader once say, “We can’t afford not to do this.”

One of the biggest fundraisers of the year for this wonderful trip is our TWAM 5K. Here’s how you can get involved:

1) Do you have two legs and can walk/run/hobble? If so, have we got a race for you!

2) If you choose not to run, come on out to support the race. It’s always a great night.

3) Sponsor the race with your finances.

Each year our youth ask for sponsors for the race. Maybe you’re not yet on our list. Maybe this is the first year you’ll feel led to support the trip.

And finally, there is another way you can offer your support of our mission trip. Every year there are leaders and students in need of financial assistance. I’m always so amazed at the generosity of those who tell me they’d like to support or sponsor a student’s trip. If that’s something you’d be interested in, please let me know.

Until then, mark your calendars for Friday, April 26! It’s a cause worth running for.

–Pastor Josh

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**First Presbyterian Church**  
**308 West Fisher Street**  
**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