

The REMINDER



MAY 2024



ON THE COVER: Confirmands, mentors, and leaders pose for a group shot during the confirmation retreat in April at Camp Longridge.

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Submit news briefs, pictures, or announcements by May 21 to Kim Brauss at kbrauss@florencefirst.org. To be added to the mailing list, call the church office at 843-662-2583.



Moment for Missions: Presbyterian Communities

Whether it's Covenant Partners visiting, working with, or residing at, First Presbyterian Church Florence has a long tradition of partnership with the Presbyterian Communities of South Carolina (PCSC). This year, the Missions Team is excited to bring our Covenant Partners a new way to support PCSC by joining other Presbyterian churches in South Carolina by collecting a special Mother's Day offering. The funds from this offering will be held by the Presbyterian Communities of South Carolina Foundation and will be used to offset the costs of residing in PCSC homes for those residents who, by no fault of their own, can no longer financially support themselves. Please prayerfully consider giving to this offering on Mother's Day. Envelopes will be available May 12 during both services. You may give online at <https://www.prescommunities.org/> or scan the QR code.



We are blessed to be a BLESSING!

First Pres, thank you for opening your doors WIDE to our community. Did you know we have hosted so far in 2024:

- 1) Boys & Girls Club Champion Youth Event
- 2) FCA annual banquet
- 3) Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts meetings
- 4) Naomi Project's play, "In the mean time, it's a MEAN time"
- 5) House of Hope Graduation program
- 6) Engaging God's Word (EGW) — Sundays at 5:30 p.m.
- 7) Just for Women Bible Study (JFW) — Tuesdays at noon
- 8) End-of-the-year piano recitals
- 9) Florence Independent Music Teachers Association Festival
- 10) Selah Yoga — Mondays at 5:30 p.m.
- 11) Helping Florence Flourish events
- 12) My Brother's Keeper — breakfast, second Saturday monthly
- 13) St. Anothy's Catholic School theater performance
- 14) American Red Cross Blood Drive
- 15) Kiwanis pancake supper

Upcoming events supporting local missions:

• **Child Evangelism Fellowship (Good News Club)** – Clay Shoot on May 11 at Moree's Game Preserve in Society Hill. Use QR code for tickets.

• **My Brother's Keeper in need of volunteers:**

Drivers and riders — 2 to 4 p.m. Saturday

Riders — 2 to 4 p.m. Wednesday

Cooking team member — noon to 2 p.m. Tuesday

Contact Laura Marechal for more information, 843-319-4564.



Walk by the Spirit

Hello, friends. As you read this, it will have been one month since I started my ministry among you.

First, I have to tell you how gracious you have been to me. You have kindly wished me well and prayed for me and encouraged me. From the Session to the last pew on Sunday to the Staff, you have all been wonderful.

Second, I have enjoyed the “Take a Transitional Pastor to Lunch” program very much! It has been good to get to know you over a meal or coffee. I hope to do more of this in the coming months.

Third, we have only just begun. There are questions out there, of course. Probably chief among these is, when will we form a new committee to seek a permanent senior pastor? The answer is, not yet. We need some time to simply be, to envision the next steps that God has for First Pres, and then to prayerfully move forward.

For now, keep praying for the leadership. Extend the bonds of fellowship to each and every Covenant Partner, especially those who are new. And entrust First Presbyterian to the Lord’s hands, asking him where you



might serve to strengthen our witness to one another, to our community and to our world.

God’s best to you,
Pastor Stuart

Spring Picnic

SUNDAY, MAY 5, AT NOON

BRING A SIDE OR DESSERT

POTLUCK PICNIC

The church will provide meat and drinks; please bring your favorite salad, side, or dessert. Bring blankets and chairs if desired for extra seating.

Investments as Ministry

For most of us, the words invest, investing or investments are associated with money and financial matters. The primary definition of invest is: “to expend money with the expectation of achieving a profit or material result by putting it into financial plans, shares, or property, or by using it to develop a commercial venture.” So, it is no wonder that when we hear the word invest, our thoughts immediately go to things such as the stock market, financial advisors, 401(k) and retirement accounts. The word invest has a secondary definition that is: “to provide or endow someone or something with (a particular quality or attribute). I want to look at this definition as it pertains to the ministry of First Presbyterian Church

Sunday, May 5, will be Confirmation Sunday. On that day, we will recognize and welcome 20 Confirmands as covenant partners in our church. Since last August this group of sixth-graders has been involved in the confirmation process of our church, which includes catechism class and a 13-week mentoring process, where the confirmands are paired with an adult covenant partner (mentor). The mentor is not someone who has all the answers but rather someone who is willing to share his/her journey of faith with another person who is an apprentice in the faith. Through this process, the catechism leaders and mentors have invested in the lives of these young people. I have had the privilege to be a mentor to three different confirmands over the past few years. Many of you have mentored confirmands through the years understand that the return on investment is watching a young person grow and mature in their faith and understanding of God. The catechism leaders and mentors are only a few of the people who have invested in the lives of the confirmands. When a child is baptized into our congregation, the covenant partners are asked if they will nurture and support the child as they grow in faith. Nursery workers, Sunday School teachers, VBS leaders, Wednesday night study leaders and others have invested in the lives of these young people along the way. First Presbyterian Church is blessed with covenant partners who understand and are involved in the secondary definition of investing both in our church and in the community. Through leading a small group,

teaching a Sunday School class, GriefShare ministry or involvement in one of the many benevolence agencies we support, our covenant partners are investing in the lives of people. The return on these investments will not show up on a quarterly earnings statement in an investment portfolio. It will be found in changed lives. There is a tendency to think of stewardship strictly in terms of money. When it comes to Christian stewardship, however, it is far more than money — it’s your life! Aspects of Christian stewardship is life lived in Christ, the life of discipleship. It takes seriously the psalmist’s affirmation that “the earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it” (Ps. 24:1).

Faithful stewards are always growing. They never graduate from the school of discipleship. Christ calls his disciples to be always on the cutting edge of life. As we are nurtured in our faith, we grow in our understanding of what it means to have “the mind of Christ.” As our senses and sensibilities are stimulated by the Holy Spirit, we grow as stewards and mature as obedient disciples. We truly have far more resources given to us by God than we even realize. So, in what ways are you stewarding the resources (time, talent, and treasure) given to you?

Staff Recognitions

First Presbyterian is fortunate to have a talented and dedicated church staff. This month, we recognize four of our staff on their employment anniversaries. Gwen DuRant, our Financial Assistant, joined our staff in May 2015. Emily Reed, our Ministry Assistant, joined our staff in May 2023. Vic Rockhill has been our Praise Team leader since May 2021. Leroy Williams, Head Custodian, joined our staff in May 2022. Thank you, Gwen, Emily, Vic, and Leroy; we are grateful for each of you and your contributions to the ministry of First Presbyterian Church.



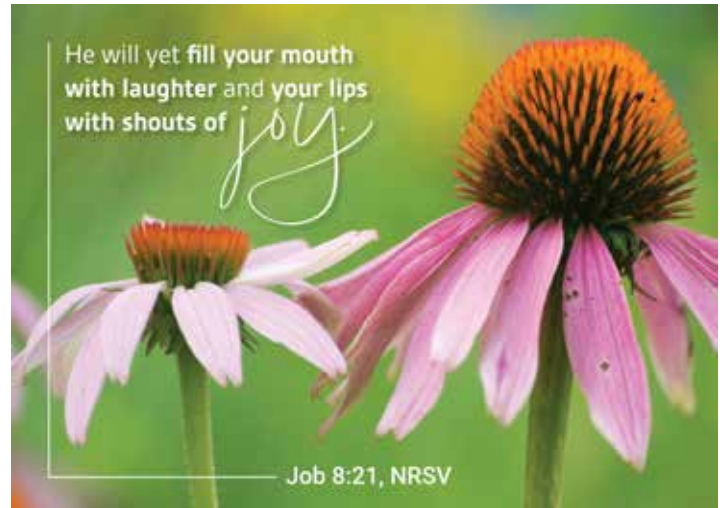
The Resurrection in Luke

The Resurrection of Jesus in the Gospel of LUKE consists of three appearances. Jesus appears to the women on Resurrection morning in LUKE 24:1-12. The travelers on the road to Emmaus entertain Jesus, not knowing that he was the Resurrected Jesus in LUKE 24:13-35. Their reaction is “Were not our hearts burning within us (LUKE 24:32).” The third appearance of Jesus is to the disciples as the travelers relate to them how the Resurrected Jesus comes to them. There are two surprising actions of the disciples in these occurrences. The emotional reaction of the disciples to the Resurrection is surprising. Fear is identified in the women and the disciples. A second reaction of the disciples is the joy of the gift of having their minds opened to the Scriptures.

The reaction of the disciples to the Risen Jesus is: “And while they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered (LUKE 24:41).” This seems to be a strange combination of emotions for one to have. Disbelief, joy, and wonderment are all included at the same moment. The Resurrection of Jesus always produces that kind of response. At a death we are in grief, but as Christians our doubt and disbelief is balanced by our hope. Joy is the emotion that we all strive for. Joy is more than a feeling. Joy is an attitude that overcomes our grief and depression.

The second surprising statement is the gift Jesus brings to his disciples. “Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures (LUKE 24:45).” The gift of God to any of us to open our minds and help us understand the scriptures seeing God’s plan in Christ. The disciples are full of mixed and confused emotions until their minds are opened by God’s Spirit in Christ and then they understand. This is the gift of faith Jesus gives to his disciples and then sends them into the world to proclaim Jesus as the Messiah as outlined in the Hebrew Scriptures or the Protestant Old Testament.

I believe being open-minded means I will listen to new ideas and consider changing my opinion about a difficult issue. Letting Jesus open my mind is different than being open-minded. Jesus’ words are not an opinion but are the truth. The correct meaning of Scripture opens our mind. When Jesus opens the Scripture he is giving them the correct interpretation of the Hebrew



Scriptures. We do not have the exact passages nor what Jesus told them. Much of our New Testament is explaining Old Testament fulfillment of things concerning Jesus as the Messiah. I believe reading Scripture gives me the ability to listen and be open-minded and opens my mind to the truth of God.

Jesus meets the disciples in the time between his resurrection and ascension opening the Old Testament to them to show he was the Messiah or Christ. The New Testament is the witness to the truth of Jesus. We as Christians believe these Gospels, letters, and sermons are Scripture. An opened mind does not mean we are open to ideas contrary to Scripture. The Church has for centuries sought to find the truth using the New Testament’s witness to Jesus. There is no better way to find the truth than by studying the Old Testament and the revelation of God through Jesus in the New Testament.

Mike



Helping Florence Flourish is a network of individuals, congregations, and ministries that work together as one for the city to address the brokenness of our community for the sake of God's mission. Areas of concentration include: restoration of the family, racial bridging, educational partnership, care for the homeless, and prayer. We are better together!

Upcoming Events:

- **National Day of Prayer, May 2**
First Baptist Parking Lot at noon May 2
NewSpring at 7 p.m.
- **Queen of McQueen** celebration and dedication —
4 p.m. Saturday, May 11, 415 N. McQueen St.
- **Kingdom Race Theology Book Club** — May 8 kickoff
- **Pastor Gatherings** — breakfast at 7 a.m. and lunch at noon every third Tuesday of the month.
Next gathering will be at New Ebenezer Baptist.
- **WinShape Camp** — July 1-5 held at First Presbyterian Church.
Sign up for campers: <https://camps.winshape.org/day-camps/florence-sc-2/>
This is a next level summer camp experience where kids can have fun and learn more about Jesus. Registration is open. Multi-sibling discounts are available.
If you have any questions, please contact Dave Lake (803-837-1432) or Alexis Morris (843-813-5202). Sign up for volunteers is forthcoming!
- **The Global Leadership Summit** — August 8 and 9 held at First Presbyterian Church.
Early bird discount for GLS ends May 8.
Use discount code HOSTGLS24 to receive \$50 off.
When you buy your 2024 Global Leadership Summit ticket by May 8, you'll get the Super Early Bird bundle:
Patrick Lencioni's past Summit talks and illustrative summaries.
Lencioni, pioneer of the organizational health movement and author of *The Six Types of Working Genius*, is one of GLS' highly rated faculty members.



McQueen Street home dedication will be held at 4 p.m. Saturday, May 11.





Spring Celebration

Betsy Olsen received the Women in Ministry’s Lifetime Achievement Award during their Spring Celebration on Tuesday, April 30. In revealing the surprise recipient, Betsey Moore gave a beautiful account of Betsy’s work in every field of church ministry — from elder to Sunday School teacher. Rounding out the night, speaker Cookie Cawthon, executive director of Tenacious Grace, captivated the audience with her story behind the founding of her ministry in Florence.



Friendship Circle

Editor’s Note: Monthly we will feature a member of the Friendship Circle, a Women in Ministry group of covenant partners who are homebound.

Betty Bell, who has been a member of First Presbyterian Church for almost 40 years, joined the Friendship Circle this year. She and her husband, Glenn, moved to The Manor last fall. She continues to serve the Lord by calling and checking on others. She enjoys visits from her friends at First Presbyterian.



Women in Ministry Circles

Bread and Fish	May 11	9 a.m.	Room 100
Joyful Hearts	May 14	11:30 a.m.	Off campus
Prayer Warriors	May 14	6:30 p.m.	Lawson-Rain Chapel
Serenity	May 14	3 p.m.	Lawson-Rain Chapel
SonFlowers	May 14	10 a.m.	Lawson-Rain Chapel
Soul Sisters	May 14	noon	Price Classroom
Sunday Salty Sisters	May 19	3 p.m.	Off campus
Women of Grace	May 13	6:30 p.m.	3002 Japonica Lane

Thankful for spring fun, successes

April was a fast and fun month! We had over 150 people attend our amazing Art Show, where the children kicked it off with singing and everyone enjoyed delicious hors d'oeuvres provided by First Presbyterian Church's Fellowship Unit. We raised just over \$2,400. A HUGE thank you goes out to all who helped make this event a success.

The children also enjoyed painting, working in the garden, singing with Mrs. Ann Rodgers, Chapel with Ms. Kaiti, Devotionals with Mrs. Kelly, an impromptu visit from our friend in blue, and so much more. God is doing amazing things at First Presbyterian CDC, and we are looking forward to seeing what all He has planned.





MEET THE CDC TEAM

Mrs. Debbie Peak



ABOUT MRS. DEBBIE

Mrs. Debbie is our amazing detailed-oriented, organized, "find a needle in a haystack," DSS guru Administrative Assistant. She joined the CDC team in 2019. She is a native of Florence and enjoys Crafting (Crochet and Diamond Painting).

What Mrs. Debbie loves most about working at First Presbyterian CDC is "being around people who love the Lord and watching the children learn and grow."

MY FAVORITES

- FOOD: Chinese
- COLOR: Purple and blue
- PLACE: Home
- FLOWER: Carnations
- SEASON: Spring



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
			<p>1 Family Dinner, 5:30 p.m. Handbells Concert, 6:30 p.m.</p> 
<p>5 Confirmation Sunday Church Picnic, 12:15 p.m.</p> 	<p>6</p>	<p>7 Keenagers, noon JFH</p> 	<p>8 Veterans Brunch, 8 a.m. Outreach Team, 12:15 p.m. Children's Ministry Team Youth Group, 5:30 p.m.</p>
<p>12 Children's Sunday</p> 	<p>13 Worship Team, 12:30 p.m. Enabling Team, 5:30 p.m. WiM Women of Grace, 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>14 Sonflowers, 10 a.m. Joyful Hearts, 10 a.m. Sonflowers, 10 a.m. Soul Sisters, noon Serenity, 3 p.m. Recital, 6 p.m. JFH Prayer Warriors, 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>15 Personnel Team, 8:15 House of Hope volunteer luncheon, 11 a.m. Youth: Confirmand Welcome Dinner, 6 p.m.</p>
<p>19 Pentecost Senior Sunday Congregational Meeting, 10:40 a.m. Talent Show, 10 a.m. Youth: Seniors Brunch Youth: Wheeldateens</p> 	<p>20 Boy Scouts, 6:30 p.m. Girl Scouts, 7 p.m. Discipleship Team, 4:30 p.m. WinShape Leadership Meeting, 5:30 p.m. Boy Scouts, 6 p.m.</p>	<p>21 Fellowship Team, 5:30</p>	<p>22 Youth Group, 5:30 p.m.</p>
<p>26 9 a.m. Sunday School 10 a.m. Worship Service</p>	<p>27 Memorial Day Church office and CDC closed for holiday</p> 	<p>28 Session and Diaconate, 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>29 Youth: Lunch at Moe's, 1 p.m.</p>

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

2
Youth: Coffee @ F.E. Pop's

3



9
CDC: Moment for Moms
Youth: Coffee @ F.E. Pop's
Evangelism Team
Meeting, 11:30 a.m.



11
Parking Lot Mission
WiM Bread & Fish, 9 a.m.
Room 100

16
Youth: Coffee @ F.E. Pop's
CDC 4K Graduation,
6 p.m. JFH

17
Piano recital, 5:30 p.m.
JFH
World View and the
Kingdom of God, 6 p.m.

18
World View, 8:30 a.m.
Piano recital, 9:30 a.m.
JFH

23
Youth: Coffee, F.E. Pop's
at 9 a.m.
Piano Recital, 5:30 p.m.
JFH



25

30
Youth: Coffee @ F.E. Pop's
9 a.m.
Youth: Buc-ee's,
10:30 a.m.

31



MAY

WEEKLY

SUNDAYS

- 9 a.m. Contemporary Worship
 - 10 a.m. Sunday School
 - 11 a.m. Traditional Worship
- Note: One worship service begins May 26 at 10 a.m.*

MONDAYS

- Prayer Group, 2:30 p.m.
- Selah Yoga, 5:30 p.m.
- Boy Scouts, 6:30 p.m.
- Men's Bible Study, 7 p.m. (203)

TUESDAYS

- Ladies' Ensemble, 1:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAYS

- Small Group Bible Study, 10 a.m.
- Youth Group, 5:30 p.m.
- Praise Team Rehearsal, 5:45 p.m.
- Chancel Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 p.m.

THURSDAYS

- Men's Bible Study, 7 a.m.
- Youth Coffee, 7 a.m.
- Bible Study, Room 202

Sympathy

Mark Davis, loss of his mother
Vicki Hebert and Nancy Poston, loss of their mother
Family and friends of Mary Louise McIntyre

Extended Care

Lowman Home
Mac King

The Manor
Joyce Floyd
Julie Hughes
Marie Jordan
Maria Whitehead

Presbyterian Community
Clariann Kellam

Memorial

Mary Louise McIntyre

Expectant Families

Amy and John Lewis
Brittany and Weber Mimms
Allyson and J.B. Pittman

Military

Andrew Stewart, deployed

Households

FLOCK 1: Casey and Jason Coker, Collins and Cannon
FLOCK 2: Sloan and Chris Evans, Reames and George
FLOCK 3: Karen and Brandon Blankenship, Ellie
FLOCK 4: Renda and Bill Lyle
FLOCK 5: Beverly and Mark Davis
FLOCK 6: Melba and Bob Whitesides
FLOCK 7: Cathy Lee, Margaret and RJ
FLOCK 8: Hal and Libby Fuller, Brandon, Vica

Flowers in the Sanctuary

May 5: Communion
May 12: Genia Tyson
May 19: Elizabeth & Joe McLean
May 26: Pam & Mike Morgan

Sick & Recovering

Aubrey Crawford
Gwen DuRant
Barbara Maffett
Todd Moseley

Elders

Rob Hall
Johnny Stoupenos

Deacons

Frances Rogers
Ed Sprenger

Missions

Tenacious Grace
Carol Crom

Women in Ministry

Sandra Davidson
Nancy Thompson

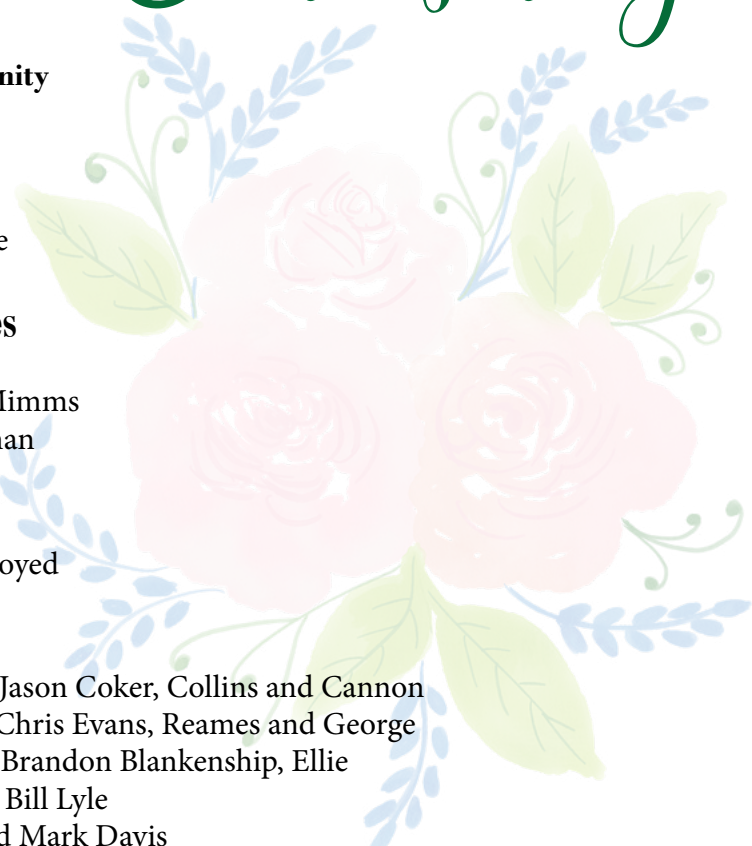
Teachers

Carey Andrews
Munford Scott

Staff

Kimberly Brauss
Mike Fleenor

Lord, Hear
Our Prayer



Do you have a friend or relative you would like to honor? Sign up to place memorial flowers in the Sanctuary. Please contact Genia Tyson (genia_tyson@hotmail.com or 843-992-8904). Please leave your name, number, and date you wish to reserve.

May BIRTHDAYS

MAY 1

Wanda Hill

MAY 2Suzanne Cain
Amy Dozier**MAY 3**Amanda Bostwick
Sarah Elizabeth Rainwater**MAY 4**Noha Cotran
Melanie DuBose
Cissy Hicks
Mya-Rose Losah
Gwen Misurella**MAY 5**Ann Rodgers Chandler
Patti Vassy**MAY 6**Ellen Pearson
Scarlett Sims**MAY 7**

Barbara Meeks

MAY 8Mac Burch
Carolyn Pearce
Katie Rockhill
Peete Smiley**MAY 9**Camp Blanton
Jennifer Foxworth
Christi Gasque
Anne Hanna
Hayes Hofler
Liam Hughes**MAY 10**Libby Fuller
Lee Gandy
Ella Warner
Lilly Williams**MAY 11**Caroline Babb
Carter Brand
Kim Brauss
Melaine Campbell
Carol Duncan
Barbara Montgomery**MAY 12**

Robin Halus

MAY 14Breck Granger
Thomas Rogers**MAY 15**Stephanie Spivey
Leroy Williams**MAY 16**Julian Fowler
John Hail
Lizzie Hanna**MAY 17**Emma Blanton
Allison Johnson**MAY 19**Jack Hofler
Meredith Dozier**MAY 21**Sasha Hall
Donald Heath
Andy Jeffords**MAY 22**Penn Packard
Mary Lynn van Witzenburg**MAY 23**

Harland Wyatt

MAY 24Carol Banner
Kelly Molnar**MAY 25**Ruth Bertram
Hank Moree
Lynn Porter
Sonny Slaughter
Austin Tyler**MAY 26**Jim Frederick
Ben Green
Jim Poston
Zip Vassy**MAY 27**

Madison Sprenger

MAY 28Graham Emerson
Masters Emerson
Beverly Everton**MAY 30**Tomi Jean Cleveland
Henry Fast
Danielle Guinn
Hunter Scott**MAY 31**Erin Lewis
Emily Reed



Church News

Bible Drill 'Boot Camp' for Adults

Join us and gain a better understanding of the books of the Bible, Key Passages, and memory verses. We will meet on Wednesday nights from 5 to 6:30 p.m. The first night is May 29, then June 5, 12, 26. Please let Ellen Wilhoit, r4wilhoit@aol.com, or Alexis Morris, nnnminusone@gmail.com, know you plan on attending.



Keenagers to end season on a musical note

The last meeting until fall is noon Tuesday, May 7, in the Jenkins Fellowship Hall. Program will be a musical presentation by Shaw and Robin Thompson. Meal will be roast pork, sweet potato casserole, mixed vegetables, rice with gravy, rolls, and dessert prepared by Fred Kunz. Cost for lunch is \$6. Thank you to everyone who helped this year with decorations, food, and programs.

Congregational meeting to be held

A congregational meeting will be held at 10:40 a.m. Sunday, May 19, in the sanctuary for the purpose of electing four Covenant Partners to serve on the Officer Nominating Committee (ONC). Members of the ONC will decide who might be the Lord's persons for the respective roles of deacon and elder. They then prayerfully ask these people to consider serving and bring that slate for the Congregation to affirm. Prior to nominating a Covenant Partner, please confirm his/her willingness to serve on the ONC. Please review ECO Polity regarding the roles of Deacons and Elders. Here are the roles for each as described in our Constitution:

2.02 Elders are given authority and responsibility, along with pastors, to oversee the spiritual health of the congregation as well as the congregation's faithfulness to God's mission. Elders may also be asked to preach and teach. Elders shall be elected by the congregation.

2.03 The Ministry of Deacons Ordinarily, the biblical office of deacon shall be utilized by the congregation. Deacons lead ministries that nurture fellowship and caregiving within and beyond the congregation. Deacons may also be asked to preach and teach. The congregation shall determine the manner in which they are selected for service. The session shall oversee and direct the ministry of the deacons.



"AS WATER REFLECTS
THE FACE, SO ONE'S LIFE
REFLECTS THE HEART."
PROVERBS 27:19

WOMEN'S RETREAT

SATURDAY, JUNE 1

BENEVENTUM PLANTATION

GEORGETOWN, SC

Retreat will include:

- 3 Bible teaching sessions by Beth Behling
- Small group discussions
- Individual prayer time
- Morning coffee/sweets, lunch, & dinner
- Free time mid-day for exploring, relaxing, or boating

Cost: \$50

Register by May 24:

<https://bit.ly/4aj08SP>



NOTE: For the sanctity, continuity, and intimacy of this experience, it is required participants attend the whole day.

Children's Ministry Corner



Dear Church Family,

If I asked you, is Children's Ministry important? What would you say?

My answer is yes, absolutely, 100%, Children's Ministry is extremely important if not one of the most important!

I say this because I am a firm believer in Proverbs 22:6, especially since I was a Proverbs 22:6 kid!

"Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (ESV)

"Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old, they will not turn from it." (NIV)

You see, there was a season in my life when I became a "know-it-all" teenager, which lasted through my mid-20s. It was a time when I decided I didn't need the church; I didn't need God. Peer pressure influenced my decisions; worldly things grabbed my attention. There were some dark times for me. Yet, during those times, God was there pulling on my heartstrings.

Over the past 20 plus years I have reflected over this time in my life. I believe with my whole heart the reason I could feel God's presence was because I was raised in the church. I know without a doubt, seeds were planted, and took root. I also know, as a child, I felt God's presence through the love that was poured into me from Sunday School teachers, youth advisors, my pastor, church members, the youth group and so many more. I saw, heard, and experienced how the love of Jesus looked, sounded, and behaved. Thankfully, the day came when I realized what I was seeking in the world, was actually what I had experienced as a child — a relationship with Jesus and His people. He was the only one who could fill the void and emptiness in my life.

Today, children are faced with so much more than I faced as a child and teenager. And sadly, they are faced with it at a much younger age. The more I see, the more I know children need to "taste and see that the Lord is good" Psalm 34:8. They need to be trained up in the way they should go, so when they become a "know-it-all," seeds have been planted, the love and presence of God has been felt, and when they are old they will not depart from it.

I know from experience the importance of Children's Ministry. If it weren't for the Children's Ministry I was a part of growing up, I am not sure where I would be today. It certainly made a difference in my life, and I hope and pray we are making a difference in the lives of the children who walk through the doors at FPC.

Much love,

Kelly

Dear Church Family,

What an amazing weekend we had at Camp Longridge for our Confirmation Retreat! I'm so grateful to have shared this experience with 19 confirmands, their mentors, and Kelly. We dove into a study on the Apostles Creed, explored personal faith stories in the Bible, and watched as the confirmands crafted their statements of faith.

We laughed a lot, tackled the rock climbing wall, played Gaga ball, made bracelets, and roasted s'mores by the campfire. Every moment was filled with fun and bonding.

Thanks so much for all your prayers and support. They really made a difference and helped make our retreat a huge success.

It's a blessing to be part of a church that's so supportive of growing our kids in faith. Let's keep our confirmands in our prayers as they continue on their faith journey. Thanks again for being such an incredible church family.

In Christ's love,

Kaiti



Registration Open: Journey to Hometown Nazareth

Join us for Vacation Bible School as we embark on a journey to Hometown Nazareth, where Jesus spent his childhood! Through the perspective of his mother, Mary, we'll delve into stories from Jesus' early years to young adulthood. Get ready to experience firsthand the sights, sounds, textures, and flavors of what life might have been like in Jesus' Hometown.

Online Registration is OPEN! Visit <https://www.myvbs.org/florencefirstVBS>. Register here to volunteer as well! Registration closes May 31.

Tents Needed for VBS

Plans are underway, and we need your help. We need 10 to 12 pop-up/tailgating tents for VBS. These tents will help us transform the Christian Life Center into Nazareth. If you have a tent we can use this summer, would you please contact Kaiti Bryant, kbryant@florencefirst.org, or Laura Anne Hofler, lahofler@gmail.com.

Children's Sunday

Children's Sunday

May 12

9 and 11 a.m. Worship Services

On Mother's Day, Sunday, May 12, our children will have an opportunity to lead worship from beginning to end.

The children will greet, usher, sing, pray, and more. We would like to encourage children to stay in worship because the children will be leading. Therefore, there will be no Children in Worship next Sunday; however, nurseries will be available. We can't wait to worship with you!



Summertime, Summertime, Sum, Sum, Summertime

It's time to make plans for the summer. To help you plan accordingly, please see the below summer schedule. More details will be available soon. Contact Kaiti Bryant with questions or for more information.

Treasured Tuesdays (Completed 3K – 5K)

June 4	Riverbanks Zoo, Columbia
June 11	On Campus
June 18	Vacation Bible School
June 25	On Campus
July 2	WinShape Camps
July 9	EdVenture, Columbia
July 16	On Campus
July 23	Neptune Island, Hartsville

Wonderful Wednesdays (Completed 1st – 2nd)

June 5	Neptune Island, Hartsville
June 12	On Campus
June 19	Vacation Bible School
June 26	On Campus
July 3	WinShape Camp
July 10	Aquarium, Myrtle Beach
July 17	On Campus
July 24	Pool Party



Thundering Thursdays (Completed 3rd – 5th Grade)

June 6	Wonder Works Myrtle Beach
June 13	On Campus
June 20	Vacation Bible School
June 27	On Campus
July 4	WinShape Camps
July 11	Frankie's Fun Park
July 18	On Campus
July 25	Pool Party

Confirmation Banquet



Congratulations to our Confirmands, mentors, and leaders who completed a full season of catechism classes, teaching, learning and understanding of their faith. The work culminated in the Confirmation Banquet, complete with lighting candles in which Pastor Stuart said, "You are the light of the world." The Confirmands will be recognized during worship service Sunday, May 5.

Children in Worship Leader, Volunteer Schedule

Children's Church for children 3K-5K meets in the Children's Chapel for *Children in Worship*. This program, held after the Message for Young Disciples, is designed to teach children about worship and allow children to experience Bible stories while learning in their own special worship center.

Date	Time	Teacher	Assistant/Helper(s)
May 5	9 a.m.	Charissa Canfield	Allyson Pittman and Carson Jeffords
	11 a.m.	Kaiti Bryant	Kelly Hickey and Reese McClaurin
May 19	9 a.m.	Suzzanne Cain	Sloan Evans and Lane Dowdell
	11 a.m.	Kelly Hickey	Reese McClaurin
May 26	10 a.m.	Kaiti Bryant	Martha Nance and Gracie Hickey

CONFIRMATION FAITH JOURNEY



David Achegenui &
Mike Lavespere



John Josphe
Alexander and
Rob Hall



Sims Bratton
and Paul Davis



Bruce Burch
and Jim Dameron



Dohnia Elizabeth
Galloway and
Kathryn Scott



Lane Dowdell
Tabatha Davis



Meredith Dozier
Laura Marechal



Kate Genoble
Amy Williams



Richard Genoble
Billy McBride



Lizzie Hanna
Caroline Genoble



Carson Jeffords
Karen McBride



Benjamin Lewis
Richie Wilhoit



Collins McBride
Ellen Wilhoit



Reese McLaurin
Ashley Bratton



Anna Packard
Jan Green



Katie Rockhill
Laura Anne Hofler



Harper Suggs
Charissa Canfield



McCall Swink
Robert Moore



John Wyatt Temple
Stuart Snow



James Whitehead
Robert Moore

Enjoying springtime

April was such a fun month! The youth enjoyed the most beautiful weather day at Carowinds, participated in a Dodgeball tournament, wrapped up our small group study, met up for our first Wheeldateens ride, and just enjoyed spending time together.

We are gearing up for another fun and busy summer. The spots for Fun in the Sun and The Great Escape are filling up. Please let Taiter know if you would like to go or for more information.

There will be no youth Sunday school this summer. We will meet once or twice a month for lunch. All the dates and locations will be on the Summer calendar that parents either received at our parent meeting or in the mail.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday Night Youth Group (May 1, 8, & 22)
5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Coffee at F.E. Pops (May 2, 9, and 16) 7 – 8 a.m. /
(May 23 and 30) 9 a.m. – until

Sunday School (May 5, 12, 19 & 26) 10 – 10:50 a.m.
Light breakfast served.

Confirmand Welcome Dinner (May 15) 6-7:30 p.m.
Join us as we welcome the newest members of the youth group. We will have dinner, play games, and enjoy a fun time of fellowship.

Graduation Sunday (May 19) 11 a.m. Church Service
Please join us as we celebrate our graduating seniors.

Wheeldateens! (May 19) 5 – 7 p.m.
Come ride bikes with us! Snacks & water provided.

Lunch at Moe's (May 29) 1 p.m.
Youth will need to bring money for their meal. Bring a friend!

Brunch at Buc-ee's (May 30) 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
We will meet at the church and travel to Buc-ee's to grab brunch. Youth will need to bring \$15-\$20 for their meal. Bring a friend!



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www.florencefirst.org

CHURCH STAFF

Interim Transitional Pastor
Director of Music/Organist
Praise Team Leader
Music Assistant
Congregational Care Assistant
Director of Youth Ministry
Director of Children's Ministries
Program Director of Children's Ministry
CDC Assistant Director/Church Nursery Coordinator
Church Administrator
Financial Assistant
Communications Assistant
Ministry Assistant
Lead Custodian
Housekeeping
Custodian

Dr. Stuart Bond
Mrs. Ann Rodgers Chandler
Mr. Vic Rockhill
Ms. Betsy Johnson
Rev. Mike Fleenor
Ms. Christina "Taiter" Garrett
Mrs. Kelly Hickey
Ms. Kaiti Bryant
Mrs. Shurrie Marks
Rev. Don Hebert
Mrs. Gwen DuRant
Ms. Kimberly Brauss
Mrs. Emily Reed
Mr. Leroy Williams
Ms. Wanda LaSane
Mr. Rayshon Woodard

Spring Handbell Concert



Congratulations to our talented Chancel Handbell Choir, director, instrumentalists, and narrator on the beautiful Spring Concert that was held May 1. Original compositions as well as hymn and song arrangements filled the Sanctuary with the joy of springtime. Please visit florencefirst.org/handbells for a multimedia video from the night of the concert as well as the full concert.