



First Presbyterian Church
of Garner

April
2026

The Spire

Letter from the Pastor

Dear Church,

Like many of you, I am sure, the presence of war in our world has stirred countless emotions: Concern for innocents in harm's way (citizens and soldiers); grief at the violence and death always left in war's wake; anger that we humans continue to find it easier to make war than peace.

These feelings are especially heightened because of the time of the year—Easter is when the Christian Church proclaims that the ways of violence and death, the wars of empire and greed, are nothing when compared to the salvation of God known in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. On the cross, God in fact says "No!" to all our destructive ways and, in the empty tomb, God says "Yes!!" to the possibility of new beginnings based on equity, dignity, and care for all creation and its peoples.

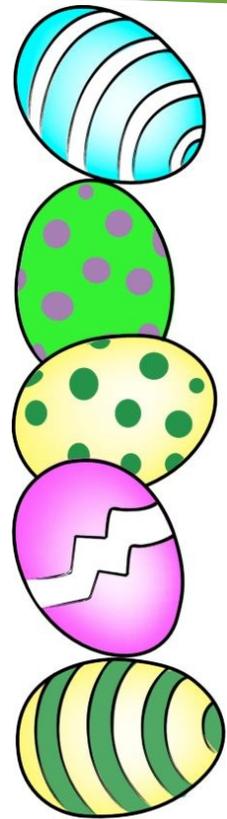
That good news though, is not to be confined just to one morning each year. It's also vitally important for us to continue celebrating the good news of "Easter" even when the promise of resurrection is not yet fully seen or known. It is our call to continue to turn away from the temptation we resisted in Lent and to keep turning towards the love of Christ.

Our worship this month will help us do just that as we explore more fully the Christian practice of "Repentance." We'll learn about the Hebrew word for repentance and how it means "turn around"; we'll learn about the Greek word for repentance, too, and how it calls us to change our mind and heart in fundamental ways. In the process, I believe we will begin to associate this practice not with some of the more extreme depictions of faith (like the guy on the street corner with a bull horn saying the end is near), but with a mindset that can help us continue to welcome, care for, and inspire all God's people to make a difference in a world that surely needs such blessings.

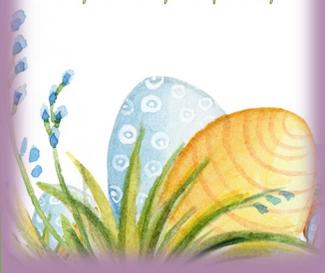
May it be so as we gather, worship, study, and serve this month together!

The Lord Bless and Keep You,

Rev. Ben



HAPPY
EASTER
to you and your family



Worship News

Here are the scriptures and hymns for this Month's worship service:



Holy Week Services



April 2nd, 7:00pm Maundy Thursday Service and Holy Communion

Texts: Luke 22:1-17

Hymns: All Glory Laud and Honor, O Sacred Head Now Wounded, Were You There

April 3rd 7:00pm Good Friday Service at Lord of Life Lutheran

This service of scripture, song, and reflection takes us through the "Way of the Cross." As we confront again Jesus' death and human complicity, we also wait in hope for the new life God's love brings to us. Join us for this combined service with our friends and neighbors at Lord of Life Lutheran

Church:

2100 Buffalo Rd,
Garner, NC, 27529

April 5th, Easter Sunday! Holy Communion

Memorial Garden Prayer Service 9:00am-9:30am (Light refreshments to follow)

Sanctuary Service 11:00am

Texts: Isaiah 25:6-9, Luke 24:1-12

Hymns: Jesus Christ Is Risen Today, In the Garden, Lift High the Cross

Bring flowers for the flowered cross at either or both services. Flowers can be placed when you first arrive or during the first hymn at the 11am service

Turning From and Turning To: A Worship Series on Repentance

April 12: From Fear to Hope

Texts: Matthew 3:1-12, Acts 26:12-18

Hymns: Let All Things Now Living, My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less,
Christ Has Rosen While Earth Slumbers

April 19: From Peacekeeping to Peacemaking, Earth Care Sunday

Text: Isaiah 2:1-4, Matthew 5:9

Hymns: Morning Has Broken, This Is My Song, The Strife is O'er

April 26: From Over/Under to Beside

Texts: Ephesians 5:1-2, 21-21-30, John 15:1-5, 12-15

Hymns: Alleluia, Alleluia, Give Thanks, Abide With Me, You Servants of God, Your Master Proclaim

Masks are optional but welcome at any gathering.
You can also attend online via Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/firstpresbyterianchurchofgarner>

Earth Care Corner

Earth Day 2026

The theme for Earth Day 2026 is **Our Power, Our Planet**. Its application reflects current global economic, environmental, and civic conditions. In 2026, **Our Power, Our Planet**, refers to the role of people and communities worldwide in sustaining environmental protections that affect the cost of living, public health, infrastructure reliability, and long-term stability. Environmental conditions influence food systems, water availability, energy access, disaster risk, and economic resilience across all regions. Community participation has historically shaped these outcomes across countries and political systems

Since the first Earth Day in 1970, civic actions have helped establish and strengthen environmental institutions, laws, and international norms. These measures have been associated with reductions in pollution-related illness, improved access to clean water, and long-term public health and economic benefits in many parts of the world. Earth Day 2026 calls on communities worldwide to take action during Earth Week to support clean air, clean water, clean energy, protected natural resources, and climate change.

Environmental protections are facing pressure worldwide due to economic stress, conflict, climate impacts, and shifting political priorities. In many countries, regulatory frameworks governing air quality, water safety, land use, and energy systems are under review or revision. Environmental policies influence costs borne by households, local governments, and national economies. Changes to these policies affect utility prices, agricultural productivity, insurance availability, disaster recovery expenditures, and public health systems. Across regions, public participation has influenced standards, enforcement, and local implementation where impacts are felt most directly.

Community-based initiatives such as decentralized renewable energy, local waste reduction programs, ecosystem restoration, and water stewardship have been associated with improved service reliability, reduced exposure to environmental hazards, and more predictable costs. Environmental systems are globally interconnected. Air pollution crosses borders. Water systems span regions. Food production and supply chains depend on shared ecosystems. Infrastructure disruptions in one location can affect markets, trade, and livelihoods elsewhere.

Environmental protections and collective action are measured by improvements in public health, ecosystem stability, and economic resilience across many regions. Earth Day's global legacy

demonstrates people's capacity to work together across borders to protect shared resources and reduce risk. Participation in Earth Day 2026 continues this pattern by supporting systems that manage costs, reduce environmental risk, and strengthen communities worldwide. Earth Day's enduring legacy is the power of people rising together.

"Here is your country.
Cherish these natural wonders, cherish the natural resources, cherish the history and romance as a sacred heritage, for your children and your children's children. Do not let selfish men or greedy interests skin your country of its beauty, its riches or its romance."
~ Theodore Roosevelt



Congregational Care

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

1ST KATHY BLUE & SKYLAR LASKIN

5TH JUDY PITTMAN

7TH MARY JO ATKINSON, WILLIAM PITTMAN, & KATHY BASS

9TH KENNETH SUMMERVILLE

12TH MARY SHULBY

13TH ANGELA MCGEE

14TH KAREN HUBBARD

22ND TRISH HOLMES & PAYTON MCGEE

23RD TIM MILEY

24TH JEREMIAH SNAPP

25TH CHRISTY TURPIN, JOHNNY WATKINS, & ABE SNAPP

26TH RUBY MILLER-OUSLEY

27TH TOM WALDROP

29TH JOE JACKSON

My church family,
Thank you all so much for the prayers for a while for Tommy, and now prayers and cards for the loss of my brother. We had a great visitation and funeral with a good crowd. And I love my plant, the church sent us. God Bless all and continue blessing for our sick!

Love, Sandra

Thanks Be To God

Each month, we share thanks for the ways God is working in, through, and among us. This month, we offer gratitude for:

- † **Presbyterian Women** for providing lunch for our Lenten Bible Study on March 1
- † **Youth and Children** who participated in the Habitat for Humanity Baffle Project on March 8
- † **Mission Ministry** for leading us in support of Able to Serve and Family Promise during this month—and for all those in the congregation who contributed items, dollars, and meals!
- † **Deacons, led by the Wellness Activities Team**, for our Easter Egg Hunt on March 28
- † **ALL Worship volunteers** (liturgists, the leaders of our "Young At Heart" messages, our music leaders, and AV operators), Bible Study Leaders, fellowship coordinators, and the many anonymous servants who show and share God's blessings to us.
- † **ALL who serve in humble, unseen, ongoing ways.** Your contributions mean so much to so many!

Prayer: God of generous provision, make us truly thankful for all the blessings you have given. Especially hear our gratitude for our church and for the opportunity to grow in friendship and service as disciples of Jesus Christ. In his name, we pray, Amen.

Have someone you think needs a specific thank you?

Please call or email Rev Acton at pastor@firstpresbyterianchurchgarner.com to share!

Congregational Care Continued

Prayer List

Members: Georgia Morrison, Edith Conyers, John Watkins, Anne Hopkins, Rose Gurkin, Carl Miller, Rosemary Carmichael, JB Slaughter (MP in Germany), Jean Smith, Ruby Miller-Ousley, Barbara Turpin, Andy Cook, Bruce and Gloria Oelke, Trish and Dave Holmes, Audrey Oelke, Judy Hudson, Peggy Wilkins, Mary Jo Atkinson, Sandy Lee, Jeff Holland, Helen Losada, Tonya Boykin, Martha Long, Bettie Hamilton, Dee Foster

Members' Families: Michael Register (Losada's grandson), Jim Cole (Trish Holmes), Aleena Conner (Jeanne Conner), Wes Smith (Sandy Lee's Brother-in-law), Charlie Merritt (Emily Lee's cousin), Candice Davis (Cheryle Prater), Linda Register (Cheryle Prater), Pat Cook (Andy Cook), Pat Ballew (Reggie Foster), Vio Tapu (Regina Alexander), Sandra Wilkins Luther (Peggy Wilkins' sister-in-law), Cheryl Weber (Jeanne Conner's sister), Jonah Ekoule (Komivi Ekoule's father), Rebekah Brewer (Trish and David Holmes' daughter), Chris Chao (Jeanne Conner), Bob Dickerson (Amy Conner's father), Betty Mitchell (Harold Bagwell's sister), Lynn Hobby (Ann Bagwell's sister-in-law), Donna Smith (Sandy Lee), Eric Lee (David Pease's son-in-law), Richard Lee (Bill Lee's brother), Todd Lee (Sandy Lee), Lennon Fisher (Parks & Lorrie Icenhour's niece), Reagan Bagwell (Ann Bagwell's grandson), Lucy Noles (Nancy Waldrop's sister-in-law), Martha Morgan (Emily Lee's sister), Kristin Shulby (Mary Minor Shulby), Barbara Wilkins (Linda Monroe's sister), Keeley Ray (Cheryle Prater's niece), Gary Foust (Regina Ekoule), Kristin, Brooklyn Hunt (Mary Minor Shulby), Mike Carmichael (Rosemary Carmichael's son), Kaye Ratliff (Reggie Foster's cousin), David Taylor (Carrie Dixon-Cash's uncle), Al Knabe (Neal Knabe's father), Kimberly Collins (Bonnie Bowling's niece), Paul vanDoornewaald (Wanda van-Doornewaald), Nancy Light (Carrie Dixon-Cash)

Members' Friends: Bruce and Myra McNellie (Jeanne Conner), The Barry's (Bill and Emily Lee), Ann Myhre (Peggy Wilkins), Jerry Godwin (Connie Boykin), Betty Peterson (Deb Wallace), Julie Prevoznik (Reggie & Dee Foster), Kenneth Ennis (Donna Gould), Pete & Pam Harris (Emily Lee), Joyce Blackwood, John Ryan & family (The Lee family), Nancy Whalen (Kathy Blue), Whitney Wolfgang (The Oriel family), Kathy Schumacher (Nancy Waldrop), Bruce Carper (David Pease), Beth Catlette (Donna Gould), Nikki Little (Kian Miley), Richard Guy (Kevin Wallace), Barbara Porter (Regina Alexander), Marvin and Suzi Perkins, Steve and Debbie Woliki, Cynthia Sanders (Ruby Miller-Ousley), Edward Pistola (Komivi Ekoule), Laura Earp (Joe and Cheryle Prater), Jerry Hart (Bruce & Gloria Oelke), Judy Huddleston (Bruce & Gloria Oelke), Jim Johnson (Sandy Lee), Caitlyn Ellison (Kathy Henderson), Dodson Tippetette (Kathy Blue)

For the World: Neighbors near and far affected by storms, flooding, and fire; War and loss of innocent life in Israel and Gaza; Victims of gun violence across our nation; War in Ukraine; refugees; the food-insecure and economically vulnerable and all affected by the rise of food costs; the mentally, physically, and spiritually overwhelmed; renewal for creation, the ill, dying, and grieving

Please contact the church office if anyone should be added or removed from the prayer list

Reg and I want to say "thank you" to so many who have sent their love, prayers, and get-well wishes our way. It means so much to have your support! We will be forever grateful for your caring and prayers. ~ Dee

Thank you all for the cards, calls, visits, food and especially the prayers during Barbra's recovery. It has meant more than you know. We are truly blessed to be able to call you our church family.
~The Turpins

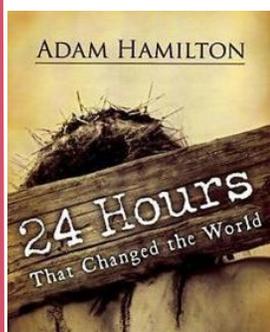


Faith Formation

Ida Joy Bible Study

Please join us on April 14th at 10am in the Ogburn classroom when we will be studying Martha and her impact on Christianity and especially to women even today. We hope you will join us as we continue this wonderful, insightful journey of the women of the Bible and how we are still influenced by their story today! (All ages are welcome) The women truly have a beautiful tapestry to share and it is exciting to see how we can apply this to our everyday walk with God. Ida Joy meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 10am in the Ogburn classroom. It is a wonderful time spent together as Christian women as we discover these women and ourselves! All you have to do is sit back and listen as Regina Alexander leads you in this very special study!

Wednesday Night Bible Study



On February 25, the Wednesday Night Bible Study group will begin our Lenten Study of 24 Hours That Changed the World, by Adam Hamilton. No single event in human history has received more attention than the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth. Hamilton retraces the day that changed human history in this heartbreaking and inspiring book. Plan to join us via Zoom each Wednesday at 7:30pm for a mid-week boost that includes lively discussion and much-needed fellowship. For more information, please contact Karen Lovering or Mike Koenig.

Thursday Morning Bible Study

As April begins, the study will be on a 2-week Spring Break! We will resume on April 9 at 10:00am in the Ogburn room. We will begin a new study on Exodus!

Adult Sunday School

The Adult Sunday School class begins the Spring edition of THE PRESENT WORD Bible Study on March 1. The spring quarter is an intriguing study of social issues that faithful Christians confronted in the early 1900s and gives an opportunity to consider how the church brings Christ to bear on these issues in our day and time. Monthly discussions include "Fulfilling Our Obligations to Neighbors", "Fulfilling Our Obligations to Family and Community", and "Fulfilling Our Obligations to God and Society". Our Adult Sunday School class meets every Sunday morning at 9:45am for enriching discussions and fellowship. Don't miss out on this opportunity to grow in faith together! For more information, please contact Karen Lovering or Mike Koenig.



Announcements



April Flowers

5th Easter Flowers

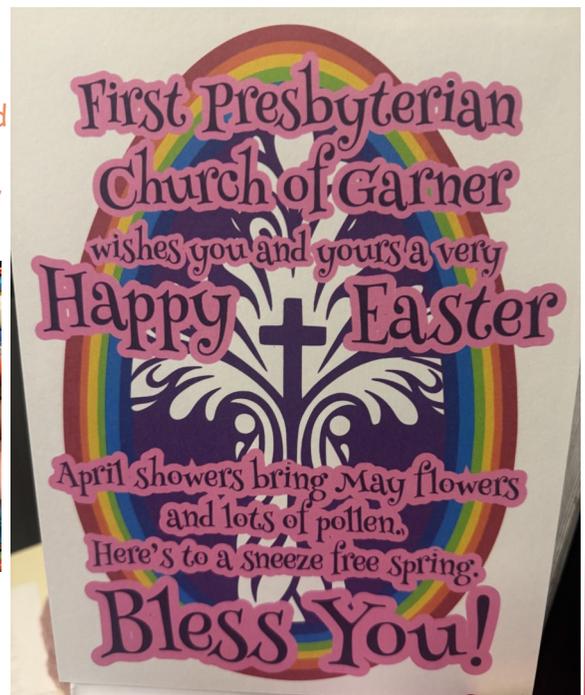
12th The flowers are given to the glory of God by Billy Knabe

19th The flowers are given to the glory of God by Lucy Paradies
in loving memory of Walt.

26th The flowers are given to the glory of God by Amy & Erik Conner
in honor of their anniversary.

Shout Out

Shout Out to Kathy Bass, who donated these colorful handmade tissue holders. Mission Committee was able to take these to the residents of Cadence At Garner Assisted Living Facility to wish them a Happy Easter on behalf of all of us at FPCoG. Thank you Kathy for helping the community prepare for the Season of Sneezin'



Presbyterian Women

Special thank you to Lucy Whipple, Special Giving/Spiritual Nurture Committee for hosting the Lenton Bible Study held on Sunday March 1st after church. There were 18 attendees. Another big THANK YOU to Vice-Moderator Cheryle Prater for "manning the ship" while Moderator Jane Knabe has been out-of-state for 4 weeks.

The Nominations have been submitted, and the honorees are being selected for Presbyterian Women 2026 Honorary Life Member and Men of the Church 2026 Man of the Year. The announcement of the honorees will be made during our **VIP Luncheon - Celebration Potluck on Sunday, May 17th after church**. The meat entrée will be provided jointly by the Men of the Church & Presbyterian Women. Please bring a side or dessert. There will be a "birthday cake" provided as part of the Presbyterian Women Birthday activities.

Upcoming FPCoG Presbyterian Women Meetings

April 18th: Spring Fling - Lillie Circle Fundraiser for Timber Drive Elementary. Donations are being collected/stored in the back of the Fellowship Hall.

May 17th: VIP Luncheon - Celebration Potluck - Honoring Presbyterian Women 2026 Honorary Life Member and Men of the Church 2026 Man of the Year. We will be collecting the Presbyterian Women Birthday Gift Offering for the Presbytery at this event.

Presbyterian Women of New Hope Presbytery Upcoming Events

Presbyterian Women of New Hope Presbytery Spring Retreat, **April 18, 2026** at First Presbyterian Church of Kinston.

Lillie Circle Welcomes you!

SPRING FLING RAFFLE is almost here! There's still time to donate items. Proceeds will benefit food insecurities for children. Please join us on Saturday, April 18, for fun and fellowship.

Our April 13 meeting will be held at the home of Bettie Hamilton at 7pm. We always look forward to our gathering at Bettie's, but especially this year, we are thankful that she is able for us to come. Bettie is certainly an inspiration and incentive for us to "keep on keeping on"!

If you need additional information about Lillie Circle, please contact Sibyl Pedziwiatr at 919-539-0874 or sunnydays4ever87@gmail.com.

Prayer Shawls

The Prayer Shawl Ministry gave its first shawl in December 2007. Since then, many hands have come together to knit and crochet shawls. Heart-felt thanks are expressed to those who make the shawls and help send warm wishes and prayers to those who receive them.

On March 29, a prayer shawl was given to Kimberly Collins, niece of Bonnie Bowling. Kimberly has a multitude of health concerns and is now on a feeding tube. A shawl was also given to William Lee. William suffered a stroke and after surgery, is doing well. A prayer cross was given to Sandra Hodge for the loss of her brother, Tommy Davis. A prayer cross was given to Ann Marie Jones, wife of Bill Rashleigh. Ann Marie suffered an incident at work that resulted in a head injury.



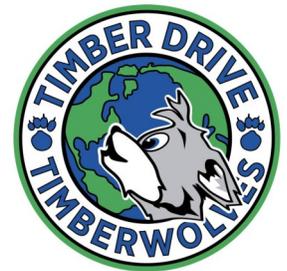
Presbyterian Women Continued

Spring Fling Raffle

The Lillie Circle is hosting a "SPRING FLING RAFFLE" on Saturday, April 18th in the church fellowship hall. We plan to host a raffle to raise money for food insecurities for children - with proceeds split between Garner Back-Pack Buddies and Timber Drive Elementary. The event will begin at 2:00 for participants to buy tickets, view the items in the raffle and put tickets in the cups in front of the desired items. At 3:00, the raffle will begin and a number will be drawn for the winner of each item and the fun begins. The event will end when the last item is raffled off. We are asking the congregation to do some "Spring Cleaning" and donate gently used or new items to the raffle. It will be an afternoon of fun with all of us trying to outbid each other for cool treasures. There will be yummy food, and lots of fun and fellowship. We are looking for items that you are ready to part with that someone else may find a treasure. Original art and baskets of goodies are also welcome. So, **SAVE THE DATE** and help our church and community and have fun at the same time. Donations will be collected beginning March 22nd. Items to donate can be placed in the back of the fellowship hall. The Lillie Circle thanks you in advance for your donations. For questions contact Donna Gould, Deb Wallace or Sibyl Pedziwiatr.



**BACKPACK
BUDDIES**



Friendship Circle

The next Friendship Circle meeting will be on April 12th after church. We moved the meeting date to April 12th due to Easter Sunday being on the same day as our regular meeting time. Please watch for emails and bulletin announcements about the April 12th meeting because we are looking to have a lunch social/meeting at a local restaurant.

Quick reminder that the circle will be providing the pizza & salad meals for Family Promise on Friday April 3rd.

For anyone interested in joining the Friendship Circle and attending our meetings, please contact the Friendship Circle Chair Deb McHenry at darmc@att.net or Vice Chair Jane Knabe at jrknabe66@rdgmail.com or 919.389.0462 (cell).



Mission Ministries

Habitat for Humanity Baffle Project

On March 8, Habitat for Humanity of Wake County invited children and youth from across the Triangle to Trinity Baptist Church in Raleigh. The reason for this event? To paint baffles, of course!

A baffle is any sort of barrier that helps prevent air leaks. Habitat for Humanity uses pieces of specialty cut cardboard as baffles that are then placed in the attic of each home they build to help with insulation. Before doing so, Habitat seeks to have words and pictures of encouragement drawn on the baffles so that the soon-to-be homeowners will feel the community's blessings surrounding them in their new home.

First Presbyterian sent a small but mighty group, led by Kim Brown and Rev. Acton. We are also joined by youth from Oakland Presbyterian in Clayton; the youth group our middle and high schoolers have been participating in since the fall. God blessed each participant with the gift of creativity, determination, and the spirit of service!



"It may take place in a foreign land or it may take place in your backyard, but I believe that we were each created to change the world for someone. To serve someone. To love someone the way Christ first loved us, to spread His light. This is the dream, and it is possible."

~Katie Davis, *Kisses from Katie*



Mission Ministries Continued

Able To Serve

FPCoG's Missions Team thanks all who purchased a BBQ Angies/ Able to Serve Fundraiser chicken dinner or made a monetary donation to support Able to Serve's day program. Through the generosity of FPCoG members, we turned in a total of \$855 to Able to Serve from the sale of 44 meal tickets plus generous donations. Many thanks to Jerry Page and Zada Page for taking charge of ticket sales along with other team members, and thanks to the rest of the Missions Team who set up Fellowship Hall so all could enjoy their meal. On March 22nd, after church, we enjoyed a delicious BBQ half chicken each, plus desserts provided by Missions. We always love to eat together at FPCoG!



Garner Area Ministries

Suggested "Item of the Month": Pasta, macaroni and cheese, and pasta sauce

The following items are often in short supply at the GAM Food Pantry:

Cereal, Peanut Butter, Grape or Strawberry Jam, Boxed Pasta, Canned Pasta (i.e. Ravioli, Spaghetti & Meatballs), Boxed Macaroni & Cheese, Tomato Sauce, Diced Tomatoes, Canned Corn/Peas/Green Beans, Tomato Soup/Chicken Noodle Soup, Saltines, Pork and Beans, Canned Beans (i.e., pintos, blackeye peas), Instant Mashed Potatoes, Rice/Rice Mixes, Non-perishable meat products (beef stew, tuna, chicken, Vienna sausage), Breakfast items (cereal, protein bars, fruit bars), Canned Meat/ Fish (Chicken, Beef Stew, Tuna), Hamburger Helper, Canned Fruit, Bottled Water, Toilet Paper.

All donations are appreciated!

Two Cents A Meal

Collected on the last Sunday in each month, the Two Cents-a-Meal offering invites the congregation to prayerfully contribute a few cents at each meal to help alleviate hunger and poverty. Participation in Two Cents-a-Meal is a commitment to share with others in response to Jesus' command, "You give them something to eat." The contribution of two cents (or more) per person at each meal, reminds us of the needs of others and our call to respond as Christians to their hunger. The money collected is dedicated during the morning worship service, and then distributed by the Ida Joy Bible Study Group to hunger initiatives including Garner Area Ministries and the World Hunger Fund.



**First Presbyterian
Church of Garner**

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