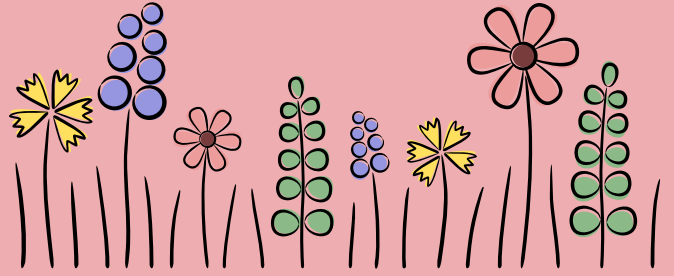


THE SPIRE

May 2026



LETTER FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Church,

The third verse of the Easter Hymn *Christ Has Risen While Earth Slumbers* (#231 in our *Glory to God Hymnal!*) reads:

*Christ has risen and forever lives to challenge and to change
all whose lives are messed or mangled, all who find religion strange.*

These words resonated with me as April ended with our Sanctuary AC still in need of repair and/or replacement. It certainly was a bit of a challenge, a definite change, and perhaps a little strange to find ourselves worshipping in the Fellowship Hall on April 19 and 26 (and anticipating doing so also on May 3) as a result.

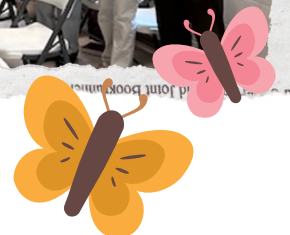
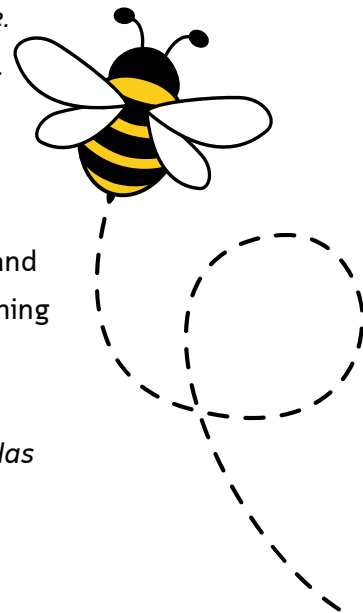
TAs always, though, God's grace sustained us, as evidenced by the number of preparations and pivots that church leaders, staff, and members made to accommodate this need. This is nothing new in my experience here as pastor. Quite often, FPCoG has shown itself to be adaptable, flexible, in flow with the Spirit's leading. But no matter how natural this adaptability was and remains, it is still worth noting and celebrating—as the last part of the third verse of *Christ Has Risen While Earth Slumbers* declares:

*Christ is risen. Christ is present making us what he has been -
evidence of transformation in which God is known and seen.*

In this edition of *The Spire*, you will see many ways God's love in Christ is indeed made visible: in the pictures below of Fellowship Hall Worship, the timeline of the Session's work to address the AC, and the plentiful opportunities for Fellowship, Service, and Mission. May this information and opportunities prompt our thanksgiving and our continued creative service in making a positive, transformative difference for the world God loves.

The Lord Bless and Keep You,

Rev. Ben



WORSHIP NEWS

During worship in May, we will be concluding our “Turning Around” worship series on Repentance as well as celebrating liturgical holidays like Pentecost and Trinity Sunday. Due to the Sanctuary AC needing repair/replacement and the timing of the work required, it is likely that worship will be in the Fellowship Hall on May 3 at least. Read on for the scriptures and hymns we plan to share as we give thanks to God and learn how to continue to serve Christ as we have been served by him.



*A Worship Series
on Repentance*

MONTH AT A GLANCE

May 3rd: “Turning Around: From Comfortable to Uncomfortable”

Texts: Matthew 7:1-5, Jonah 3:1-4:5

Hymns: 14 For the Beauty of the Earth & 231 Christ Has Risen While Earth Slumbers

May 10th: “Turning Around: From First to Last”

Texts: 1 Corinthians 12:20-26, Mark 10:35-45

Hymns: 248 Christ is Risen, Shout Hosanna, 691 Lord, When I Came Into this Life, & 649 Amazing Grace

May 17th: “Turning Around: From the Sidelines to the Center”

Texts: Matthew 25:31-46

Hymns: 610 Oh For a Thousand Tongues to Sing, 246 Christ Is Alive!, & 69 Here I Am Lord

May 24th: “Turning Around: From One to Many”

Pentecost Sunday!

Texts: Acts 2:1-13, 37-42

Hymns: 286 Breathe On Me Breath of God, 305 Come Sing O Church in Joy, & 300 We Are One In The Spirit

May 31st: Trinity Sunday!

Texts: Genesis 1:1-5, Matthew 28:16-20

Hymns: 1 Holy Holy Holy, 275 A Mighty Fortress is Our God, & 266 Love Divine All Loves Excelling

WITH RESPIRATORY ILLNESSES PREVALENT, MASKS ARE OPTIONAL BUT WELCOME AT ANY GATHERING.

YOU CAN ALSO ATTEND ONLINE VIA FACEBOOK: [HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/FIRSTPRESBYTERIANCHURCHOFGARNER](https://www.facebook.com/firstpresbyterianchurchofgarners)





EARTH CARE CORNER

THE PREVALENCE OF PLASTIC

An article in National Geographic, updated on April 8, 2026, notes the prevalence of plastic in our world today.

If plastic had been invented when the Pilgrims sailed from Plymouth, England, to North America—and the Mayflower had been stocked with bottled water and plastic-wrapped snacks—their plastic trash would likely still be around, four centuries later.

If the Pilgrims had been like many people today and simply tossed their empty bottles and wrappers over the side, Atlantic waves and sunlight would have worn all that plastic into tiny bits. And those bits might still be floating around the world’s oceans today, sponging up toxins to add to the ones already in them, waiting to be eaten by some hapless fish or oyster, and ultimately perhaps by one of us.

The article goes on to say that, because plastic wasn’t invented until the late 19th century, and production only took off around 1950, we have a mere **9.2 billion tons** of the stuff to deal with. Of that, more than 6.9 billion tons have become waste. And of that waste, a staggering **6.3 billion tons** never made it to a recycling bin—a figure that stunned the scientists who crunched the numbers in 2017.

Plastic just doesn’t break down readily! This is

because plastics are long-chain polymers of repeating links called monomers. The chains are strong, light, and durable, which makes them so useful—and so problematic when they’re disposed of carelessly. The polymer here is PET, a type of polyester, the stuff of bottles and clothes.

When you go to Target, Home Depot, a Lowes Home Center, or a grocery store, you’re more than likely going to be given a plastic bag or bags to carry out what you’ve purchased. Don’t contribute to plastic pollution!! Bring a few of our reusable FPCoG bags. You’re not only helping save the planet – you’re also telling people you belong to an Earth Care Congregation.

Now, about those plastic water bottles...



CONGREGATIONAL CARE



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:

- **Rev. Betty Berghaus** for filling the pulpit and presiding at communion while Rev. Acton was on vacation in March.
- **Deacons** for coordinating the for providing refreshments after our Easter Garden Service on April 5.
- **The Earth Care Team** for helping celebrate our Earth Care Sunday on Aril 19
- **Presbyterian Women** and all participants who were part of Spring Fling on April 18! **Over \$1200 was raised for Garner Backpack Buddies and Timber Drive Elementary to address food insecurity!**
- **Extra hands** who helped us pivot to worship in the Fellowship Hall until the Sanctuary AC is again functioning
- **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, whose mercy is freely given, help us also give in gratitude, modeling the actions of those for whom we are thankful. Thanks be to You, O God, most of all. Amen.

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

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 vanDoornewaald), 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), Steve Cicci (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

FAITH FORMATION



IDA JOY BIBLE STUDY

Please join us on May 12th at 10am in the Ogburn classroom, where we will be studying Jezabel and her impact on Christianity, especially to women, even today. We hope you will join us as we continue this wonderful, insightful journey into the lives of the women of the Bible and how we are still influenced by their stories 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 Cheryle Prater leads you in this very special study!

WEDNESDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY - EARTH CARE EDITION

In celebration of Earth Day, the Wednesday Night Bible Study group will begin *Follow Me: Biblical Practices for Faithful Living - Care for Creation* in April. This study explores creation care as a faith issue and a way of following Jesus, focusing on appreciating, tilling, sharing, and restoring God's creation. Plan to join us via Zoom each Wednesday at 7:30 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

Thursday Bible Study is currently working through the Book of Exodus! Anyone is welcome to join! We meet 10:00am-11:00am or just a hair after. Contact Rev. Acton with any questions.

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Adult Sunday School class continues the Spring edition of THE PRESENT WORD Bible Study. The spring quarter is an intriguing study of social issues that faithful Christians confronted in the early 1900s and gives 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.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

BIRTHDAY OFFERING

The 2026 Presbyterian Women's Birthday Offering will be collected on Sunday, May 17, 2026. The two recipients for this year are "**City Mission of Findlay**" in Findlay, OH and "**Haywood Christian Ministry**" in Waynesville, NC. **City Mission of Findlay** empowers change by offering safe shelter, warm meals, and hope. One of their services is Martha's Home, a haven of compassion and support for women and children in crisis, which strives to break the cycle of homelessness. **Haywood Christian Ministry** believes that everyone deserves access to high-quality, healthy food. Their anti-hunger programs, including the Smoky Mountain Harvest Hub, work to ensure that people across Haywood County, North Carolina, have the food they need, when they need it, and where they are. "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." —Romans 15:13. Please support the Birthday Offering so that organizations like the ones selected for 2026 will continue to celebrate in God's abounding hope and power in the world.

LILLIE CIRCLE WELCOMES YOU!

Our May 11 meeting will be held at the church at 7pm. We will meet downstairs to assemble Blessing Bags for the Hope Day of Dignity participants on May 30. If you need additional information about Lillie Circle, please contact Sibyl Pedziwiatr at 919-539-0874 or sunnydays4ever87@gmail.com.



SPRING FLING THANK YOU!

Thank you, FPCoG, for your generosity! The Spring Fling Raffle held on April 18 was a great success and loads of fun. Thanks to everyone who donated items, attended the raffle, bought raffle tickets, and donated cash --- **you raised a grand total of \$1,171!** Lillie Circle will distribute the proceeds between Garner Back Pack Buddies and Timber Drive Elementary. Your efforts will go a long way in helping children who experience food insecurities. **Praise be to God!**



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN CONTINUED

CELEBRATION POTLUCK

May 17th VIP Luncheon – Celebration Potluck

The announcement of the Presbyterian Women 2026 Honorary Life Member and Men of the Church 2026 Man of the Year honorees will be made during the **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.*

The Presbyterian Women Honorary Life Membership (HLM) program was established in the Presbyterian Church to honor faithful service to the women’s organization and to the church. We will also be collecting the Presbyterian Women Birthday Gift Offering for the Presbytery at the VIP Luncheon – Celebration Potluck.

FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE

The next Friendship Circle meeting will be on May 3rd in the Ogburn Classroom after church at 12:30 pm. The Lesson Leader is Jane Knabe. Don’t forget to pack a lunch or snack and bring your book for the meeting. The Lesson will be Chapter 7 – Spiritual Gifts from the No-Homework Women’s Bible Study Group Hug - Volume VI by Christine Tate. Since our April beach trip got postponed to the fall, we had a lovely lunch and social event after church at Alexanders on April 12th. 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@gmail.com or 919.389.0462 (cell). ***This will be our final meeting prior to the summer break.***

PRAYER SHAWL

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 April 26, a prayer shawl was given to Bob Dickerson, who is Amy Conner’s stepfather. Bob has had health issues for a while and is now in Hospice care. We also pray for Amy’s mother, as she has been the primary caregiver for Bob for a long time.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

we're engaged!



SHE SAID YES
MARCH 2026



Billy Knabe proposed to Kaitlyn Bohn downtown Raleigh at the Urban Oak Rooftop Bar & Lounge on March 28, 2026. Afterwards, Billy surprised Kaitlyn with a festive engagement party that included her parents, sister, and college friends from Virginia, as well as Kaitlyn's friends from church and dance. Neal, Jane, Susie, Issac, and friends were also on hand to celebrate the happy couple. Billy Knabe and Kaitlyn Bohn's engagement photos were taken at the Biltmore Estates.

Men's Breakfast



The Men of the Church will meet on the first Sunday of the month, May 3rd, for breakfast. All men are welcome to join us in the Fellowship Hall at 8:45 am for coffee, juice, biscuits, donuts, and fellowship.

MISSION MINISTRIES

"If you love me, feed my sheep."
John 21:15-19



Reminder... May 30, 2026

FPCoG's 5th Saturday Commitment for H.O.P.E.

H.O.P.E. is – Homeless Outreach Providing Encouragement

FPCoG 5th Saturday Commitment – May 30 Serving Our Neighbors at H.O.P.E. and they are depending on us. As always, we know that **FPCoG will be there for them.**

For those who may not be familiar with our 5th Saturday Commitment, this ministry involves **providing the meal, serving, cleaning up, and doing laundry from the shower area.** Since 2000, FPCoG has faithfully committed to serving on every 5th Saturday at **H.O.P.E.**, located at **Garner Methodist Church, 201 Methodist Drive** (near Papa John's on Vandora Springs Avenue).

What We Provide / Need / Responsible for...

- **Lunch for approximately 100 hungry guests**
- **Volunteers to serve** (*extra hands are especially needed!*)
- **Clean Kitchen & Fellowship Hall – clean tables, breakdown tables/chairs, vacuum**
- **Assistance with laundry from the showers** (*we provide the supplies/laundry card – complete & return laundry to GUMC after finished*)

In addition to the **sign-up sheet in the Narthex** (*near the hallway to the classrooms*), we are excited to introduce an **electronic sign-up option** this time. Many thanks to **Christy Turpin** for her efforts in making this possible!

SignUpGenius Link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0D45A4AA29A2FF2-61729052-hope>

Please note: We have been informed that the youth from Garner Christian Fellowship, who often assist with serving, will **not** be able to help on May 30. If you have not served in the past, this is a wonderful opportunity to step in—we truly need extra help and would love for you to join us! I like to refer to our Saturdays at H.O.P.E. as a day of “transformation.” Saturdays are about so much more than a meal. At H.O.P.E., we witness the transformation of a guest after:

- A hot shower
- Clean clothes
- A specific need being met
- A hot, nutritious meal
- And most importantly, kindness and genuine concern experienced

Transformation also happens in those **who** serve. Knowing that your time, food, funds, and willingness to help make this possible can change your attitude, perspective, and outlook... **Gratitude and grace truly rule the day of transformation!**



Please continue to share what you have, no longer need, or want. There is always a need that can be met at H.O.P.E... Basically, everything is needed! Please place your donations in the H.O.P.E. Chest (The H.O.P.E. Chest is found at the top stairwell landing near the Ogburn classroom). Anytime you have donations of items of clothing, blankets, jackets, jeans, plastic grocery bags, etc., please consider placing them in the

H.O.P.E. Chest. Your ongoing contributions make a big difference to this ministry --- H.O.P.E. is funded solely by donations!

Thank you, FPCoG, for continuing to support and serve the H.O.P.E. ministry—faithfully, wholeheartedly, and through your prayers. Your continued generosity and commitment make a lasting impact on the lives we serve. If you have any questions regarding H.O.P.E., please contact Julie Tedder at 919-622-2120.

FPCoG – Mark your Calendars for our remaining 5th Saturday Commitments at H.O.P.E. in 2026:

May 30



August 29



October 31



**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF GARNER**

503 Lakeside Dr.

Garner, NC 27529

Phone: 919-772-0727

Pastor:

pastor@firstpresbyterianchurchgarner.com

Admin Assistant:

administration@firstpresbyterianchurchgarner.com

Director of Music Ministries:

music@firstpresbyterianchurchgarner.com

FAMILY PROMISE THANKS YOU FPCOG!!!

Because of your generosity, prayers, and support, we were able to help four families (5 adults and 14 children/teens) during their time of transition. Meals were provided March 30 – April 3 by FPCoG (Youth, Lillie Circle, Men of the Church, Friendship Circle, and Community Navigators). Cash donations provided groceries for the week, plus gift cards for gas and Food Lion. Easter basket supplies were donated by you for the parents to surprise their kids. What a wonderful week! **THANK YOU!!!**

We often do not know the effect of the little things we do for those in need. By the grace of God, most of us will never have to be on the receiving side and are blessed to be on the giving side. Please continue to be in prayer for those facing challenges with housing, jobs, food insecurities, etc.

The FPCoG Missions Committee would like to share an inspirational note we received from Michelle, one of the mothers that FPCoG helped this year:

I want to take a moment to sincerely thank you for the love, support, and provision you have extended to my children and me during this season. Your kindness has not gone unseen, and I am deeply grateful. Please pray for peace in our home, obedience and alignment for my children, protection over their minds, bodies, and decisions, strength, wisdom, and endurance for me as their mother. I believe this is a turning point for my family, and I am trusting God to complete the work He has begun. Thank you again for standing with us.