



2026 September



The Spire

Letter From The Pastor

Dear Church,

As the calendar turns to September, my heart is ever more in tune with a spirit of celebration! We are now mere weeks away from the First Presbyterian Church of Garner's 70th Anniversary! We are now just days away from once again welcoming, loving, and inspiring so many who have called this church their spiritual "home."

On such occasions, our eyes may be quickly drawn to all the things that have changed over the years. If we did so, we certainly could come up with a long list! Such a list would also include an almost endless number of names and acts of ministry from the past that rightly deserve our thanks and praise.

And yet, as I have looked through a number of the bulletins, photos, and other artifacts of the church from these last 70 years, I find myself drawn deeply to what has remained the same:

- 🍁 **How the courage and faithfulness of our charter members poured into and inspired others who came after them;**
- 🍁 **How the congregation has remained resilient amid all sorts of changes, challenges, and causes for celebration;**
- 🍁 **How generosity of time, finances, and energy has been determined and faithful;**
- 🌻 **How, in our continuing service to others, God has been glorified, Christ has been made visible, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit have been shared.**

As we head towards September 27, let us all remember to celebrate. Not only what God has done for us in the past, but also what God is doing with and among us now and into the future. The new things God is building upon an already sturdy foundation may look different, with the spirit of welcome, love, and inspiration, which has long been a part of our church and remains steadfast and true.

To God Be The Glory,
Rev. Ben

*Thanks for being part
of our journey!*



Worship News

SONGS FOR THE

Journey

WORSHIPING WITH THE PSALMS

Given that celebration is on our mind this month, our worship will lean into those “vibes” by exploring selected Psalms. Each Psalm will connect with a part of God’s continuing journey with the church, a journey that empower us to share God’s love and grace with others. Join us each Sunday at 11:00am on-line or in person to add your voice to the chorus of thanks and joy!

Month At A Glance

September 6th - “Songs For The Journey: Firm Foundation”

Texts: Matthew 7:24–27; Psalm 1

Hymns: The Church’s One Foundation, In The Bulb There Is a Flower, How Firm a Foundation

September 13th - “Songs For The Journey: Sanctuary”

Holy Communion

Texts: John 20:19–23 ; Psalm 84:1–10

Hymns: Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty, God Be With You Until We Meet Again

September 20th - “Songs For The Journey: Through the Valley”

Texts: 2 Corinthians 12:6–10, Psalm 23

Hymns: God of the Sparrow, Spirit Open My Heart, Christ Be The Love to Search and Keep Me

September 27th - “Songs For The Journey: Doxology 70th Anniversary Celebration!”

Texts: 1 Thessalonians 5: 12–18; Psalm 100

Hymns: Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken, Let All Things Now Living,
Now Thank We All Our God

With respiratory illnesses prevalent, masks are optional but welcome at any gathering.

You can also attend online via Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/firstpresbyterianchurchofgarner>

September flowers

6th: The flowers are given to the glory of God by the Knabe family in loving memory of Stella Knabe.

13th: The flowers are given to the glory of God by Carrie & Chris Cash in honor of their birthdays.

20th: The flowers are given to the glory of God by Reggie Foster in loving memory of Dee Foster.

27th: The flowers are given to the glory of God by the Goulds’ in honor of their children and grandchildren.



70th Anniversary Celebration

Our 70th-anniversary homecoming worship service and potluck will be held on September 27. Worship is at 11 AM, with our potluck and a program following in the fellowship hall. We hope to be wrapped up by 2:30 PM at the latest.

Worship will be led by pastors, members, and leaders in the community connected to FPCoG. The Deacons will provide the main dish (BBQ and Fried Chicken). Our program will be a roundtable discussion of memories and stories from our 70 years of witnessing to Christ's love.

There are several ways you can continue to help us plan and prepare for this celebration:

- 1) Let the Church office know any folks you have sent an invitation to attend the homecoming service and potluck so we can make sure we have enough bulletins and enough food for everyone.
- 2) Prepare a side or dessert for the potluck and drop it off in the Fellowship Hall on Sunday, 9/27, before worship.
- 3) Volunteer to be one of our 7 specific participants in the roundtable discussion. Participants will be asked to share their brightest memory of the church and qualities they believe have been essential to FPCoG.
- 4) Share with Rev. Acton any items (bulletins, photos, etc.) you feel comfortable having on display in the narthex or in the Fellowship Hall on September 27th. If you have any further questions about any of the items above, give Rev. Acton a call.



Thank You Note

To our First Presbyterian Church Family

Words cannot adequately express my feelings at this time and perhaps even for a long time to come. However, I am truly grateful to all of you for your prayers, calls, visits, texts, cards of encouragement, home-cooked meals, the "Meal Train" donations, and many other expressions of love for Dee and me over the last few months. Your care for both of us was and still is one of our many blessings.

We were blessed that during this all too quick illness, Dee was never in pain. We were blessed to have a wonderful team from Transitions Life Care who provided support for both of us and encouragement for me when I was unsure of myself. We were blessed, too, that our twin nieces and nephew came to be with us and help with Dee's care.

Thank you, and may God bless each one of you.

Reggie





Earth Care Corner

Let's Connect with Nature

When we connect with nature, nature connects with us. Whether it's an urban park, a vast preserve, or even your own backyard, the natural world has an incredible power to amaze us, inspire us, teach us, and provide for us.

Five Ways to Wander and Wonder



Wanders can do wonders. A short ramble outdoors can put us in a better tune with our minds and the nature around us- and deepen our appreciation for both. Here are five tips to help you stroll more mindfully through nature.

 **Slow down.** A nature stroll is no time to rush. Slowing your pace might help you notice some of the smaller features around you. It may also bring more wildlife your way.

 **Skip the headphones.** Let nature be your soundscape. What are the instruments around you? Singing birds, creaking trees, hungry squirrels? You'll likely hear people or cars, too, but let them in as temporary members of nature's orchestra.

 **Get to know your neighbors.** Learn the names of at least three common animal and tree species near you. That way, you can see how they're scattered along your favorite walking path and watch them change throughout the year.

 **Count your steps-but not the fitness kind.** Play into your curiosity. How many steps does it take for you to reach the closest tree? How about the closest flower? The closest body of water?

 **Sense the scents.** When you're strolling in nature, take note of subtle smells around you. Your sense of smell is closely tied to memory. Do any scents invoke a feeling or a memory?



Speak Up for Nature

Your voice matters. We need strong public policy to protect our planet, now more than ever. At this critical time for our natural world, everything we cherish—our lands, our water, our air, and all the plants and animals we love—is depending on us to speak up. You have the power to make your voice heard and help create a future where people and nature thrive.



Congregational Care



Birthdays

1st Carrie Dixon-Cash

2nd Rose Gurkin

3rd Gloria Oelke

7th Lorris Icenhour

15th Andy Cook

16th Donna Gould

17th Ann Bagwell

17th Jerry Page

19th Edith Conyers

23rd Billy Knabe

27th Anne Hopkins

anniversaries

3rd Rich & Lucy Whipple

14th Joe & Cheryle Prater

30th Jim & Kathy Blue

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:

 **The Deacons Wellness Team** for encouraging our Summer walk through Revolutionary war sites and hosting a hot dog picnic on August 2 after worship to celebrate the achievement!

 **All who have donated to "Feet and Seats"** providing much-needed socks and underwear for guests at H.O.P.E.

 **Our Congregational Nominating Committee**, tasked with discerning and calling our new deacons and elders. These leaders include Elders Karen Lovering and Christy Turpin, Deacon Donna Gould, and at-large members Frank Hall, Jane Knabe, Mike Koenig, and Randy Stephens.

 **ALL who are committed to ministries of teaching and learning!** Especially, we thank our Sunday School, Bible School, and Presbyterian Women Leaders; Nursery and Children's Church leaders; Faith Formation Elders Kim Brown and Helen Stehens; and our youth and children who assisted in worship on August 30.

 **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!

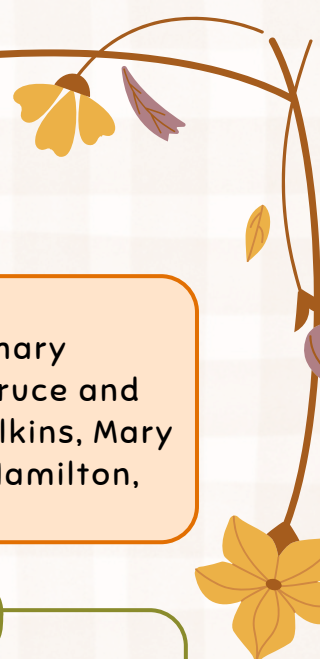
Prayer: Gracious God, we are grateful beyond measure for your love that is like blessings overflowing. May we always remember to use those blessings to bless one another. For we pray in the name of Jesus Christ, your overflowing love in the flesh. Amen,

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





Prayer List



Members

Edith Conyers, John Watkins, Anne Hopkins, Rose Gurkin, Carl Miller, Rosemary Carmichael, 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, Helen Losada, Tonya Boykin, Martha Long, Bettie Hamilton, Melissa Miley, Kay Carroll, Kathy Henderson, Wanda vanDoornewaald

Members' Families

Michael Regester (Losada's grandson), Jim Cole (Trish Holmes), Wes Smith (Sandy Lee's Brother-in-law), Candice Davis (Cheryle Prater), Linda Register (Cheryle Prater), Pat Cook (Andy Cook), Pat Ballew (Reggie Foster), Sandra Wilkins Luther (Peggy Wilkins' sister-in-law), Jonah Ekoule (Komivi Ekoule's father), Rebekah Brewer (Trish and David Holmes' daughter), 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), 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), Sebastian White (Lorrie Icenhour's grandnephew), Patrick McGuire and family (Kim & Mike Brown's son-in-law), Bentley Porter (The Porter's grandson)

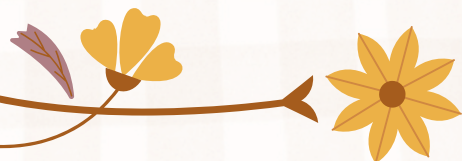
Members' Friends

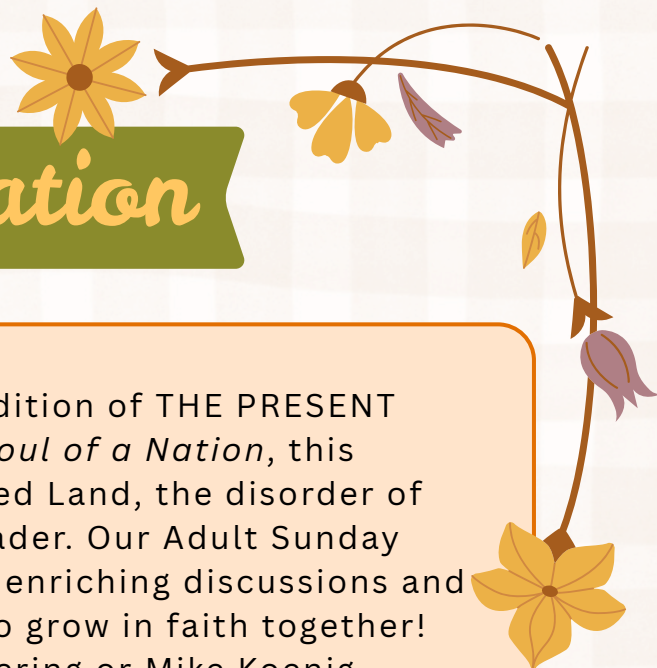
Ann Myhre (Peggy Wilkins), Jerry Godwin (Connie Boykin), Betty Peterson (Deb Wallace), Julie Prevoznik (Reggie Foster), Kenneth Ennis (Donna Gould), Joyce Blackwood, Nancy Whalen (Kathy Blue), Whitney Wolfgang (The Oriel family), Kathy Schumacher (Nancy Waldrop), Bruce Carper (David Pease), Beth Catlette (Donna Gould), Nikki Little (Kian Miley), Richard Guy (Kevin Wallace), Barbara Porter (Regina Alexander), Marvin and Suzi Perkins, Steve and Debbie Woliki, Edward Pistola (Komivi Ekoule), Jim Johnson (Sandy Lee), Glen Dyer (Lorrie Icenhour)

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

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





Fatih Formation

Adult Sunday School

The Adult Sunday School class begins the Fall edition of THE PRESENT WORD Bible Study on September 6. Titled *The Soul of a Nation*, this quarter highlights Israel's move into the Promised Land, the disorder of the Judges, and Samuel's rise as a stabilizing leader. Our Adult Sunday School class meets every Sunday at 9:45 am 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.



Ida Joy Bible Study

Please join us on September 8th at 10 am in the Ogburn classroom, where we will be studying Eve and her impact on Christianity, especially for 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 their stories still influence us 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 10 am in the Ogburn classroom. It is a wonderful time spent together as Christian women, discovering 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 - Lenten Study

On September 16, the Wednesday Night Bible Study group will begin our Fall Study of Genesis: "A Beginner's Guide to the Beginning" by Amy-Jill "AJ" Levine. This study offers a fresh, accessible look at Genesis, treating it as a living text that continues to shape faith and identity. AJ combines historical context and thoughtful insight to bring new meaning to these well-known stories, highlighting their beauty, tensions, and lasting relevance. 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

The Thursday morning bible study will begin a study on the Gospel of Mark, beginning on September 10.

Join us for fellowship and an opportunity to learn more about how scripture impacts our daily lives. Contact Rev. Acton for more information.

September 10: Orientation and Mark 1
September 17: Mark 2-3
September 24: Mark 4:1-34

Presbyterian Women

Coordinating Team will meet after church on September 20th in the Ogburn Classroom. A light lunch will be served.

New officers for 2026-2027:



Moderator Cheryle Prater
Vice Moderator Jane Knabe
Treasurer Karen Lovering
Assistant Treasurer Sandra Hodge
Secretary Donna Gould
Historian Carrie Dixon Cash
Search Committee Debbie McHenry
Special Giving/Nurture
Together in Service/Special Issue
Friendship Circle Chair Jane Knabe
Lillie Circle Sibyl Pedziwiatr
Ida/Joy Jackie Dail

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. Heartfelt thanks are expressed to those who make the shawls and help send warm wishes and prayers to those who receive them. On August 14, a prayer shawl was given to Reggie Foster for the loss of his wife, Dee. A shawl was given to Glen Dyer, friend of Parks and Lorrie Icenhour. Glen has terminal brain cancer. A shawl was given to Kim Salmon, sister of Deb Wallace. Kim lost her husband, Joe. Another shawl was given to Sebastian White, infant great-nephew of Parks and Lorie Icenhour. Sebastian was born prematurely at 24 weeks. He required a surgical procedure and did not survive. A prayer cross was given to Harry Gould. Harry had surgery on his carotid arteries.



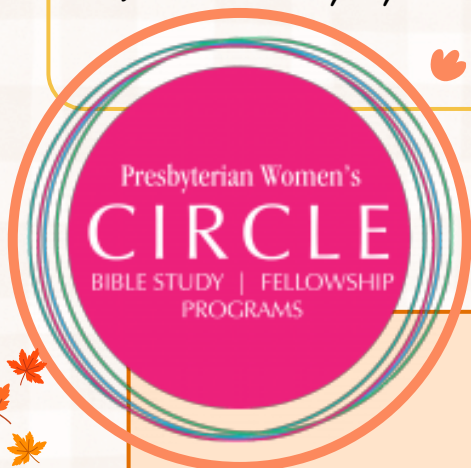
Presbyterian Women Continued

Lillie Circle - All women are welcome!

The Lillie Circle meets on the 2nd Monday of the month (September – May). Meetings are held either at the church in the Ogburn Classroom or in a member's home at 7 pm. We participate in many areas of missions (child food insecurities, HOPE, GAM, Family Promise, congregational care through meals, prayers, cards, and visits).

Our September 14 meeting will be held at the church in the Ogburn Classroom at 6:30 pm. A light meal will be served, followed by a devotion and business meeting. Our normal 7 pm schedule will resume in October.

If you need additional information, please contact Sibyl Pedziwiatr at 919-539-0874 (text or call) or email sunnydays4ever87@gmail.com.



Friendship Circle

After the summer break, the Friendship Circle is ready to start back up. The 2026-2027 Planning Meeting will be held on Tuesday evening, September 15th at 7:00 pm. This will be a Zoom Meeting. This planning meeting will replace our regular September meeting since it lands on Labor Day Weekend and attendance will be sparse. The first meeting of the new year will be Sunday, October 4th at 12:30 pm in the Ogburn Classroom. The focus of the October meeting will be on the Chili Bowl Luncheon in November.

For anyone interested in joining the Friendship Circle and attending our meetings, please contact the Friendship Circle Chair Jane Knabe at jrknabe66@gmail.com or 919.389.0462 (cell).



H.O.P.E. Update



The “Seats & Feet” campaign that began with our Mission focus at Faith Fest for H.O.P.E. and continues through the end of August. Thank you for your donations in support of this campaign thus far! Provided below are our contributions through August 16.

“Seats & Feet” for H.O.P.E. update through August 16:

Men's Boxers						Women's Underwear						Men's Socks	Women's Socks
S	M	L	XL	XXL	XXXL	S	M	L	XL	XXL	XXXL	173 pairs	145 pairs
10	5	67	38	-	-	5	15	31	34	-	-		

At the time of writing this article for H.O.P.E., our 5th Saturday commitment for H.O.P.E. is August 29. My heart is torn while writing this submission, as the Celebration of Life service for Georgia Morrison, a precious matriarch of our church and charter member, will also take place that day. It is a poignant contrast that these two meaningful events, one honoring a faithful servant's life and the other celebrating the foundational commitments of our church, will occur at the same time.

As First Presbyterian Church of Garner, we continue to remain true to the foundation laid by faithful members such as Georgia Morrison and so many others who helped build and strengthen this congregation through their unwavering faith, service, and dedication. Their legacy lives on through our continued commitment to serve others, share God's love, and carry forward the mission they embraced so faithfully.

While we will gather to remember and celebrate Georgia's remarkable life, we will also honor her legacy by continuing the work of ministry and outreach that she so deeply valued. Let us move forward with grateful hearts, celebrating both a life well lived and the enduring mission of the church she helped establish.

May we be reminded that our greatest tribute to those who have gone before us is to remain steadfast in our faith and faithful to the calling God has placed upon our church.

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

✧ **October 31** ✧

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



Mission Ministries

Welcome

Able To Serve created some new programs this year for individuals with disabilities, over and above its flagship Day Program, among which were Sewing Skillz and Theater Skillz programs. Theater Skillz Program offered participants learning how to interact with others while portraying characters on stage and enjoying the experience of “being under the lights” in a live performance before a very enthusiastic audience. Under the direction of Jacob Sinclair fourteen ATS participants spent five weeks learning lines, choreography, and stage movement to present a showcase of individual talent plus a presentation of the play “The Show Must Go On”. Several members of the FPCoG Mission Team attended the performance and were impressed by the camaraderie and dedication to their characterizations exhibited by the ATS performers. Encore!



2026 Habitat Fall Beloved Build & Service Opportunities

A “Day One” Kick-Off Ceremony was held on Saturday, August 29, 2026, at Habitat’s newest location, Hope Grove on Creech Road, in Garner, attended by Jerry Page. Please see Jerry Page or Melissa Miley if you have any questions regarding any opportunities with Habitat for Humanity Greater Raleigh.

- Click on this link to see the upcoming opportunities to volunteer for the 2026 Fall Beloved Build at Hope Grove, Old Poole Place, or the Construction Warehouse. [Build Schedule – Fall Beloved Build | Habitat for Humanity Greater Raleigh](#)
- Please send this link to anyone you know who is interested in and in need of affordable housing. [Habitat Wake Homeowner Services Handout Updated 2025](#)
- Interested in advocating for affordable housing? Please click on this link. [Advocacy | Habitat for Humanity Greater Raleigh](#)
- Shop, donate, and volunteer at Habitat Restores of the Triangle. Check out this link. [Shop, donate, and volunteer with the Triangle ReStores. | Habitat Wake ReStores](#)
- Please see this link to learn about the various ways to make donations to Greater Raleigh Habitat for Humanity. [Donate Today | Habitat for Humanity Greater Raleigh](#)



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