



NOVEMBER

2026 Spire

LETTER FROM THE PASTOR



Dear Church,

Our **Stewardship Emphasis Season** continues this month as we continue to build on our 70-year legacy of serving Christ in Garner and beyond! A main feature of our **"Rooted in Grace, Growing in Gratitude"** theme has been and will continue to be storytelling. Already in worship, we have heard from long-time members and new members about what impact First Presbyterian Church of Garner has had on their lives. No matter how long someone has been part of our shared ministry, a spirit of welcome, care, and inspiration has been a component of our faith journey in this place.

Two specific opportunities to tell these sorts of stories still await!

- 1) We have more Sunday morning opportunities to share your story during the **Time for the Young and Young at Heart**. If interested, **please contact me or Deb Wallace** (dwall0562@yahoo.com). We also hope to bind all the stories we collect into a book that will be available to all.
- 2) After worship on **November 22, Gratitude Sunday**, when we give thanks for **Able to Serve's** ministry in our community, we will have volunteers serving as **videographers**, asking, **"How would you sum up FPCoG in 1-2 sentences?"** The videos they record will then be used on the church website and social media (with permission of the person being recorded). The hope is that these videos will tell our story in a way that draws others looking for a church home to our congregation.

Keep these other Stewardship Dates in mind as well!

- 1) **The Faith Budget for 2027** will be shared and discussed on **November 1**
- 2) **Dedication Sunday**, when we initially receive **financial pledges** for the 2027 Church Budget will be **November 8**. This year, we will emphasize the General Fund.
- 3) **Gratitude Sunday will be November 22nd**; on this day we take time to thank those who serve our wider community; we will also have a **Stewardship Reception** after worship in the **Fellowship Hall** that day.

Note: *Gratitude Sunday's date moved one week forward from an earlier Stewardship Calendar*

It should never go without saying: Thanks be to God for the faithfulness of multiple generations from 1956 until today who, in response to God's blessings, have faithfully given time, presence, finances, and many other gifts. May we continue to tell their story and sing their song in the stewardship we share this month and beyond.

The Lord Bless and Keep You,
Rev. Ben



Worship News



We continue moving through Ephesians, concluding our Stewardship Emphasis Season on November 22. Advent then begins on November 29! Read on for the scriptures and hymns planned for the month, along with notes on Advent resources and plans.



*Rooted in Grace,
Growing in Gratitude*



**November 1: “Rooted in Grace, Growing in Gratitude: To God Be The Glory”
All Saints Sunday**

Texts: Psalm 34:1–10, 22, Ephesians 3:7–21

Hymns: God Our Help In Ages Past, For All the Saints

**November 8: “Rooted in Grace, Growing in Gratitude: Put Together”
Holy Communion and Dedication Sunday**

Texts: John 15:1–4, Ephesians 4:1–16

Hymns: For the Fruit of All Creation, We Give Thee But Thine Own

November 15th: “Rooted in Grace, Growing in Gratitude: Rules and Relationships”

Texts: Matthew 22:37–39, Ephesians 4:17–5:2

Hymns: Christ is Made The Sure Foundation, Blest Be The Tie That Binds, Lord I Want To Be a Christian

**November 22nd: “Rooted in Grace, Growing in Gratitude: Able to Serve”
Gratitude Sunday**

Texts: Matthew 10:28–31, Ephesians 6:10–20

Hymns Now Thank We All our God, God Whose Giving Knows No Ending, Take My Life

We will honor Able to Serve for their service to Garner; Founder and Executive Director Rev. Carlton McDaniel will share in the sermon.

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

You can also attend online via Facebook:

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



November Flowers

November 1st: The flowers are given to the glory of God by Kathy Blue in loving memory of Mike Perry

November 8th: The flowers are given to the glory of God by The Conners in honor of Grahams birthday and Veterans Day.

November 15th: The flowers are given to the glory of God by Karen Lovering.

November 22nd: The flowers are given to the glory of God by The Praters in honor of Britt & Layla.

November 29th: The flowers are given to the glory of God by The Conners in honor of Amy's birthday.



Earth Care Corner



Recently, one of us (Mike) had an opportunity to visit "Earth to Sky Park" in Burnsville, NC. The park is in an internationally certified Dark Sky environment, and the observatory there offers exceptional telescopic views of the night sky. Mike saw the Milky Way Galaxy with his own eyes for the first time in his life and got to see Saturn and its rings as well as several other galaxies and nebulae. If you are ever in western North Carolina, you definitely should see what you probably have been missing!



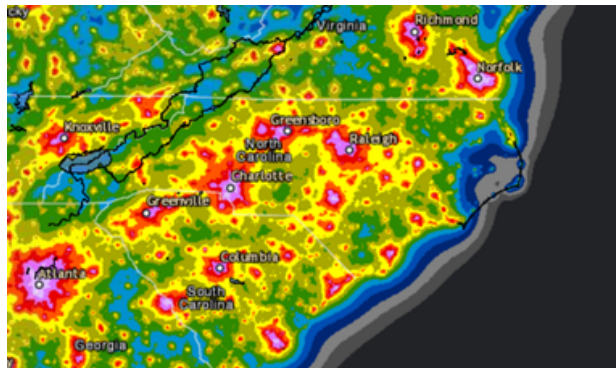
Why have you been missing direct viewing of objects in our night skies? Light pollution. Light pollution is "human-made alteration of outdoor light levels from those occurring naturally" (<https://darksky.org/resources/what-is-light-pollution/>)

Yes, light can be a pollutant just as plastic and waste can pollute our water and improperly disposed of trash can pollute our roadsides and neighborhoods. According to DarkSky, light pollution derives from at least four different components:

- Glare – Excessive brightness that causes visual discomfort
- Sky glow – Brightening of the night sky over inhabited areas
- Light trespass – Light falling where it is not intended or needed
- Clutter – Bright, confusing and excessive grouping of light sources



Here's what Sky Glow light pollution looks like in North Carolina



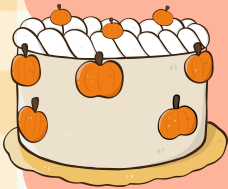
While we may be disappointed that we're more concerned about the effects of light pollution on birds – particularly migrating birds. We can help these birds very simply:

- Turn off lights when you're not using them
- Dim indoor lighting at night or close your blinds
- Skip decorative landscape lighting after dark
- Aim outdoor lights downward or use lighting shields
- Use motion sensors to activate lights only when they're actually needed

Protecting migratory birds doesn't require special gear or big commitments, just a little awareness and a habit change. By choosing darker nights, you're helping birds travel safely, conserving energy and doing something genuinely good for the planet. That's a pretty powerful move for something that starts with a light switch.



Congregational Care



Birthdays

1st: Magdalena Leon

2nd: Paul Thompson

3rd: Ben Acton

7th: Gary Lovering

10th: Linda Monroe

11th: Graham Conner & Dylan Tedder

13th: Melissa Miley & Debra McHenry

17th: Maria Contreras

24th: Julie Tedder

25th: Bruce Oelke, Lisa Jackson, & Lucy Paradies

28th: Wayne Shulby

30th: Peggy Wilkins & Amy Conner



On behalf of my mother,
Georgia Morrison. I want to
thank you for the Celebration of
Life service on August 29th. It was
a wonderful gathering, the
church she loved, the best place
for the Lord to receive her, Thank
you for loving her all these
years.

~ Susan Umstead (eldest
daughter)



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:

- **Our Elders and Deacons-Elect:** (Elders): Regina Alexander, Mike Koenig, Jerry Page, Roxann Porter; (Deacons): Bonnie Bowling, Lorrie Icenhour, Emily Lee, Karen Lovering
- **Mission Ministry** for coordinating our efforts with Wake County Read and Feed which began on Tuesday, October 6!
- **Building and Grounds Ministry** for Coordinating replacement of all gutters around the church building
- **Our Staff:** Stephanie Taylor-Morgan, Bill Rasheligh, Gloria Oelke, and Rev. Ben Acton whom we honored on October 4. Thanks to the Deacons and Administrative Ministry Team for coordinating and hosting a reception following the service as part of this thanksgiving!
- **Jackie Dail** and **Aaron Brown** for sharing their Stewardship Stories during Young and Young at heart on October 18 and 25th, respectively who shared reflections on how First Presbyterian Garner has made a difference in their lives and on our community!
- **ALL who serve in humble, unseen, ongoing ways.** Your contributions mean so much to so many!

Prayer: Thanksgiving is the only fitting response when we consider your many blessings, O God. May our thanksgiving, though, also be directed to acts of service and generosity so that your blessings may be made more visible to the world. 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, Bonnie Bowling, Allen & Sandra Hodge, Harry Gould

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), 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), Sandy Spiegle (Reggie Foster)

For the World

Neighbors near and far, especially in Nepal, Tibet, and China, 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



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), Patrick McGuire and family (Kim & Mike Brown's son-in-law), Bentley Porter (The Porter's grandson), Virginia Monroe (Kim Brown's mother), Don Brown (Ann Bagwell's nephew)



faith formation



Ida Joy Bible Study

Please join us on November 10th at 10 am in the Ogburn classroom, where we will study Hagar and her impact on Christianity, especially for women 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!



Thursday Morning Bible Study

The Thursday morning bible study continues our study in Mark! Join us from 10am to 11amish in the Ogburn Room!

11/5: Break

11/12: Mark 10

11/19: Mark 11:1-12:12

11/26: Thanksgiving Break



Wednesday Night Bible Study

The Wednesday Night Bible Study group has begun their 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.



Adult Sunday School

The Adult Sunday School class is working through the Fall edition of THE PRESENT WORD Bible Study 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.

Presbyterian Women



Lillie Circle

All women are welcome!

Our November 9 meeting will be held at FPCoG in the Youth Room (downstairs) at 7pm. We begin our meetings with prayer and a devotional program presented by circle members. Photos included here were taken at our October meeting by our "circle photographer", Judy Pittman. We assembled Hygiene and Snack Kits to be included in Blessing Bags for HOPE ministry.



During November, Lillie Circle will help with poinsettia sales along with Friendship Circle. We continue to support GAM with monthly donations and collect a love offering each month to help with various mission activities. As requested, gift cards are given to individuals facing long-term health challenges and hardships (from Julia's Silver Lining Fund established in honor of Julia Russell, a former church member).

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

Friendship Circle

Sadly, the Friendship Circle had to cancel the Annual Chili Bowl Luncheon Fundraiser which was to be held on November 1st. We are encouraging member to still donate the money that they would have been spent supporting the fundraiser to the Circle so that we can still send a donation to Able to Serve.

Thus, we will be having our November monthly meeting on November 1st after church in the Ogburn Classroom. Meeting will start after the Poinsettias sale completes.

Future Activities

November 1st – Regular Monthly Meeting after church in Ogburn Classroom. Cheryle Prater has the Devotional Reading.

November 8th & 15th – Support Poinsettia sale.

December 4th – Poinsettia Delivery

December 5th – Decorate Church

December 6th – Christmas Luncheon and Sneaky Santa at Lucy Paradies' home.

PW Coordinating Team

The Coordinating team will meet on November 15th, right after church, in the Fellowship Hall. A light lunch will be provided.



Announcements



Advent at a Glance

The December Spire will have more details on our Advent Theme: "O Come Emmanuel." But for now, save these dates!

November 29: First Sunday of Advent, Devotional Resources available in the narthex

December 6: Second Sunday of Advent and Hanging of Greens during 11am Worship

December 13th: Third Sunday of Advent

December 20th: Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 24th (Thursday): Christmas Eve candlelight and Communion Service at 5pm

December 27: Christmas Hymn Sing

January 3, 2027: Epiphany Sunday and Star Words for 2027



70th Anniversary

To my dear friends at First Presbyterian Church of Garner,

Thank you for inviting me to join you as you celebrate the birthday of First Presbyterian Church of Garner. I wish I could be with you on this special day. However, I am two weeks from saying goodbye to the folks at Oakland Presbyterian Church in Clayton, where I have served for 4 yrs as Transitional Pastor. And two weeks from beginning a new call to Unity Presbyterian Church in Newton Grove, where I will be their Pastor. So, I am in transition!

And that is how I began my ministry at FPCoG – as your Transitional Pastor, some ten years ago. You were my first Transitional Pastorate after I completed the Certification for Transitional Ministry. And you were the first congregation where I was introduced to the Holy Cow Consulting folks. They introduced us to the concept of systemic and organizational behavior theory. It was a first for me and for you. I became fascinated with this theory and went on to become certified as an Interpreter for Holy Cow and have continued to do assessments in this presbytery for 10 years now, for probably 15 congregations. I share this with you because what we did together at FPCoG has had a ripple effect throughout this presbytery.

I want to extend my gratitude to you.

First, for being the church together for 70 years. It is not always easy to be the church. To keep our vision on what Jesus Christ would have us to do. The culture surrounding us tugs at us and challenges us in ways we never expect. And sometimes we get caught up in family feuds which threaten to tear us apart. So being the church together takes persistence, patience, graciousness, and most of all love. So, thank you for being the church.

Thank you for being uniquely FPCoG. I am grateful that you continue to reach out to your neighbors, sharing who you are and your resources. While I was your Transitional Pastor, you embraced outreach ministries with generosity and compassion, being the faithful disciples of Jesus Christ, responding to his call to feed and tend and care for his sheep. You were also committed to studying God's word and I remember, with great fondness, our Bible studies together.

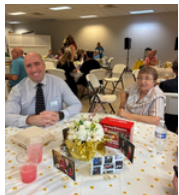
I also thank you for your vision. You were always open to where the Holy Spirit might be calling you into the future. It was difficult to let go of old ways of doing things in order that we might embrace the new. With, at times, a little encouragement, you were willing to imagine the new places to which God was calling you.

Thank you for loving me, for your patience when I stumbled, for your willingness to listen, for your graciousness in welcoming me. I carry those lessons and memories with me. And the friendships which continue, I treasure. And thank you for loving my daughter and embracing her and her ministry among you.

First Presbyterian Church of Garner is a special family of faith. I give thanks to God for you. And I will continue to watch and listen for the new ways God will use you for the furtherance of God's kingdom.

Blessings and much love to you all!

Pastor Debbie



Mission Ministries

Garner Area Ministries

Suggested "Item of the Month":

"Trimmings" for the turkey (rice, stuffing, vegetables, pumpkin, soups)

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!



STRESSED ABOUT HOLIDAY SPENDING?
HAVE THINGS YOU DON'T NEED BUT OTHERS MIGHT?
JOIN US FOR THE...

SECOND ANNUAL HOLIDAY SWAP SHOP

Come to swap or just to shop!
All items will be free of charge

DECEMBER **12** 8am-3pm

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
503 LAKESIDE DRIVE GARNER, NC 27529

DONATIONS WELCOME AT THE ADDRESS ABOVE
NOVEMBER 14, 21, 28 & DECEMBER 5 - 11AM-1PM
FOR INFO & VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES
EMAIL GARNERHOLIDAYSHOP@GMAIL.COM

Community Navigators
Community Builders

Christmas Town Donation Drive

Let's share the joy!
Donate items to make Christmas
more meaningful for **local
elementary school students and
neighbors** in our area.

 Grocery Gift Cards	 Leggings (all sizes)	 T-Shirts (all sizes)
 Reusable water bottles	 Non-perishable canned goods	 Warm Weather Clothing

Christmas Town Festival
Saturday, December 5th
10am-2pm
Home Depot in Garner (off Timber Dr.)
<https://www.garnercncb.com/>



Mission Ministries

Calling All Angels!!!

YES, it's time for the ANGEL TREE!!! We're partnering again with Timber Drive Elementary School. The Missions Team works with the school's social worker and guidance counselor to provide us with the angel tree recipients and each family's wish list.

The Angel Tree will be in the narthex from November 15 - November 29, along with the wish lists and gift tags for each recipient. The Missions Team will be available to answer questions and help you sign up and retrieve gift tags from the tree.

- All gifts are to be wrapped or in gift bags
- Attach gift tags (retrieved from the Angel Tree)
- Include gift receipts inside your wrapped gifts
- Return your wrapped gifts to the church parlor between November 15 and December 6.

Thank you for helping others celebrate the season with Hope, Happiness, Peace & Love!



2 Cents a Meal

Collected on the last Sunday of 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 others' needs and our call as Christians to respond to their hunger. The money collected is dedicated during the morning worship service and then distributed to hunger initiatives, including Garner Area Ministries and the World Hunger Fund.





**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF GARNER**

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Garner, NC 27529
Phone: 919-772-0727

Pastor:

pastor@firstpresbyterianchurchgarner.com

Admin Assistant:

administration@firstpresbyterianchurchgarner.com

Director of Music Ministries:

music@firstpresbyterianchurchgarner.com

Join us for a refreshing...

**Wellness Walk &
Fellowship**

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 14

1:30PM: MEET AT LAKE BENSON PARK, PICNIC SHELTER #1

2:15P-3:30PM : FELLOWSHIP AT HOLL & STONE FARM

*All ages and
fitness levels
are welcome*



WALK,
BREATHE,
RECHARGE

A perfect way to
boost your mood,
move your body,
and connect with
your community!



**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF GARNER**



POINSETTIAS

The Presbyterian Women will begin taking orders for poinsettias starting November 1st thru November 15th. The Poinsettias have increased to \$15 per flower. The colors available are Red, White or Pink. Please stop by the Ogburn Classroom right after church to drop off your order form and payment. You can also mail your order to the office. If you have questions, please email Jane Knabe at jrknabe66@gmail.com.

The poinsettia tree will be placed in the Narthex to adorn the church during Advent. Poinsettias will be delivered on Friday, December 4th and remain in the church until December 24th when you can pick up your poinsettia to take home after the Christmas Eve Service.

Thanks to the Lillie Circle, Friendship Circle and Stephanie Taylor-Morgan for their support with this lovely project.