

ANNUAL REPORT 2024



First Presbyterian Church

131 Big Valley Street
Boone, North Carolina 28607

Our Mission Statement:

*“A family of faith Called to Grow in the love of Christ,
Share that Good News, and Serve the world.”*

2024 Annual Report

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828-264-3906

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A Year in Review - From our Pastor

Dear FPC Family of Faith,

The Apostle Paul proclaims, *“By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care.”* (I Corinthians 3:10). As I reflect on 2024 the one word that continues to come to the forefront of my mind is “build”. This word is foundational to a lot of what we have experienced together in ministry as a church. Paul was speaking about his work and about Apollo’s work who succeeded him; acknowledging they both sought to serve Christ and help build the church.

In ministry we are always building on foundations that have been laid before us. This year we had a number of staffing transitions upon which we were building upon. Jennifer Jones retired as our Office Administrator in March and moved to a part-time role as our Finance Director. Lynne Hutelmyer stepped in to help from March to August, before Erin Fowler transitioned into our Administrative Assistant role, coupled with her Children’s Ministry Director role. Erin transitioned back to the school system to teach in January and was part-time as our Children’s Director until she came back in her new role in August. Our Choir Director, Brandon Winbush, took a new call to FPC Newton, NC after Easter, and Ellen Brown transitioned as our Interim until we called Dr. John Ross in November to be our new Music Director. Our Youth Director, Shawn Huntley, stepped down at the end of July and I have taken on the youth ministry until we can be better equipped to bring on a new youth leader. And Larke Blanton moved from a part-time role to full-time in August to pursue becoming ordained and installed as an Associate Pastor through the Presbytery. So many changes have taken place this year and yet we continue to build upon what has been done before!



Speaking of building, we raised \$31,322 for our Lenten Mission Project to support our high school mission trip to Sumpango, Guatemala. These funds literally helped build nine total homes this summer, of which three were constructed by 19 of our own members. What a gift it is to share Christ’s love by gifting a home to families who otherwise wouldn’t be able to afford one! In addition, our church building needed new siding installed due to poor installation when it was originally constructed. The old siding was a liability and in May the church moved forward contracting work with Stone Restoration and REI Engineering to begin a rebuild of two-thirds of the building. From May to December our building was under construction as the old siding was removed and the new siding was put on. We’ve seen quite a transformation take place, and now we have the assurance that it will last for a long time. In addition, we originally planned to take out a \$320,000 loan but thanks to generous members and to good financial stewardship, we will only have to account for \$160,000 withdrawn. Thanks be to God!

At the end of September Hurricane Helene hit western North Carolina hard. All of us experienced the effects of the storm, and many were without power for over two weeks. In response, our church partnered with Water Mission to provide safe and clean drinking water through their living water treatment systems, but also to support families who were without power. Over the course of two weeks, we worked with families who needed help, by assembling and distributing 875 generators to our neighbors in need. In addition, we raised \$30,610 through donations from within and beyond to provide needed help to those seriously affected by the storm. Together we were building hope through Christ to those who needed it most.

God is the master builder, our cornerstone, and God has been at work building our faith as we’ve gathered in meaningful worship services, as we’ve cared for one another, as we’ve studied scripture together and prayed for one another, and as we’ve served members of our community. You’ll find continued proof of God’s work building among us in the pages of this report. Truth be told, this work continues moment by moment, day after day and on into this New Year. And the good news is that God has called us together to continue to build on the foundations that have been laid before us. May we do so with care but also with joy!

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Jeff

Staff

Dr. Jeff Smith, Pastor and Youth Pastor (Aug-Dec)
Rev. Larke Blanton, Director of Adult Education (Jan-Aug), Pastoral Associate (Sept-Dec)
Jennifer Jones, Finance Director & Office Administrator (Jan-Mar)
Lynne Hutelmyer, Office Administrator (Mar-Aug)
Erin Fowler, Children's Director & Administrative Assistant (Aug-Dec)
Shawn Huntley, Director of Youth Ministry (Jan-July)
Brandon Winbush, Chancel Choir Director (Jan-Apr)
Ellen Brown, Interim Chancel Choir Director (May-Oct)
Dr. John Ross, Music Director (Nov-Dec)
Cindy Clawson, Praise Team Director
Tyler, Dellaperute, Pianist
Sylvia Rippy, Handbell Director
Brooke Hollar, First Morning Out Director

Elders

Melissa Bahleda
Jack Butler
Neville Chaney
Margaret Gregor
Allison Harrison
Joe Hutelmyer
David Kesler
Anna Lehman (Clerk)
Frank Mayberry
Carrie Mersch
Patrick Moree
Sue Newell

Deacons

Jane Butler
Barb Edwards
Andrew Glover
Sarah Gordon
Dot Hutelmyer
Katherine Logan
Jerri Mayberry
Ben Miller
Guy Rippy
Linda Ruff
Dee Pelliccio
Jo Sorrell

Baptisms

Bethany Browning
Susanna Goff
Porter Liljestrang
James Mersch
Maddy Wilson

Deaths

Jean Ray

New Members

Bethany Browning
Ellen Browning
Susanna Goff
Anneliese Haibach
Peter Haibach
Emma Lehman
Porter Liljestrang
James Mersch

Jon Burgess
Caleb Ogden
Casey Patton
Laurel Patton
Jeremy Turner
Megan Turner
Olivia Turner
Weston Turner
Maddy Wilson

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Moderator: Jackson Butler, Elder

Co-Moderator: Carrie Merschat, Elder



Children's Ministry

The Children's Ministry continued to see many regular attendees of Sunday school and Reach Wednesday in 2024. On Sunday mornings the children worshiped our Lord with music accompanied by Kevin Hutelmyer's guitar and then divided into two groups taught by Beth Savage, Elizabeth Hutelmyer, Dawn Talton, Dot Hutelmyer, and Linda Steinbach for Bible lessons and games. Our Kidspring Bible Curriculum helped the kids know that Jesus is "Better than Gold" and our Summer Vacation Bible School lessons explored the Jesus parties of the New Testament. Our Advent study ended our year with knowing that Jesus is "The Best Gift Ever".

"Start the Party" Vacation Bible School took place on the evenings of June 23-June 25. Fifty children and forty youth and adult volunteers participated in disco party themed music, games, food box packing, and evening fellowship meals pointing them to the love of Jesus. Highlights included the humor of Greg Langdon's character, DJ Dan, student led singing and dancing, and a final celebration with a bounce house and large slide.

Jo Sorrell and Mrs. Erin had a blast spending time with Reach Wednesday kids studying the Fruit of the Spirit with the rest of Reach goers. The children learned "The Fruit of the Spirit's not a Coconut" song, and performed the tune during the last Reach meeting with Kevin Hutelmyer. The children took part in the Palm Sunday Service and the Lovefeast's worship time playing the melodee bells directed by Jo Sorrell.

Other events included Friday Parents Night Outs, and an Easter egg hunt, and a Christmas Party. Children learned about serving by coloring pictures and writing messages in coloring books that were donated to Hospitality House during Gathering to Serve and painted pumpkins for centerpieces to add to the tables for the annual Thanksgiving Feast.

Erin Fowler, Children's Ministry Director

YOUTH MINISTRY



2024 was a transformative year for our youth as our high school students took an international mission trip in June to Sumpango, Guatemala to minister to and build homes for three families there. Our Lenten Mission raised over \$31,000 to support their efforts to construct six homes over the summer through Next Step Ministries. Working with Next Step Ministries and partnering with Breaking Cycles Guatemala, Shawn Huntley led a group of 19 of our church members including 11 high school students, two college students, and six adults.

Our mission team spent the week building block homes with tin roofs, spending time with children involved with Breaking Cycles Ministry, and in meaningful worship services each night together.

Thanks to the generosity of our Lenten Mission funds, our church provided six homes with the initial money donated and then an additional three homes were constructed by other groups with additional funds provided to Breaking Cycles from our church. This was the first international mission trip that our youth have been on led by the youth ministry. Our hope is to continue our relationship with Breaking Cycles on an ongoing basis and to partner with Next Step Ministries to take students back to Guatemala in the next few years so that all our students have an opportunity to serve globally.



In July, we had 8 youth, and two adults participate in the Passport Mission Conference in Spartanburg, SC. They enjoyed gathering together for worship, for fellowship, and served at several different mission sites with other youth from various churches across the southeast.



Shawn Huntley, our Director of Youth, stepped down at the end of July to support and care for her family. Pastor Jeff took on the responsibility of leading the students until we are better equipped to hire a new youth leader. God has blessed this ministry as our students have been involved with youth group on Sunday nights and mid-week gatherings on Reach Wednesdays. Many helped assemble generators during our partnership with Water Mission after Hurricane Helene, we packed meals together at our Feed the Hunger meal packing,

and our high school students continue to meet at Chick-Fil-A on Thursday mornings for a short devotional and prayer before school each week. In addition, our high school boys had two church basketball teams play in our league coached by Patrick Moree and Allen Trivette. We look forward to another great year in 2025!



Dr. Jeff Smith, Pastor

ADULT EDUCATION

2024 Highlights in Adult Education

The Adult Ministry program enjoyed another blessed and purposeful year in 2024. Our efforts are facilitated by staff and various planning teams. Our programming is coordinated through the Christian Education Committee which provides guidance and support. This past year, we have continued to focus our programming on Sunday School and Reach Wednesday night programs.

Our Sunday School classes continued to meet weekly throughout the year. We are blessed to offer eight different classes each week. These classes meet to discuss content from traditional biblical studies to current topics on various social concerns. All classes are meeting in-person, with a few continuing to offer Zoom options for our homebound and out of town folks. Class leaders utilize a variety of teaching media, studies, curriculum, and styles in an effort to offer something meaningful to everyone.

Our Sunday School classes also combined for our annual joint Advent study. The Advent study, led by Pastor Larke Blanton, followed Pastor Jeff's sermon series. It was titled, "O, Come Let Us Adore Him". From December 1 through December 22 our adults gathered to focus our faith on four Advent areas: Prepare, Presence, Passion, and Promise. December 29th brought a unique joint Sunday School experience: Cocoa, Cider, and Carols. Families joined together to sip and sing as we celebrated the newborn King!

Our Reach Wednesday programming continued in-person with both a spring and fall series. We offered a variety of classes and special programs for our various age groups in the Spring. For Fall 2024 REACH we tried on something new: SMALL GROUPS! Pastor Larke led a combined teaching portion and then the large group transitioned to their small groups for deeper discussion and reflection on the scripture and that week's fruit. Our topic was "Fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5). Planning for our spring and fall programming is supported by a dedicated group of folks who make up our Reach Wednesday Planning Team.

Again in 2024, many church members and class facilitators continued to rely on the use of Right Now Media for most studies. Some classes transitioned to book series. This streaming service offers instant access to thousands of great videos for kids, youth, parents, married couples and more. Right Now Media can be accessed from a smartphone, tablet, or computer. The church underwrites the cost of this service and offers it to our members and guests for free! Right Now Media is available for all of our adult ministry activities in addition to use by individuals and families at any time.

We are set to soar into the new year with hearts excited for the Messiah who meets us there!

Rev. Larke Blanton, Pastoral Associate

CHURCH LIFE

Moderator: Sue Newell, Elder

Team members: Sharon Carlton, Joan Cone, Angie Holt, Sandy Kesler, Katherine Logan, Eric and Marsha Parsons, Linda and LaFelle Ruff, Beth Savage

The Church Life Team's Mission is to involve members and friends of the congregation in the life of the church by creating opportunities, guided by the Holy Spirit, to grow, and to share our faith, hope, and love, in relationship with others. Here's some of what life at FPC looked like in 2024...

"Meet and Greet Your Deacon and Grab a Treat" was held on March 3, after worship to help deacons get to know their care groups better. Each deacon had a table set up in the gym with treat bags for their care group that had a note with their contact info and a favorite scripture or how they plan to pray for their care group. There was also a table with treats for visitors. Posters were available that had the deacons photos and a list of their care group. The deacons collected contact information for each person in their care group that stopped by so they would know how best to stay connected.



Easter Covered Dish Celebration Brunch was held on March 31, at 9:30am. Everyone was encouraged to bring a favorite finger food or breakfast casserole to share. It's always a great opportunity for fellowship as we celebrate our Risen Lord together.

Let It Shine Spring Workday: May 4, 8am – noon, (a prep day was held on Friday, April 19). Volunteers painted gym walls, the youth room, washed windows, deep cleaned the kitchen, organized the pantry, painted corner guards for the upper level of the church. After a full morning, everyone came together to share their experiences over a pizza lunch.



The Church Picnic on July 21 was rained out, so we held it at the church instead of Valle Crucis Park. The men of the church grilled hamburgers and hotdogs. The Church Life Team provided support by purchasing food, preparing the fixin's, setting up tables and chairs in the Gathering Space, organizing the food, and adding conversation starters and crayons at each table. The gym was free for kids of all ages to play. We are so thankful for the facility God has provided for us!

Church Directory update –families were contacted whose photos had not been updated in a long time with instructions about how to submit a new photo for the directory.

Clergy Appreciation Month – In October, CL helped facilitate getting the word out to the congregation to encourage them to send cards of appreciation, and potentially make donations to local ministries in honor of Pastor Jeff and Pastor Larke. Church Life members provided edible goodies for Jeff and Larke and Erin for the staff meetings in October. The timing to express our gratitude to them was good since it occurred in the midst of disaster relief after Hurricane Helene.



Thanksgiving Fellowship Covered Dish Meal – On November 19, we were blessed to be able to share a time of fellowship and a lot of good food with around 20 guests from the Hospitality House. Many thanks to the whole church family for welcoming our neighbors and sharing the love of Jesus!

Welcome Bags were provided for new members May 19 and October 20, which included ways to make them feel welcome and part of our church family: a personal card to welcome them, a FPC note pad, car sticker, instructions for Instant Church Directory, and RightNowMedia, a JESUS plaque and a homemade treat. October 20 was also Dedication Sunday. CL provided treats in the Gathering Space. It was a good opportunity to stay and connect with our new members and others after Hurricane Helene.

Moment for Church Life on 5th Sundays - Church Life takes a couple of minutes to share something about life at FPC to help people know what's going on, how they can be involved, and how we share the love of Christ through what we do. In March we held the Easter Sunday brunch. In June welcome cards were explained and ways were shared that visitors and members could get involved at FPC. September was going to be about the Knarhex Knitters, but was canceled due to Hurricane Helene. December's moment is an invitation to join us the first Sunday in January 2025 to get to know each other a bit better while sharing some savory treats.

Coffee Ministry – Regular and decaf coffee made by volunteers welcomes those who come to Sunday School in the downstairs hall.

The Church Life Team is so grateful to be able to offer opportunities to grow in our faith, hope and love as we serve God alongside our church family, and we look forwards to doing the same in 2025!

COMMUNICATIONS

Moderator: Frank Mayberry, Elder

Co-Moderator: Patrick Moree, Elder

During the past year, the Communications Committee began working on a new video for our Church. You may have noticed Garner Dewey videoing and taking pictures at a variety of Church events – thanks to Garner for all his work! We hope to complete this project during the coming year.

Our committee continues to focus our communications on the following activities:

- ◆ www.firstpresboone.org website
- ◆ In Contact – our weekly newsletter
- ◆ “Text in Church” notification
- ◆ Zoom
- ◆ Facebook
- ◆ Instagram
- ◆ Welcome/Connect cards
- ◆ Flyers of upcoming events in bulletin
- ◆ YouTube Livestream of Worship Services
- ◆ FPC note pads available to new members and church staff
- ◆ FPC t-shirts available for order/purchase to congregational members

The Communications Committee meets monthly.

CONGREGATIONAL CARE

The Congregational Care committee serves as an adjunct of the Diaconate of the church with a mission to provide loving and compassionate care when needed, according to the season of life or needs which arise from birth, illness, hospitalization, or death within a family. The committee serves in various capacities, with primary responsibility for the following five initiatives in Congregational Care:

Comfort Kitchen - This ministry team is dedicated to preparing homemade, individually packaged meals for our sick and homebound. Arlene Steeves, Claudia Bake, Carolyn Banzhaf, and Linda Phelan keep our church freezer stocked with healthy, tasty meals using minimal amounts of fat, sugar and salt. Meals are primarily distributed by Pat Weaver (Congregational Care team), Deacons and church members. These meals may be delivered by anyone to anyone in need of extra help, love and prayer. This year the Comfort Kitchen Team prepared 158 meals.

Card Ministry - In 2024, 634 cards were sent. Cards vary from “Thinking of You, Get Well, Sympathy, Happy Birthday, Christmas, and notes of Encouragement”. Pat Weaver says “I make calls checking weekly on folks who are sick, lonely, hurting, birthdays, widows....We want people to know they are not forgotten by their church.”

Knarthex Knitters - The Knarthex Knitters worked together to knit and crochet prayer shawls and lapgans for individuals experiencing grief, illness, or other needs in 2024. Last year we gave 12 shawls and lapgans.

New Chapter Widow’s Group - New Chapters fosters community by encouraging and supporting widows in our congregation and greater area as they move through grieving processes and adjust to the new chapters of their lives.

Gatherings, activities, service projects, and communication are facilitated by Sharon Carlton.

New widows are provided with the Stephen Ministry “Journeying Through Grief” series of booklets over the course of the year, and are encouraged to attend Grief Share classes.

Rev. Larke Blanton, Pastoral Associate

DEACONS' FUND 2024

Food Cards for Angel Tree	\$3,175.00
Payment on Mortgage	\$1,679.00
Total Distribution	\$5,354.00

Respectfully submitted, Ben Miller, Treasurer

2024 ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

The Endowment Committee currently manages two funds. One is the Hunter Unrestricted Fund that began when the stock gifted by the Hunter brothers went public in 1995 with a market value of \$235k. In 1996 the brothers made an additional gift of stock with a market value of \$330k. In 2022 we received \$58k from the Delores Bell Estate. That gift was designated for mission projects and is part of the mission reserve. To date the Unrestricted fund has paid out \$914,807 for the capital needs of our church, and \$602,855 for mission projects. The balance in the fund at 12/31/24 was \$804,557.

The other fund is the Weeks FMO Scholarship Fund that began in 2006 with an anonymous gift of \$30,000. To date the fund has paid out \$32,814 for FMO scholarships and had a balance at 12/31/24 of \$44,474.

Currently in the Unrestricted Fund we reserve 1% per quarter for mission projects, and 1/2% per quarter for capital needs projects. Session then draws on those reserves on an as needed basis. Currently we remit 6% of the June 30th FMO Fund balance each year to a reserve controlled by the FMO board.

Our current goal is to soundly grow each of these funds by more than the 6% committed to annual expenditures.

Activity in those funds for 2024 was as follows:

	Bal. 12/31/23	Gain (Loss)	Expended	Bal 12/31/24
Unrestricted	\$739,087	\$98,470	(\$33,000)	\$804,557
FMO	<u>41,531</u>	<u>5,592</u>	<u>(2,649)</u>	<u>44,474</u>
Total	<u>\$780,618</u>	<u>\$104,062</u>	<u>(\$35,649)</u>	<u>\$849,031</u>

Activity in the Unrestricted reserve accounts was as follows:

	Mission Projects.	Capital Needs.	Total Reserves
Balances 12/31/23	\$65,873	\$65,867	\$131,740
Add. per formula.	31,564	15,781	47,345
Expended	<u>(33,000)</u>	<u>(0)</u>	<u>(33,000)</u>
Balances 12/31/24	<u>\$64,437</u>	<u>\$81,648</u>	<u>\$146,085</u>

\$48,345 of the Mission Reserve is the remaining balance of the Delores Bell Estate gift.

If you have any questions or if you have an interest in serving on this committee, please contact any of our members. At 12/31/24 our committee members were Justin Cox, chair, Keith Ogden, vice chair, Gary Moss, secretary, Bill Caroselli Jr., Treasurer, and at large Neville Chaney, Wayne Steeves and Greg Warmuth.

Justin Cox, Chair

FINANCE / STEWARDSHIP

Moderator: Greg Warmuth

Co-Moderator: Joe Hutelmyer

Committee Members: Wayne Steeves, Gary Moss, Betsy Payne, Ben Miller, Justin Cox

We started 2023 with a budgeted and expected deficit of (\$98,840). We ended the year with a net income of \$8,431.75 as detailed below. In addition, our membership made substantial contributions to support the Deacons' Fund, Youth Missions, Property Reskinning, and the local Disaster Relief projects which are detailed in other places of this Annual Report. The presence of the Holy Spirit continues to lead our membership.

2023 Revenues	Amount	Percent	2024 Budgeted	Amount
Pledges	\$612,092	84.78%	Pledges	\$538,248
Member Giving	38,124	5.28%	Member Giving	26,740
Loose Offerings	25,709	3.56%	Loose Offerings	24,000
Endowment	28,000	3.88%	Endowment	28,000
Interest Income	18,071	2.50%	Interest Income	20,000
Total Income	\$721,996	100.00%	Total Income	\$636,988
2023 Expenses			2024 Budgeted	
Administration	\$471,156	66.03%	Administration	\$426,894
Congregational Care	1,062	0.15%	Congregational Care	1,800
Building & Grounds	96,182	13.48%	Building & Grounds	119,974
Missions	99,588	13.96%	Missions	94,800
Worship	21,631	3.03%	Worship	22,325
Children's Education	12,025	1.69%	Children's Education	13,517
Youth Education	6,870	.96%	Youth Education	11,950
Adult Education	1,981	0.28%	Adult Education	3,600
Church Life	2,131	0.30%	Church Life	4,900
Communications	938	0.13%	Communications	1,500
Total Expenses	\$713,564	100.00%	Total Expenses	\$701,260
Net Income	\$8,432	1.17%	Net Income	\$ (64,272)

MISSION

Co-Chairs: Melissa Bahleda and Margaret Gregor, Elders

The Mission Committee of First Presbyterian Church glorifies Jesus Christ as we proclaim the Gospel, hands on and with partners in ministry, while sharing our resources in our community and around the world.

Each month the committee provided a Minute for Mission in the church's worship service, sharing information about our outreach efforts with the Congregation.

The committee met monthly to plan and organize outreach efforts in 2024. Committee activities included a number of projects throughout the year. We supported the youth mission trip to Guatemala through the Lenten offering of \$31,322. In March we hosted a dinner for the Presbyterian/Episcopal Campus Ministry at the Bahleda's home where the group enjoyed an evening of food and fellowship. The committee designated money from the Endowment fund for a children's ministry in the Ukraine. We organized Gathering to Serve and Feed the Hunger and assisted with other community, national, and international mission projects.

In November the committee developed a process for distributing funds in the church's disaster recovery fund in response to hurricane Helene. We identified individuals in need, and distributed monies totaling \$30,610 as approved by committee members. Funds from the Moravian Lovefest offering have been added to this effort. This work is ongoing and will continue in 2025.

2024 Mission Committee Budget

54110-OP	RUF Campus Ministry-Will Barbour	\$1,200.00
54215-OP	Hospitality House	\$10,000.00
5254220-OP	Hunger Coalition	\$10,000.00
54310-OP	International hunger relief-Feed the Hunger	\$4,300.00
54310-OP	Food 4 Families	\$7,000.00
54321-OP	Hebron USA-Clinic	\$13,000.00
54323-OP	WeCAN	\$10,000.00
54330-OP	PECM	\$5,500.00
54402-OP	Freedom Farm/Kari's Home	\$7,000.00
54406-OP	Wood Lot	\$1000.00
	Forgiven Ministries/ODWG	\$2,500.00
54408-OP	RAM	\$3,000.00
54409-OP	Casting Bread/Travis' Lunchbox	\$3,000.00
54550-OP	Real Love Haiti	\$7,000.00
54900-OP	Mission Discretionary EF	\$3,500.00
54901-OP	Gathering to Serve	\$300.00
	World Relief Triad	\$1,500.00
	International Partnerships	\$2,500.00
	PAACS	\$2,500.00
	Total	\$94,800.00

Pictures from 2024 Mission Moments



PROPERTY AND PERSONNEL

Moderator: Neville Chaney

Co-Moderator: David Kesler

2024 was consumed by two primary areas – personnel changes and construction. Jennifer Jones wrapped up her 27-year full time career as our Church Administrator. We knew that she would be hard to replace, and we were right! However, Jennifer agreed to work part-time as our Director of Finance and Lynn Hutelmeyer stepped in as Administrative Assistant for the various office tasks that did not require finance. Lynne was had to resign later in the year and Erin Fowler, our part-time Director of Children’s Ministries returned from teaching in the local school system to hold a dual role with the added responsibilities of Administrative Assistant and became a full-time employee again. Brandon Winbush, our Choir Director, moved out of the area during this year and was replaced on an interim basis by Ellen Brown. Ellen did a marvelous job but did not want the position on a permanent basis. In November, Dr. John Ross became our latest answer to prayers and assumed the role of Director of Music. He has coordinated the music from the traditional choir and the Praise band. We are blessed to have such an outstanding music ministry.

Construction – Our “Reskinning Project” notes go back to 2018. Between having contractors come in and tell us what needed to be done and our really not being confident in what we were hearing to having an architect tell us that he did not feel that he had the expertise to create the bid document that we would need to the simple funding of the project.... I am happy to say that we finally got it done! REI Engineers from Charlotte was recommended to us to review the defects in the previous construction, create the construction bid documents, and recommend appropriate contractors to send the bid to that could perform the work. The church retained REI to do the above. Bids were sent and Stone Restoration was selected. Their bid was for \$620,000 and was well below their competition. This bid included up to \$40,000 in contingency work. To begin this construction, approvals had to be received from the Executive Council of the Presbytery, the Session of First Presbyterian Boone, the congregation of First Presbyterian Boone, and we had to find a lender who would finance the remainder of the amount we did not have funds on hand designated for this project.

After looking at local financing options, the committee recommended the Investment Loan Program (ILP) of the Presbyterian Church USA to be our provider of funds. We were approved for a \$300,000 line of credit to use as we needed it. The Finance Committee of First Presbyterian administered the borrowing and the payments from existing accounts and credit sources. As of the end of 2024, all monies will have been paid to Stone Restoration. We decided with the approval of Stone Restoration to hold out \$15,000 to them for things that still need to be corrected. They will be coming back in better weather (spring) to repair some things such as damage to landscaping, etc.

Special thanks to David Kesler and especially Jeff Smith for the work they did to make sure that construction was done in the manner of acceptable construction techniques and craftsmanship. We did not want to have the shoddy job that the previous contractor oversaw, and we think that we accomplished that goal.

Thanks be to God!



WORSHIP

Moderator: Allison Harrison, Elder

Members: Jeff Smith, Cindy Clawson, Ellen Brown, Sylvia Rippey, Greg Langdon, Judy Miller, Rebecca Weaver, Wes Weaver, Shannon Odgen, Laura Brown

Mission: To enhance worship which involves all generations through drama, liturgical dance, singing, teaching, and preaching so the congregation of First Presbyterian Church experiences the joy and wonder of God and gives God praise and adoration.

Worship services continued as one blended service of Praise and Worship. The feedback continues to be positive. Members and visitors are enjoying the blended music from the Choir, Praise Band and Handbells. Larke Blanton became full time in August and began assisting regularly with our worship services. Other guest Pastors we enjoyed throughout the year were Rev. Kelly Barefoot, Rev. Doug Starrett and Dr. David Renwick.

Offering and Communion - We are pleased to have the tradition of having congregation members serve as worship assistants again. The offering plate is continuing to be passed down the aisles, and giving continues to be received online as well. Additionally, the congregation has been able to receive Communion by Intinction, with a pre-packaged option still available. We resumed the practice of an Officer's Prayer following the Offering. That same officer remains available after the service to pray with anyone who needs or would like to.

Music - The Worship Committee funded the Praise Band, Handbell, and Choir scholarships during the Spring, Summer and Fall semesters. We said farewell to Brandon Winbush as Choir Director on Easter. He has moved to further his education. Ellen Brown graciously agreed to be the Interim Choir Director. The Search Committee worked diligently to find the right person to continue the wonderful work Ellen had accomplished. In November, we welcomed Dr. John Ross as the Director of Music. He will preside over all music at FPC.

Special Services: We hosted several special services including Youth Sunday, Officer Installation, Pentecost Sunday, Stewardship Dedication Service and World Communion Sunday.

Lenten Services: FPC Boone offered the following services during the season of Lent this year: Ash Wednesday (including a Drive-Thru lunch time option), Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday service and Communion, the Good Friday noon service at Ruple Presbyterian Church with joint choir, and Easter Sunday morning service.

Advent Services: Greening of the church, Advent wreath lighting each Sunday, Moravian LoveFeast, Lessons and Carols Service, and Christmas Eve Service.





First Presbyterian Church

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