



ICHTHUS

December 2019

First Presbyterian Church, Smithfield, NC

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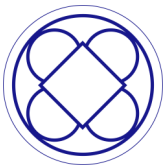
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Reflections in the Water: Gifts of Love

As each has received a gift, let us use it to serve one another. —1 Peter 4:10



*Come, they told me,
Our newborn King to see
Our finest gifts we bring
To lay before the king
So to honor Him
When we come.*

*Baby Jesus,
I am a poor boy, too
I have no gift to bring
That's fit to give our King
Shall I play for you?*

What is the best gift you've ever received?

I invite you to pause and reflect on the circumstances of that memorable gift. Perhaps it was a simple act of kindness that stays with you. Gifts and kind deeds stay with us because they are most probably characterized by your relationship with its giver even if that person was a total stranger who came to the rescue. I believe our understanding of the meaning and importance of gifts change as we grow. The gifts of childhood that capture our attention may be described as bright, shiny, new, and often expensive. Wisdom, with the benefit of our age and experience, teaches us that the most valuable presents are not necessarily those that glitter or are necessarily even tangible. What endures is the thoughtful consideration, the time given, and the sacrifices made by those who gave us gift and performed a kind act on our behalf.

My childhood was filled with stories about the meaning of gifts and sharing with others. From the song of the poor boy who plays music for the Christ child to O. Henry's short story *Gift of the Magi* wherein a husband and wife sacrifice their greatest personal possessions to give a gift to one another left strong impressions. The biblical story of the Magi themselves who traveled a long distance and presented gold, frankincense, and myrrh to the newborn of King of Israel has become a central part of the nativity story for me. In hindsight I know now the greatest gift was belonging to a family and church and community who knew the value of sharing these stories with me at a young age and the strong bonds between us it nurtured.

The Shaker hymn 'Tis a Gift to Be Simple' embodies my simple invitation to stewardship this year. Your faithful gifts of time, presence, and material in thankful response to the providence of God gives life to this faith community that we may serve others and one another. Mindful of the greatest gift we have received, I ask you to renew your commitment to the mission and ministry of First Presbyterian Church sowing in hope our faith in God's good promises.

Blessings to you all through this holy Advent,

Pastor Joe

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. —John 3:16

Prayerful Support for:



Add to
your
prayer
list

Marie Atkins at Smithfield Manor
Eleanor Bell at Barbour Court
Bernice Johnson, Autumn Care of Nash
John MacFadyen at Brookdale, Raleigh
Ellen Rogers in Raleigh
Virginia Williams in Laurinburg
Lucy Worley at BellaRose Nursing and Rehab, Garner
Linda Wells in Mt. Olive
Ruth Daniel

Wayne Dockery
Freddy Johnson
Tom Johnson
Sandra Lester
Bill Leist
Miriam Lore
Earl Marett
Jill Merrick
Mary Miller
Benny Pope
Chap Ragland
Peter Russell
Nelson Vaughn
Betty Welch
William Wells

Rebecca Ziady at Johnston Health
Ralph Mosley, Dot Ellmore's brother
Gerald Coley, Judy Miller's brother
Bryan Jones, Nan Jones' father
Harold Lee, Nan Jones' stepfather



Memorials for Joseph L. Hester, Sr., Ruth Bell, Shannon Kimball
Honorariums for Anna Pearce, Greg and

Joyce Knoll

Donors: Roger and Eleanor Horne, Joyce and David Lee, Judy Miller, Bill and Shirley Sharek, Laura Vaughn



Camille Boone and Kathy Rice for their tireless efforts for our church music program for our young children.
Kathy Rice for directing our handbell choir.

Patrick Templeton for her work with the Chancel Choir.

Jaime Beasley for serving as Finance Team Chair.

Beth Daniel for serving as the church treasurer.

Mary Miller and Martha Taylor for their work on the Care Packages.

Martha Taylor and Joy Worsham for their work with the Relay Cookie Walk.

Stan Coats, Kenny Duncan, and Evans Horne for taking care of our church property concerns.

Evans Horne for his work with our scouts and youth.

Sarah Pate for preparing communion elements and for her work with the youth.

Jo James for coordinating the volunteers at the front desk.

Julie Duncan for coordinating this year's Christmas in a Barn.

The Langdon family for allowing us to use their barn for Christmas in a Barn.

Jennifer Templeton for leading the Advent Workshop.

Eve Creech for providing the materials for the Worship Bags and for keeping the bags in good order.

Betsy Olive for coordinating arrangements for funerals and memorials services at our church.

Sandy Perkinson and Helen Best for heading up JOY Connection.

Camille Boone for coordinating the Prayer Shawl Ministry.

Hubert Schmidt for taking such wonderful care of our grounds.

Judy Schmidt for writing welcome notes to our visitors.

Diane Dockery for writing memorial acknowledgments.

Dot Ellmore and Judy Schmidt for taking care of the Angel Tree.

Greg and Joyce Knoll for coordinating volunteers for the SECU Hospice House meals.

Sandra Johnson for heading up the mailing for the Presbyterian Women's Thank Offering.

Debbie Jacobs for heading up the Fall Festival.

Maxine McFadyen for her work with the Prayer Chain.

Anita Liverman for caring for our columbarium and memorial garden.

Hank Roberson for always helping with flowers and for stepping in for Nancy Lee this year to head up Advent and Christmas decorations.

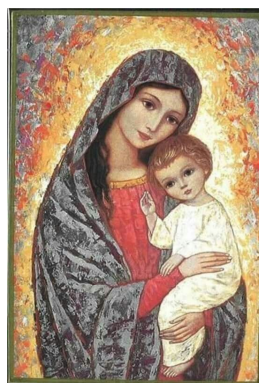
HIGHLIGHTS

of December Session

- Approved a Fellowship Covered Dish Lunch on Sunday, November 17, 2019.
- Approved annual leave for the pastor from Dec. 2-8, 2019 to attend his quarterly assessment at Structure House in Durham.
- Approved calling a congregational meeting on Sunday, November 24, 2019 for the purpose of electing the 2020 Nominating Team.
- Approved the dates for Stated Session Meetings for 2020 as: February 9, May 17, September 13, and November 8, 2020. The Joint Officers' Meeting was approved for Saturday, February 1, 2020.
- Approved quarterly quadrant chair meetings with Session members for 2020.
- Approved continuing the 2019 operating budget that was continued through August 2019 (with no changes from the 2018 budget) through December 31, 2019.
- Approved an Advent workshop with soup and sandwich lunch for Sunday, December 1, 2019.
- Approved Christmas in a Barn for Sunday, December 15, 2019.
- Approved receiving a gift of \$25,000 to the Building Fund, with grateful thanks and approved the request that the gift be applied to the fund principal.
- Approved a Fellowship Breakfast on Sunday, November 24, 2019, hosted by the Presbyterian Men.

If you have items you wish to bring before Session, please contact Debbie Jacobs, Clerk.

—Debbie Jacobs



For unto us a child is born.

Communications and Technology



Each Sunday, our worship service is streamed LIVE on Facebook. If you cannot be at church, you can still be there through this new technology! We have received great feedback from this and regularly have several households attending remotely. Feel free to share the page and video with your other Facebook friends.

COMMUNICATION & TECHNOLOGY

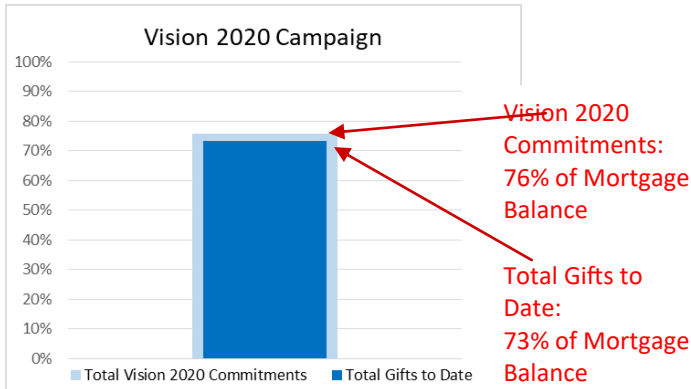


It is important for the church to have your correct contact information. If your phone, email, or mailing address has changed, please let Debbie Jacobs and the church office know so that we may keep our records current. An updated directory that is updated quarterly is available through the eNews. Please check the latest update to ensure we have your correct contact information.

—Debbie Jacobs

First Presbyterian Church Operating Results January—October 2018

	Actual	Budgeted*
*Budgeted numbers have been reviewed and updated from the previous publication.		
**There is a pending disbursement to Presbytery from the Mission Outreach line item.		
Revenue		
General Offering	200,422.00	219,656.00
Disbursements		
Education Quadrant	30,353.00	26,299.00
*Mission Outreach Quadrant	2,737.00	13,625.00
Spirituality Quadrant	119,669.00	130,477.00
Stewardship Quadrant	116,339.00	83,163.41
Total Disbursements	269,098.00	268,675.00
Net Income/(Deficit)	(68,676.00)	(48,991.00)
VISION 2020 Capital Campaign as of 10/31/2019		357,992
Pledge Gifts	428,196.00	
Memorials/Honorariums	33,194.00	
Other Gifts	61,952.00	
Total Gifts	523,342.00	
Total VISION 2020 Commitments	540,786.00	
Mortgage Balance	714,479.00	

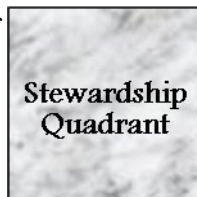


—Jaime Beasley

Stewardship News

Our 2020 stewardship campaign is off to a great start! The kick off fellowship meal was a relaxing time for visiting with each other, enjoying good food, and seeing a “whole church” effort come together. Evans, Emilia and Shelley asked the youth to help set up and cover tables and they did so with eager hearts. Debbie Jacobs and Judy Miller helped so much with set up and getting the food ready and out. And our clean up crew: WOW! “We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us.” Romans 12:6 We are blessed as a family of Christians to share so many gifts. How will YOU be a “good steward of the manifold grace of God?” What gift will YOU share during this stewardship season?

—Sandy Perkinson



Relay for Life Fundraiser



The Relay for Life Cookie Walk will be held Sunday, December 15 from 9:30-11:00 a.m. We need lots of cookies this year!

The sign-up sheets will be both in the parlor and at the front desk. Please bake 6-8 dozen of each kind of cookie you bring. (We will take less, of course!) If you can't get them to church by 9:30 on the 15th, please bring them to church between 10-12 a.m. on Saturday while the team is setting up.

If you return tins after the event, please make sure they are washed first.

Thank you for your participation and for helping us fight cancer!

—Martha Taylor
Debbie Jacobs
Team 37

FPC Increases Hospice Support

The Mission Outreach Quadrant partners with the volunteers and staff at the SECU Hospice House of Smithfield numerous times each year to provide an opportunity for our congregation to share our support and care to the families with loved one there by providing and serving a meal for them, the volunteers, and the staff. Special thanks to Rhonda Backner, Eve Creech, Jo James, Eleanor Horne, Jenny Ham, and Betsy Olive for the November 10 meal.

We also thank Eve Creech and Betsy Olive for providing lunch on September 28 and desserts on October 23 and 30. Many thanks to Lisa and Frank Deans and Betsy and Eve for coordinating meals again this past year and continuing to do so next year. Thanks to their help, we have more than doubled the number of meals we are able to share at Hospice over the past two years.

Mission Outreach also thanks the congregation for your generous support of Hospice House by stocking their pantry throughout the month of November. Special thanks goes to Anita Liverman for delivering the donations each week and to Hubert Schmidt for decorating the collection ox.

Thank you all for supporting this caring mission.

—Greg and Joyce Knoll



Feeding the Hungry

God bless us all! It is with excitement that the youth of our church are getting more involved in gathering food items for the hungry in our county. When you bring food for the youth's food drive, put in an extra can or two for the Yes We Can program; and when it is all combined, it will go the SAM Food Closet. You will be blessed with your sharing.

When our church hosted the New Hope Presbytery meeting in late October, one of the requests made was for each participant to bring a food item that could be passed on to SAM (Smithfield Area Ministries). Participants followed through by giving a little over 100 food items. This made the food closet volunteers at the Methodist Church very pleased that we Presbyterians gave about 230 food items in the month of October. During the Yes We Can food drive in November, our church gave 63 food items to it.

Can you imagine a family not having enough food to satisfy the nutritional needs of those you provide for and love? We hope our donations can alleviate some of that need and hunger.

Psalms 41: 1-3 says: How blessed is he who considers the helpless; the Lord will deliver him in a day of trouble.

—Hubert Schmidt





⁷And

she brought

forth her firstborn son,

and wrapped him in swaddling clothes,

and laid him in a manger, because there was no

room for them in the inn. ⁸And there were in the same country

shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

⁹And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone

round about them: and they were sore afraid. ¹⁰And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for,

behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. ¹¹For unto you is born this day

in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in

swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and

saying, ¹⁴Glory to God in the

highest, and on earth peace,

good will toward men.

Merry Christmas from the Staff of First Presbyterian Church, Smithfield



CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

DECEMBER 2019

Smithfield, NC 27577

PO Box 1159

First Presbyterian Church

PERMIT #93

SMITHFIELD, NC 27577

USPOSTAGE

NON-PROFIT STD MAIL



December 13-14

and Lock-in
7:00 p.m. —
7:00 a.m.

Our end-of-the-year celebration will be filled with fun, food, and activities. Each youth needs to bring along a \$5 wrapped gift. And another \$5

as they will go to Walmart to buy gifts for the Angel Tree. Pray for our wonderful, generous, energetic, but sleep-deprived youth leaders!

Quieting the Soul

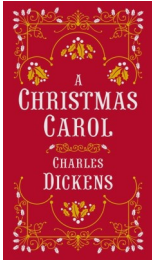
Music and Christmas share many characteristics. They both invite reflection, stir big feelings, and carry deep meaning. I'm sure many of you could share musical memories tied to the Christmas season.



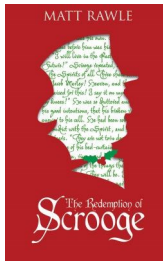
The choir has been reading through Advent and Christmas pieces since mid-November. The music of the season will be filled with familiar tunes and new melodies as we practice waiting for Christ and then celebrate His birth through our worship services together. We hope that God will allow us to be part of what stirs or quiets your soul this season. Merry Christmas!

—Patrick Templeton

December Bible Study A Christmas Carol



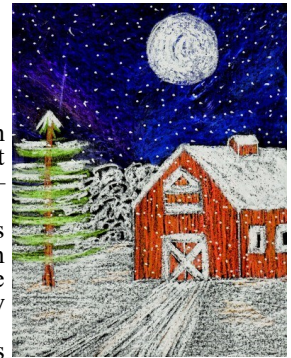
Join our Bible Study on Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m. on December 11 and 18 as we explore the Biblical foundation and themes of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. Our study guide is Matt Rawle's *The Redemption of Scrooge*. Contact the pastor for more information.



Christmas in a Barn Sunday, December 15 5:45 p.m.

Maps available in the vestibule

Once again First Presbyterian Church will celebrate the birth of Christ with one of its most beloved traditions — Christmas in a Barn.



Each year, barring rain, our members gather in a barn at Hillcrest Farm on Highway 210 in a barn owned by the Langdon family to reenact the nativity through costumes, music, and drama.

Julie Duncan is coordinator for this year's production, and Debbie Jacobs will be in charge of refreshments.

Please plan to attend Christmas in a Barn on Sunday, December 15, at 5:45 p.m. NOTE: If you have a child participating in the production, please arrive by 5:00 for costumes.

—Julie Duncan

And A Little Child Shall Lead Them . . .

“Men work together, I told him from the heart, Whether they work together or apart.”

A good thought from one of my favorite Robert Frost poems, these lines seem to apply to our church as well as to the subject of Frost's poem. I sat in the congregation on Youth Sunday and watched with great pride as the youth, grades 7-12, working together, sharing, singing, leading and let love lead, and I reflected on the accomplishments of our Education Quadrant over the past few years. I remember the proposal from the Education Quadrant that Jennifer Templeton made three years ago that we discontinue Sunday School as it has always been and move to a Wee Kirk program during church to see if we could serve more children by accommodating their busy schedules. It was difficult to give up what we had always done, but what a success it has been! So many more children attend Wee Kirk than attended Sunday School, and the lessons that are set up to be presented are interesting, traditional bible stories and include a craft and music. When the little ones leave the sanctuary after the children's sermon, I feel so good knowing that they're learning about people and places, lessons and parables from the bible, and that they're enjoying it! What a great decision!



Another great decision our church leadership and the youth have made was to have the youth meet at 9:30 on Sunday mornings! Evans Horne, Emilia Anaruma, and Shelley Roberts are providing great and steady leadership and covering relevant topics and teen concerns. And the youth are guiding their own program and are deeply involved in service to the church! They are attending church and sitting together...Because they want to! They are helping to take up offering, greeting worshippers, helping with set up and clean up of events, serving as lay readers, leading the children's sermon, assisting with Wee Kirk and other activities for the children, and even learning to prepare Communion. I believe that we are watching our own teenage miracle taking place, and I could burst with pride. I couldn't let 2019 pass without a tip of the hat to innovation and to the innovators who help us all grow in faith. I think I speak for the Session when I say "Well done!" Keep up the good work!

—Sandy Perkinson

**Educational
Quadrant**

Traditions Old and New

Deck the halls with boughs of holly— and lots of greenery and bows and lights and other sparkly things! That is our task for Monday, December 2 and 3 as we share in the laughter, fellowship and joy of decorating our church for Advent. I hope you can join us. We'll need light technicians and ladder climbers, bow fluffers and ornament hangers, plug finders and tree straighteners: there's a job for everyone! My favorite part is hanging the delicate and symbolic Chrismon ornaments and topping the tree with the crown of thorns made of pearls. Such a lovely part of Advent and such a lovely tradition. Come join us.



You may have noticed a few changes in another tradition: how we celebrate Communion. In order to make Communion more inclusive, we are now using only gluten free breads. That change, in addition to the use of the beautiful memorial Communion set donated in memory of Debbie Henderson by her family, and the kind help of the youth in preparing Communion make the celebration more meaningful. We hope you notice and like the changes.

At the end of December, my dear hard working friend, Judy Daniels, is stepping down as leader of the worship team. After three years in this leadership role (and several years as Spirituality Quadrant leader before that), Judy is ready for a change. Her enthusiasm, organization, attention to detail, and devotion to the many worship activities of this church have been a blessing to me, to her teammates, and to this church. Luckily, hand bells and choir will still enjoy her talents. Thanks, Judy, for your wonderful leadership!

—Sandy Perkinson, Spirituality Chair

**Spirituality
Quadrant**



**Christmas Joy Offering
December 1—22, 2019**

Each year during the Advent and Christmas seasons, we turn our eyes to Bethlehem and celebrate the wondrous gift of Jesus Christ our Savior.

God has blessed the Church with incredible leadership in every time and place, but those leaders often need to be supported by their communities as well. This offering addresses the support needed by some of our leaders, including supporting leadership development for communities of color and providing support for church workers in their time of need.

Angel Tree Ministry

We hope everyone will pick an “Angel” from the angle tree to help those less fortunate have a merrier Christmas in the community! Your unwrapped gifts need to be at the tree by Dec. 15. You may want to consider including wrapping paper as part of your donation.



—Hubert Schmidt

Need a Grant?

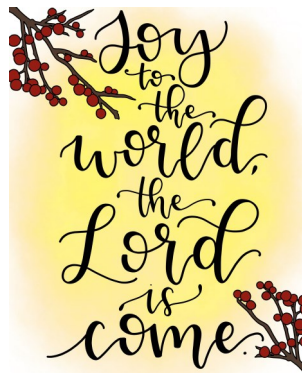
New Hope Presbytery has a program that solicits churches in the Presbytery to apply for grants of \$2000 that will help start a community project to meet a specific need. These applications are due each year by August 1. If you have some ideas or requests that we could/should make, or you would like to write, contact Joe or Hubert. Now, that is some opportunity!



—Hubert Schmidt

*Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
of Lessons and Carols*

**Tuesday,
December 24, 2019
7:00 p.m.
Our Sanctuary**



You are cordially invited to

JOIN US FOR OUR...

*Holiday Staff & Volunteer
Appreciation Luncheon*

**First Presbyterian Church
FELLOWSHIP HALL**

on

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2019

12:00 Noon

Please RSVP with the church office or on the sign-up sheet located at the front desk.

Advent Workshop



♦ Advent Workshop ♦



**Sunday, December 1
following worship**

The Education Quadrant invites you to participate in the annual Advent Workshop in the fellowship hall on the first Sunday of Advent.

This year we're trying something new! We're holding the workshop immediately following worship beginning with a luncheon. Soup and grilled cheese sandwiches will be served. Then we will get down to the business of Advent wreaths and a variety of other crafts for all ages. We are also inviting church members to contribute their musical talents and provide live, seasonal music during the workshop.

We are asking for donations of soups, desserts, and live greenery. Be on the lookout for sign-up sheets! 'Tis almost the season!

—Jennifer Templeton

