

REPORT TO THE CONGREGATION

First Presbyterian Church

August 2020 - July 2021



Do justice.



Love kindness.



Walk humbly with your God.

Introduction

Dear FPC Family and Friends,

In the Jewish tradition there is a celebratory word, “Dayenu,” which is several thousand years old and is put to music for the Passover. It is translated as “it would have been enough.” It is a prayer thanking God for leading them out of slavery, the giving of the law, the gift of Sabbath- and saying had God only given one, it would have been enough.

As we reflect on the past year, the spirit of Dayenu is flowing through our congregation. It would have been enough just to be able to begin live streaming our worship, but God also provided a way to have worship on the lawn. It would have been enough to simply move through the liturgical seasons, but God inspired us to create worship bags for each season and to reach out into the community with love.

We can see God’s blessings in the way we were able to be nurtured and to nurture one another through virtual Bible studies, member-to-member check-in calls, special online grief groups, and incredible renowned teachers from a variety of PCUSA seminaries teaching us. It would have been enough just to have in-home resources available, but our amazing Family Ministries team led by Laura Holbrook created Sundays on Park for families to safely gather and experience God’s love.

In a season where there was such pain, disorientation, and loss, our dedicated volunteers were able to keep the soup kitchen open, providing meals to our vulnerable neighbors and to financially support our mission partners when they needed it most.

It would have been enough just to have these innovations happen in our life together, but God inspired a dream of renovation for a vibrant future with refreshed gathering and education spaces and accessibility for all with our Faith Grows Here building project.

It is a joy to be able to announce that our Preschool is fully enrolled and opened on September 7. Renovations are expected to be completed by November 7, with the addition completed in March of 2022.

We have incredible blessings to give thanks for and a vibrant plan for ministry in the season ahead. We hope you will continue to support God’s mission at FPC with your time, talent, and treasure.

With affectionate faith,

David, Aram, and Liz

“He has told you,
O mortal,
what is good;
and what does the
LORD require of you
but to do justice,
and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly
with your God?”

Micah 6:8



Do justice.



Love kindness.



Walk humbly with your God.

This time last year, the Building Design Committee was working with our architect to complete the design of a three-story addition. The committee introduced the project to a new contractor to seek better pricing and construction services. In addition, the architect was preparing the documentation to submit the project for a range of approvals and permit reviews from different departments in the city. This effort was done all in the shadow of the pandemic surging for the first time. The committee worked remotely with great care for the health of its members while remaining dedicated to the success of the project.

Connecting on Park Street *Faith Grows Here*



The committee elected to use Hourigan Construction, a prominent company relatively new to the area that features a special team for projects of our modest size and a large pool of sub-contractors that would potentially yield more competitive pricing. Their first task was to create an estimate for the construction to test the size of the project. Based on their detailed estimate of construction costs, the 3-story addition was determined to be beyond budget.

After consulting with our architect, the committee changed our approach and vision for the project. We decided to make a modest addition connecting the core of the original church and the 1984 addition and to proceed with a much-needed renovation of the existing church. This effectively improves all interior spaces, except for the kitchen that was recently renovated and the Sanctuary. Outside, the re-envisioned project creates a clear new entry and improves key areas where we gather and play. The committee was convinced that the priorities our congregation discerned and established by our Session in 2018 would be addressed and we would better leverage the funds committed to the project.

The committee also realized a unique opportunity to perform the extensive renovation work while the church was empty and operated virtually. We crafted a new schedule consulting with both the architect and the construction manager to expedite the work knowing the disruption a major renovation would cause to programs in the church in person and the advantage of getting the work done in a timely manner and cost without interruption. The committee worked with the architect to reconsider the uses of our existing spaces, introduce more flexibility for the long-term effectiveness and utility of the renovation, and rethink the best use of our building for future generations while honoring our current congregation.

Our architect expedited the design effort on the new scope and began the process of seeking city approvals. This included the Board of Architectural Review (BAR) and the necessary building permits for the renovation. We passed the BAR review with ease and received the building permits allowing Hourigan to begin their demolition and construction work within the existing church. Meanwhile, the committee continued to meet with the architect weekly to finalize the drawings for the small addition. This allowed us to seek the construction permits for the addition and site plan approval. In the meantime, we have made final selections of finishes and furnishings working closely with our interior consultant.

We anticipated a reasonable amount of asbestos abatement based on previous assessments and we included this in the renovated scope, but a much larger amount of asbestos was discovered in unexpected areas and materials. Knowing the necessity and benefit of removing all asbestos for current and future generations, we authorized additional abatement and the resulting renovation work to patch and replace the finishes disturbed by the abatement.

This increased the cost of construction and caused some delay in the delivery of the finished project. Addition to this, construction costs jumped unexpectedly late spring due to the pandemic that crippled transportation of materials and the snowstorm in Texas that destroyed common construction materials in storage and in fabrication. Fortunately, with Session's January and March 2021 approvals, we were able to lock in over \$3 million of work and materials before the steep spike in inflation. Nevertheless, the remaining materials and work combined with increased asbestos removed increased our costs by nearly 20%. The Session held a special meeting to consider funding our options moving forward and voted unanimously to fund the remainder of the project through a bank loan.

The work moves forward with great anticipation. The projected date for completion of the renovation is late October, and we anticipate completion of the addition in Spring 2022.

Building Design Committee

Terry Forbes, Chair; Judy Blair, Jocelyn Kelly, John Meaney, Nancy Roche, Michael Joyce, David Forney



Do justice.



Love kindness.



Walk humbly with your God.

Do Justice

SERVE one another, our community, and the world with humility and love, relying on the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to lead us in witnessing to the love of God in Jesus Christ.

FPC continues its committed partnerships with organizations whose mission and vision align with that of our church, especially for the local communities of Charlottesville and the surrounding counties. With the leadership of the COC, our local mission partners for 2020-21 included: Abundant Life, Alliance for Interfaith Ministries, Habitat, The Haven, International Neighbors, PACEM, and Loaves & Fishes. We also supported the First Pres Preschool, Presbytery of the James, Montreat Conference Center, and special projects such as the Binns County Community Center in SWVA and the Free Kids' Bikes program for Charlottesville Community Bikes. We have ongoing partnerships with the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank and Region Ten's Blue Ridge House for their annual Thanksgiving meal.

Our Soup Kitchen ministry pivoted and has creatively served take-out lunch from the Carriage House during construction every Wednesday, rain or shine.

Additional efforts where First Pres provided specific support for our local mission partners include, but are not limited to:

Abundant Life: Support for property upgrades and Christmas Cares

AIM: Support for new Secure Seniors program delivering monthly groceries and household items as well as box fans

Habitat: Cleaning supplies with caddies for 10 new homeowners and ongoing commitment for Southwood

Haven: Dinners for guests being temporarily housed at La Quinta

International Neighbors: Participated in the Great Neighbor Guide Program, becoming "Neighbors" with a family of three from Afghanistan.

PACEM: Bed bug blaster, linen for women's shelter, support for Premier Circle project

Loaves & Fishes: Educational toys for pantry guests

With our Mission and Benevolence Endowment, First Pres also supported a retinal camera project for IRIS (International Response to Improve Sight) in Cameroon and housing repairs for Georgia's Friends, a local non-profit dedicated to the healing, health, and hope for women in recovery in Charlottesville.

In countless and active ways, First Pres is faithful in its mission and vision to love neighbor.



Do justice.



Love kindness.



Walk humbly with your God.

Love Kindness

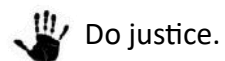
NURTURE our faith in Jesus Christ through education and fellowship, growing in wisdom, and deepening our relationship with God and one another.

Fellowship is an integral part of life at First Pres. We did not get to hold our fall or spring picnics because of COVID-19, but we were overjoyed to be able to host evening Picnic on Park in both June and July.

We enjoyed fellowship in the spring during our outdoor worship services, particularly on Pentecost Sunday when we had a Pentecost Parade and a food truck lunch. Construction on our fellowship spaces progressed over the course of the year, and we look forward to welcoming everyone when the work is complete.

Our New Member Team created a partner program that paired new members with an established church member, to help newcomers to feel more connected during the challenging times. Eighteen people joined this past year.

Additional ministries nurtured and supported members and the larger community: Blood Drive (through local options rather than onsite at the church), Card Ministry, Flower Delivery, Prayer Team, Transportation, Visitation, and more.



Do justice.



Love kindness.



Walk humbly with your God.

Family Ministries

New words entered our vocabulary, and unique practices became commonplace due to the pandemic that blanketed this past year. Seeking to provide study, nurture, service and fellowship, new forms of learning and growing in faith emerged:

Sundays On Park: A weekly intergenerational time between worship services gathered parents and children on tarps outdoors. Families engaged with a word from scripture and a creative practice.

Back to School Activity Bags were delivered to each student and included an FPC water bottle, prayers and wiggle break activities.

Advent Bags were shared with the church, and an Advent class using Godly Play resources anchored Sunday mornings via zoom.

When Christmas Eve services indoors seemed unlikely, a team of creative folks designed and produced a **Journey to Bethlehem**, an “experiential” walk through Christmas Eve. College students, youth and adults portrayed all the characters at 9 stations, and even an actual donkey, homemade sheep and 12-foot angels graced the walk. The Journey was a blessing to all, and we hope to repeat it in the future.

Winter hampered our weekly outdoor times, but we met when weather allowed, including a **Mission Focus** in February. Families chose to support either Living Water for the World, International Neighbors, or Food for Families by raising money as a family. **Lenten Bags** went out to the congregation, and a Holy Week coloring book was created and mailed to every child. Easter was outside, followed by a huge Easter Egg Hunt for children.

The **Pentecost Parade** added wheels. Close to 75 children, youth and adults biked, rolled, scootered, and walked the streets around the church shouting “Happy Birthday, Church!”

VBS was not doable due to the construction and COVID restrictions, so we continued with Sundays on Park and an **Under Construction** theme for summer. Families had their own tool boxes and each week a “morsel” about how we grow our faith in God was explored.



Do justice.



Love kindness.

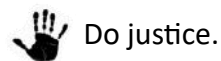


Walk humbly with your God.

Youth Ministry

Youth @First Pres are loyally committed to each other like family. Together we worship, study Scripture, engage in serious life talks, and explore faith in the larger Charlottesville community through outreach events. During the 2020-21 program year, however, we pivoted significantly due to COVID. Our major annual events such as Pilgrimage to DC (January) and Montreat (June) were canceled. Along with COVID, the building construction caused us to be creative in the ways we gathered in different gathering spaces, including regular outdoor spaces. Hence, this is exactly what we did.

Our youth gathered safely outdoors and indoors, wearing masks without complaints because the longing to be together outweighed any inconvenience. We gathered in the upper church parking lot for Faith & Firepit gatherings and even visited various church members' backyards for this new tradition, complete with s'mores. We routinely gathered at Nathan Jones' horse farm for outdoor YG gatherings. We ended the program year at Lake Monticello thanks to our 6th-7th grade teacher Amy Gillespie and her family's hospitality. We were inspired by our high school volunteer Bob Garnet's cabin building skills. Our seniors led worship for Youth Sunday without a hitch (COVID has no power over the Spirit's). We pivoted our resources and adjusted because crisis brought to surface the character of strength, resolve, resiliency, and faithfulness among our youth. Our team of committed adult mentors and volunteers has been a steady presence for our youth, and their prayers the best support for our ministry. While 2021 required flexibility for smaller and less frequent gatherings, our group gained a level of friendship and loyalty that is unbreakable. Our end of the year retreat at Lake Anna was a last-minute surprise and gift, and we are already looking forward to Montreat 2022 (June 12-18). If you want to be blessed in surprising ways, join us.



Do justice.



Love kindness.



Walk humbly with your God.

Adult Ministries

Adult Ministries helped lead the way in holding our fellowship together during this time of the COVID pandemic by offering a number of in-person and online classes to meet our congregation's needs.

We learned:

- About racial history in the Presbyterian Church and its cultural effects today
- How to read, ponder, and discuss our sacred texts
- How Mark and others interpreted the life of Jesus
- Interpretation of the Scripture via pastor-led Bible discussion
- Bible history and culture from Abraham to David
- Expert Sunday school studies of Proverbs, James, and modern theological concepts

These have all fit our mission goals of:

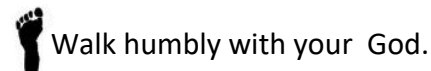
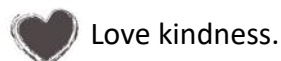
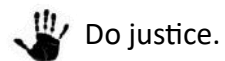
Learning opportunities

Nurturing experiences

Centering activities

Engaging the greater world

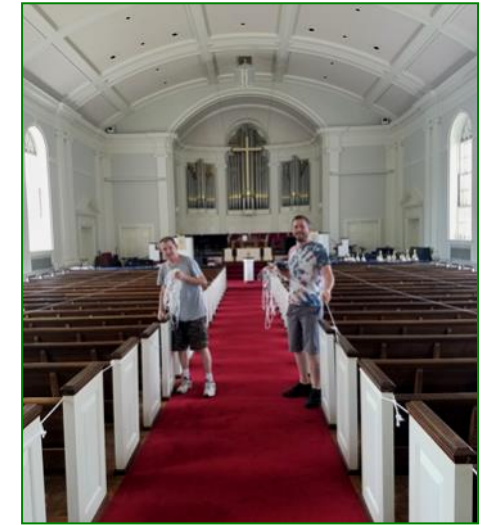
While the pandemic kept us apart physically for much of the year, we remained together in our study and fellowship via modern technology and love of God and one another.



Walk Humbly with God

WORSHIP God faithfully and joyfully,
prayerfully seeking God's direction for our lives.

Worship was held throughout the year following COVID-19 protocol as per the CDC guidelines. We were able to safely provide in-person worship for most of the year. Sometimes worship was held inside, socially distanced with the congregation wearing masks, and other times it was held outside only. When it was safe, we were able to lift restrictions for a period of time. Video recordings have been available since October 2020.



The Welcome and Worship Committee decorated for Advent. Poinsettias were distributed to shut ins after use. A Journey to Bethlehem was held outside on December 23, followed by an outdoor Christmas Eve service that was rescheduled due to weather.



On Ash Wednesday, we offered drive-thru ashes and Lenten bags. There was a Maundy Thursday service as well. Three Easter services were held, starting with a sunrise service. Weekly communion was offered starting at the end of March. New service times were approved to start at 8:30 and 11:00 to enable longer fellowship time, starting Summer 2021. Greeters were added at the end of July. Choir was able to add singers and bells as restrictions were lifted. Worship ran smoothly despite the many restrictions and obstacles. Many people contributed to making the services successful and meaningful.



Do justice.



Love kindness.



Walk humbly with your God.

Music at First Pres

This year was a very challenging year for musicians to be able to find ways to make music. The members of First Presbyterian's music ministry were able to play an important role in helping to lead the congregation in worship each week throughout this difficult time. Through recorded offerings, in person small groups, the continuation of handbell rehearsals and presentations, and Music on Park Street concerts both indoors and outdoors, the musicians of First Presbyterian found ways to connect with God, each other, the congregation and the community at large.



Do justice.

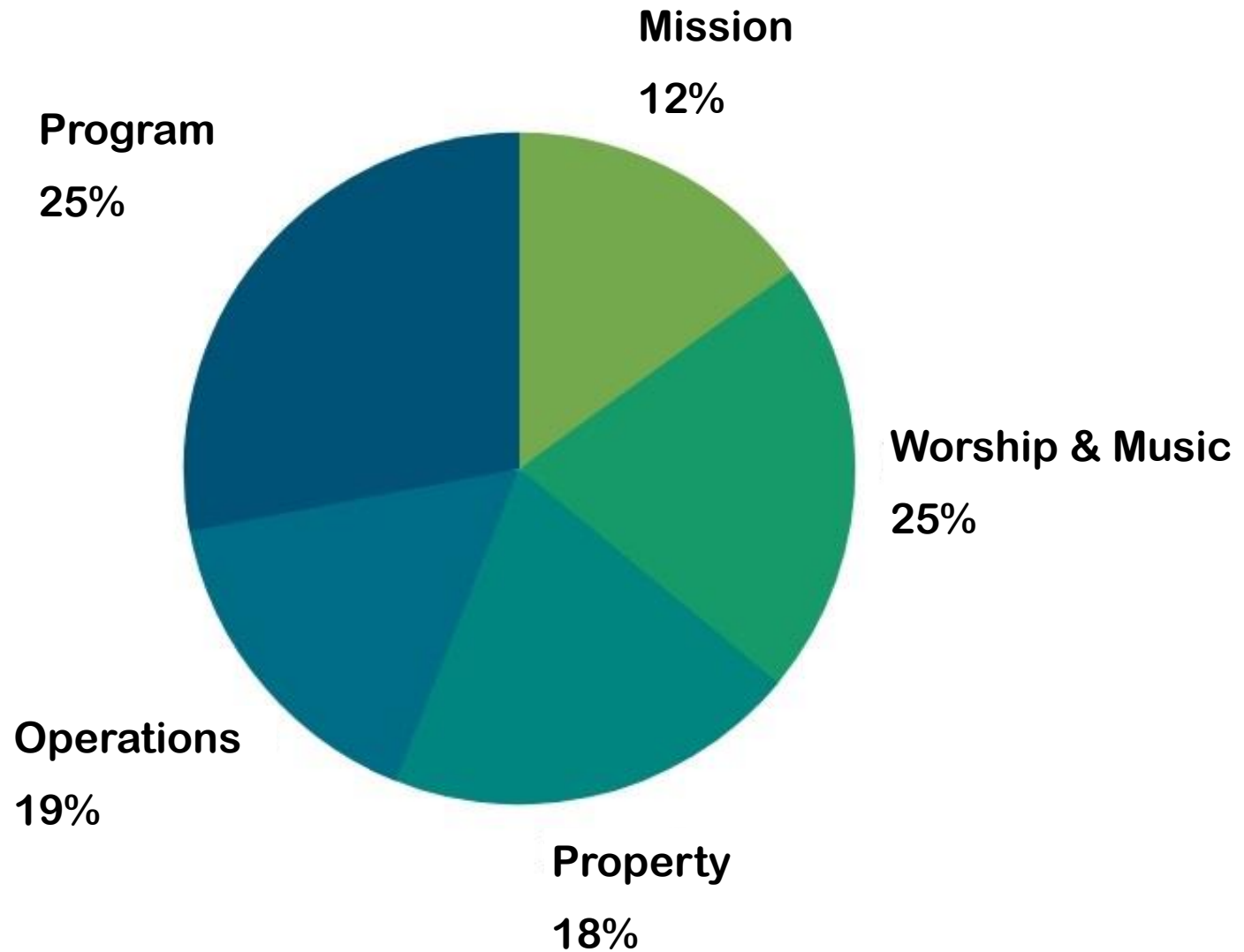


Love kindness.



Walk humbly with your God.

First Presbyterian Church Expenditures



Do justice.



Love kindness.



Walk humbly with your God.



Active Members

1,041

New Members

18

Baptisms

3

Average Worship Attendance

203

Faith Grow Here Pledges

195



Do justice.



Love kindness.



Walk humbly with your God.

Staff



Rev. Dr. David G. Forney
Rev. Dr. Aram Bae
Rev. Liz Forney
Donna Buchanan
Cathy Dalton
Laura Holbrook
Michael Joyce
Susan Lawson
Claire Linden
Nancy Lutz
Ashley Ravitsky
Tracey Schoch
Jen Snook
David Thompson
Dr. Jeremy Thompson
Helen Travis
AJ Wallace

Pastor and Head of Staff
Associate Pastor for Youth & Mission
Covenant Pastor
Preschool Director
Assistant Preschool Director
Director of Family Ministries
Facilities Manager
Office Administrator/Receptionist
Finance Manager
Faith Community Nurse
Assistant Director of Children's Music
Communications Director
Program Coordinator
Custodian
Director of Music
Bookkeeper
Seminary Intern

Leadership

Class of 2021

Elders of the Session

Robert Brewbaker
Lori Chapman
Terry Forbes
Susan Howard-Smith
Jennifer Jones
Gary Selmeczi
Tom Towberman
Ada Trowbridge

Board of Deacons

Allen Bailey
Anne Bear
Jane Brennan
Brenda Lipscomb
Yvonne Rice
Ellen Roberson
David Swett
Jocelyn Thach

Class of 2022

Elders of the Session

Christine Dean
Amy Gillespie
Rich Lutz
Cathy Meaney
Monika Mentzer
Wayne Mullins
David Schmidt

Board of Deacons

Nancy Brewbaker
Susan Carl
Anna Farrell
Allison Scholl
Thom Waite
Missy Witherow

Class of 2023

Elders of the Session

Judy Blair
Victoria Kean
David Maloney
Carolyn Pettit
Reid Thompson

Board of Deacons

Matt Benefield
Jill Campbell
Kara Chandeysson
Lisa Dugan
Lynn Ferguson
Glenn Forloines
Michael Loret



Do justice.



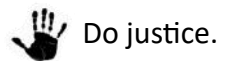
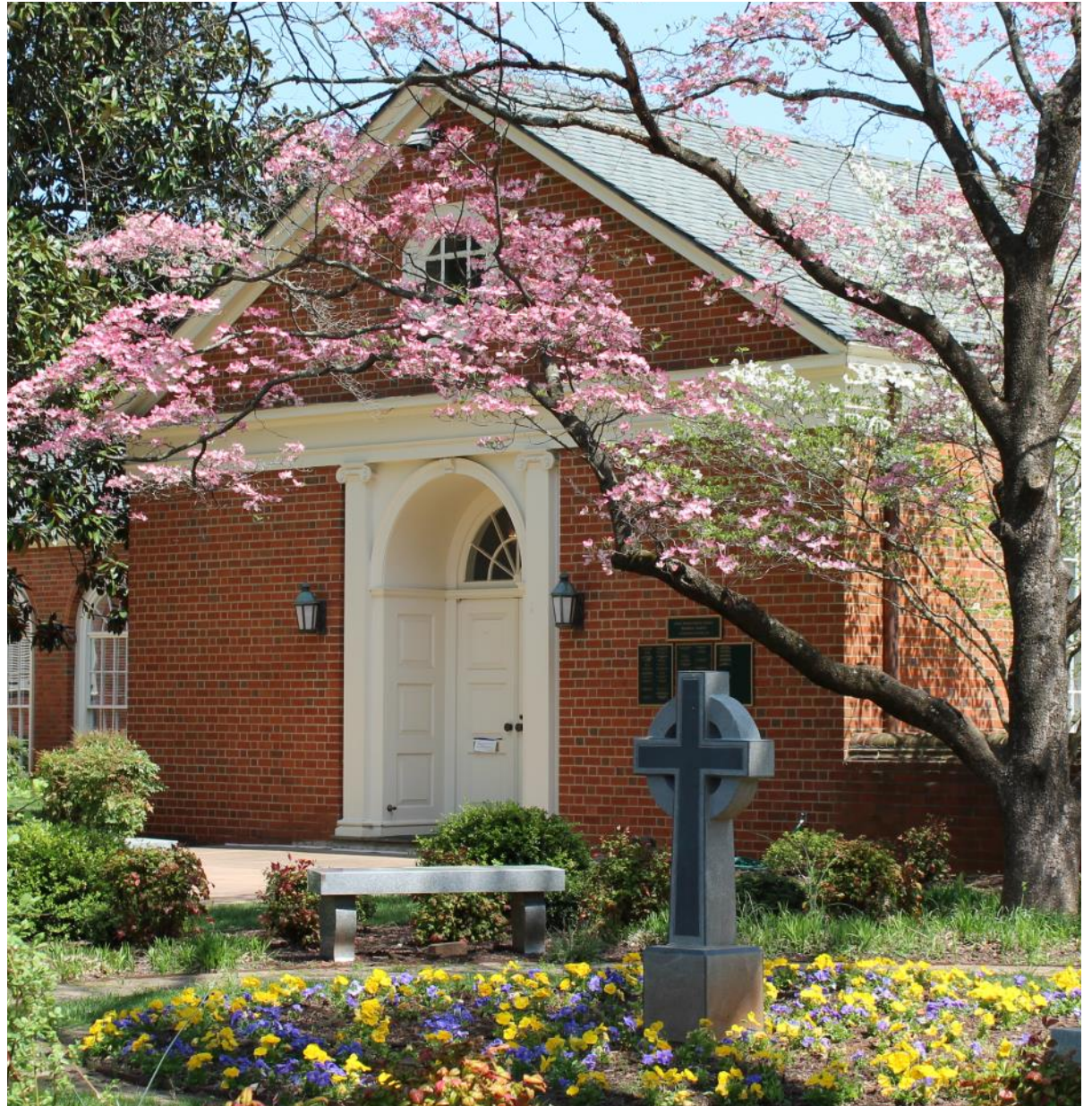
Love kindness.



Walk humbly with your God.

In Memory

Elizabeth "Libby" Hoyle
Rodney Fisk Beckwith
Jane Walker Kerewich
Dorothy Lucas Stone
Robert F. Nootbaar
Caroyl Beddow Gooch
Charles Holden Smith
Alice Stauffer Easton
James Fully Beddow
Phyllis Kay Otis
Mary Elizabeth Snoddy
Sharon Fry Nalle



Do justice.



Love kindness.



Walk humbly with your God.