

Report to the Congregation

First Presbyterian Church Charlottesville

August 2022 - July 2023



Do justice.



Love kindness.



Walk humbly with your God.

Introduction

First Pres,

We've come a long way.

The **Faith Grows Here** construction is done, our usual outside groups are gathering again in our renovated spaces, new groups have reached out to gather at our church, and our addition groups are enjoying the renovated Carriage House, including a completely spruced up third floor. Bottom line: there is more space to gather, and all are welcome.

While the initial plans are done, there is always work to do. Scripture reminds us, after all, that the harvest is plentiful but the laborers few. But thanks be to God, we see the laborers growing both in numbers and certainly in faith. With a spirit of humility, we have been encouraged by one another's commitment in time, talents, and treasures through the ministries of our faith community. You have labored faithfully to worship every Sunday no matter the season (or temperature in the sanctuary), to nurture your faith growth in all its various stages (from VBS to Memorial Garden), and to serve Charlottesville and the world with gratitude and curiosity (Honduras missions a third year). You continue to buck the trends of a "dying" institution. Led by the Spirit of God, your sense of commitment has deepened, and our local church witness is strengthened because of it. Praise be to God for the Spirit who inspires and leads.

In the following pages you will gain an overview of the ways we have double downed to be a witness of the gospel ethic to love God by loving one another. You will see how our renovated areas and additional new construction are now spaces to gather because **faith grows here** indeed. And you will sense how First Pres is exploring its commitment to the ways in which **faith grows out there**, too, in the corners of the world where God's heart beats with the poor and weak. We want to be there, too. As our faith grows here, may we continue to be led out there, for the harvest is plentiful and the laborers ready.

All glory to God,
David, Aram, and Rachel

"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



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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.



For the fourth year, we continued our program rhythm with a **Mission Fair** in the fall and **Mission Matters** in the spring. The Mission Fair was held on a Sunday morning for the purpose of introducing and communicating each of our mission partners to the church. Mission Matters was held on a Saturday morning during which our mission partners provide a bite-sized, two-hour opportunity for the purpose of engaging with one of them, hoping to connect you more intimately with one of them.

For the third year in a row, we learned about needs in **Honduras** and commissioned not two, but 10 volunteers this year to join the efforts of Palmetto International Missions. We supported 10 families to replace stick and mud shacks with sturdy, sanitary cinderblock homes with concrete floors (part of the 40+ homes being built this year).

We have supported the Presbytery of the James, Montreat Conference Center, Blue

Ridge Area Food Bank, and Region Ten's annual Thanksgiving meal (delivering meals to Lynchburg as the Charlottesville location is closed). With additional gifts, we supported Palmetto International Missions (Honduras) and a family of eight from International Neighbors.

Our efforts with our local mission partners for 2022-23 have included but are not limited to:

Abundant Life: Nine of you joined during Mission Matters, working diligently on a landscaping project with UVA students; annual art auction fundraiser held at First Pres this year for the first time; supported partnerships with UVA Health for Prospect Community health days

AIM: Monthly deliveries for Secure Seniors program

Georgia's Friends: Supported the nine current residents; assisted with landscaping and garden clean up; supported a new community pantry

Habitat: Supported construction efforts for the first 49 Habitat homes in the new Southwood mixed-income community, with closings planned on 33 partner family homes in 2023 and a Dedication for Village One in August; supported a total of 143 Partner Families through its Pathways financial coaching program, helping to make dreams of homeownership possible

Haven: Continued our **Soup Kitchen** with a rotation of volunteer teams and organized chefs of First Pres

International Neighbors: Assisted in providing rides for the nearly 100 refugee children to attend summer day camps; contributed funds to enable 60 newcomers to receive professional driving lessons; helped to initiate refugees meeting monthly in small groups for mutual support, mental health, and education

PACEM: Provided shelter, beds, and meals for an average of 50 guests for four weeks this winter; more than 60 volunteers provided bedtime and morning snacks, assisted with set-up and break-down of the shelter area, participated in fellowship during evening shifts, and served meals; donated socks, coats, long johns, gloves, sweaters, and assorted clothing

Loaves & Fishes: Assisted with the 50% increase in the number of clients served; supported the new mobile kitchen project, demonstrating how donated food can be prepared; supported building renovations; received a gift from our **Mission and Benevolence Endowment** for their community outreach efforts.

In countless and active ways, First Pres continues to **serve faithfully**, obeying the command to love God by loving our neighbors, near and far.



Do justice.



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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 continues to be an important part of First Pres family life. We always enjoy talking, laughing, and, of course, eating.

The Congregational Life Team did a wonderful job of hosting our Epiphany brunch, the seasonal Sunday picnics, and Picnic on Park.

This year we resumed Kirk Night, a beloved First Pres tradition from years ago. With the wonderful help of Chef Ray Strunk, Congregational Life hosted several Wednesday evenings of fun and fellowship.

Sunday morning Fellowship Time continued to be hosted by a different group every week, giving each group an opportunity to not only participate in this meaningful activity but to share about the work they do.

Our New Member Team continued to facilitate the process of welcoming new people into the church, and an in-person Getting to Know First Pres class was held in the Chapel. Twenty-seven people joined this past year.

Additional ministries who nurtured and supported members and the larger community include Card Ministry, Flower Delivery, Prayer Team, Visitation, and more.



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Family Ministry

Sunday School

Thanks to the help of more than 15 dedicated volunteers, we had four children's Sunday School classes with an average attendance of 27 children every Sunday. Each class has its own unique curriculum depending upon the developmental needs and interests of the students. In every class, the children learned Bible stories, sang songs, crafted, and had time to get to know one another and share about their weeks.

Children's Activities

Prioritizing relationship building, the Children and Family Ministry Committee offered a variety of children's activities throughout the year. Children were invited to attend cooking classes and play dates. We had 25 children attend our Parents' Night Out "Under the Stars" event, and we had a fun-filled Vacation Bible School with about 50 children, including children from Abundant Life Ministries.

Family Activities

FPC also offered opportunities for families to connect with one another. In the fall, families were invited to join us in Lovingston for a corn maze and pumpkin patch picking. We also had our Advent craft workshop to help families decorate for Advent and explore the season together. We ended the program year with an Easter egg hunt and a Pentecost parade.



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Youth Ministry

Sunday School

In Sunday School, we focused on exploring how the Bible, an ancient text, still speaks to our daily lives. Moving through Genesis to Ruth, we wrestled with how God's people consistently turn away from God and mistreat one another. Together we considered what it means to be in a covenant relationship with God and how our faith impacts how we treat each other.

We also enjoyed Advent and Lent series led by Anita Brockette and Chris Dean. We marked these special liturgical seasons by exploring spiritual practices and reflecting on the lectionary texts. At the culmination of the year, the Sunday School class worked together to organize and write the liturgy for Youth Sunday.



Community Service

FPC's youth enjoyed engaging in a variety of community service activities over the year. The Youth Ministry Committee aimed to provide youth with service opportunities at least once a month. Some of our activities included shopping for food for Loaves and Fishes, rolling utensils for Soup Kitchen, and preparing lunch for Habitat for Humanity builders.



Youth Group

Youth group provides youth with an opportunity to build supportive relationships. From pool parties to lock-ins to bowling, our youth participated in a variety of on and off-site activities meant to encourage teamwork and team bonding. Most Sundays, we met for lunch on the Downtown mall and came back to the church for group activities and discussion. We also met weekly at Bodo's for early morning devotionals centered around how we love our neighbors and ourselves. Youth serving on the Youth Ministry Committee took on leadership roles to help select youth group activities and invite their peers to participate.



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Adult Ministry

This program year Adult Ministry sponsored three special offerings.

We kicked off the Sunday School program in September with Dr. Martien Halvorson-Taylor of the UVA Department of Religious Studies, who spoke to us on “Who Wrote the Bible—and Why on Earth Does It Matter?” We livestreamed her presentation to a great response. This led us to livestream selected Sunday School classes throughout the year.

In January, Adult Ministries offered a Contemplative Retreat Day at FPC led by Rev. Liz Forney. This was a restorative day of stillness in God, reflection, and prayer with opportunities to learn about the ancient practice of the Examen, listening for God in our everyday lives, and an exploration of group listening prayer.

In the fall we offered a discussion group on Sunday afternoons on *The Chosen*, the first multi-season series about the life of Christ.

The Sunday school hour continued to offer a wide variety of classes. These included Uncommon Decency: Christian Civility in an Uncivil World; an exploration of Brene Brown's best seller *The Gifts of Imperfection*; Faith and Family for parents of children and teens; Just War Theory and Theology; Awaiting the Already: An Advent Journey Through the Gospels; The Kings of Israel and Judah (The Good, The Bad, And The Ugly) Part I (Part II is coming in September); Scripture in the Headlines. We offered two classes in Lent -- Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Life Together and Sensing Lent: Six Views of the Meaning of Lent. We wrapped up the school year with two classes: Bizarre Wisdom: The Apocalyptic Voice in Ancient Israel, Early Christianity, and Modern America; and Grandparents and Spiritual Development. We finished the program year with a summer class on the Scripture of the Day with the pastors discussing the scripture they were preaching on that Sunday.

We continued to offer spiritual growth opportunities during the week both in-person and via Zoom. These included the Monday Morning Bible Study, the Brown Bag Bible Study, Lectio Divina, Weekly Women's Bible Study, and the return in April of the Men's Luncheon.

All these efforts were in service of our mission statement goals to provide an environment for: Learning opportunities; Nurturing experiences; Centering activities; and Engaging the world.



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Walk Humbly with God

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

All regular and special worship services were held in person and livestreamed, and the recordings of all services continued to be available online. For most of this year (starting in September 2022), worship was offered at 9:00 a.m. (music by Praise Team) and 11:00 a.m. (music by Sanctuary Choir and Handbell Ensemble) each Sunday.

Welcome and Worship continued to engage volunteers for service roles in support of weekly services (Officer of the Day, Ushers, Praise Team, Sanctuary Choir, Handbell Ensemble, Communion Preparers, etc.), and attendance remained steady. Plans were made (i.e., volunteers recruited and materials developed) to resume welcome bags for visitors in Fall 2023.

Hanging of the Greens in November allowed members of the congregation to participate in decorating the church for Advent and singing Christmas carols. Two Christmas Eve services were held: the 4:30 p.m. service was a family-friendly service with music led by the Praise Team, and the 8:00 p.m. service was the traditional Lessons & Carols service led by the Sanctuary Choir.



Additional worship services were held on Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday. The Sanctuary Choir and guest musicians presented two master works offered during worship services: *Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity* (text by John Milton set to music by H. Walford Davies) on Sunday, December 18, 2022, and Robert Schumann's *Mass in C Minor* on Sunday, April 30, 2023.



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Music Ministry

This year, the members of the Music Ministry continued their faithful service of using music in praise of God. Highlights were the presentation of two major works by the choir, *Davie's Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, and Schumann's *Mass in C minor*. The Praise Team revitalized their offerings with the addition of new songs and arrangements to their repertoire. The handbells presented two excellent concerts in the community at the Christmas season and participated regularly in worship. Music on Park Street concerts continued, being re-energized after the difficulties of COVID. In all, the many participants grew musically, and in their commitment to excellence in worship and outreach to the community.



Do justice.

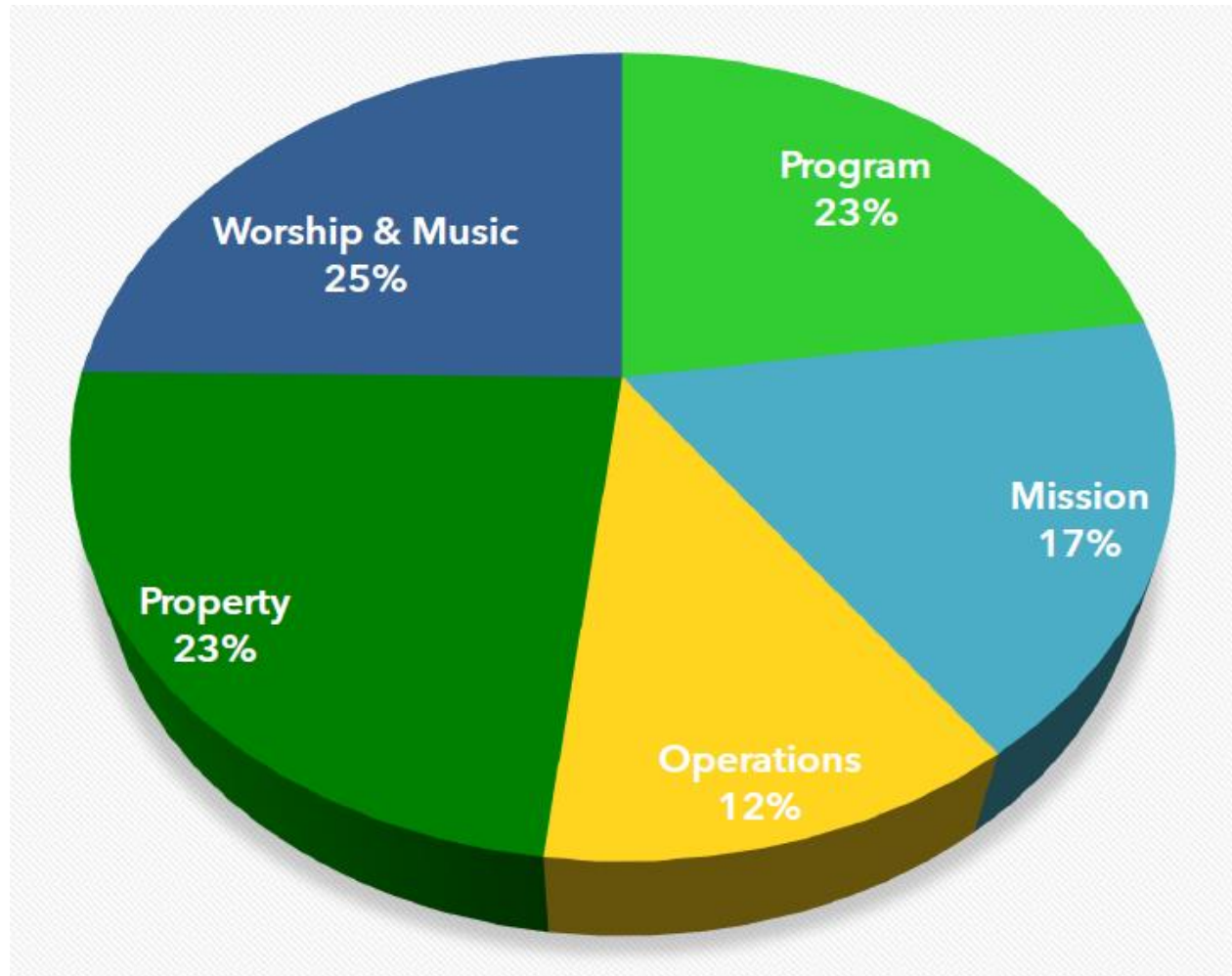


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Expenditures



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Active Members

1,032

New Members

27

Average Worship Attendance

314

Baptisms

7



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Staff



Maria Brown	Preschool Director
Susan Carl	Office Administrator/Receptionist
Rev. Dr. Aram Feinberg	Associate Pastor
Rev. Dr. David G. Forney	Pastor and Head of Staff
Fred Holbrook	Interim Pastor and Head of Staff
Michael Joyce	Facilities Manager
Christine Kelly	Assistant Preschool Director
Nancy Lutz	Faith Community Nurse
Ashley Ravitsky	Assistant Director of Children's Music
Ellen Roberson	Program Coordinator
Tracey Schoch	Communications Director
Jen Snook	Finance Director
Rev. Rachel Sutphin	Covenant Pastor for Families
David Thompson	Custodian
Dr. Jeremy Thompson	Director of Music

Leadership

Class of 2023

Elders of the Session

Judy Blair
Robert Brewbaker
Victoria Kean
Rich Lutz
David Maloney
Carolyn Pettit
Reid Thompson

Board of Deacons

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

Class of 2024

Elders of the Session

Charlie Chadwick
John Dillery
Linda Hitt
Jocelyn Kelley
Jolene Kidd
Vasant Kumar
Trip Walker

Board of Deacons

Johanna Chase
Sally Clarry
Brooke Lambert
Greg Ravitsky
Amy Richardson
Mark Sackson
Teller Stalfort

Class of 2025

Elders of the Session

Anita Brockette
Jan Garnett
Jim Gillespie
Jean Hudson
Elaine Knight
Marty Mason
Rick Welborn

Board of Deacons

Barbara Carswell
Maggie Kleinot
Bonita Metz
Jamie Miller
Julie Patterson
Jayne Rathburn



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In Memory

Ethel Boring
Lauree Brunfeldt
Doris Buck
Joanne Conley
Daley Craig Jr.
Betsy Critzer
Ed Dinwiddie
Betsey Hathaway
Ralph Hathaway
Jim Higgins
Terry Holland
Jim Houser
Marge Kochard
Jean Lindsay
Jack Little
Sylvia Lord
Helen Minor
Bobbie Mooney
Brian Powell
Virginia Rybolt
Lea Schultz
Judy Spangler
Joan B. Wilson



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