

Tech Improvements at FPC Help Us Live Our Mission!

Thanks to generous gifts from members of this congregation from the pandemic to the present, we've been able to replace and/or upgrade audio-visual technology in both Fellowship Hall and the Sanctuary. By installing new and better equipment, using a new software program, and training staff and volunteers about both, FPC has enhanced appreciably the online worship experience in addition to improving the services for those worshipping in person.

Our most recent improvements were explored and implemented only after extensive behind-the-scenes work by AV Tech Coordinator Jane Jude and Will Robinson, Senior Pastor/Head of Staff, and with the approval of Worship and Music, Personnel, Facilities and Finance Ministries. "Improving our technology definitely helps us fulfill our mission to 'Change Lives...Make Disciples,' said Pastor Will. "I'm grateful to Jane for her steadfast and skilled diligence and dedication to this crucial ministry."



Jane Jude, FPC's AV Tech Coordinator

To meet key goals set forth in the most recent technology enhancement proposal, FPC contracted with Churchfront LLC, an IT company that specializes in helping churches lead gospel-centered and tech-savvy worship. A consultant from Churchfront worked on-site with Jane for four days—from March 30 through April 2. During that time, the video system was physically upgraded in Fellowship Hall and the Sanctuary. In addition, the TV monitors in the Gathering Space were repaired.

As FPC's Audio Visual Coordinator, Jane is responsible for the systems that amplify sound; provide on-screen lyrics, Scripture and images; and broadcast services for viewing via our livestream or as recorded videos. Jane prepares all of the slides we see in worship as well as the pre-service announcement video loops that help communicate to the congregation upcoming ministries and events.

In addition, Jane trains and schedules the volunteer members of FPC's Tech Team who operate our soundboards, cameras and computers during worship, memorial services and other events. Tech training, available online from Churchfront, can be viewed by new members of the team. Though she has an established group of FPC members who participate on Sundays on a rotating basis, new members are always welcome. To learn more, contact Jane Jude, jjude@fpchhi.org, or see her on a Sunday morning before or after worship in the tech booth at the back of Fellowship Hall (at the 9 AM service) or in the north balcony of the Sanctuary (at the 10:30 AM service).

Members Over 90 Were Celebrated for May Day



By May 1, members of FPC's Health Ministry and Board of Deacons delivered begonias to 71 members age 90 and over. Those making deliveries reported having delightful visits and feeling possibly more blessed than the recipients did! Here are some of FPC's "busy bees" preparing plants. (Left) Shari Slusne; (Right) Susie Zitello



“Count Your Blessings”

“Count your blessings; name them one by one. Count your blessings; see what God has done!”



An adult Sunday School class at a previous church I served would end each class by singing the hymn, “Count Your Blessings,” including the memorable refrain above. At a time of the year when we celebrate Pentecost—the birth of the church and the gift of

the Spirit in our lives—I’d like to count just a few of our many blessings here at FPC.

- Forty-four new or affiliate members have joined the FPC family of faith since the start of the year. I’m so grateful the Lord has led each of them to us! When we asked them what attracted them to FPC, their answers varied but included the worship here; the warmth and welcome they’ve experienced; *you*, FPC’s members and friends; and the music (e.g., on Palm Sunday and Easter).
- Another blessing is that three of these new members are confirmands Jack Gatlin, Millie Jones and Celia Walter. These three young people affirmed their faith in the Lord at Session’s April meeting and then in worship on April 30. The Session enjoyed, appreciated and benefitted from hearing their thoughtful and poignant faith statements and how God has been at work in their lives.
- Wendy Rose joined our staff team on Monday, April 17. She’ll assist me and Pastor Diane, and she’ll also provide support for communications,

administration and reception. She brings administrative experience to this part-time position, and we’ve enjoyed getting to know her. Wendy joins a church staff that is truly a blessing to me and to this congregation.

- Over the past five years, we’ve been blessed by our organist Charlie Frost. An outstanding musician, we’ve enjoyed his unique talent every Sunday at 10:30 AM (e.g., his organ transitions to the Doxology!) and at his recitals here. He’s gone “above and beyond” in his commitment to this church, and he’s a gracious host, opening the door of his home to break bread with our choirs. Charlie’s last Sunday is May 21, and we’ll celebrate his ministry among us at a reception after the 10:30 AM service that day. I encourage you to write him a note to express your gratitude.

In addition to these and many more blessings, I also count *you* as a blessing in my life. I “see what God has done” in and through you and this family of faith as well as in and through our gifted and committed church staff.

May we always count our blessings, and in light of them may we always seek to be a blessing to others.

The Lord bless you and keep you,

Pastor Will



Seeking Nominations for New Officers

Serving as a church officer is a privilege and an extremely important role within the church. The Nominating Committee is seeking recommendations for the names of members you feel would be good representatives of First Presbyterian Church — to serve as deacon or elder.

Six deacons and seven elders are needed to serve in the Class of 2026.

To submit name(s), please complete the submission form which you can access online, [click here](#).

According to the Book of Order, individuals who undertake particular ministries, including ruling elder and deacon should be persons of strong faith, dedicated to discipleship and a love of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Their manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian Gospel in the church and in the world. (Book of Order, G-2.0101)

All church officers must be active members for at least one year prior to election (October 2023) with terms beginning in February 2024.

Congregational Care and Connection

My title is Associate Pastor for Congregational Care and Connection, and it was chosen deliberately with the word "congregational" rather than "pastoral" to describe care and connection. It used to be that the pastor was the one who did "pastoral" care, something believed to be magical and special that no one else could do. However, in recent years, churches and pastors have realized that all Christians are called to care for one another as part of the body of Christ. Pastors *do* have some special skills...and these skills are what I draw upon to help shepherd, equip and encourage all of you as you care for one another.

Our congregational care is robust and compassionate not because of me, but because of the work of our deacons. They oversee the following ministries of care and connection and depend upon all members and friends of FPC to serve in faithful response to God's call.



Lay Visitation (Robin Swift, chair), visiting the lonely, the homebound, and those in the hospital

Health (Julie Hellman, chair), promoting wellness of body, mind, and spirit

Prayer (Rusty Brown, chair), praying for those in our congregation and beyond

Family Promise (Lindsey Jones, chair) supporting temporary housing for the homeless

Memorial Receptions (Jan Raisch, chair), offering refreshments and hospitality to memorial service guests

Neighborhood Care Groups (Cristy Robertson, chair), creating opportunities for neighbors to care for and fellowship with one another

Knitting (Betty Bush, chair), gifting items hand-made with love to convey sympathy or joy

Stephen Ministry (Pastor Diane, current contact), caring for those experiencing grief, divorce, illness or other life changes

In this newsletter you will see information about the upcoming Prayer Project, Neighborhood Care groups, Health Ministry and Stephen Ministry. We are seeking caring people to become involved in these ministries as well as all those listed above. Please contact Deacon Moderator Debbie Berling, Vice-Moderator Rusty Brown, or any of the contacts listed above to see how you can serve Christ by caring for others.

I am grateful to be serving alongside you all in such a caring congregation!

Pastor Diane

Neighborhood Care Groups Return to FPC

Mr. Rogers, a former minister and TV educator, had it right when he asked, "Won't you be my neighbor?" A feeling of community comes from the sense of responsibility we have for each other, especially those who are our physical neighbors.

Your deacons hope to give our large church a small church feeling by starting Neighborhood Care Groups. These groups will give members a chance to develop relationships with near-by neighbors who are also church members or friends of FPC via "getting to know you" events, periodic fellowship or other social and caring activities.

We've already outlined designated groups based on geographic areas of the island and Bluffton. We are now seeking neighborhood coordinators for each group. Stay tuned for further information or contact Cristy Robertson if you would like to get involved with this project, cristyr448@gmail.com.

We Welcome New Member of FPC Staff



Wendy Rose, and her husband, Walt, moved to the Lowcountry in 2021. They moved to Bluffton to join Walt's brother and his wife — and Wendy and Walt were more than ready for a change. Moving here from Traverse City, MI, they left a cold climate to enjoy life in the sun.

On April 17, Wendy joined the FPC staff as part-time Administrative Assistant. In this position, Wendy assists in the work and ministry of Pastor Will, assists Pastor Diane, and supports communications, administration and reception, as needed. To this position, Wendy brings a career of adminis-

trative experience from her 40-years with the University of Michigan Hospital. A native of Ann Arbor, Wendy attended college at the University of Michigan before working at the hospital.

Several years ago Wendy and Walt built a home in Traverse City, near Interlochen. The intent was to remain there and eventually enjoy retirement. However, when it became clear there was plenty of work here for Walt, a tile contractor, they sold their home and headed south.

When not working, Wendy enjoys reading, walking and doing crosswords and Sudoku. She and Walt have one adult son who lives in Ann Arbor.

If you've not yet met Wendy, stop by her office on the second floor of the administrative wing.

The Blessing of Legacy Giving

A will or estate plan is a statement of what we love or value most. We trust that the love and value we hold for others continues even as we pass from this earthly existence.

Our Lord, responding to a challenge to name the greatest commandment responds with words from Deuteronomy: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the greatest and first commandment." (Matthew 22:37, 38)

We have shown our love for God in Christ through our participation in the worship and ministry and First Presbyterian Church – some for many years, others for but a short time. In our worship, giving, study, fellowship, prayers, and service we declare our love for Christ as well as for our neighbor. Many members

have also demonstrated their lasting commitment to God in Christ by including FPC in their estate plans



We sow that others may reap

- plans that show faith, love and hope. We give thanks to them for their commitment, and, if you have not done so, we invite you to consider joining them.

For more information about making a Legacy Gift, or if you have already named the church as a beneficiary in your estate plan, please contact Susan Brannon, Director of Administration, at the church office, 843.681.3696. All discussions are confidential and without obligation...and all gifts are welcome!

B I N G O				
4	26	43	59	70
9	30	41	55	68
7	23	FREE 32 SPACE	50	63
8	20	31	60	75
13	18	34	52	69

Save the Date ~ Wednesday, June 21 BBQ, Bingo & Brownies (5:30 PM)

- **BINGO** (for all ages!) following a *delicious BBQ dinner* prepared & served by our own Breaking Bread Ministry
- BINGO caller – FPC member **David Lauderdale**
- Join us for *food, fun, fellowship* AND prizes!
- Watch for details and reservation information

Gearing up for 2023 Prayer Project

Never stop praying, especially for others. Always pray by the power of the Spirit. Stay alert and keep praying for God's people. - Ephesians 6:18

Prayer is one of the greatest gifts and privileges we have as Christians. It's God's gift of His time to be available for conversation at any time of the day or night. There are many people who need prayer – Paul reminds us to put others ahead of our needs and by offering prayers for the relief of others and sharing their burdens and joys, our burdens seem lighter and our joys more magnificent. That is what our 2023 Prayer Project strives for. During this time, prayers are raised on behalf of every FPC church member.

The Prayer Project will take place again this summer during the months of July and August. By volunteering to pray for other church members during the two months of the project, you will have an opportunity to participate in a community of caring and prayer. Every church member will be assigned to someone who will be praying for them during this time. Last year we had about 90 volunteers to pray for our church members and we are hoping for a similar number this year. Each volunteer will be assigned approximately 8-10

church families for whom they will pray.



We will be contacting past volunteers in the near future, and new volunteers can participate. More details will be forthcoming as we get closer, including how to sign up to be a volunteer. Volunteers will not be contacting the church members for whom they are praying. Prayer-related resources will be provided to volunteers to help with their prayer practice, if desired, including how to pray for someone you may not know. We ask that you include them in your regular prayers, however you choose to do that, and ask for God's blessing, guidance, help and love as you pray for them. Prayer is a gift of care and connection that you can offer wherever you happen to be and whenever you have an opportunity.

— Charlie Deaton and Rusty Brown, on behalf of the Deacons' Prayer Project

We're Getting Started ~ Operation Christmas Child is Underway



Thanks to your help and support of OCC in 2022, 400 shoeboxes were filled and shipped to children around the world. Many FPC small groups — both men and women — and our youth will participate in the packing process.

The Knitting Ministry makes crocheted bunnies for every box! Many ladies in the church sew small blankets for the dolls that go in the girl boxes. Many save nails and screws in pill containers for the older boy boxes.

Global Outreach allocates funds from member offerings to pay for shipping. Shoeboxes are filled with hygienic, scholastic and fun items, to let children know that Jesus loves them and He had His hand in making this happen.

"This year, we hope to pack 400 shoeboxes - if not more," says Robin Swift, one of the ministry organizers who will be in the Gathering Space the next several Sundays. Stop by the OCC Ministry Table to learn more about what they are collecting and how you can help.

Swift and Co-chair Martha Phillips shared the list of what they need: yo-yos, jump ropes, washcloths (Walmart has bundles of 18 for \$6), toothbrushes (Walmart has them 5 for \$1), construction paper, three-ring white notebook paper, small etch-a-sketch, Legos, scissors, small tin puzzles (Dollar Tree), small flashlights, Matchbox -type cars, nails and screws for tool kits, safety pins, straight pins and matching buttons and decorative trim for sewing kits. Items can be dropped off in the workroom at the church office.

FPC Kids & Youth Ministry

FPC Kids & AiM End-of-Year Program is a Smashing Success!



More than 175 people attended the musical program presented before the all-church picnic on May 3. FPC Kids, led by Children's Music Director Beth Green, sang excerpts from *The Three Trees*.



AiM Choir (Adventures in Music), led by Laura Floyd, also participated in the program on May 3. On May 10, AiM sang their last program of the year for residents at the Cypress and the Preston.



On Sunday, April 30, three new members joined the church. Above (from left) are confirmands Celia Walter, Jack Gatlin and Millie Jones. Each of these FPC youth studied during the past year with Faith Formation Director Jackie Wilhelm, as well as their adult mentors. We welcome Celia, Jack and Millie!

Gearing up For Summer

\$20
Online
Registration
Click Here

**FPC KIDS
SUMMER
CAMP**

**JULY
10-14**

**READY, SET,
MOVE!**

FOLLOW JESUS HERE,
THERE, AND EVERYWHERE

Pre K Camp
Age 3 - Rising K
(MUST BE TOILET TRAINED)
9am-12pm

Elementary Camp
Rising K-5th
9am-3pm

Activities include: music,
drama, Bible story, crafts,
outdoor games, missions
and more!

Montreat High School Retreat — June 11-17

In Joy ~ Seven FPC youth and three adult chaperones will explore the sources and meaning of authentic joy grounded in the light of God.

Watch for info about this special experience in the next issue.

Every Act of Generosity Matters

Even as we experienced a challenging journey over the last few years, First Presbyterian Church continued to transform lives both near and far. Now we are flourishing, blessed to be a blessing to others. This year, as we envision the future, open to what God may place on our hearts, the Giving Ministry will take its inspiration from a new theme: **Generosity Ignites Change**.



2 Corinthians 9:6 says, "...whoever sows generously will also reap generously." When you show generosity and Christlike love for others, it makes a difference for those who receive your generosity – and for **you** – as it deepens your relationship with Christ and draws you closer to Him.

While we as individuals are called to "sow generously," our *collective* generosity as a church is equally important. Just as a strong chain link fence depends on each link to help connect and support every other link, many generous acts create a powerful force that reaches farther as we touch more lives *together*. Your faithful generosity carries out our mission of *Changing Lives...Making Disciples* as we unite to ignite change locally and worldwide.

Every act of generosity matters and even a single generous act can spark spiritual change. How will *your* generosity ignite change for yourself and for others today and tomorrow?

Giving Ministry May/June 2023

2023 MEMBER GIVING			
	ACTUAL	BUDGETED	VARIANCE
March	\$116,615	\$169,588	(\$52,973)
YEAR-TO-DATE	\$530,567	\$655,147	(\$124,580)

Is your pledge up-to-date? If not, please catch up!

- GIVE button at fpchhi.org; a one-time or recurring gift*
- Texting "FPCHHI" to 77977
- QR code below, right
- Check: Mail a check to 540 William Hilton Parkway, HHI, SC 29928; please indicate on the memo line how the gift is to be used, (i.e., pledge, etc.)
- Stock transfer – Gifts of securities are welcome (consult your financial advisor or tax advisor for details). The process is simple. Please contact Susan Brannon, sbrannon@fpchhi.org, for the information required for this transaction.

*If you are setting up a recurring gift for your 2023 pledge, please select 2023 Current Member Giving as the fund. If you have any questions, contact Susan Brannon, sbrannon@fpchhi.org, or call the church office, 843.681.3696.



A Request From FPC's Flower Ministry

The Flower Ministry, chaired by Shari Slusne, needs vases for delivering flowers from Sunday worship to homebound members. If you have an accumulation of small vases or bud vases at your house, please donate them to a good cause! Or, if you find one in a thrift store, consider buying and gifting to the church. Vases can be dropped off in the church Sacristy next to the Sanctuary or given to Pastor Diane.

May ~ June Newsletter

Wow! So much fun at the all-church picnic on May 3 following the musical program. More than 175 people enjoyed grilled hamburgers, hotdogs and all the fixin's.



FPC Stephen Ministers (*Below*) are lay congregation members who are specially trained to provide confidential, one-to-one care to individuals who are experiencing difficulties in their lives and need a listening ear and a caring heart .



Summer Sermon Series
**QUESTIONS
FAITH
ANSWERED**

Send your questions to
info@fpchhi.org