



First Presbyterian Church Mount Airy

The Grapevine

May 2022

An Update from Session on the Transition

Since the last issue of *The Grapevine* there has been a lot of change at our church. The session, presbytery, and Rev. Griff Gatewood decided we should dissolve our relationship and the congregation voted on April 24 to approve the terms of Griff's severance package. So, what happens now?

After worship on April 24, the session met with Tom Nesbit from the presbytery who will help the session and our congregation navigate through this next phase. The session has the option of hiring guest ministers through pastoral supply or immediately searching for an interim minister who will help guide us in the final step of finding a new minister.

Because the financial team is still working to get a clear picture of our financial situation, session has opted to utilize pastoral supply until we can determine what we can afford to pay an interim. Keep in mind that we are paying Griff's full salary for the next six months as part of his severance.

The presbytery recommends using an interim minister to guide us in our search for a full-time minister as we examine the wants and needs of our church. Those who were members eight years ago will remember activities such as a congregation health survey, and meeting in small groups to share our thoughts and hopes for our church's future.

Please pray for our church during this transition. We understand that this is a confusing time for our congregation. Session members are available to discuss where we are in our transition. Please pray for us as we navigate our next step in the process. All members of our congregation are welcome to attend session meetings, but some matters such as personnel must take place in closed session.

Through this process, we remain a loving and caring body of Christ. If there are any pastoral needs, please call the church office or any elder, and we will make sure you receive the care you need.

Yours in Christ,
The Session



Welcome Bill and Joanna Refvem!

On May 1 we welcomed Bill and Joanna Refvem to our church family by Letter of Transfer from First Presbyterian Church in Florence, SC. They are not strangers to us. Bill and Joanna have been worshipping with us and involved with activities since their return to Mount Airy almost two years ago. Welcome to our First Presbyterian church family and welcome back to Mount Airy!

Session News: Ministry Teams Reports

Missions Ministry Team would like to invite you to participate in the following:

- **Yokefellow:** Our food for the month of May is spaghetti noodles and spaghetti sauce. Donations of any non-perishable food are welcome. A collection basket is in the hallway.



Post Office Food Collection:

Saturday, May 14, noon-4pm
Yokefellow, Old Jones School

We are planning to have a group of volunteers help sort items being brought by the postal workers. Children 10 or older welcome to help but they need to be accompanied by a parent if not yet 12. Contact Beth at beth.pequeno@gmail.com if you can help or just show up!

- **Pennies for Hunger:** On the first Sunday of each month, we take up a special offering of loose change for Pennies for Hunger. Please add your change to one of the yellow buckets passed in the sanctuary, or you can give online through Realm to the fund titled "HUNGER". The next collection will be Sunday, June 5.
- **Shepherd's House:** The Beacons have started to collect items for the homeless shelter. For May, they are collecting coffee. A collection basket is located in the area outside the sanctuary.

One of the local ministries that our church has supported for many years is the Shepherd's House, which offers hope and safety by providing shelter for homeless women and children. This year, the Shepherd' House is sponsoring a "Mother's Day Project" that allows you to honor your mother and provide blessing to others at the same time. By purchasing a brick paver for the walkways outside their new facility, you'll also provide as many as 90 meals for Shepherd's House clients. Each paver costs \$250, and for more information you can visit <https://www.shepherdshousema.org>.

- **Walk to End Alzheimer's: Saturday, September 10** at Riverside Park (Time TBD) Learn more or join our team at <http://act.alz.org/goto/FPCMA>

The Christian Education Team

Announcing VBS August 8-10! Mark your calendars for our annual Vacation Bible School themed "Discovery on Adventure Island" this summer. We will have a kick-off celebration on Sunday, Aug. 7 and our VBS programming will run Monday through Wednesday evenings, Aug. 8-10. Volunteers will be greatly needed, so stay tuned for more information to come this week on how you can help!

The Worship and Music Ministry Team

- **Member led music** practices are on Sunday nights at 5pm in the sanctuary. If you have musical talents that you would like to share with the church, please reach out to Anna at the church or anna@fpcma.com
- **Chancel Choir** practice continues to be held on Wednesday nights at 7:00 pm.

The Communications Team

New visitor cards are located on tables around the sanctuary. Please help us gather contact information of our visitors by encouraging them to fill out a card and leave it in one of the offering plates.

NEEDED: The church is in need of donations of 8oz. water bottles for our area outside the sanctuary. Please leave donations on the counter. This would be greatly appreciated since we no longer have a water fountain. Worshipers are welcome to help themselves to bottled water located in the refrigerator under the counter.



Beacons Update

The Beacons at FPC meet weekly in the Scout Hut on Sunday afternoons from 5-7pm to have fellowship time together, enjoy fun activities and do their weekly Bible study.

On May 1, we had Youth Sunday. The twelve Beacons that participated in and led this worship service were Charlotte Ann Banfield, Evan and Gavin Bush, Morgan and Sam Cooke, Jackie De La Cruz, Andie Horton, Anne Rachel Sheppard, Emmalee Ogle, Anna Peterson, Taylor Pike, and Maddie Youell. They have been working super hard in preparation for this special worship service and they all did such an excellent job!

Among their regular gatherings to do activities and Bible study, the Beacons also gave the church van a much needed deep clean. It was a challenging job, but they had fun working together.



On the last weekend in April, the Beacons gave the church bus a much needed deep clean and wash. It was a challenging job, but they had fun working together and the bus looks amazing now!

The Beacons also helped to get everything set up for our Easter Egg Hunt Party that was sponsored by the church. They set up games and activities and hid hundreds of Easter eggs filled with fun candy and surprises for all of the children that attended.

Graduating Beacons will be recognized during our graduation service on June 5. If you have a high school or college graduate or someone earning a master's or doctorate degree, please let Loida know so that we can honor them in worship. Loida@fpcma.com

We have four high school students who are planning to attend the Montreat Youth Conference July 31 - Aug 6. This has not been able to happen in several years due to the pandemic. We are so excited for them to experience this spiritually uplifting conference. It will also be Loida's first time attending!



Enrollment for the 2022-2023 school year is now open for all families. A \$150 fee is required to hold your spot for the coming year. An enrollment form must be completed and turned in along with the fee. Enrollment forms can be found on our [website](#) or picked up in the church office.

First Steps is hiring teachers and subs for the coming school year. These positions are part time. Interested applicants can send their resume to firststeps@fpcma.com.

First Steps is happy to announce that one of our own congregation members will be assisting the program for the remainder of the year in our older two-year-old class. We are grateful for Wendy Clabough and her service to the program and our church. She has been a wonderful addition and an answered prayer!

There are many ways congregation members can continue to support First Steps. Please see our [Amazon wish list](#) for items you may purchase for a donation. We always welcome volunteers and would love a few more options for substitute teachers. Please contact Christie Sheppard if you would like to be added to our sub list.

First Steps would love your help in making our playground safe for our littles as well as our members. Some initial groundwork was made toward a new playground rendering as well as a quote. Please consider reaching out to the session or Nicole Harrison, chairman of the First Steps Committee if you are interested in helping with making a vision a reality for our youngest members and visitors.

Thank you for your continued support and prayers. God is always at work in our little program! We are so grateful for his blessings!



Worship Volunteers Needed! There are lots of ways to get involved during Sunday morning worship. We need scripture readers, flowers for the Sanctuary, worship greeters, nursery helpers, and Little Church helpers. Please take the time to sign up for one of these positions on the sign-up sheets in the hallway, or by reaching out to Anna at office@fpcma.com.

Date	Flowers	Leading Worship	Scripture Reader	Giving Message
May 8		Peter Pequeno		Tom Nesbit
May 15		Elder:	Valerie Parker	Alex Hudson
May 22	Ann & Jay Brown	Elder:	Derek Higgs	Alex Hudson
May 29	Lydia Taylor	Elder:	Lydia Taylor	Katie Todd

Prayer List: Gary Bowers, Rob Evans, Debbie Stoltz and family, Ron Atkins, Vickie Riekehof, Becky Lyons, Brad Ballentine, Thomas Reisinger and Katherine Burke-Reisinger, Carol Burke, Mike Shumaker, Mark Johnson, Tammy Moore, Kayla Keller, Laura Brown, and members of the military and their families.

Live Streams of Worship Services

We continue to provide live streaming of worship services through our Facebook page. You do not need to be a member of Facebook to access. To see past or live streams, use this link: [Live Streams](#)



Mark Your Calendar:

Sunday, May 8: Worship Service: 11am

- Mother's Day
- Elli Smith Baptized

Monday, May 9: Girl Scouts Hosting a Blood Drive: 3-7pm

- Make your appointment at [Blood Drive](#)



Saturday, May 14, noon-4pm: **Post Office Food Collection:** see details in Mission Team update above.

Sunday, May 15: Worship Service: 11am

Sunday, May 22: Worship Service: 11am

Sunday, May 29: Worship Service: 11am

- Memorial Day Weekend

Monday, May 30: Office closed in observance of Memorial Day

NOTE: Session voted not to change worship time over the summer.

In upcoming months:

August 8-10: **Vacation Bible School:** evenings

Saturday, September 10: Walk to End Alzheimer's



May Birthdays



5/1	Robby Rives	5/7	Will Sheppard	5/25	Les Slate
5/1	Garrett Draughn	5/9	Casey Barnett	5/26	Matthew Gatchel
5/2	Elliott Draughn	5/14	Rachel Ray	5/26	Meredith Moody
5/3	Jackson Heath	5/16	Anna Louise Gatewood	5/27	Ben Heath
5/4	Charlotte Banfield	5/17	Legh Beal	5/28	Claire Youell
5/4	Chris Wishart	5/17	Evan Bush	5/29	Daniel Hatcher
5/4	Emma Ferry	5/17	Theresa Minter	5/31	Mae Daniels
		5/21	Bill Rountree	5/31	Jason Pflug
		5/23	Jenny Cooke		
		5/25	Kelsey Carlisle		



May Anniversaries:



9	Tom & Cathy McCluskey	22	Lee & Mae Daniels
14	David & Marinda Rives	23	Doug & Carol Draughn
17	Drew & Wendy Clabough	25	Lucas & Lizzie Morrison
21	Will & Christie Sheppard	26	David & Melissa Whitfield
22	Bobby & Sylvia Chilton		

FPC Children and Youth Discipleship for May 2022:

Beacons (6th-12th grades) will meet every Sunday in May (except on Mother's Day, May 8) for their Bible study and fellowship/activity time together. We are planning to go on a picnic and hike to Pilot Mountain on Sunday, May 15, and do either another escape room or trampoline park adventure on Sunday, May 29. Connect with us on Realm or on Instagram: [fpc_beacons](#).

Godly Play (ages 3 yrs-1st grades) will meet on Wednesday, May 4 and Wednesday, May 18 from 5-7pm in the Scout Hut for Godly Play Bible stories, curriculum, Bible verse memorization, and time for music and outside activities. This month we will be studying the life of Moses.

Faith Friends (ages 2nd-5th grades) meet on Wednesday, May 11 and Wednesday, May 25 from 5-7pm in the Scout Hut for SPARK Rotation Bible stories, curriculum, Bible verse memorization, songs, games, and activities. This month we will be studying the life of Moses. Connect with us on Realm and Instagram at [faithfriendsfpc](#).

For more information on monthly events or the activities listed above, contact Loida Slate at the church or loida@fpcma.com.

Adult Discipleship

New Adult Sunday School Class: 10:00 am in the Ladies Parlor.

The class uses The Bible Project (found at <https://bibleproject.com/bible-studies/reflections/>) that has paired a video with passages to read and discussion questions to walk through as a group. We hope you will join us for this unique study. Each lesson stands alone, so join us when you can.

Odds and Ends Sunday School meets each Sunday at 10am in the classroom located upstairs in the long hallway past the staff offices.

The complete church calendar can be found at [News & Events](#)



Your Session Members:

Moderator: Varies Clerk of the Session: Bob Keck

Elders:

Class of 2022: Mary Ellen Goad, Joy Barlow, Nelson Clark, and Valerie Parker

Class of 2023: Will Sheppard, Margaret Cockerell, and Beth Pequeno

Class of 2024: Barry Schneider, Lydia Taylor, and David Rives

Ministry Teams:

Music and Worship
Christian Education
Financial Oversight
Personnel
Buildings and Grounds
First Steps
Congregational Care
Missions
Communications

Contact:

Margaret Cockerell, Valerie Parker
Loida Slate, Valerie Parker (Youth)
Barry Schneider
Nelson Clark, Joy Barlow
Will Sheppard, Lydia Taylor
Nicole Harrison, Christie Sheppard
Margaret Cockerell, Mary Ellen Goad
Beth Pequeno
Joy Barlow

Useful Links:

Church Calendar: [News & Events](#)

Church website: www.fpcma.com/

Office Email: office@fpcma.com

Bulletins: www.fpcma.com/worship.html

Facebook: [@FirstPresMtAiry](#)

Instagram: [fpcmountairy](#)

Live Stream videos: https://www.facebook.com/FirstPresMtAiry/live_videos/

Realm Connect:

<https://onrealm.org/fpcma/Account/Start?ReturnUrl=%2Ffpcma%2FTextNotifications%2FSetup>

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Office Administrator and Music Director: Anna Bush

Director of Youth and Children's Discipleship: Loida Slate

Director of First Steps: Christie Sheppard

This publication was created by the Communications Team with the assistance of the office staff. If you have questions, concerns, or something to add, contact Beth Pequeno at beth.pequeno@gmail.com