

2018

ANNUAL REPORT



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
CONCORD

Celebrating the Joy of Giving

MISSION & OUTREACH • CHRISTIAN FORMATION • CONGREGATIONAL CARE •
WORSHIP & MUSIC • BUILDINGS & GROUNDS



2018 Annual Report

Celebrating the Joy of Giving

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH | CONCORD

As you read this Annual Report it will become obvious to you that 2018 will go down in our church history as an extraordinary year! Christ-inspired gifts from our church family touched lives both locally and internationally. These gifts allowed us to feel and see the Holy Spirit at work.

In 2017, the Strategic Planning Committee began the process to create a comprehensive vision for our discipleship over the next five to seven years. This plan was approved by the Session in February of 2018 and continues to guide our ministry today.

Two significant initiatives identified through the strategic plan were implemented in 2018. These projects were supported by unique funding sources, once again demonstrating the generosity of our church family, both past and present.

The extensive Sanctuary renovation was a critical component of the strategic plan. It was funded from the distributions from estate gifts managed by our First Presbyterian Church Foundation, eliminating the need to conduct a capital campaign to finance the project.

The Commons, our beautiful community prayer room, resulted from another goal in our strategic plan: developing more mission outreach projects. An anonymous donor's gift received four years ago was used to fund this inspiring prayer space.

We hope you will see how the gifts you continue to share with our church enable our church family to serve God in so many exciting ways! ❖



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!
The next Market is scheduled for
Oct. 5, 2019

65 Church Street Market for Mission Supports our mission in Haiti

On April 14, 2018, First Presbyterian Church members joined together to organize the 65 Church Street Market for Mission which raised nearly **\$8,000** for our partner children's mission in Byonnais, Haiti.

This first-ever gigantic yard sale/treasure hunt included thousands of gently used and new items donated by church members. Teams of volunteers organized and priced these items. Almost 50 people volunteered the day of the event and had high praise for the market.

"It was remarkable to see how our church touched the community as so many non-church members poured in to support our work," said Carrie Myers, co-chair of the project. Jane Spainhour felt the use of the building was a highlight for her and **"what we had hoped Davis Hall might become."**

Items that didn't sell were repurposed in wonderful ways. **Families being served by the Community Free Clinic shopped for free things they needed,** the Commons Prayer Room gained needed décor, and remaining items were donated to Habitat Restore and CVAN. ❖



Bayonnais in 2018. These included **Nicki and Lilly Bryant, Betsy Liles, Dave and Ellis Sheridan, Margaret and Brian Moore, Gabbie Frech, and Rev. Lynne Keel.** They made kits for prenatal wellness with materials brought from home and food bought locally at the mercantile. They toured a satellite school, the medical clinic and explored the local community. **Each afternoon they played and interacted with the local children.** This mission of our church continues to grow and prosper under the leadership of Rev. Lynne Keel. ❖



2018 HAITI MISSION TRIP

We are proud to share our faith mission outreach internationally through mission trips to Haiti. During 2017 and 2018, we participated in international mission trips to support Operation Force for Christ Bayonnais (OFCB) in Haiti and will take a third trip in 2019.



In 1993 **Actionelle Fleurisma** founded **OFCB Ministries**, starting a school in the mountain region of Bayonnais, Haiti. The **school has grown to two satellite locations and serves over 2500 students** whose most treasured aspirations are to obtain an education.

The campus also houses World of God through which students are financially sponsored for their education at the school. **Sponsorships for 40 students are provided by our church and community friends** who also write letters and communicate with each child.

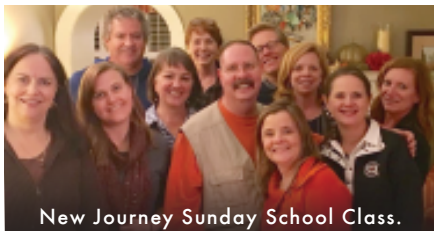
Nine members from First Presbyterian travelled to

Christian Formation

Caroline Hedgecock, 2018 chair of the Christian Formation Committee, reflected on the excitement within the many programs and the variety of Christian education opportunities for all ages. "I am in awe of the numerous ways the Holy Spirit inspired and encouraged so many members of our congregation to step up and contribute to the church in new and exciting ways."

Adult Christian Formation

• The S&D Sunday School Class continued its focus on outreach, both local and international. Its weekly collection was used to purchase and deliver food for Operation Breadbasket, a program at First Missionary Baptist Church in the Logan Community long-supported by our church. The class hosted weekly dinners for college students taking part in the Habitat Collegiate Challenge. The homemade brownies have become famous among colleges who return each year and ask for the S&D Class brownies! The class has also "adopted" a student in Haiti.



New Journey Sunday School Class.

• The Todd Hobbie Class continued to benefit from vigorous and questioning discussions sparked by lecture topics led by our ministers using a video series "Saving Jesus." The class continued its creative card mission ministry, a project that was started with the Blanche Stewart class. The class mailed 325 hand-colored written note cards to members of both our congregation and community. Since 2015, more

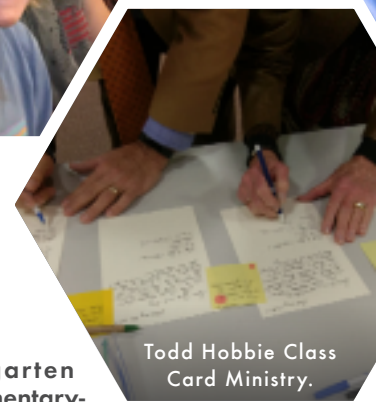
than 1000 have been mailed. Examples included members on the Prayer Chain, parents and grandparents with new babies, baptisms, weddings, notes of sympathy and encouragement. This class also supports Operation Breadbasket by combining its weekly offerings with those of the S&D Class.

• The new Journey Sunday School Class was started in early 2018 by one church member who felt the Holy Spirit at work. Hunter Morrison facilitates Biblically-based round table conversations which help class members find instant connections with one another while they journey through Scripture together. They studied many of the books by N.T. Wright as well as more contemporary studies like the "Advent Conspiracy."

• A new Men's Bible Study began in the fall of 2018. It meets each Wednesday morning from 7:30 to 8:30 in Room 201 in the Education Building. Those interested should enter from the ramp entrance to the building.

Children and Youth Learn

• The Children of the Church have ways to grow in their faith as well. A new nursery curriculum shared Bible stories from the Old and New Testament featuring play-based Sunday school lessons including Bible stories, prayers, music, and more.



Todd Hobbie Class Card Ministry.

• Kindergarten and Elementary-aged Children continued to dive deeper into the Bible with the Sunday School rotation which walks through the Old and New Testament. Together they connect and reflect on the stories through art, games, science, and other fun ways! Look for the beautiful murals they created in their class.

• On Sunday mornings the Middle School and High School Youth met to ask questions, learn from one another and deepen their friendships. Middle Schoolers learned about scripture and how to connect it to their lives using the Feasting on the Word curriculum. High Schoolers used the Faith Questions

ARTICLE CONTINUED ON PAGE 7



The youth enjoyed Montreat.

First Kids Preschool Program



A crown jewel among programs at our church is our 64-year-old Christian Education ministry, the First Kids Preschool program. The program offers two, three or five-day options in 11 different classes for children ages six months old through five years old. Director Maureen O'Bryan said, "We are so fortunate to have a church that supports our program and

offers such a nurturing environment for our children."

• 135 children are taught by 18 eminently qualified staff members who hold a total of two Master's Degrees, eight Bachelor's Degrees and four Associate's Degrees. Staff members have a combined total of 167 years of



ARTICLE CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

Sanctuary Renovation | a historical “happening” in the life of our church

The renovation of our church sanctuary during the summer of 2018 can be viewed as a historical “happening” in the life of our church. For several years discussions and planning had been underway to renovate our sanctuary. The last painting was in 1986 and the interior was starting to show its age. What began as a “paint and spruce up” endeavor became a full-blown renovation!

Pews were disassembled and removed and sent to a subcontractor that reconditioned the pews before reinstalling them. The first two rows were permanently removed to allow more room for choirs and musicians when they performed at the front of the sanctuary. **The old cork flooring was removed** with the help of church volunteers who painstakingly removed not only the cork but thousands of staples. A new cork floor was installed and all hardwood floors were refinished.

The interior was totally repainted with colors that duplicated the previous paint color selections including the 36’ tall ceiling which also required some repair. Scaffolding was installed to accomplish this task as well as provide a subfloor from which electricians could remove old florescent



lights and install LED lighting with dimming capability. **A new hearing loop was installed under the new cork floor** which dramatically improved the sound as well as having a feature tied to helping enhance those wearing hearing devices.

New audio and video equipment were added. One feature included creating a video screen at the organ. This allows the organist to see activities in the sanctuary below which is helpful for timing music to these activities. Another major aspect of the project was **totally dismantling and removing the 2000 pipes within our Flentrop organ which was originally installed in 1975.** They were cleaned and repaired and, as the final step of the renovation, returned, replaced, and tuned.

A long-overdue **addition within the sanctuary was a restroom in the narthex** which has been



enthusiastically accepted. This feature doubles as a space to be used during weddings for the bride’s dressing area if needed.

Bob Smith served as volunteer coordinator of this project and spent numerous volunteer hours as the church’s contact person for subcontractors and organizer of volunteer work days.

Bob said, “Of particular note was the work of Jock Liles of our church family whose company Liles Construction served as the primary contractor. Untold extra hours of his personal and professional “hands on” expertise helped to make the overall project a success.”

Our church family celebrated our move to the newly renovated sanctuary on Dedication Sunday, October 21 where our church family celebrated with special music, praise and thanks to God for blessing our church with the ability to complete such a meaningful project. ❖



Innovation in Music Ministry

2018 was a year of change and innovation in worship. While our sanctuary and Flentrop organ were being renovated and updated, **worship was moved to Davis Hall during the summer. The congregation and choir were seated in the round creating an intimacy among pastors, choir and congregation.** Media was projected on the screen including sacred art which enhanced the children’s message and served as an inspirational focal point during worship.

Upon return to the sanctuary, special anthems were presented joyfully by our Sanctuary and Youth Choirs to mark the dedication of our sanctuary and organ on October 21.

Other highlights during the year included:

- the retirement of Preslar Newton, children’s music associate who had led the children’s choirs since 2004.
- the riveting Christmas Showcase in Davis Hall by the Children’s Choir.
- the worship services led by the Youth Choir comprising middle and high school youth which included the annual Christmas Pageant and Christmas Eve service.
- the Christmas Cantata performed by the Sanctuary Choir at Taylor Glen.
- the 15th year anniversary of music leadership by Dr. Jacqueline Yost, Director of Music and Organist, and Dr. Jeffrey Price, Choirmaster.

Whether in Davis Hall, the sanctuary, or in the chapel, **music continues to be an important element of worship.** It frames our traditions, seasons, and special occasions throughout the church year with transformative and uplifting power. ❖



Volunteers and professional expertise helped make the renovation project an outstanding success!



Presbyterian Women of the Church

The Presbyterian Women of First Presbyterian Church encompasses all women in our church family. **Margaret Campbell, Presbyterian Women Moderator, said, "It is such a joy to work with our volunteers as we offer women of our congregation a meaningful way to enjoy Bible study and fellowship.** In addition, we see our work as an opportunity to make a difference if the lives of others through local and global service and mission projects."

In 2018, approximately 100 women actively participated in one of four organized Circles, and 40 more participated through committees and teams dedicated to Fellowship, Missions and Congregational Care.

Study, Special Events, & Service Projects

Circles met monthly for Bible study, fellowship and service projects. They studied Amy Poling Sutherlun's book and study guide **GOD'S PROMISE: I AM WITH YOU.**



The Presbyterian Women planned and hosted special events throughout the year. These included the Fall Kick-Off Dinner in August, Spiced Sunday Luncheon in the fall, Spiritual Nurture Event in the spring and the Birthday Offering Luncheon in May. In November/December the Presbyterian Women hosted the Joy Gift Offering Dinner, a church-wide event. Offerings from these events are collected for projects of Presbyterian Women across the nation.

Service projects benefitted CVAN, CCM, MAC House, Opportunity House, Rose of Thanks, local schools, disaster relief efforts, and the Salvation Army Night Shelter where food is organized and meals are served for three weeks each year. The largest volunteer effort is the Coltrane Webb Backpack Program described in a separate article below.

Scholarships & Estate Gift Administration

Presbyterian Women administer several funds and estate gifts. The first,



The Women hosted a reception for high school graduates.

The Todd and Betsy Hobbie Scholarship

established in 2012, is funded by gifts such as honorariums and memorials designated by individuals to the scholarship fund. **It provided full scholarships in 2018 for four nursing students in the Congo.** As trustee of the Nancy Ridenhour Dunford Fund established in 1980, the leadership of the Presbyterian Women meets quarterly to review written requests. **In 2018, distributions totaling \$21,930 were granted to worthy projects in our community and church.** The Ridenhour Scholarship fund established in 1983 to honor Mrs. Johnsie Ridenhour, provides **\$2000 annually** to a seminary student.

Congregational Care

Funeral meals and hospitality were provided for six grieving church families last year. We also organized meals and transportation for members who need them due to problematic circumstances or illness. Our Care Team keeps the church in touch with thirty-one "Presbyterians at Home" who are home-bound or in care facilities through visits, cards and small gifts throughout the year. ❖

Peg Morrison receives the 2018 Honorary Life Membership.

COLTRANE WEBB BACKPACK PROGRAM

In 2018 one of the largest volunteer efforts of the Presbyterian Women was the Coltrane Webb Backpack Program. The support our 14 students and their families receive consists of enough food to feed four people over the weekend. Many of the students are on subsidized breakfast and lunch programs at the school and would not eat over the weekend if it were not for the Backpack Program.

Susan Brooks, volunteer coordinator of this project, said, "It also takes a lot of money to purchase the groceries needed. One week's worth of food for 14 students costs about \$320. Multiply that by the number of weeks in the school year, and add the gift cards we send home to supplement the food at Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter, and a reasonable representation of the total program cost,

approximately \$7500. Additionally, we replace suitcases due to heavy use and purchase pots and pans, crock pots, and can openers for families that don't even have these basics."

The program has numerous sources within the church who purchase food including the Presbyterian Women's Circles, the Girl Scouts, and individuals. The children's Noisy Offering collected once a month during worship service is also used for the Backpack program. Many in our congregation also make individual financial contributions. ❖

"I have enjoyed packing the backpacks, as I know the small amount of time I am spending is helping someone."

Olivia Rotan, packer



How It's Done

It takes many people to complete this mission. This includes volunteers who inventory what's on hand and then develop shopping lists, individuals who shop every week and load the shelves in the pantry, people who pack the suitcases, those who deliver the suitcases to the school (and they are heavy!), and those who pick the suitcases up and return them to the pantry each week.





the Commons

A Concord prayer space...

with Wi-Fi, quiet music, great books, comfortable furniture & good coffee.

A group of dedicated church members and our ministers worked tirelessly throughout 2018 to create The Commons, a dedicated space for prayer for our church and our community. The Commons grew out of First Presbyterian's hope for our church to open its doors to the community in new ways.

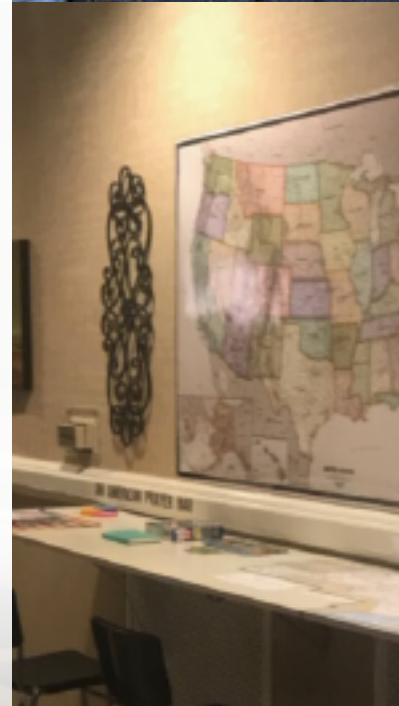
Four years ago, an anonymous donor had provided a special gift for our church with one requirement: use it to begin a new outreach project. Simultaneously, several church members had visited a prayer room in Charlotte created by The 24/7 Prayer Room organization and decided to bring this concept to our church. Our church realized this was the "right" time and perfect project for the purpose of the donor's generous gift and approved the project. This gracious donor's dream became a reality!

We collaborated with the 24/7 Prayer Room group to design and create The Commons in the space which was formerly the recreation hall in the Education Building. It was renovated and transformed into this remarkable spiritual sanctuary for prayer and opened in November 2018.

The Commons is best described as a quiet refuge for prayer and reflection. The space has been designed creatively and intentionally with a variety of prayer stations for quiet reflection, meditation, prayer, reading, having coffee with a friend or to escape for a few minutes from the "noise" of the day.

It is a place to focus, re-focus, become energized or become calm. A variety of prayer stations are placed around the room and include Reflection, Confession, Gratitude, Pick a Fight (social justice issues), Surrender and Holding Vigil. All stations contain various prompts to stimulate the visitor's thinking. The name, "The Commons," was chosen because the church wants this space to be a place of hospitality for everyone.

Come as you are, God will find you.



Annual Picnic on the Grounds

Our church-wide picnic was held on the church grounds on Dedication Sunday, October 21, 2018 following the 11:00 worship service. Boxed lunches were served, entertainment was provided by H.L. Ruth's band, and there were crafts and games for children. More than 200 attended this fun-filled event. Members brought chairs and picnic blankets where they ate and enjoyed visiting with each other. **Margaret Hillman, chair of this event said, "Volunteers from the Women of the Church helped prepare the sandwiches and boxed lunches. It was a beautiful day and a good time was had by all!" ❖**

Gracious Greens Garden

Our dedicated garden team harvested **381 pounds of mustard greens and kale during the 2018 season.** Through the work of this ministry and other food-related ministries of First Presbyterian Church, we were able to uplift many feeding ministries throughout Cabarrus County. **"The donated greens provided by this ministry assisted Operation Breadbasket in serving 9,803 people in 2018.** In total, the garden has produced over 4 tons of fresh produce from the nine gardens we planted for our community," said Thomas Moore, Coordinator of this Project. ❖





Boy & Girl Scout Troops

2018 marked another exciting year for First Presbyterian Church's Boy Scout Troop 3. Boys ages 11 to 18 continued to benefit from outdoor activities, leadership training and character development. **The troop welcomed four new scouts into the program in the fall.** Troop 3 attended the last Camporee to be held at Camp Cabarrus before that property changed ownership.

After 17 years as the Scoutmaster of BSA Troop 3, Trip Ruth turned that role over to Harris Morrison who will lead the troop into 2019. Trip influenced countless boys during his tenure, and guided **51 boys to the rank of Eagle!**

Daisies, Brownies, Juniors, & Girl Scouts

Daisy Troop 3631, Brownie Troop 323, Junior Troop 3142, and Girl Scout Troop 334 finished out the 2017-2018

school year serving girls in kindergarten through 12th grade from both our church membership and from the broader community. Entering the 2018-2019 school year, **Troop 334 remained active and is led by Kirby Sheridan and René Prager.**

Because community outreach is important to Troop 334, a portion of their **cookie sale proceeds was donated to Cabarrus County Special Olympics** and used to purchase food for the church's Back Pack program. The Girl Scouts serve dinner three times a year at the Salvation Army Center Night Shelter and assist with the family activities for the annual church tree lighting. **For the past 12 years, members of Troop 334 have helped to fill plastic Easter eggs for the kindergarten teachers at Coltrane Webb Elementary school.** The Girl Scouts also serve the community through their Silver and Gold Award projects. ❖



High School Youth Sunday School Class.

Christian Formation continued from pg 3

curriculum which invited them to **ponder the good and sometimes challenging questions of life and faith.**

- **In the spring, seven students completed the Confirmation Class,** wrote their statements of faith and professed their faith before the Session and the congregation. Their parents also had the opportunity to take the Confirmation Class in the fall to enhance and support their child's faith journey.
- **Middle School and High School youth meet on Sunday** evenings for fun, fellowship, and faith discussions. With the **creation of a Youth Council in the fall, parents and youth, along with Rachel and the Christian Education Committee, work to plan** new and exciting opportunities for service and community building.
- Over the summer the High School youth attended the **Montreat Youth Conference** and were so inspired by what they heard, saw, and learned they returned home and led a worship service sharing the scripture and themes they learned at the conference. ❖



VBS & First Kids Partnership

A new collaborative effort between First Kids Preschool and Vacation Bible School Summer Camp **created a larger age group. They came to learn, sing, play, and create at the Rolling River Rampage.** Many volunteers and some of our Preschool teachers helped to teach Bible stories and share God's love with the children of our church and community.

First Kids continued from pg 3

- four Associate's Degrees. **Staff members have a combined total of 167 years of service to First Kids.**
- Staff participated in a **curriculum enhancement project called Building Healthy Lifestyles** which focused on increased exercise and healthy eating habits.
- **Preschool and church collaborated** in Book Fairs, a Viewing Party on the Lawn for the Concord Christmas Parade, a Lenten Luncheon Program and a combined Vacation Bible School/

Summer Camp Program. **Rev. Rachel Vogado leads monthly Chapel time** for the Three and Four-Year-Olds and the Transitional Kindergarten class.

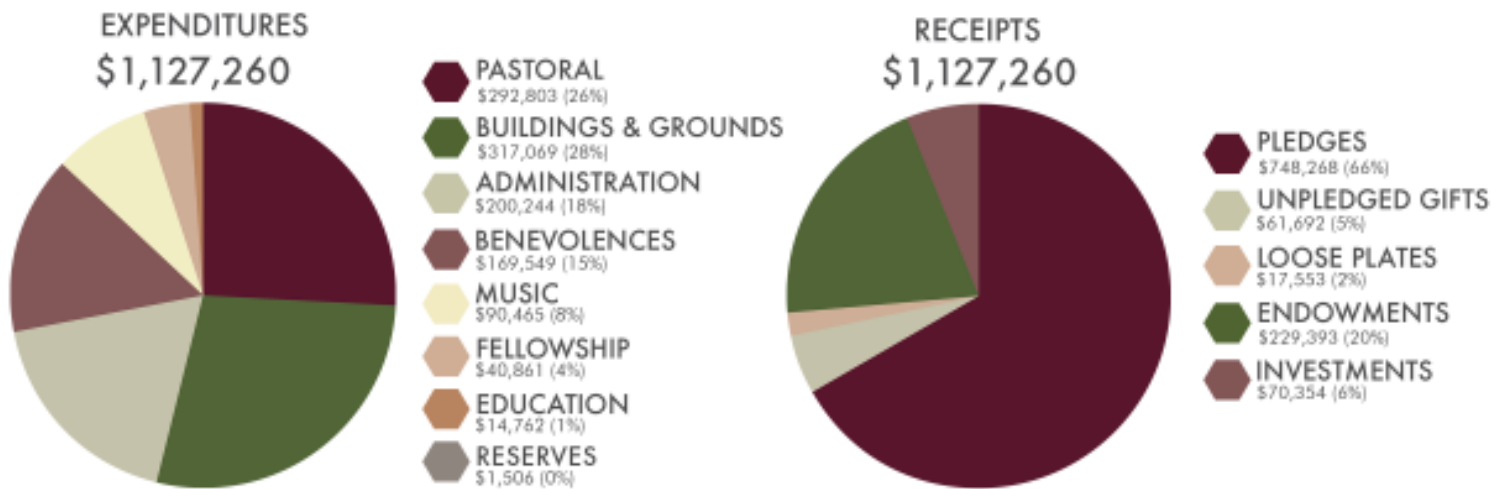
- For service and mission outreach, **First Kids collected over 200 pairs of children's shoes** for the Papa Joe Shoe project to benefit the children of El Salvador. They provided over 150 Christmas gifts for CVAN. ❖

"I and I will forever be grateful to First Kids Preschool. Not only did my two children learn their ABC's, 123's, and all the wonderful preschool curriculum, they also learned how to share, be good friends, and that they were special and an important part of their preschool family. We were so blessed to find First Kids!!"

Kim Bell, former First Kids' parent

So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. (2 Corinthians 9:7)

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH BUDGET EXPENDITURES AND RECEIPTS 2018



Stewardship Giving & Planned Giving: Our Future

The Joy of Giving demonstrated by our church family's gifts to the 2018 Stewardship Campaign and the distributions returned from estate gifts invested by our First Presbyterian Foundation allowed the projects and programs outlined in this Annual Report to become a reality.

The results of the Stewardship Campaign shown in the graphs above indicated a continued dependence on estate gifts to meet our operational budget. **In 2018, 26% of our budget was supported from funds invested and managed by our Foundation.** We thank God for those faithful followers who, though gone from our church family, left their gifts as a reminder of their love of God and our church.

This unselfish generosity added to our annual gifts allowed us to **distribute Benevolences totaling \$170,700 in support of mission outreach projects** serving those less fortunate.



OUR CHURCH NEEDS YOUR HELP!

As we enter 2019, the focus of the implementation of our Strategic Plan is to increase service and community outreach, locally and internationally. Thus, our **annual stewardship pledges and gifts become more important to ensure we have the financial health** to accomplish these goals.

Increasing our annual stewardship pledges and gifts as well as creating a gift to the church in estate plans will be extremely important to the future prosperity of First Presbyterian Church! Please contact those listed below for more information and visit our website at firstpresconcord.org/give/planned-giving.

First Presbyterian Foundation

| | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Bob Bratton | Holt Morrison |
| Betsy Liles | Kate Morrison |
| Britt Leatherman | Toby Prewitt |
| Jim Monroe | Susan Schneider |

2018-2019 Stewardship Committee

John Bishop
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