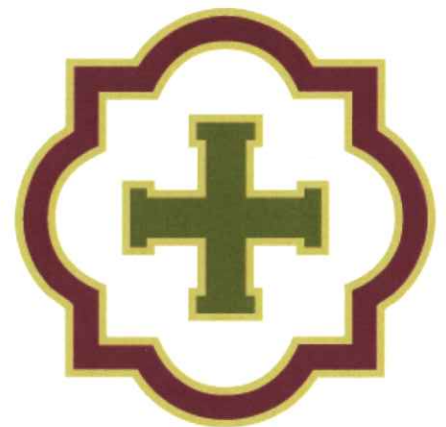
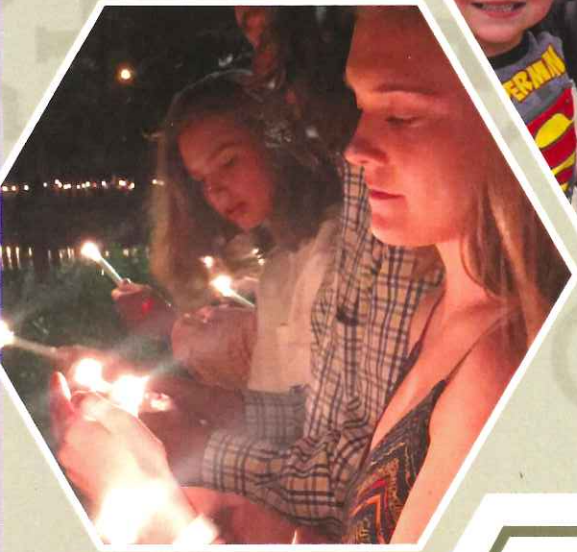
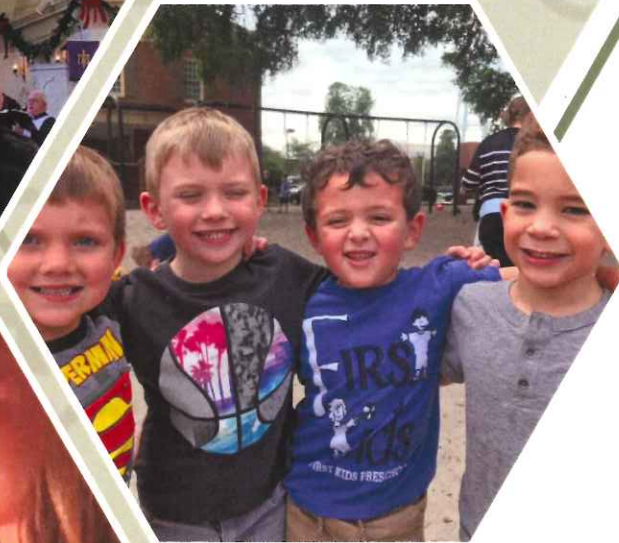
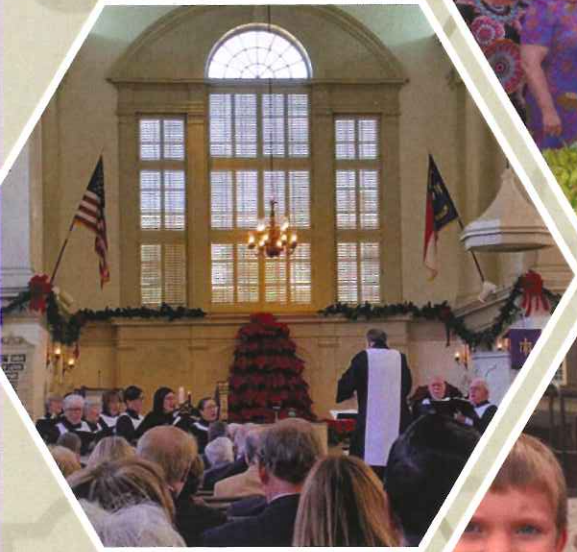
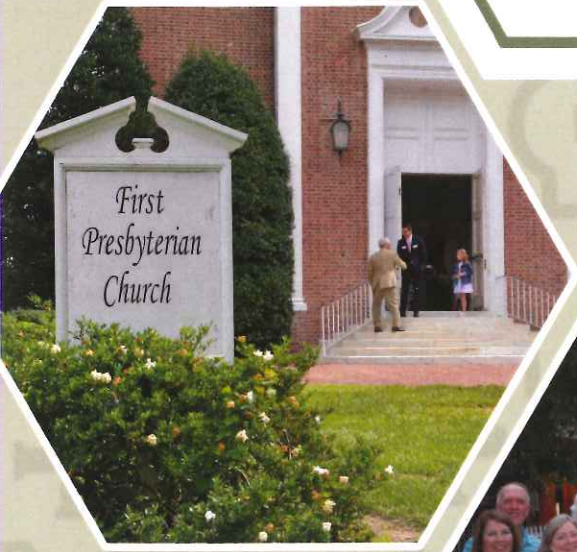


2019

ANNUAL REPORT



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
CONCORD

Celebrating the Joy of Giving

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



2019 Annual Report

Celebrating the Joy of Giving

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH | CONCORD

2019 could best be described as a year of transition. The Interim Pastor Search Committee proudly announced in May our new interim pastor Scott Kenefake would join us June 1, 2019. An ordained Presbyterian Church USA Pastor for more than 30 years, Scott came to us after completing a call as interim pastor at Davidson College Presbyterian Church. We enjoyed getting to know Scott and his wife Gail as they assimilated into the life of our church.

This third *Joy of Giving* Annual Report is designed to illustrate through narratives and photos how our church family continues to use the gifts God has bestowed upon us to serve others. Hours of volunteerism, both for the church family as well as the community, resulted in homes and bridges built, backpacks filled with food for children, 10,000 Rise Against Hunger packages assembled, the grounds beautified, families served by the Presbyterian Women during times of need, the explosion of scouting programs, and an extremely successful Market for Mission—just to mention a few!

This Annual Report also reveals how our annual gifts and pledges support the programs of the church. Hopefully the energy of the church on a day-to-day basis comes alive for the reader, underscoring that our gifts are being used for God's purposes. We encourage each reader to find themselves somewhere in these pages, seeing and hearing that Christ's call for us to serve others and to love our neighbors as ourselves is being met by First Presbyterian Church, Concord!

PART ONE: Haiti in 2019

Despite our mission trip to Haiti being cancelled in 2019, our relationship with Organization for the Christian Force in Bayonnais, loosely translated from Haitian Creole and referred to as OFCB, remains strong. Haiti currently has a fuel shortage, and prices have risen 500%. Because of this, travel is severely restricted, food and water can't be distributed, and currency is difficult to come by. Mission trips can't safely be transported to Bayonnais from Port Au Prince at this time.

Nevertheless, while schools across the country had been cancelled due to protests and shortages, OFCB has remained open in grades K thru 5 since those teachers and students are local. Because of the importance of national exams, OFCB has been working through solutions for grades 6 through 13 and are working tirelessly to find fuel for the buses.



Market for Mission

Supports our Mission in Haiti and The Commons

65 Church Street

We did it again! Working together all year, **our church family organized the second Church Street Market for Mission and raised almost \$13,000!** The community loved it, our neighbors benefitted from shopping, and we were able to **support our partner children's mission in Bayonnais, Haiti with a donation of \$10,000.** The remainder was used to support the Commons Prayer Room.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

The next Market is scheduled for **October 2021**

worked for months cleaning out their attics, closets, and cabinets generously donating a variety of wonderful items.

Led by event coordinators Carrie Myers and Gina Goff, dedicated volunteers met weekly to organize and price things. More than 50 volunteers worked the week of and day of the event and everyone experienced a wonderful sense of community in making the sale a success!

This one-of-a-kind, indoor-outdoor yard sale and treasure hunt was held on October 5th in Davis Hall and on our lawn. The market included 1000s of gently used and new items: vintage and collectible pieces, artwork, home décor, furniture, jewelry, housewares and much more. Church members

Items that didn't sell were used to further benefit the community by donating them to the Habitat Restore and CVAN. The Commons Prayer Room also gained some needed décor.



Jock Liles surveys bridge site



Pillars built

Sponsorship funds continue to support the school, including lunches for the children. **In this regard, our members currently sponsor 33 children in Bayonnais, providing each child with an opportunity for education.** Although food has become very expensive, students at all three campuses—Nicolas, Zoranger, and the main campus—are receiving lunch at school when school is in session. **\$10,000 from funds raised in 2019 by the Church Street Market for Mission were donated to OFCB** and have been a real blessing in helping

them cope with the rising costs of fuel and food.

Reverend Lynne Keele said "Our church will continue to support OFCB and a **"Relationtrip"** will be rescheduled when we can safely travel to Haiti. Those wishing to sponsor a child or for more information, contact World of God by visiting them online at worldofgod.org/sponsor.php."



Buildings and Grounds

After the major sanctuary renovation of 2018, the Buildings and Grounds Committee focused on routine maintenance and repairs and painting during 2019. One exception was a major repair on the gutters and soffits on the north side of the sanctuary building. The gutters were lined and coated with an elastomeric. Soffit rot was removed, replaced, and repainted. The unsightly water damaged areas now look like new!

To make our campus safer, sidewalks were repaired, playgrounds inspected, and keypad locks were installed on the Will Young Building and at the entrance to the Commons.

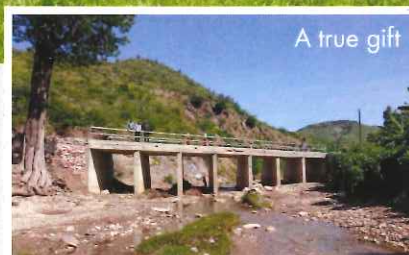
The Buildings and Grounds Committee held church grounds work days in the spring and fall. Rather than their usual Sunday best, church members arrived in work clothes to weed, prune, rake and plant seasonal flowers. This time to help beautify and maintain the church campus was a great opportunity for fellowship. The courtyard became more beautiful than ever with newly installed sod!

PART TWO: The Bridges

In December of 2018, church members Jock Liles and Buzz Simpson partnered with Engineers Without Borders and Friends of OFCB to undertake the construction of two reinforced concrete bridges over the La Coulevre River in the general vicinity of Bayonnais. Jock and Buzz each spent weeks at a time in Bayonnais overseeing the construction of the first bridge which was completed in June of 2019.

Since then, a construction arm of the United Nations, UN OPS, has agreed to undertake the construction of the second bridge and will begin work in February, 2020. These bridges are essential to all people who live in areas around Bayonnais by providing safe and uninterrupted access to the region throughout the rainy season.

Prior to the construction of the bridge, the only way the residents of the area could cross the river was to walk or drive through it; often leaving them stranded, sometimes for days, when a sudden storm event occurred. There were also incidences of people drowning and vehicles being swept away while, out of desperation, attempting to cross the swollen river. These bridges now provide a new level of safety, commerce and convenience for the people that live in this region of Haiti. Visit haitibridgesproject.com for more information.



Reflections 2019

One of the big challenges of Interim Ministry is quickly "getting to know" a congregation and what makes it "tick." **Every congregation is unique and has its own way of**

doing things and follows its own particular traditions. However, it is often difficult for clergy to learn about and understand these things when so much of the history of a congregation is assumed to be "common knowledge" by long term parishioners and "the way we do things" is simply assumed as "normal."

But here are some things I have learned about First Presbyterian Church of Concord (FPCC) since starting as your Interim Senior Minister on June 1st, 2019.

FPCC is a lot healthier and effective in ministry than some may be aware of. For example, the congregation continues a long tradition of generous volunteer and financial support to many local nonprofits and organizations that make a very positive impact on the larger community, the music program is excellent and continues to be vibrant, quality educational and enrichment programming is offered to people of all ages in a variety of settings, and the congregation continues to be well served by a host of member volunteers who are deeply committed to the mission and ministry of the congregation.

There is growing recognition among many that housing and commercial development in recent years has shifted the "center of gravity" of the community away from downtown Concord toward outlying suburban developments. As a result, many people in the congregation are working hard to cast the net of the congregation wider so that it is easier for newcomers to the larger community to discover the congregation. Marketing and communication strategies are presently being developed and implemented to nurture relationships with new people and invite their participation.

For these reasons and more, I am optimistic that FPCC will continue to be a strong Presbyterian witness in Cabarrus County for years to come. There will always be a need for churches that are open-minded, inclusive, and passionate for the common good. These are some of the unique gifts our reformed tradition brings to the witness of the larger Christian community and our society, as well.

Blessings,
Rev. Dr. Scott M. Kenefake
Interim Senior Minister

Presbyterian Women of the Church



The Dunford Fund Grants

The Presbyterian Women continue to provide activities and support for our church throughout the year including organized Circles and committee participation dedicated to Fellowship, Missions and Congregational Care.

This portion of their Annual Report focuses on the 2019 grant program which illustrates the many organizations and lives touched by generosity from a trust fund, The Dunford Fund. These charitable gifts greatly enhance the mission work of our church family.

The Presbyterian Women awarded grants totaling \$21,945 in 2019 for charitable-focused projects throughout the community. These grants were provided quarterly from income from The Dunford Fund. **This Fund was left in the care of the Presbyterian Women of our church in 1980 by Nancy Ridenour Dunford who established the Fund in honor of her mother, Mrs. Johnsie Sims Ridenhour, one of our faithful members.** Income from the fund is "to be used for yearly projects of the women of the church."

They include the Ridenhour Scholarship awarded to seminary student Casey Aldridge, a member of our church; grants for internal projects of the Presbyterian Women such as the

Backpack Program and the Todd and Betsy Hobbie Scholarship; and mini-grants to various external organizations and individuals doing work in our community.

The external mini grants make up the large majority of Dunford awards. Grants included:

- **The Early Childhood Foundation of Cabarrus County** to pay for "Conscious Discipline" workshops, books and workbooks offered to all preschool teachers in Cabarrus County
- **The Robertson Family of First Reformed Church of Landis** who are gathering resources to move to Tanzania and serve as missionaries
- **The SandBox** serving area families of seriously ill children with programs such as their annual "Prom" and providing travel expenses to distant appointments and other assistance
- **A Rose of Thanks** for mailing expenses for care packages collected by area churches and sent to deployed military women
- **The Boys and Girls Club of Cabarrus County** to pay after school care expenses for two children
- **Racial Equity Cabarrus** to provide 10 scholarships locally for their workshops.
- **Cooperative Christian Ministry** for a volunteer appreciation event



- **William Black Lodge at Montreat** for food and housing for a retreat for pastors of smaller churches.
- **Meredith Sheridan's Girl Scout Gold Award** project to furnish a teen room for foster children at DHS
- **The Academic Learning Center** for tutors for low income children
- **Present Age Ministries** for a counseling room for young victims of human trafficking referred by local law enforcement, schools and courts.

Presbyterian Women's Honorary Life Membership Recipients

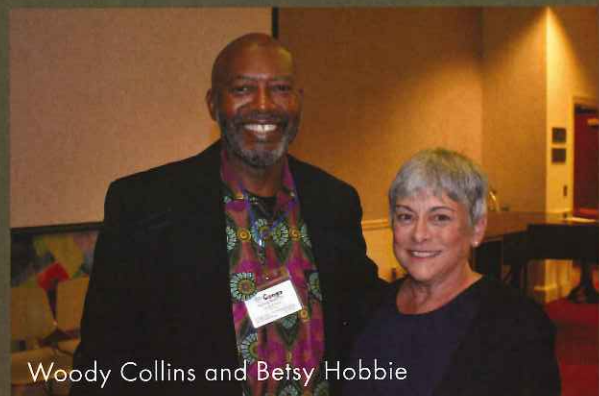
Shirley Brannan, left, and Kay Wall were the 2019 recipients of the 2019 Presbyterian Women's Honorary Life Membership. Each year recipients of the award are recognized for their faithful service to the organization, our church and the community.



Woody Collins & Todd and Betsy Hobbie Scholarship Program

Seven years ago, following the retirement of Rev. Todd Hobbie, the Presbyterian Women established a scholarship to honor Todd and Betsy Hobbie, celebrating their early work in the Congo. Each year, through generous donations from our congregation, Congolese nursing students receive a full four-year tuition. This year four students received this scholarship.

This scholarship program is administered through Congo Helping Hands, a non-profit organization founded and led by Woody Collins, a member of the Whitewater Valley Presbytery in Indiana. The Presbyterian Women invited him to our church to share his story about his work in The Congo and the impact of our scholarship funding.



Woody Collins and Betsy Hobbie

Adult Sunday school classes attended his hour-long presentation in Davis Hall. In addition, Woody provided additional information about this scholarship program during the Minute for Mission at the 11a.m. service. He gave an eye-opening look

at daily life in the Congo and the huge impact that even a small financial donation can make.

He suggested members consider donating \$200 to cover a full year of tuition, room, and board for nursing students. The nursing school has other needs that include textbooks and hands-on teaching models.

Those wishing to support this mission should make a donation to First Presbyterian Women for the Todd & Betsy Hobbie Scholarship.

2019 High School Graduates Honored

On May 5th, 10 graduating high school seniors were celebrated and recognized during the worship service. The Presbyterian Women hosted a reception for the graduates and their families in the Fellowship house during the Sunday School hour. They were presented a book *Prayers for the Road*.

Back row, (L to R): Kate Prager, Collier Leatherman, Mary Morrison; front: Emily Mitchell, Rachel Perdue, Abigail Hedgecock, & Rev. Rachel Vogado. Not pictured: Timmy Jones, Jack Neal, Julia Patrum, & Ross Wilder.



Presbyterian Women Programs

"As I compiled our Presbyterian Women 2019 Annual Report, I was struck by how much we had accomplished, and how many hands make it all happen. **The Coordinating Team Chairwomen and Circle Leaders (and all volunteers) work tirelessly for our community and beyond. I'm proud and humbled by all that these women do.**" **Susan Hannah, Moderator**

- Approximately 100 women actively participated in 2019, whether as a circle member, coordinating team member, participation in fellowship, missions, or congregational care.



In the Spring of 2019, the Diaconate invited a representative from Barium Springs/Children's Hope Alliance to present information about the work the organization is doing within our state to help vulnerable children, youth and young adults in need. The presenter noted there has been an accelerated increase in those who need this support plus a decrease in state funding.

The Presbyterian Church USA and our local Presbytery support this organization because it is one of the only faith-based organizations of its type and size left in the state. **Children's Hope Alliance has 14 offices and has served children and families across 61 North Carolina counties.**

Our congregation's financial support has traditionally been sought annually through an announcement from the pulpit and bulletin insert. The response has been minimal. **After learning more about this organization, the Diaconate approved a gift of \$5000 from the Discretionary Fund.**

Janna Mitchell, Diaconate Moderator said, "This presentation to our Diaconate was memorable. The personal stories were real and difficult. There are more than 200,000 children in NC who need the services provided by Children's Hope Alliance and only half get the help they need. We were moved to act to support these hurting children, teens and families to provide a safe healing journey and hope for their future. These are our neighbors."

- Four circles met monthly for Bible study, fellowship, and service projects.
- Circle service projects included support of CVAN, CCM, MAC House, Opportunity House, Rose of Thanks, local schools, Disaster Relief, Coltrane Webb School Backpack Program, and Salvation Army Night Shelter meals.
- "In house" service projects included yearly polishing of brass in the sanctuary and silver in Fellowship House, transportation to and from church events for needy individuals, and support of our newly created Prayer Room, The Commons.
- A newly created Meal Ministry coordinated homemade meals from members to our shut-ins due to illness or injury. In addition, we served four funeral meals in 2019.
- Special events hosted by Presbyterian Women included the Kickoff Dinner in August, Spiced Sunday Luncheon in October, Joy Gift Dinner in December, Spiritual Nurture Luncheon in the spring, and the Birthday Offering Luncheon in May which included a memorial to women who passed away in 2019. Offerings are collected at three of these events for worldwide organized relief.
- The recently re-instated Ridenhour Scholarship Fund presents an annual scholarship to a seminary student in our area. Our own church member Casey Aldridge was the recipient in 2019.



What happens when the Deacons' Congregational Care and Mission committees unite? It has become an annual tradition for our congregation to join together on a Sunday afternoon in February for fellowship and to pack meals for those in need around the world.

This project supports Rise Against Hunger, an international hunger relief organization that distributes food and life-changing aid to the world's most vulnerable, mobilizing the necessary resources to end hunger by 2030.

Regardless of age and skill, everyone who came on 2019 had a role to play. In a fun-packed two hours of high energy and joy, 10,000 meals were prepared, packed, loaded on a truck and shipped to the worlds' most vulnerable!

Our church donated \$3400 or \$.34 per meal from our Discretionary Fund Budget to underwrite the cost of the supplies and expenses for these meals!



Preschool Sunday School

2019 brought many joyful changes to our Sunday nursery program. **Using the Frolic Curriculum, Margaret and Brian Moore worked to bring the Bible stories to life for our youngest children of God.** Using storytelling, music and hands-on activities, infants and toddlers learned some of the most important Bible stories.



Elementary Sunday School (Grades K-5)

A full slate of **new teachers brought enthusiasm and energy to each Sunday morning** as they presented students the newly chosen curriculum "Feasting on the Word." After several years using a rotation model, we returned to the classroom lesson/activity model. **These children learned Bible stories each week that followed the lectionary so what they learned in Sunday school was heard again in worship.**

An exciting event occurred in October. **5th graders Katharine Morrison and Grace Morrison spearheaded a project which raised nearly \$400 to help our homeless neighbors.** This younger group of our church family has been described by their teachers as **one full of smiles, laughter, wonder and hope—a real pleasure to watch as they grew on their journey of faith.**

Middle & High School

The Middle School and High School Youth met to ask questions and learn from one another. Once again, the Middle School used "Feasting on the Word" curriculum. High School used the Faith Questions curriculum. **With the changing church attendance patterns, our church is continually seeking ways to connect to youth in new and unusual ways especially using online opportunities.**



Youth Confirmation Class

In the spring, Rev. Rachel Vogado taught the Confirmation class which met on Sunday mornings. **Six Confirmands learned about the Bible, explored God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit, and what faith meant for them.** Their Confirmation journey wrapped up with a morning retreat where they wrote their faith statements and created stoles for worship.

The Confirmands were Lilly Bryant, Eli Farmer, Avery Garmon, Michael Gilbert, Anna Claire Watson and Gregory Watson.

Youth Fellowship

The Youth gathered weekly throughout the school year for Youth Fellowship, lunches after church and for various fun activities out in the community. **One of their highlights is the opportunity to lead worship, where they shared their prayers in a meaningful visual way for the congregation to see.** In the spring they took a trip to **Asheville Youth Mission, where they got to hear important stories of people experiencing homelessness** and how communities can help all of its neighbors.

In the spring the youth **sent college care packages to our college and seminary students.** In the summer our High Schoolers went to **the Montreat Youth Conference where they met with a thousand other youth to reflect on the theme, "Let Love Lead."** In the fall, Youth Fellowship focused on the theme of "Relationships: Love God, Love Yourself, Love One Another" and **they had a blast baking for the bake sale for the Church Street Market!**



College Students

Two college students attended the **Montreat College Conference in 2019 and reflected on what it means to be a "Compassionate Community."**

Adult Classes

The Journey Class

This very active class ranging from ages 30 to 60 meets in the Education Building each Sunday for Bible study, discussion, and fellowship. **The class supports the missions of not only the church but the larger community** including helping the homeless, providing meals for Habitat Cabarrus volunteers, or simply assisting a family in need in the community. **Striving to do the work of God in their everyday lives so our community becomes a better place,** the class has ongoing fun-filled social outings and gatherings.

The S & D Class

The S & D Class meets in the parlor of Fellowship each Sunday for study and discussion led by members of the class. This class continues its history of being service/outreach oriented. **This includes purchasing and delivering food for Operation Breadbasket, a program at First Missionary Baptist Church in the Logan Community, and hosting weekly dinners for college students taking part in the Habitat Collegiate Challenge.** Members are active in and provide leadership in all areas of church mission and to charitable groups.

The Todd Hobbie Class

The Todd Hobbie Sunday School Class meets in Davis Hall in the Will Young Building each Sunday. From January through May, **Rachel and Lynne led the class on a study called "Saving Jesus,"** which looked at who Jesus is, how he lived and what that means for us today. In the fall, **members of the class led lessons based on a series "Feasting On the Spirit".** They continue their card ministry in which church members and others receive messages of encouragement, sympathy, and congratulations from the class members.

Music Ministry

Music at First Presbyterian Church continues to be an integral part of worship and community. Thanks to the talented leadership of Jacquie Yost, Director of Music/Organist and Jeff Price, Choir Master.

Youth Choirs

The graduated program in sacred music education offers musical training from K-12, held regularly on Sunday afternoons during the regular choir season. Though choral music is the central focus, participants easily transfer learned musical concepts to their schools and/or other civic musical venues often excelling in them as they mature. **For example, Eli Farmer, a ninth grade baritone in the Youth Choir,** attended the Cannon Music Camp during the summer, majoring in piano. In addition to choir, **he offered special piano music occasionally for both youth-led and regular worship services.**

Other examples include senior Anna Ruth Morrison and junior Molly Morrison who placed in state and regional orchestra and choir clinics. Molly sings in both the Youth and Sanctuary Choirs. She invited her talented Cannon School volunteer acapella group to present a special concert in Davis Hall for the annual 2019 Joy Gift Dinner in December.



Emmaline Moore, left, said, "I love learning about the music notes and singing."

Adult Choir

Our Sanctuary Choir continued to give their unfailing participation, commitment, and generosity of their time and talents nearly every week of 2019. While all of our choir members are special, notable examples of their commitment follow.

- Through their unselfish contributions including extra practice time, **soloists Joy Cook, Bob Prescott, Carrie Myers, Scott Verner, and Jennifer Newton provided lovely accompaniment** to the choir's special musical performances.
- **Judy Mongold organized, categorized, and filed the choir's music** in addition to baking her award-winning cookies once a month for rehearsals.
- **Carole Shaw cared for the choir robes,** working miracles with tattered scapulars to create what appears to be brand new material.
- **Marc Niblock shared his carpentry talents by building the risers** used by our choir during special music when accompanied by an orchestra.
- **Tyler Stark, Central Cabarrus High School band director, brought his talented music students to play for the Easter sunrise service** in Memorial Gardens for the last three years. On occasion he directed congregational singing from the chancel.

2019 also featured a resurgence of greater community musical events at our church. The internationally famed vocal quintet "Ensemble Nobiles" gave two exciting performances in October and a "Celtic" evening worship in November featured violinist Jane Paris and vocalist Ivey Cherry from UNC Charlotte. In December, gifted organ students from the North Carolina School of the Arts gave a riveting performance on our newly renovated and enhanced Flentrop organ.

An annual highlight, always well received, and repeated at Taylor Glen, was the Christmas Cantata. The Sanctuary Choir performed with 14 Charlotte Symphony players. Robust arrangements of traditional carols for choir, orchestra, and congregation including readers from all age groups gave an opportunity for all to participate in worship.



Reflections 2019

2019 felt like a dizzying year of change, hopeful transitions, and new opportunities. Working alongside Lynne for the first half of the year during our "interim before the interim" pushed

all of us to think creatively to engage with one another and the community in new ways. **Upon reflection, I sense that our most hopeful and vibrant ministry moments came when we worked to reimagine and reinvigorate long-held programs and outlooks.** From blasting out "To Mars and Beyond" with our First Kids VBS Summer Camp to much needed technology updates to the rolling out of the new "GIFT Sunday" educational opportunity, when First Presbyterian Church seeks to do a new thing, the Holy Spirit shows up to help!

If there is anything that the church should especially be paying attention to in these days is the importance of intergenerational learning and ministry together. The Christian Education committee took that knowledge to heart and worked to bring **GIFT Sunday's to life. GIFT Sundays, meaning Generations In Faith Together,** were an opportunity for people of all ages to gather on Sunday morning, share meals around the table, reflect on scripture, and engage hands-on ways to learn and grow together.

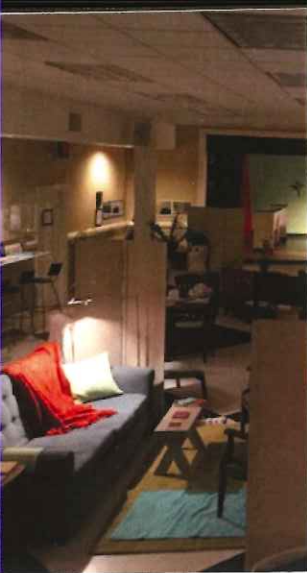
At Rally Day we shared the fall theme of "Won't You Be My Neighbor" after reading *Neighborhood Church* together in the summer as an All-Church-Read. **We continued to see the fruits of conversations about this book that invited us to see the ways we are called to be better neighbors together.**

GIFT Sundays have truly felt like a gift to me, along with the growing partnerships with First Kids Preschool which included Summer Camp, the book fair and getting to lead preschool chapel once a month. **As I have seen how 2019 stretched and shaped us all, I hope the flexibility, hopefulness, and joy of trying a new thing continues for First Presbyterian Church.**

Blessings,
Rev. Rachel Vogado
Associate Pastor for Christian Formation

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord!





the Commons

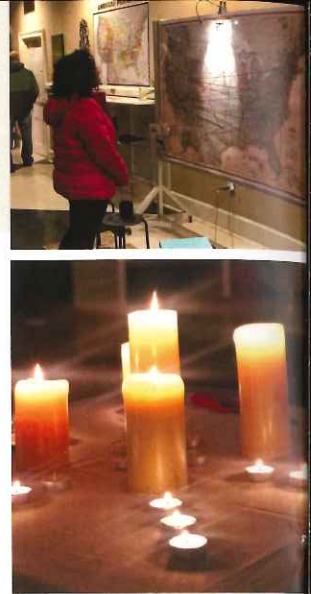
A Concord prayer space...

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

The Commons celebrated its first year anniversary in 2019 with the year being marked by significant growth and outreach! The anonymous gift that made the Commons possible has helped spread peace, comfort and solace to many.

This community prayer space offers a respite from the busyness of our lives and to make it possible to slow down, feel the Holy Spirit, and experience a sense of calm. Each prayer station is approachable and engaging, ranging from those offering solitude, to those offering creative activities.

Many community groups visited and often chose to continue to experience the space on a regular basis. Examples of the use of this space included:



- **Youth groups** from First Presbyterian, Central Methodist Church, and Davidson College gathered for their youth programs and to explore the space. FPC Christian Formation classes of all ages also visited and used the space for a variety of study and prayer sessions.
- **A spontaneous prayer vigil** was held for a beloved community member which provided a time of prayer and comfort for those concerned for her recovery.
- **A time of reflection** was held for another much loved community member several days following her formal memorial service. The Commons served as a gathering place for her friends who reflected on her friendship and gained comfort from being together.
- **A local pastor brought his small congregation** as a group to experience the Commons. His FaceBook comment noted: "I recommend visiting this space to any and everyone who is wanting to seek the Father's peace and presence without the constraints and confinement of religiosity, denominationalism, cultural barriers, racial divisiveness, or classism. I was impacted in every sense the moment I first entered the space several months ago and it's been a part of me ever since. Go see for yourself.....truly God inspired!"
- **Sisters Building Sisters**, directed by two sisters who lead a Bible study for a small group of women, met monthly. The group strengthens each other's journey of faith their interaction in this quiet environment.
- **Moms in Prayers** is a group of prayer warriors whose prayers focus on children, their teachers and their schools. They met several times and will continue in 2020.
- **Resident chaplains** participating in the Chaplain Residency Program at Atrium Health Cabarrus met for their oral exams as part of their final exams. Their coordinator noted this was a perfect environment for this part of their curriculum.
- **Atrium Health Cabarrus Leadership** hosted a luncheon in Davis Hall and then visited the Commons.
- **My Father's House**, a housing ministry of Cabarrus Cooperative Ministry, held a series of planning sessions in 2019 as they prayerfully considered work for 2020.
- **Each Tuesday evening a large Al Anon group** who had outgrown their previous location began meeting in the Commons, finding it to be a welcoming and affirming space.
- Examples of **individuals using the space included a young homeless woman** who studied for her GED and non-profit staffers who chose to visit to reflect and reenergize.

For the most part, the groups listed above met during Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday (by appointment). The space is open to the public on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Postcards are available for our church members to use with friends, neighbors, and organizations as a way to promote the Commons throughout the community!

For questions or to schedule a group to meet in this prayer space, contact the Commons at thecommonsconcord@gmail.com and visit their website: thecommonsprayerroom.com



Pastor Nominating Committee Chosen

On November 17, 2019, the Pastor Nominating Committee, following Session approval, was affirmed by the congregation to begin the search for a new senior minister. **Those chosen in the photo were, front row, from left, Margaret Hillman, Betsy Liles, Cheryl Kelling; second row, Rindy Moore, Kathy Pilkington, Nathan Woolwine; third row, Dave Goff, Todd Phillips, and Mack Moore (youth representative). Betsy Liles was elected chair by the PNC.** This process was conducted by a Selection Committee which began its work in September by seeking nominations from the congregation. Twenty seven adults and three youths were nominated and agreed to serve if elected. **The Selection Committee was Jim Monroe, chair, Tripp Carpenter, Sallie Dotger, Carol Hovey, and Janna Mitchell.**

First Kids Preschool Program

A leader in preschool education in the community, **First Kids Preschool currently has third generation students** participating in this well-respected preschool program. In 2019, First Kids Preschool **offered 11 different classes for a maximum of 140 children ages six months through Transitional Kindergarten.**

The staff focuses on the theory that **sensory-rich, hands-on and emotionally supportive experiences children are provided during the early brain-building years create the foundation for successful learning through life.**

Some notable accomplishments of the past year follow.

- The curriculum included guiding our children spiritually by including weekly Bible stories and verses in our classroom, choosing Character Traits as our preschool annual theme and having Reverend Rachel Vogado provide monthly chapel time in the Fellowship House chapel.
- For the second year, a strong collaboration continued between our preschool and church to created and conduct an interesting and meaningful Vacation Bible School/Summer Camp program.
- The preschool and church updated the campus-wide emergency preparedness program. They also joined forces to keep buildings and playground beautiful.



- Throughout the year the preschool students and family members participated in special events including the Christmas Parade Viewing Party, the Blessing of the Animals, Book Studies and Prayer and Meditation activities in the Commons.
- The popular Book Fair was co-sponsored by the preschool and the church.
- Our program was deemed a successful and "star" participant in the UNCC Building Healthy Lifestyles Grant Program which was expanded this year to include Farm to School initiatives to encourage gardening and nutrition.

We are proud of the response of our students and their families to community outreach programs. **Approximately \$1800 in food items were contributed to the Backpack Program, over 200 pairs of shoes were collected for the Papa Joe Shoe Drive, and more than 200 Christmas gifts were contributed to CVAN.**

First Kids Director Maureen O'Bryan noted, "Our award-winning program, dedicated staff and beloved students and their families are not just a school, we're a family!"

Cabarrus County Preschool Teacher of the Year

Amy Murphy was awarded 2019 Hearts and Hands Award for outstanding Preschool Teacher of the Year given at the annual Coming Together for Children Event in March 2019 at Crossroads Church. This award is awarded to deserving early childhood educators from Cabarrus and Stanly County. It recognizes their outstanding commitment to excellence in teaching and care of young children while promoting positive relationships with and providing service to families, colleagues and the community.



First Pres & First Kids VBS Summer Camp

Our church continued to strengthen its ties with First Kids Preschool as we co-hosted another First Kids Vacation Bible School Summer Camp, blasting off **"To Mars and Beyond!" Davis Hall was transformed into the Mission Control Center for over 100 children from the preschool, church, and community.** Commanders Rev. Rachel Vogado and First Kids Director Maureen O'Bryan coordinated celestial story time, space science, and astronomical arts and crafts as children played, sang, and "created" together for a week in June.



Campers learned about important stories and faith figures from the Bible, such as Dan-

iel in the lions den, Queen Esther, the Good Samaritan, and Jesus who healed a thankful man. During VBS they also learned how to care for our neighbors who do not have enough money to afford the basic necessities. We hosted a food drive to help children in need that attend Coltrane Webb Elementary School, as well as learning about other important community mission organizations. Rachel and Maureen said, "It was rewarding to see church volunteers, parents, and preschool teachers working alongside one another to create such a high-energy, joyful, and faith-building week!"



Scouting Opportunities Grew in 2019



Scouting exploded at First Presbyterian Church in 2019 as is evident by the interest of church scouting volunteers and their efforts to reestablish scouting at all age levels.

Boy Scout Troop 3

Boy Scout Troop 3 continued to thrive at First Presbyterian Church. During 2019, three boys earned the rank of Eagle: AJ Miller, Alex Gaines and Braden Hamilton. All the boys are advancing through the ranks, earning badges, completing service hours and having fun. Everyone – every leader, parent and scout alike – enjoyed the regular outdoor adventures. For example, scouts went bike-riding on the Virginia Creeper Trail, skied in the NC mountains, hiked on the Appalachian Trail, and rafted on the Nantahala River. *Note: Harris Morrison is the contact for Troop 3.*



Cub Scout Pack 3

2019 was also an exciting year for Pack 3. After several years of inactivity, Cubmaster Chip Clark, and Den Leaders HL Ruth and Courtney Clark have rebooted the program with a Lion (kindergarten-age), and Tiger (first grade) den. There are currently 12 boys in the program and the leaders hope to start several new dens next year.

Highlights of the year included field trips to nearby Fire Station 1, a camping trip to Camp Barnhardt, and several nature hikes. Planned adventures for spring 2020 include running our own Pinewood Derby, camping trips, and a field trip to the new Cannonballers stadium.

Note: Chip Clark is the contact for Pack 3.



Girl Scouts

2019 was a great year for the Girl Scouts at First Presbyterian Church. With the rebooting of opportunities for younger girls, all ages are now covered, from kindergarten through 12th grade! Community outreach is important to Girl Scouts.

The Girl Scout troops support many missions of First Presbyterian church including the backpack program and meal services at the Night Shelter. Spring /summer plans for 2020 include a hiking series and camping.

Troop 334 (Cadettes, Seniors, Ambassadors)

Kirby Sheridan and René Prager led Troop 334 which serves girls 6th-12th grades and has shown significant growth in its middle school age group. Members serve dinner three times a year at the Salvation Army Center of Hope, a night shelter. For the past 13 years, they have helped to fill plastic Easter eggs for the kindergarten teachers at Coltrane Webb Elementary school.

These scouts also serve in the community through their work on Silver and Gold Award projects. Meredith Sheridan earned her Gold Award in November 2019 with her work at Cabarrus County Department of Human Services targeting the foster care system. She addressed one of these needs by creating a safe and inviting space for foster children to spend time and complete homework, job, or college applications when they are pulled from a home or school for various reasons. Meredith also designed the room to allow for emergency overnight stays when needed. Two other troop members have Gold Award projects in process.



The school year ended with Girl Scout Scholarships for two graduating seniors, Breanna Mayfield and Kate Prager. Breanna was awarded the Marie McLucas scholarship and Kate was awarded the Norma Cannon scholarship.

Daisy Troop 3631, Brownie Troop 323, Junior Troop 3142



girls who meet on alternating Sunday afternoons.

Additional scouting opportunities for girls in kindergarten through 12th grade were established with the rebooting of three troops. Rindy Moore and Sarah Thrush restarted Daisy Troop 3631 for kindergarten and 1st grade

René Prager reestablished Brownie Troop 323 (2nd & 3rd grades) and Junior Troop 3142 (4th & 5th grades) by late fall 2019. Megan Rodriguez now co-leads the troops and they meet together on alternating Thursday evenings and are open to additional girls.

Note: Rindy Moore is the contact for Daisy Troop 3631 and René Prager is the contact for all other ages of Girl Scout troops..



COLTRANE WEBB BACKPACK PROGRAM



Our Presbyterian Women continue to provide leadership and financial support for the Backpack Program at Coltrane-Webb Elementary. Our church shares this program with Central United Methodist Church, and, together, we are serving 30 students each week during the school year. The support also provides 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 this program. This important mission outreach takes a team to be successful. Members of this team (and their families) conduct inventories and develop shopping lists, do the weekly shopping, put everything on the shelves in the pantry, pack the backpack suitcases, deliver the suitcases to the school, and pick the suitcases up and return them to the church pantry each week.

During this past summer the program moved from its former pantry in a hallway near The Commons to a different room in the Fellowship Building. **As his Eagle Scout project, Walker Hedgecock undertook the renovation of the new space and then relocated the supplies to this area.** He was awarded his Eagle award at the end of the year. This new location provides better proximity to the parking lot for moving groceries from cars into the pantry each week and for moving the filled suitcases out for delivery to Coltrane Webb.



We provide gift cards for Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter, **replace suitcases, purchase pots and pans, crock pots, and can openers for families that don't have these basics.**

The Presbyterian Women's Circles, the Girl Scout troops, First Kids and many individuals are actively involved in this mission outreach. Many in our congregation make financial contributions, and the Board of Deacons made a significant contribution in 2019. All of this support is critical to the continued success of providing food to the children at Coltrane Webb!

"We are very grateful to partner with First Presbyterian Church to help over 15 families every week! Parents and students both express appreciation for this wonderful resource!! Thank you!"

– Kristi Monto, School Counselor, Coltrane-Webb STEM Elementary



Habitat for Humanity

Deacon Ron Barus coordinated the 2019 Habitat campaign whose volunteers helped build a new home in July for Shermesha and her three children, Maleik (22), Kenijhae (15), and Ke'niah (11). **In addition, through the generosity of our church family, \$5,121 was contributed to Habitat Cabarrus to build this house.**



Shermesha currently works as a **Certified Nursing Assistant in Concord.** After becoming a Habitat homeowner, she is now focusing on going back to school to become a nurse. **Her greatest satisfaction from being in the Habitat homeownership program was that she was been able to follow through on a commitment.**

Reflections 2019



While my job title is Associate Pastor for Care and Mission, **God's work for me in 2019 involved wearing multiple hats in a variety of settings! Without an Interim**

Pastor in place the first half of the year, Rachel and I functioned as Co-Heads of Staff as well as Co-Moderators of Session.

In addition to the typical duties of a Senior Pastor, FPC encountered a number of changes that needed to be addressed during this time of transition. Our church member database became obsolete requiring significant church role cleaning and maintenance in addition to transitioning to upgraded Shelby software and training.

Alongside this change, Deborah Mesimer announced her retirement which led to the creation of a new job description as well as the hiring of Suzanne Russell. Finally, just prior to the arrival of our new interim minister Scott Kenefake, **we trained, ordained, and installed a new class of Deacons and Elders.**

The second half of the year brought a return to focus on Congregational Care and Mission. The **Deacons were instrumental in keeping all current church Mission and Care programs running smoothly in addition to re-invigorating our Lay Visitation program and supporting and adding structure for The Commons.** As the year came to a close, we were inspired by our All Church Read of "Neighborhood Church." We began to discuss how we might think more strategically with our community mission landscape and efforts. To be sure, **2019 was a roller coaster of activities and emotion, but I have felt God's steady hand among us in the form of our church staff, leaders, and parishioners who were supportive and willing to do a new thing!**

Blessings,

Rev. Lynne Keel

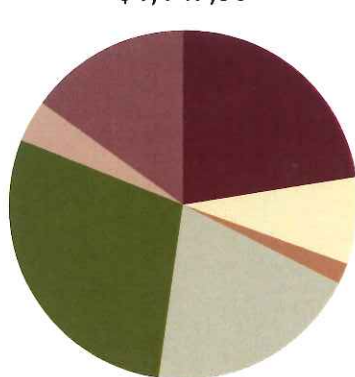
Associate Pastor for Care and Mission



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)

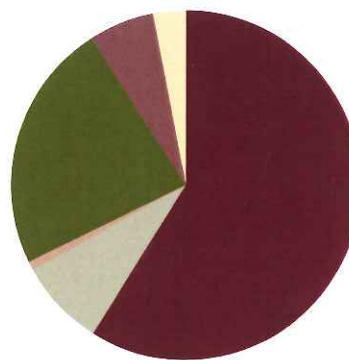
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH BUDGET EXPENDITURES AND RECEIPTS 2019

Expenditures
\$1,147,554



Pastoral	\$265,222 (23%)
Music	\$94,922 (8%)
Education	\$21,967 (2%)
Administration	\$224,127 (20%)
Building & Grounds	\$333,009 (29%)
Fellowship	\$40,693 (4%)
Benevolences	\$167,614 (15%)

Receipts
\$1,147,554



Pledges	\$680,168 (59%)
Unpledged Gifts	\$86,467 (8%)
Loose Plate	\$14,412 (1%)
Endowments	\$267,423 (23%)
Investments	\$65,459 (6%)
Reserves	\$33,625 (3%)

OUR FUTURE

Stewardship Gifts & Planned Giving

All of the projects and programs outlined in *The Joy of Giving Annual Report* were made possible by two acts of generosity: our church family's gifts from God to the 2019 Stewardship Campaign and the funds returned from thoughtful estate gifts invested by our First Presbyterian Church Foundation.

The results of the Stewardship Campaign shown in the graphs above indicated an increasing importance on this sustainable funding source, the interest from estate gifts, which allowed us to meet our operational budget. **In 2019, 29% of our budget was supported by funds returned from our investments and endowments.** 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 \$167,614 or 15% of our budget in support of mission outreach projects serving those less fortunate.**



OUR CHURCH NEEDS YOUR HELP!

As we enter 2020, seeking ways to joyfully serve God will sustain us through another transition year as we search for a new senior minister. In order to maintain our energy and momentum as a church family, we will find satisfaction through following Christ's example by searching for ways 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.**

And deciding to increase our annual stewardship pledges and gifts as well as creating a gift to the church in estate plans will remain extremely important to the future prosperity of First Presbyterian Church!

Please contact those listed below for more information about the many ways you might wish to financially support our church. We encourage you to go to the GIVE section of our website at firstpresconcord.org/give to learn more about resources which will assist you in planning your gifts.

First Presbyterian Church Foundation

John Bishop	Jim Monroe
Bob Bratton	Holt Morrison
Britt Leatherman	Toby Prewitt
Betsy Liles	Susan Schneider

2018-2019 Stewardship Committee

John Bishop
Pat Chaffin
Chrissy Rotan