

First Presbyterian Church

BEYOND THE COLUMNS | MARCH 2025

Random Thoughts from Jackson

This first week of March we join together in worship celebrating Ash Wednesday on March 5th. Ash Wednesday reminds us of the temporariness of our physical life and the permanence of our spiritual life. Ash Wednesday begins the season of Lent, a time of preparation, repentance, and reorienting our lives toward the sacrifice of Jesus' life and the gift of grace through His resurrection. Many of us will fast during Lent, we will give up something to spend that time with God. I remember talking to a friend of mine one year and they asked, "What are you giving up for Lent?" I didn't know; I had to really think about it, so to buy some time I asked, "What are you giving up for Lent?" They said, "I'm giving up chocolate." I thought that seemed interesting, but then I remembered something, they are allergic to chocolate. I said, "Wait, aren't you allergic to chocolate?" They said, "Yes, so it'll be easy to keep my Lenten fast." I don't think that is the point of Lent... How often do we try to take the easy way out of something? The point of Lent is to challenge us, to push us to a deeper relationship and understanding of our Lord. It's a time for us to place Christ before our wants and needs; to let go of the temporary things of this world and to grab hold of the permanent things of God. The idea of giving up something is to reorient our lives toward following Jesus, not to just check a box and say, "Yep, I gave that up." Where does Christ need to be the center of your life? What thing, person, or practice has taken up too much of your time and become an idol?

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Where do you need to let go and grab tightly to the promises of God? I think the idea of giving up something of this world that has taken too much of a "front and center" role in our lives and replace it with Christ who should be the center of lives (who should be our all in all) is a great practice, a practice that should be daily, not just Lent. For this season and beyond, ask the question, "Where is Jesus not the Lord of my life?" Find that place (s), give it up (through the strength of the Holy Spirit), and commit to following Jesus every day.

Jackson

Session Action Items

For the past four years we have been using the Presbyterian "Glory To God" hymnal projection during Sunday morning Worship. The Worship Committee recommended to Session purchasing physical "Glory To God" hymnals for several reason:

1. Pew hymnals that correspond to our hymn projection during worship make for a more cohesive worship service (especially for guests and visitors).
2. Having the "Glory To God" pew hymnals will cut down on the amount of photocopying that must be done for special services where the screen projection is not used (i.e. funeral services, Christmas Eve, Holy Week, etc.)
3. Many beloved hymns were not included in our current blue hymnal that are in the "Glory To God" hymnal such as:

Be Still, My Soul • I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say • I Love to Tell the Story • I Need Thee Every Hour • Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me • We Praise Thee/You O God, Our Redeemer, Creator • His Eye Is on the Sparrow • It Is Well with My Soul • Leaning on the Everlasting Arms • Softly and Tenderly, Jesus Is Calling • Standing on the Promises.

Session approved \$1,200.00 in the 2025 budget to be used to supplement the purchase of "Glory To God" pew hymnals. Session also approved a special donation to collect for new "Glory To God" hymnals. So we will be collecting for new hymnals now through March 21st, if you would like to contribute to the purchase please note in checks "Hymnal." The new hymnals cost \$25.00 each. The goal is to at a minimum match the \$1,200.00 approved, however we would also like to be able to distribute new hymnals throughout the sanctuary.

Session has approved the formation of a 200 Year Anniversary Committee. As you know December 31, 2026 will mark 200 years of First Presbyterian Church as a worshipping community. If you are interested in serving on the committee to organize a celebration of this anniversary please contact Vickie in the Church Office.

Youth Group

Youth Lunch Ministry March 22nd
Youth Group March 12th, 19th,
26th

Souper Bowl of Caring collected
\$369.70 for our Saturday Lunch
Ministry. Thank you to everyone for
your generous giving.

Men's Breakfast

Men's Breakfast Bible Study March 22nd 8:00am in
Westminster Room. Bring your own breakfast,
we will be taking a look at the beginning of Jesus'
Ministry.



March

2 Fletcher Meadema

5 Mack Williams

9 Gerry Belton

13 Keith Walden

Sarah Abreu Schoof

Elliot Jones

15 Jeanne Nostrandt

Andrew Gardner

Phillip Gardner

21 Lorraine Willeford

22 Kathy Machado

23 Harriet Beale

Drake Weller

Liam Weller

25 C. B. Strange

Let us know if we've missed your special day!

Mission Committee

Donald and Martha Wehmeyer

The Antioch Partners

Yucatan, Mexico

First Presbyterian Church has supported Reverend Dr. Donald and Dr. Martha Wehmeyer with our finances and prayers for 33 years. They work with the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico. This denomination has 6000 churches and 3 million members representing a slow steady growth over the years. COVID stopped this, but the National Church is getting back to normal now. Weakness is seen in the non-spanish speaking presbyteries, mostly in the mountains, as they do not get the support they once did. Donald reports that it is hard to travel to Chiapas because of the cartel troubles. One pastor's church of Tzeltal people went from 200 members to 20 as the country people go to the cities out of fear. Pray for some solution to these sad issues.

The National Presbyterian Church of Mexico in partnership with the Outreach Foundation focuses on church planting in the central and northern states of Mexico where there is a scarcity of evangelical churches in order to reach the next generation. A major challenge is how best to reach a growing refugee population along the northern and southern borders. The Wehmeyers provide tremendous support to the Mexico Partnership helping to fuel the global mission of Christ in different regions of Mexico, focusing on theological education. Donald continues as a professor at San Pablo Presbyterian Seminary which trains students from 20 Mexican states, Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, Chile and Colombia. San Pablo also offers a program for unordained individuals who go on to preach and serve churches in Mexico. Please keep the Wehmeyers in prayer, especially for adequate funding of their ministry.

*Submitted by
Linda Copeland*

Music Department

Welcome to the Season of Lent!

On March 5th, as we celebrate Ash Wednesday together, we will begin our journey through the season of Lent. Many Christians fast from some food or drink during the season of Lent, remembering Christ's sacrifice to forgive us from sin. I have participated in that type of fasting during several Lenten seasons in the past – abstaining from ice cream as a child, giving up meat on certain days of the week, or refraining from afternoon snacks. Most recently, I have found it more impactful to give up some of the time I would have spent worrying or thinking about inconsequential things. One Lenten devotion that really impacted me was praying the Lord's Prayer at noon each day. Another idea for inspiration is to fast from things by donating something to people in need each day of Lent. This could mean physical donations of clothing or food, or it could mean setting aside \$1 or \$2 each day to donate to God's Storehouse, Saturday Lunch Ministry, or House of Hope. One other idea would be to spend more time with God "in-person" – This could mean stopping by the sanctuary to say a prayer each time you are at church, volunteering during Holy Week lunches, or signing up to volunteer at God's Storehouse or another food bank.

During our worship services this Lent, we will play and sing several pieces of music that are well worth reading during personal devotional time. Reading a hymn or another song of praise can be a wonderful devotional exercise. Even the most familiar hymns contain fresh wisdom when read or sung quietly at home. Below are some songs we will play and sing together to consider reading for personal devotion –

- Feed My Lambs by Natalie Sleeth
- My Song Is Love Unknown by Samuel Crossman
- What Wondrous Love is This, American folk hymn
- O Sacred Head Now Wounded, 12th-13th century Latin hymn, H.L. Hassler/J.S. Bach
- All Glory, Laud, and Honor by Theodulph of Orleans (circa 820), Teschner/Monk
- Hosanna, Loud Hosanna by Jennette Threlfall
- Beneath the Cross of Jesus by Elizabeth Cecilia Douglas Clephane
- Go to Dark Gethsemane by James Montgomery
- Were You There, African American spiritual/Melva Wilson Costen
- When I Survey the Wondrous Cross by Isaac Watts

Updates on the Presbyterian Delegation to the United Nations:

The joint Presbyterian Delegation is comprised of 67 members of Presbyterian Churches from around the world. I will be the youngest Presbyterian delegate this year, at 33 years old; the oldest delegate is 96 years old. During my first training I learned this will be Presbyterian Women's twentieth UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW); our first time participating was 2006.

I would deeply appreciate continued prayers for safety as I travel to NYC on March 6th and back home to Virginia on March 14th-15th. I request prayers for wisdom and focus as I assist in leading worship from 7:30-8:30am, Tuesday, March 11th. Please pray also for energy and good health for all delegates as we undertake many sessions at all hours of the day and night. I am slated to participate in online sessions between 6:30am and 11:55pm through the conclusion of the event on March 21st. There will be sessions taking place almost around the clock focusing on girls' access to education in Asia and the Middle East, rebuilding after natural disasters, and religious freedom in India (just to name a few of the focus areas of leaders from Asian countries who will present during the wee hours of the morning). In order to be alert for worship each morning at 8:00am, I will be ending my participation by midnight each night. Thank you so much for all your encouragement and prayers.

Grace and Peace of Christ,

Ashley



**Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord,
And he will reward them for what they have done.**

(Proverbs 19: 17)

House of Hope is the Danville Area's only shelter for the homeless. Based on the values of Christian belief, the House of Hope offers homeless adults and children a warm place to lay their heads, food, clothing, hygiene products and, perhaps most importantly, concern and respect. For a growing number of our fellow citizens and Christians, the House of Hope provides love and aid to those in greatest need . . . and a leg up to a better future. The House of Hope can successfully operate only by the gifts of area churches, organizations, businesses, and individuals. It is one of the First Presbyterian Church local missions.

On February 22, the House of Hope held its annual fundraiser, Coldest Night of the Year. CNOY not also raises fund, but as people walk at 5:00 p.m., they get a glimpse of what life is like for homeless people on a cold night when no beds, food, or concern are available. First Presbyterian hosts a team and provides chili and corn bread for the event. In addition, our team donates the offering from our Ash Wednesday Service – this year on March 5.

Please lend to the Lord by providing support. I hope you can join us at the Ash Wednesday Service. If you cannot, please give an offering to FPC to help the House of Hope serve our homeless brothers and sisters.



The Evening Circle will meet at the home of Karan Johnson, March 3rd, at 7 p.m. All women are invited to attend for the bible study with Joyce Perez and fellowship with other members.

For information you may call Bunny Hayes, 799-5662.

The Day Circle will meet at 12:30 March 3rd in the Westminster room. All are welcome.

Day School Round up

Winter! Snow! Cold! This just about sums up January and February at FPD School was not just a flurry of activity, but a flurry of snow! Even though we missed a few days here and there we still found time for fun crafts, playtime, and learning.

The 3's and 4's walked across the street for our annual trip to the museum. We learned all about quilts and how they are made from Ms. Karen, We even made our own!

- We learned all about "Love Your Teeth", during Dental Week, and how important it is to brush your teeth regularly, and see your dentist every six months.
- We capped it all off with our Valentine's Day party! Everyone wore pink or purple or red, We all brought cards and candy, There was so much food, we couldn't eat it all!
- We will cap off February with Dr. Seuss week, and that's always exciting. Something new each day. We will wear silly clothes, and eat even sillier snacks.

The snow was great, but we are really looking forward to some warmer weather and all the fun activities we have coming up at FPDS. We will be sure and keep you in the loop!



Thursday Bible Study will meet in Westminster Room at 10:30am every Thursday in March.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Founded in 1826, we were the first organized congregation in Danville. Our sanctuary and offices are located at 937 Main St, next door to the Sutherlin Mansion and Museum and a few blocks of west downtown.

You can reach us at (434) 792-7822 or admin@fpcdanville.com

Office hours are
Monday– Thursday 9 am—1 pm



If you are interested in placing flowers in the sanctuary, please contact Brannon Blount at 434-334-9935 or brannon_blount@yahoo.com for the dates available.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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