



Beyond *the Columns*

April 2026

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Danville, VA

Wrestling with the word

As we turn the page to April, our hearts are drawn toward the radiant hope of Easter morning. This season invites us to walk again through the story at the center of our faith—a journey from sorrow to joy, from darkness to light, from death to life.

Easter is not simply a day on the calendar; it is the living reminder that God's love is stronger than anything we face. The empty tomb proclaims that despair does not have the final word. In a world that often feels uncertain, messy, and heavy, the resurrection of Christ assures us that hope is not wishful thinking, it is a promise grounded in God's faithfulness.

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**YOUTH
Will not meet
April 1, 8
Will meet
April 22 & 29**



Article Continued ...

Here at First Presbyterian Church, this season is an opportunity to renew our trust in that promise. Whether life has brought you joy or challenge in recent months, Easter speaks to you. It reminds us that God meets us in every circumstance and calls us forward into new life.

As we gather for worship this month, I invite you to come with open hearts. Come ready to celebrate, to reflect, and to be renewed. Bring your questions, your gratitude, your burdens, and your hopes. The risen Christ welcomes all of it and meets us where we are.

Let us also remember that we are called to be Easter people beyond Sunday morning. We carry the message of resurrection into our homes, our workplaces, and our community. A kind word, a helping hand, a moment of grace, these are the small but powerful ways we bear witness to the life we have in Christ and the work of transformation by the Holy Spirit within us.

May this Easter season fill you with peace, strengthen your faith, and inspire you to live as people of hope.

Christ is risen! He is risen—He is risen indeed!
Grace and peace,
Jackson

Music Department

Spring Worship and Music Updates

I have prepared a list of several special worship services and upcoming spring concerts below. All of these are free and open to the public – no tickets or reservations are needed!

A special concert highlight in May will be the Danville Symphony Orchestra Spring Pops Concert. Greg Robey has been asked to direct one of the pieces, *The Dark Knight Rises* from the popular Batman film score (2012). There will also be a vocal ensemble featuring our very own Mack Williams, along with myself and several others, to sing with a string arrangement of “Spider Pig” from *The Simpsons Movie* (2007).

At the DACAS concert on May 3rd, several of our handbell choir members will perform along with the chorus and a special guest narrator.

Upcoming Worship Services and Concerts

March 30 – April 3rd, Monday through Friday – We will have Holy Week services at 12:00 noon each day in the sanctuary, followed by lunch in the fellowship hall.

Sunday, April 5th – **Happy Easter!** We will celebrate Easter on Sunday, April 5th at 11:00am. Please invite your family, friends, and neighbors – all are welcome to celebrate the joy of the resurrection of our Lord!

Friday, April 24th, 7pm – Averett University Band Spring Concert at Pritchett Auditorium

Sunday, April 26th, 2pm – Worship at Stratford House in the Evergreen Room.

Saturday, May 2nd, 5pm – Danville Symphony Orchestra Spring Pops Concert, Bonner Middle School Auditorium

Sunday, May 3rd, 3pm – Danville Area Choral Arts (DACAS) Spring Concert, a patriotic celebration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States including choir, piano, and handbells, at St. Luke’s United Methodist Church, 3090 N. Main Street

Sunday, May 17th, 3pm – Martinsville Handbell Ensemble Spring Concert, another celebration of the 250th anniversary of the United States featuring handbells, choir chimes, White Chapel bells, a guest cymbal player, and several conductors including myself on “Prayer for Peace” and Greg Robey on “Armed Forces Medley,” at First United Methodist Church, 146 E. Main Street, Martinsville, VA 24112

Personal Note – I would like to thank the congregation for your continuing support and encouragement of our music program. Special thanks to all Chancel Choir singers and Handbell Choir ringers for your dedicated leadership throughout Lent and Easter! Greg and I will be out of town for vacation from April 6th – 12th, and I will return on Monday, April 13th.

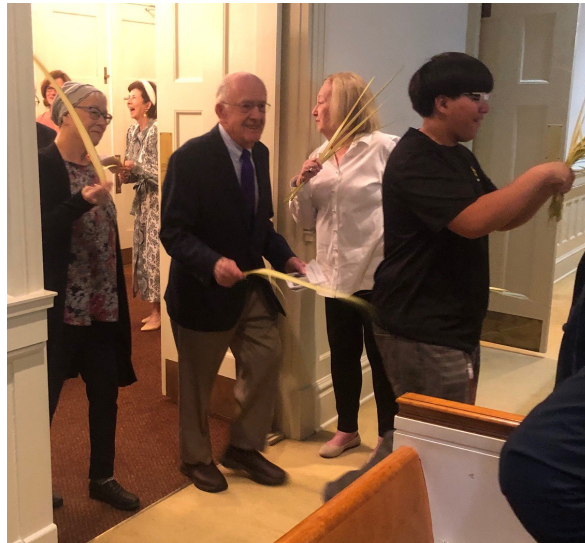
Wishing a joyous and happy Easter to you and your families,
Ashley



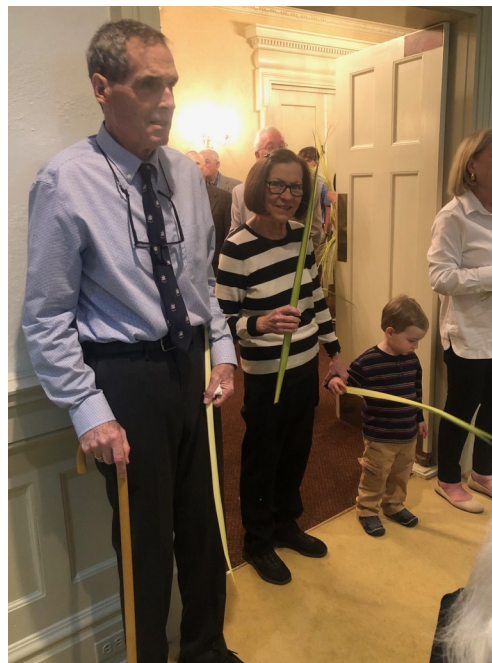


The Presbyterian Women's Day Circle will meet on April 6th at 12:30 p.m. in the Westminster Room. We will continue our Series on First Peter "Sojourners and Exiles" by Sinclair B. Ferguson. All are welcome.

The Evening Circle will meet at the home of Harriet Beale, on Westmoreland Court, April 13th (note date change) at 7pm. All women are invited to attend for the bible study with Joyce Perez and fellowship with other members. For more information you may call Bernadine Hayes at 434-799-5662.



Palm Processional 2026



Missions

OPEN ARMS MINISTRY Bill Perrow

The Open Arms Ministry has been a wonderful mission supported by FPC for many years. We have had the pleasure to hear missionary Bill Perrow talk to us about their efforts in Columbia for many years. Since 1990, Open Arms has ministered to a variety of economically challenged youth, including boys without homes, pregnant teens and young girls involved in sexual trafficking. In 1993, the foundation opened a farm for boys, while continuing to offer various types of street ministries, planting two churches, building homes for displaced families and providing shelter for earthquake victims.

In recent years, Open Arms have ministered exclusively to boys living on the farm. A dairy farm was started, and properties were refurbished and rented to help support the foundation's work. However, in the past 10 months, Open Arms has had to deal with many problems and has looked to the Lord to guide them in a new direction

Last May, one of the Open Arms boys got into a fight with a town boy resulting in backlash from the other boy's family and town officials. In October, the boy was found to be in a boyfriend/girlfriend relationship with a young girl. The authorities got involved and after numerous run-ins with the town and Columbian authorities, the farm was closed and the resident boys returned to their families or next of kin. As of now, Open Arms has no boys housed at the farm.

The Perrows and Open Arms Foundations reached out to God to guidance. After 35 years of residential rescue ministry, the Lord guided them to re-engage their children and families in the marginalized areas where they live. They have started offering evangelism, nutrition, counseling, tutorial services, scholarships, emergency medical assistance funds, and connecting families with ministry in a local church. Every week, the team enters neighborhoods and meets with the children in their homes and in the church to provide these services. They have also sponsored special retreats for their families at the farm.

So Open Arms continues its ministry in Columbia. God has redirected their efforts to continue his ministry. They continue to assist families in communities struggling with poverty and internal battles from gangs and drug dealers. They are currently trying to pay interest on a loan while working through government officials who are not always supportive of their efforts.

The FPC Missions Committee is continuing to support their efforts. We pray that God continues to guide and direct the ministry through the New Model that they are following. Lord, please protect these precious children as they live away from the farm. Even the sparrow has found a home.

Submitted by David Swann



Session Highlights

March 2026 Session Highlights

Session met on Tuesday, March 10, 2026 at 6:30 AM.

The following items of interest were approved and discussed.

MEMBERSHIP

- Follow up with new members and invite them to different activities and to serve in various capacities within the church
- Recognize visitors and make them feel welcomed as well
- Update the membership directory
- Church t-shirts: Do we want to get some? Price and order, vendor?
- “The Big Day” - Think of activities we could have that could involve the community (coordinate with 200th anniversary)

MISSIONS

- Motion from missions committee: Request \$4,360 from Freddie Lamb to fund local missions, plus additional support for Open Arms. This motion will go to the Trustees to approve and make requests for the funds. Motion approved by consensus.

PROPERTY

- Session approved by consensus to form a House committee. The purpose and information is included below.
 - Form a House Committee as a subcommittee of Property. The purpose of this committee would be to identify areas or concerns of the campus that need attention. For example, painting an area, power washing the exterior, making an area more attractive, etc. would be some potential items of improvement. The current Property Committee concentrates on plumbing, roofs, etc. and doesn't have the expertise for such endeavors. This will be open to all members of the congregation. Motion approved by consensus.
 - Funding of the improvements would be from Endowment Funds and expenditures of over \$500 will be approved by the Property Committee. Any expenditure of over \$2,500 would be approved by Session. For 2026 due to the 200th anniversary, the budget would be \$35,000 which is equal to the contractor repairs budget. Future budgets will be approved by Session.
 - Members of the House Committee will be published so the congregation can submit ideas for improvements.

SCHOLARSHIP - Harriet Beale - Scholarship applications will be taken until the end of April.

STEWARDSHIP - Stewardship will have a new chair from finance.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE -Joan Reynolds

- Palm Sunday-everyone is invited to Holy Week March 30-April 3. Services will begin at noon with lunch to be served after each service

The entire meeting minutes are located in the church office should you wish to read them. Session meetings are open to the congregation.



If you are graduation high school or reapplying to college, please stop by the office and get your scholarship application. Turn in you application by April 30th. Get your application today!



Men's breakfast & bible study will meet Saturday April 25th at 8am in Westminster Room. Please bring your breakfast as we join together in study.



- 3 Linda Copeland
- 4 Benjamin Kassa
Anne Mason
- 5 Philip Baughman
Will Brown
- 20 Luis Abreu
- 22 Gwen Baucom
- 25 Alice Saunders
Ava Belk
- 30 Bracken Erwin

Anniversaries

April 5 Ray and Harriet Beale

Let us know if we've missed you're special day!

DAY SCHOOL ROUND UP

Well, March brought the sunshine that we had been missing - and Dr Seuss week, St Patrick's Day parties, and a visit from the Danville Police Department. We packed it all in and had a blast!!

Dr Seuss week was so much fun. Each day we had a different theme, and snacks to go along with it! We dressed really silly and enjoyed reading some of his books that have become our favorites!

Our St Patrick's Day Party was perfectly GREEN! We wore green and enjoyed yummy snacks that our parents sent. We did the leprechaun freeze dance and even went on a hunt for a very mischievous leprechaun. We didn't have any luck, but we did find some gold that he left behind. We will count that as a win!

Some members of the police department came by to tell us a little bit of the job they do everyday to keep us safe. They are so important in keeping our community running smoothly, and we are so grateful for all that they do. Before they left, they gave us badges and popsicles and a promise to come-back. We can't wait!

March is almost over. We look forward to enjoying the rest of the Easter season, and look forward to spring break with our families. Happy Easter to you all!



200 YEAR ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE DID YOU KNOW...

This month we continue our look at our carvings in the sanctuary. You see them every Sunday but do you know why they are in our church?

Symbolism has played a very important part in the proclamation of Christian faith. In the early Church, symbols of the resurrection and immortal life helped a great deal in maintaining morale during the days of persecution. In later years, the Church's teaching and worship have inspired the formation of other symbols to bring Christian ideas and truths home to the minds and hearts of men.

Thus, we see there two great values in symbols: devotional and educational. Devotional, because they help to remind us of the Christian faith, creating an atmosphere of worship and providing food for religious thought. Educational, because it is a medium of approach to the basic tenets of Christianity. What better aid to an explanation of the Trinity than a triangle, one geometric figure, composed of three equal sides?

We have incorporated into the architectural design of our sanctuary several hand carved symbols, with the hope that they too will be of spiritual benefit to those worshipping. A brief explanation of the symbols used follows:

PEW CARVINGS

We have used five different pew carvings repeating themselves throughout the Church, starting in the order in which they are explained below:

BULRUSHES WITH ALPHA AND OMEGA

"The bulrush is a lowly, thickly clustered, common plant, growing near the water. Because of these characteristics, it has become the symbol for the multitude of the faithful who lead a humble life and abide by the teaching of the Church, the source of living waters. This explanation, found support in Job 8:11, 'Can the rush grow up without Mire? Can the flag grow without water'? Also, since the infant Moses (and Moses is taken as the forerunner of Christ) was found in the bulrushes, they have come to be connected with the place whence salvation came." Alpha Mu Omega is Christ, the beginning, the continuation and the end of all things."

HOLLY AND CROSS

"The ilex, or holly oak, is an evergreen which, because of its thorny leaves, is regarded as a symbol of Christ's crown of thorns. It is also said to have been the tree of the Cross and, therefore, is symbolic of the Passion of Christ. A legend relates that all the trees, when they heard that Christ was to be crucified, agreed not to allow their wood to be defiled for this purpose. Only the ilex remained whole and permitted itself to be used as the instrument of the Passion. It is often found in paintings of St. Jerome meditating on the Passion, or of St. John the Baptist, who, by acclaiming Christ the Lamb of God, foretold His Passion." The Cross is the symbol of faith.



FPC would like to officially welcome our newest members.

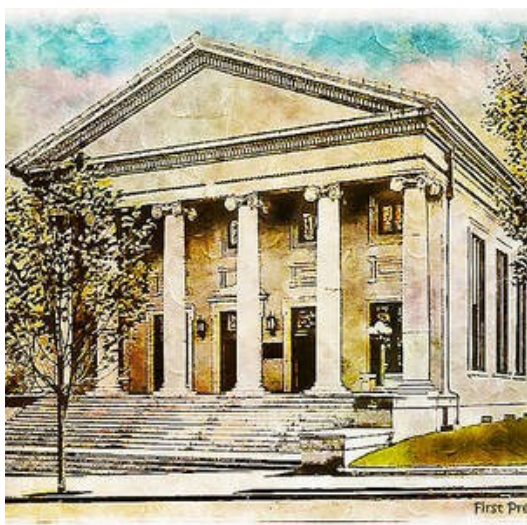
Angie & Joe Alexander

Jeanne Anderson

Jack Garrett

Connie & Don Warren

The Zagol family; Jessica, Brian, Tom & Charlotte



Announcements

Wednesday Night Dinner this month will be April 15 at 6pm.

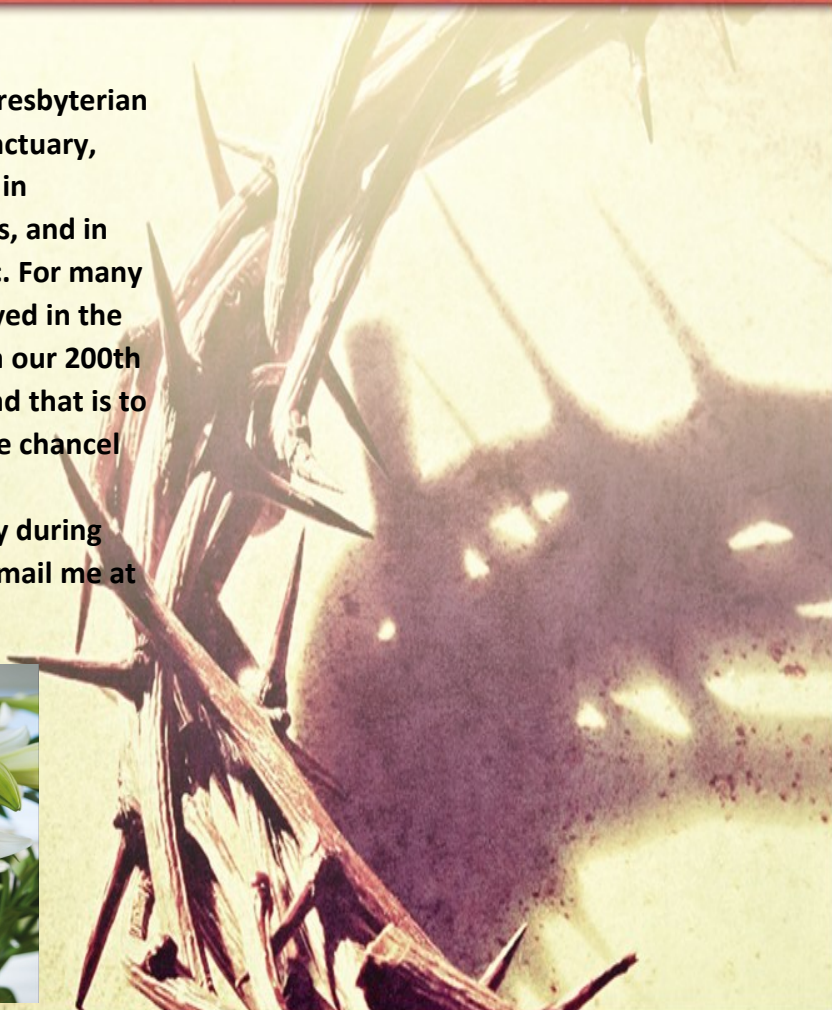
Thursday Bible Study will continue each Thursday morning at 10:30am except during Holy Week and Spring Break (April 9th). We will resume April 16th.

Sunday April 26th Jackson Weller and Ashley Stanley-Robey will lead worship at Stratford House. The service is in the Evergreen Room at 2:00pm.

Dear members and friends,
As many of you know, it is our tradition at First Presbyterian Church to enjoy fresh flowers in our beautiful sanctuary, during worship. These flowers are usually placed in “honor of” or “in memory of” friends or love ones, and in celebration of a special birthday, anniversary, etc. For many years, there have been two arrangements displayed in the rear of the sanctuary on the reredos. As we begin our 200th year of worship, we now have another option, and that is to display only one fresh arrangement in front of the chancel area.

If you would like to place flowers in the sanctuary during worship, please contact me at 434-203-1666 or email me at Rebeccaatkinson@comcast.net.

In Christ,
Rebecca Moore



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