

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



First Presbyterian Church

131 Big Valley Street
Boone, North Carolina 28607

Our Mission Statement:

*“A family of faith Called to Grow in the love of Christ,
Share that Good News, and Serve the world.”*

2023 Annual Report
First Presbyterian Church

131 Big Valley Street
Boone, North Carolina 28607
828-264-3906

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A Year in Review - From our Pastor



Dear FPC Family of Faith,

The psalmist proclaims, *“I lift my eyes to the mountains – where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. The LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.”* (Psalm 121 1-2; 8). 2023 has been a year of God’s help! The Lord has been faithful to us at FPC watching over our coming and our going. After almost four years of working on my Doctor of Ministry degree, God helped me wrap up my final project and complete my program in May. All of you were instrumental in supporting and encouraging me all the way through – Thank You! In addition to that, I was blessed to take a sabbatical leave to find rest and renewal after nine years of service. What a blessing and help to come back reenergized and ready to serve. During the summer God helped all of us as Steve Marks filled in as Head of Staff, providing support, worship leadership, and pastoral care to the congregation. God provided rich messages through the sermons of Dr. David Renwick, Dr. Dave Henry, and Rev. Kelly Barefoot who preached during my time away.

In addition, God provided help through all of us to support our Ukrainian brothers and sisters who continue to deal with displacement and an ongoing war with Russia. The Lenten Mission generated \$23,072.89 used to support International Partnerships and World Relief Triad, caring for many who are hurting and grieving the loss of their homeland. Because of your love and care we fed impoverished families in our community through Food for Families all summer, we provided shoeboxes for children all over the world with Operation Christmas Child, we gave Christmas gifts to families through our Angel Tree ministry and packed over 15,000 meals through Feed the Hunger to feed the hungry in impoverished countries.

God has watched over our coming and going, as we welcomed and said goodbye to various staff members. After 13 months of transitional youth leadership, we welcomed Shawn Huntley as our full-time Director of Youth Ministry. Shawn is the perfect fit, and our youth ministry has grown immensely this year. We said goodbye to Amber Kanoy as our First Morning Out Director and welcomed Brooke Hollar as our new Director. Brooke is full of energy and is doing a great job leading this ministry. Steve Marks completed his Master of Divinity degree and felt God’s call to social justice work here in the community. Steve served faithfully as our Pastoral Associate and will be greatly missed, but once again God provided help. Rev. Larke Blanton joined our staff in October as our Adult Education Director and is overseeing our Adult Sunday school classes and our Reach Wednesday programming, as well as working with our Deacons and providing some pastoral support. She is very gifted and has already jumped right into the joy of ministry with us!

God blessed us with 10 new members this year; more who have come to join in the ongoing work of God’s good news! When needs arose, God helped through the generous provision of gifts that allowed us to purchase a new sound system for the multi-purpose room, and three electric window shades in the sanctuary to protect the pews from sun exposure and to help Tyler play the piano without being blinded by the reflection of the sun. As we move into 2024, God continues to watch over us as we lift our eyes to him. We still have building issues to deal with, but with God’s help we will find ways to ensure that the beauty and the integrity of our building will be taken care of for years to come. For, *“The Lord will watch over our coming and going both now and forevermore!”*

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Jeff

Staff

Dr. Jeff Smith, Pastor
Steve Marks, Pastoral Associate (Jan-Nov)
Jennifer Jones, Office Administrator
Erin Fowler, Director of Children's Ministry
Shawn Huntley, Director of Youth Ministry (June-Dec)
Rev. Larke Blanton, Director of Adult Ministry (Oct-Dec)
Cindy Clawson, Band Director
Brandon Winbush, Chancel Choir Director
Tyler, Dellaperute, Pianist
Sylvia Rippy, Handbell Director
Amber Kanoy, First Morning Out Director (Jan-May)
Brooke Hollar, First Morning Out Director (June-Dec)

Elders

Jack Butler
Neville Chaney
Ruth Dotson
Allison Harrison
David Kesler
Kim McAulay
Carrie Merschat
Garry Moss
Sue Newell
Harris Prevost
Cathy Simpson-Koch
Greg Warmuth

Deacons

Pete Barr
Jane Butler
Mary Linda Dooley
Steve Edwards
Andrew Glover
Dot Hutelmyer
Katherine Logan
Liz Michael
Ben Miller
Guy Rippy
Linda Ruff
Jo Sorrell

Baptisms

Lucy Eyer

Deaths

Dr. Bill Herring

Marriages

Genesis Dingle & Mondale Baker

New Members

Cheryl Anderson	Angie Holt
Anna Eyer	Tom Holt
Chuck Eyer	Laura Pell-McManus
Lucy Eyer	Lana Steen
Jason Hees	
Susan Hees	

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Moderator: *Carrie Mersch, Elder*

Children's Ministry

The Children's Ministry was blessed in 2023 to have many regular participants as well as new faces joining in the fellowship for Sunday school, Reach Wednesday, and other monthly activities. Kevin Hutelmyer led worship through singing and guitar during opening Sunday school time. New teachers Beth Savage and Linda Steinbach joined Dot Hutelmyer, Elizabeth Hutelmyer, Ashley McKinney, and Dawn Talton in the monthly rotation of Sunday morning instruction. Holly Jolly Christmas was our theme for Advent study using oven mitts, hot chocolate, and cookies to study Jesus's birth.

Ready, Set, Move Vacation Bible School took place on the evenings of June 25th-28th. Sixty children joined over forty youth and adult volunteers to move to music, games, and interactive Bible exploration. Dinner was served nightly. Greg Langdon, also known as Tourist Tim, helped share the important facts about the Feed the Hunger Mission project. Pete Barr led the opening time with Alex Barr as worship leader. Many young helpers led the dancing. Bounce houses, silly string, and popsicles were enjoyed by all!



Children, ages 1 year-5th grade, participated in Reach Wednesday Bible study at the start of the year using the Sciency Fun curriculum to look at the miracles of Jesus in a meaningful way. In the fall, the children used the podcast and book, *Rooted in Nature* to find connections between the outside and scripture. Laura Brown with her guitar, sang with the children during both Reach times. The singing of “Ho, Ho, Ho, Hosanna” and mash up of “This Little Light”, “He’s Got the Whole World”, and “Michael Row the Boat” was shared with the congregation during Sunday morning worship. Jo Sorrell helped lead the Wednesday evening study and directed the Melodee bells. The children played “In the Garden” on Palm Sunday and “Still, Still, Still” during the Lovefeast.

Monthly happenings included a Valentine's party, talent show, Easter event, a pumpkin patch visit, and a Christmas party. The children made placemats by painting with forks for Meals on Wheels during August's Gathering to Serve. Thank you notes were created for Church Life's gratitude effort and angels made for the Angel Tree Mission project in November. Most months held a Parents Night Out on Friday evenings with pancakes or pizza and the help of some energetic childcare workers who also helped care for our children on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings. The time provided by teachers, meal servers and other volunteers during VBS, worship leaders, and extra hands in general helped make 2023 one of fun and growth in Jesus for our younger members.

Erin Fowler-Children's Ministry Director

YOUTH MINISTRY

2023 found a new director of youth. Beginning in June, Shawn Huntley came on staff full time.

Keeping with traditional youth activities at First Presbyterian, youth met each Sunday for Sunday school classes for both the middle and high school. Thanks to our gracious parent volunteers, this has been an important constant in the life of the youth. We also had youth specific REACH Wednesday night groups that regularly averaged 15 students in attendance.

High school prayer breakfast also continued gathering each week during the school year for fellowship and a brief devotion. We have been thankful to continue with 8-14 students gathering for that time.

Youth Group has also continued as our keystone program for the youth. We are blessed at FPC to have 40 active youth throughout the year. Regularly we see between 20 – 30 participate in Sunday night youth group activities. We spend time on a lesson, sharing a meal and plenty of shenanigans. We are high spirited group learning to serve, grow and share God’s word.



We continued with boys’ church basketball. Boys started practicing in November and will start play in January. We have 18 boys playing on two teams representing FPC-Boone in the community. This is a great outreach to involve youth outside of our church to engage in the spirit of God.

The youth continued with leading FPC worship one Sunday out of the year and the Feed the Hunger mission event to pack meals for the food insecure across the world.



Partnering with church life, the youth sponsored a spaghetti fundraising dinner and talent show. Almost \$5,000 was raised to help with camp costs and great food and fellowship were shared.

This summer, we were pleased to take 17 youth to Passport camp in Spartanburg, SC. The youth performed mission work, led worship, participated in interactive bible studies and creative programming rooted in scripture.



Throughout the year we were able to repeat other traditional events such as the cardboard box regatta at the Gryders, volunteering at VBS, and high school graduate recognitions. We also began some new traditions with Blessings of the Backpacks and See You at the Pole – a day of national prayer at the flagpole at the high school.



We look to 2024 for continued growth of the youth program and an increase in service projects in and around our community. Our youth are highly engaged, high spirited and ready to serve.



Shawn Huntley, Director of Youth

ADULT EDUCATION

The Adult Ministry program enjoyed another busy and productive year in 2023. Our efforts are facilitated by staff and various planning teams. Our programming is coordinated through the Christian Education Committee which provides guidance and support. This past year, we have primarily focused our attention on Sunday School activities and Reach Wednesday night programs.

Our Sunday School classes continued to meet weekly throughout the year. We are blessed to host *eight* different classes each week, offering content from traditional biblical studies to current topics on various social concerns. All classes are meeting in-person, with a few continuing to offer Zoom options for our homebound and out of town folks. Class leaders utilize a variety of teaching media and styles in an effort to offer something meaningful to everyone.

Our Sunday School classes also combined for two special church-wide programs. The spring program led by Pastor Jeff Smith summarized his doctorate project on evangelism and how the church and its members understand the call to make disciples of all nations. The Advent program led by Pastor Larke Blanton entitled "Immanuel: God With Us" focused on a guarantee we receive through Jesus who is God with Us.

Our Reach Wednesday programming continued in-person with both a spring and fall series. We offered a variety of classes and special programs for our various age groups as well as meals prepared by church cooking teams for each night. Our Spring session included classes on the Evidence of God, a Worship Tech Class, a women's Bible study, and offerings for our music and knitting ministries. Our Fall session included classes on Women of the Bible, Hearing God, Church Officer Training, and offerings for our music and knitting ministries. Planning for our spring and fall programming is supported by a dedicated group of folks who make up our Reach Wednesday Planning Team.

Again in 2023 church members and class facilitators continued to rely on the use of Right Now Media, affectionately named "Netflix of Video Bible Studies". This streaming service offers instant access to thousands of great videos for kids, youth, parents, married couples and more. Right Now Media can be accessed from a smartphone, tablet, or computer. The church underwrites the cost of this service and offers it to our members and guests for free! Right Now Media is available for all of our adult ministry activities in addition to use by individuals and families at any time.

Steve Marks, Adult Ministry Director (Jan-Nov)

CHURCH LIFE

Moderator: *Sue Newell, Elder*

Members: *Sharon Carlton, Joan Cone, Roberta Greene, Angie Holt, Sandy Kesler, Katherine Logan, Sue Newell (moderator), Eric and Marsha Parsons, Beth Savage*

Mission: *To involve members and friends of the congregation in the life of the church by creating opportunities, guided by the Holy Spirit, to grow, and to share our faith, hope, and love, in relationship with others.*

We started 2023 off with a 5th Sunday time of fellowship after worship in the Gathering Space and enjoyed snacks prepared by the CL team on January 29.

Welcome Team Luncheon was held on March 19 to welcome new team members and answer greeter's questions and share ideas.

Easter Covered Dish Celebration Brunch was held on April 9 before the worship service. Everyone was encouraged to bring a favorite finger food or breakfast casserole. A great opportunity for fellowship as we celebrate our Risen Lord. Clean up happened after the service so everyone could worship together.

Church Life sponsored a Talent Show in conjunction with the Youth fundraiser spaghetti dinner on April 30. Great acts... lots of fun... a great way to support the youth! We will consider doing this again in 2024.

Spring Cleaning: June 10, 9am - noon, volunteers showed up to clean the church bus, pressure wash the front patio, spackle and paint part of a gym wall, clean the road sign, wash windows, repair the sanctuary doors, clean the back patio, sort kitchen utensils, etc..

Library clean up: due to a leak in the plumbing, the pressure washing at the Spring Cleaning caused a lot of water to find it's way into the church library. CL made the decision to get rid of a lot of the books in the library that were never used and remove bookshelves that were damaged by the water. A "Back to School Book Giveaway" was held this summer in the gym for a few weeks. The books that remained were donated to RAM's Rack and OASIS.

Church Picnic at Valle Crucis Park on July 23. The men of the church grilled hamburgers and hotdogs. The Church Life Team provided support by purchasing food, preparing the fixin's, setting up at the picnic shelter, organizing the food, and adding conversation starters and crayons at each table. It threatened to be a stormy day, but it cleared up and we had a great afternoon!

Church Directory update – Garner Dewey took photos after worship in the Gathering Space on October 1 and 8 for the directory. We hope to offer this opportunity again in the future.

Clergy Appreciation Month – CL helped facilitate getting the word out to the congregation to encourage them to send cards and potentially make donations to local ministries in honor of Pastor Jeff and Steve. Each pastor had a small mailbox in the church office for people to put their cards in. Church Life members provided edible goodies for Jeff and Steve and staff for the staff meetings in October.

Appreciation Station – on October 29 Church Life had our first Moment for Church Life presentation at the beginning of the worship service to invite people to stop by the Appreciation Station that was set up in the Gathering Space to encourage people to share their gratitude with a group or individual. The AP was left up until the end of the year and will potentially be set up again next fall.

Thanksgiving Fellowship Covered Dish Meal – On November 19, we were blessed to be able to share a time of fellowship and a lot of good food with around 30 guests from the Hospitality House! Many thanks to Shawn Huntley for driving the church bus to transport our guests, and to the whole congregation for welcoming them!

5th Sunday: On New Year's Eve, we had our 2nd Moment for Church Life: "Growing God's Kingdom on Earth: Reflecting on 2023 and Anticipating 2024". We invited people to use post-it notes that were included in the bulletin on an "Opportunities to Be the Church" flyer, to write one activity they participated in during 2023 that they believe helped to grow God's kingdom. On the second note, to write one seed they hope to plant in 2024, and then add the notes to the posters in the Gathering Space after worship. A lot of people participated in posting their notes and stayed around to enjoy some time for fellowship and sweet treats as we looked forward to 2024.

New Member Sunday Welcome Bags were provided for new members 4/2 and 10/15 and 11/19, which included: a card to welcome them to the FPC family, a FPC note pad, FPC car sticker, instructions for Instant Church Directory, homemade pumpkin bread, special stickers and goodies for families with children, and an order form to order FPC t-shirts for each member of the family. T-shirts were provided by Communications Team.

Coffee Ministry – Regular and decaf coffee made by volunteers continued to be served throughout the year in the church office before Sunday School.

Talent Show



Spring Cleaning



Thanksgiving Dinner



COMMUNICATIONS

Moderator: *Cathy Simpson-Koch*, Elder

The Mission of the Communications Team is to share our Mission Statement:

*“A family of faith Called to Grow in the love of Christ,
Share that Good News, and Serve the world.”*

Methods of Communications include:

Zoom

Facebook page

Instagram

In Contact - our weekly church newsletter

Welcome/Connect cards

Flyers of upcoming events inserted into the bulletin

Email

YouTube

Signs by the roadside

Face-to-face gatherings with optimal masks being worn

Phone calls to those not seen in some time

Cards, letters, and e-cards to bring spiritual uplifting/care

“Text in Church” notification of events and weather changes of the church

FPC note pads available to new members and church staff

FPC t-shirts available for order/purchase to congregational members

FPC t-shirts available at no cost to new members joining the church as a one time offer

Support of the Welcome Greeters for Sunday morning church service

Communication Committee meetings to come continually search for improved communication methods to reach others

The Communications Committee meets monthly, via Zoom.

CONGREGATIONAL CARE

The Congregational Care committee serves as an adjunct of the Diaconate of the church with a mission to provide loving and compassionate care when needed, according to the season of life or needs which arise from birth, illness, hospitalization, or death within a family. The committee serves in various capacities, with primary responsibility for the following five initiatives in Congregational Care:

Comfort Kitchen - This ministry team is dedicated to preparing homemade, individually packaged meals for our sick and homebound. Arlene Steeves, Claudia Bake, Carolyn Banzhaf, and Linda Phelan keep our church freezer stocked with healthy, tasty meals to be distributed by church members to anyone in need of a comforting meal. This year the Comfort Kitchen Team prepared 174 meals!

Cards Ministry - This ministry is dedicated to sending cards for celebration, encouragement, those in need of comfort for sickness and grief, cards for Easter and Christmas, and to let people know they are in our thoughts. In 2023, this ministry sent 719 cards! Pat Weaver leads this team assisted by Linda Phelan who sends 15 cards per month. This is so helpful and much appreciated support! In addition to the cards, Pat also makes weekly calls to check on people who are lonely, sick, widowed and having a birthday. Mary Linda Dooley and Gay Lynn Williams also support this team in sending birthday cards!

Care Givers Ministry

Knarthex Knitters - This ministry team gave 19 prayer shawls or lapgans to comfort those in need in 2023. The Knarthex Knitters join in fellowship to crochet and knit shawls and lapgans. We work with the Congregational Care Committee to identify those who are ill, suffering a loss, or in need of comfort during a difficult time. We also welcome new babies with baby blankets.

New Chapter Widow's Ministry- Providing fellowship and support for widows in our congregation and greater area, New Chapter is facilitated by Sharon Carlton. Through monthly gatherings, activities, mission projects and phone calls, the group fosters community and encouragement for one another as they move through the grieving process. New widows are provided with the Stephen Ministry "Journeying Through Grief" series of booklets over the course of the year, and encouraged to attend GriefShare.

The Congregational Care Committee typically meets every other month and will convene more often when needs arise.

Rev. Larke Blanton, Director of Adult Christian Education

DEACONS' FUND

Food Cards for Angel Tree	\$3,675.00
Materials for House Repairs	1,044.00
Walmart Cards	809.88
Motel Expense	<u>122.90</u>
Total Distribution	\$5,651.78

Respectfully submitted,
Ben Miller

2022 ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

The Endowment Committee currently manages two funds. One is the Hunter Unrestricted Fund that began when the stock gifted by the Hunter brothers went public in 1995 with a market value of \$235k. In 1996 the brothers made an additional gift of stock with a market value of \$330k. In 2022 we received \$58k from the Dolores Bell Estate. That gift was designated for mission projects and is part of the mission reserve. To date the Unrestricted fund has paid out \$914,807 for the capital needs of our church, and \$569,855 for the mission projects. The balance in the fund at 12/31/23 was \$738,072.

The other fund is the Weeks FMO Scholarship Fund that began in 2006 with an anonymous gift of \$30,000. To date the fund has paid out \$30,165 for FMO scholarships, and had a balance at 12/31/23 of \$41,462.

Currently in the Unrestricted Fund we reserve 1% per quarter for mission projects, and 1/2% per quarter for capital needs projects. Session then draws on those reserves on an as needed basis. Currently we remit 6% of the June 30th FMO Fund balance each year to a reserve controlled by the FMO board.

Our current goal is to soundly grow each of these funds by more than the 6% committed to annual expenditures.

Activity in those funds for 2023 was as follows:

	Bal 12/31/22	Gain (Loss)	Expended	Bal 12/31/23
Unrestricted	\$668,021	(\$103,125)	(\$33,074)	\$738,072
FMO Fund	<u>37,276</u>	<u>(6,674)</u>	<u>(2,488)</u>	<u>41,462</u>
Total	\$705,297	(\$109,799)	\$35,562	\$779,534
	=====	=====	=====	=====

Activity in the Unrestricted reserve accounts was as follows:

	Mission Projects	Capital Needs	Total Reserves
Balance 12/31/22	\$70,524	\$ 51,766	\$122,290
Add per formula	28,349	14,175	35,524
Expended	<u>(33,000)</u>	<u>(74)</u>	<u>(\$33,074)</u>
Balances 12/31/23	\$ 65,873	\$ 65,867	\$124,740
	=====	=====	=====

If you have any questions or if you have an interest in serving on this committee, please contact any of our members. At 12/31/23 our committee members were Wayne Steeves, chair, Keith Ogden, vice chair, Gary Moss, secretary, Bill Caroselli, Jr., treasurer, and at large Neville Chaney, Harris Prevost, Justin Cox and Greg Warmuth.

Respectfully Submitted by *Wayne Steeves*

FINANCE / STEWARDSHIP

Moderator: Gary T. Moss Jr., Elder

Co-Moderator: Greg Warmuth, Elder

Committee Members: Wayne Steeves, Betsy Payne, Ben Miller, Justin Cox

Attending: Jennifer Jones

We started this year with a budgeted and expected deficit. We ended the year with a net income of \$71,779.68 as detailed below. In addition, our membership made substantial contributions to support the Deacons' Fund and local Disaster Relief projects which are detailed in other places of this Annual Report. The presence of the Holy Spirit continues to lead our membership.

2022 Revenues	Amount	Percent	2023 Anticipated	Amount
Pledges	\$629,260	84.54%	Pledges	\$553,810
Member Giving	33,614	4.52%	Member Giving	26,740
Loose Offerings	52,282	7.02%	Loose Offerings	24,000
Endowment	28,000	3.76%	Endowment	28,000
Interest Income	1,218	0.16%	Interest Income	12,000
Total Income	744,376	100.00%	Total Income	\$644,550
2022 Expenses			2023 Budget	
Administration	\$426,239	63.37%	Pastor's Salary	\$135,551
Congregational Care	1,394	0.21%	Staff Salaries	307,667
Building & Grounds	106,958	15.90%	Church Management	36,950
Missions (see report)	99,799	14.84%	Congregational Care	1,600
Worship	17,452	2.59%	Building & Grounds	85,359
Children's Education	9,893	1.47%	Missions	99,800
Youth Education	7,073	1.05%	Worship	22,450
Adult Education	1,472	0.22%	Children's Education	23,000
Church Life	1,571	0.23%	Youth Education	10,950
Communications	741	0.11%	Adult Education	3,100
Total Expenses	\$672,596	100.00%	Church Life	4,900
			Communications	1,245
Net Income	\$71,779	10.67%	Total Expenses	\$732,573

MISSION

Moderator: *Ruth Dotson*, Elder

The Mission Committee has joyfully embraced the church's vision that we are called to Grow in the love of Christ, Share that good news, and Serve the world. The members of the committee have prayerfully considered how financial and other resources of this church will be most impactful in serving others in the name of Christ locally and around the world.

In January, the Mission committee provided a meal to the students of *Presbyterian/Episcopal Campus Ministry (PECM)* and the group enjoyed an evening of food, fellowship, games and Bible study. PECM's meeting place near Appalachian State campus was full of students!

First Presbyterian Church (FPC) continues to give generously with financial gifts, time and talents. Our special Lenten Mission Offering raised \$23,072.89. *World Relief Triad* received \$7,690.96 to help resettle refugees, and \$15,381.93 went to *International Partnerships* to aide and spread the gospel to people in the war-zone of eastern Ukraine. In addition, a large U-Haul was loaded with slightly used donated furniture and other items which were transported to *World Relief Triad* in partnership with Rumble Presbyterian Church in Blowing Rock.

In August members and friends gave of their time and talent throughout our community at *Gathering to Serve*. Organizations served included *Hunger and Health Coalition*, *RAMs Rack*, *Casting Bread/Travis' Lunchbox*, *Wood Lot* and *First Morning Out (FMO)*. Volunteers also sang and provided music to shut-ins and children made place-mats for *Meals on Wheels*. Volunteers also prepared lunch for those who went into the community to serve.

In October, the congregation met for a "Pack-a-thon" sponsored through *Feed the Hunger*. Seventy-five volunteers packed 15,120 meals to be sent to areas at risk of famine.

FPC members and friends provided Christmas gifts for 49 local school children in need and packed 57 shoeboxes for Samaritan Purse's *Operation Christmas Child* program.

The special love offering at the December Moravian Love Feast collected \$984.00 which went to support local food pantries *Hunger and Health Coalition* and *Casting Bread*.

Pennies for Hunger, an offering the last Sunday of each month, received a total of \$2,413 to support grants for local food pantries.

Other organizations and individuals that FPC supported in 2023 include:

- \$13,000.00 - **Las Manos de Cristo Medical Clinic** works with the Presbyterian Church and the indigenous people of Chiapas, Mexico
- \$10,000.00 - **Hunger and Health Coalition** is a local resource for members of our community who need assistance with basic needs such as food and prescription medications.
- \$10,000.00 - **Hospitality House** serves seven northwestern NC counties and has been combating homelessness, hunger and poverty since 1984
- \$10,000.00 - **WeCan (Western Crisis Assistance Network)** provides crisis assistance with heating bills, housing and other needs while providing guidance and education to those in crisis
- \$6,981.64 - **Food 4 Families** provides summer food deliveries to support at-risk families in western Watauga County
- \$7,000.00 - **Freedom Farm Ministries** for men and **Kari's Home** for women provide Christian counseling and housing for those seeking to be out of bondage of alcohol and drug addiction
- \$7,000.00 - **Real Love Haiti** seeks to invest in the lives of the people of Haiti with the love, mercy and power of Jesus. Core ministries include an orphanage and supporting widows in extreme poverty.
- \$ 6,500.00 - **Appalachian State Presbyterian/Episcopal Campus Ministry (PECM)** provides Christian fellowship and Bible study to students
- \$4,300.00 - **Feed the Hunger** provides an opportunity to pack meals for people at risk of malnutrition and starvation

- \$3,600.00 – donated to **Hebron, USA** toward ministry support in Chiapas, Mexico
- \$3,000.00 - **Casting Bread Ministries/Travis' Lunchbox** provides food, community and compassion in association with Faithbridge United Methodist Church in Blowing Rock
- \$2,500.00 – **Forgiven Ministries** operates camps within prisons and provides an opportunity for inmates and their children to reconcile with one another and spend time together in a Christian setting
- \$2,500.00 – **Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons (PAACS)** – PAACs trains African physicians as surgeons to care for the poor and the sick. PAACS also discipled these surgeons to share the love of Christ with their patients to bring hope to those who are suffering.
- \$2,000.00 - **RAM (Resort Area Ministries)** provides local campground worship services, an affordable Thrift Store, and home repair projects to those in need
- \$1,500.00 – Missionaries **Will and Maggie Sabillo** moved from Boone to Quezon City, Philippines in 2022 where they worked with the International Graduate School Leadership Program with a vision to build Christian leaders and missionaries to serve throughout the world. In late 2022 they moved to Aberdeen, Scotland to continue their education and ministry.
- \$1,500.00 – donated for housing assistance for newly arrived Ukrainian refugee family
- \$1,250.00 - **High Country Prison Ministries** supports the chaplain at the Avery-Mitchell correction facility and works with **Forgiven Ministries/One Day with God** program to unite inmates with their children
- \$1,200.00 – **Will Barbour - ETSU Campus Ministry** - Will Barbour grew up at First Presbyterian Boone and serves as the campus minister for Reformed University Fellowship at ETSU
- \$1,000.00 – **WAMY Community Action** works in Watauga, Avery, Mitchell and Yancy counties to break the cycle of poverty by partnering with families and communities to provide the disadvantaged the support and tools they need to become self-sufficient.
- \$1,000.00 - **International Partnerships** is based in Kyiv, Ukraine and has served the people of the war zone of eastern Ukraine since 2014 through spreading the gospel and providing food and supplies
- \$1,000.00 - **Wood Lot Ministry** is a partnership with Grace Lutheran Church and collects, splits, and stores donated firewood for those who need winter heating assistance
- \$1,000.00 – **World Relief Triad** provides housing and support for newly arriving refugees
- \$1,000.00 – gifted to **Hebron, USA** in memory of Dr. Bill Herring, a long time member of FPC and passionate advocate for missions
- \$521.79 – **Watauga Community Housing Trust** works to preserve and develop permanently affordable housing in Watauga County
- \$200.00 - **Back-to-School Festival** was created to help with the heavy financial burden that back-to-school shopping creates for local families
- \$100.00 – donated to help a Ukrainian family with moving expenses

Many thanks to members of the committee as well as many others who helped throughout the year.



PROPERTY AND PERSONNEL

Moderator: *Neville Chaney*, Elder

Personnel

Staff Developments: Shawn Huntley was hired as Youth Director. Pastor Jeff Smith embarked on a much needed three month sabbatical. Amber Kannyo resigned her position as FMO Director and was replaced by Brooke Hollar. Steve Marks resigned as FPC's Associate Pastor. Larke Blanton was hired as Adult Education Director. Tyler Del-laperute was hired as Pianist.

FMO successfully completed the 2022 Fall and 2023 Spring Sessions: Amber Kannyo resigned her position as FMO Director and was replaced by Brooke Hollar, with the active support of the FMO Advisory Board.

Property

Building Operations: 2023 was the year of HVAC and plumbing repairs. Multiple HVAC units failed during the year and with the help of Elder David Kesler, these units have either been repaired or replaced and are operating effectively as we close 2023.

David also helped with plumbing issues that we had with the bathrooms in the lower floor near the church offices. Combining his engineering experience with our plumber and electrician, David enabled us to put these two restrooms back in service by overcoming a mistake by the contractors when the church was built at little additional cost.

Building Repair/Maintenance Issues: New computer-operated thermostats, together with upgrades to the computer system, were installed early in 2022 to help save saving energy costs. There have been some ongoing issues with these that are being addressed as this document is being generated.

Building Exterior Repair Issues: While continuing to work with REI, our consulting engineers, on the design solution to building envelope issues, continued shortages of materials and labor and volatility in prices counselled delaying implementation of this project through 2022. REI has prepared and sent bid documents to three contractors that they have chosen to prepare bids for this long awaited project. Members of the Property & Personnel Committee met with representatives of REI to identify the issues and we have asked the bidders to provide not only an overall cost in doing it all at one time, but also for individual phases to be more "church budget friendly." The bidders on site visit and bids will be tendered in January 2024.

Other Considerations: Building usage is something that also falls under the auspices of the Property and Personnel Committee to take requests and make recommendations to Session. In 2023 we approved and recommended the request of the Cub Scouts and the Red Cross to be able to use First Presbyterian Church facilities.

WORSHIP

Moderator: Kim McAulay, Elder

Mission: To enhance worship which involves all generations through drama, liturgical dance, singing, teaching, and preaching so the congregation of First Presbyterian Church experiences the joy and wonder of God and gives God praise and adoration.

Accomplishments for 2023

Worship services continued as one blended service of Praise and Worship. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, church service attendance has increased above and beyond the numbers from 2 separate services. Members and visitors are enjoying the blended music from the Choir, Praise Band and Handbells.

Offering and Communion both returned this year post-Covid. The offering plate is being passed down the aisles again after a three-year hiatus, and giving continues to be received online as well. Additionally, the congregation has been able to receive Communion by Intinction, with a pre-packaged option still available.

Music scholarships. The Worship Committee funded the First Light Praise Team, Handbell, and choir scholarships during the Spring, Summer and Fall semesters..

Special Services: Throughout the year, we hosted several special services including Youth Sunday on February 5, Officer Installation on February 12, Pentecost Sunday, Stewardship Dedication Service and World Communion Sunday in October.

Lent Services: FPC Boone offered the following services during the season of Lent this year: Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday service and Communion, the Good Friday noon service, and Easter Sunday morning service.

Advent Services: We were able to return to our full season of Advent services: Greening of the church, Advent wreath lighting each Sunday, Moravian Love Feast, Lessons and Carols Service, and two Christmas Eve services since December 24 was on a Sunday.

Other activities:

Pastor Jeff successfully finished his dissertation and presented his findings during the Sunday School hour during the month of May.

In addition to our traditional Ash Wednesday service and activities, we offered a lunch-time drive-thru opportunity to receive ashes

We hosted the Watauga High School Baccalaureate Service in May before graduation.

Pastor Jeff went on a well-deserved three-month Sabbatical during the months of June, July and August. We were led by Steve Marks and three visiting pastors: David Rennick, David Henry and Kelly Barefoot

On Sunday November 26, we bid farewell to Steve Marks, He has been an integral leader in worship and we wish him the best as he ministers in new ways.

Porter Liljestrang joined the Praise Band this year, providing percussion as the youngest member ever. The Praise Band also purchased a new drum kit and bass accessory.



First Presbyterian Church

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