



2023

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SYLVA

Rev. Blake Daniel, Pastor
office@sylvapres.org

Office Hours: Monday - Friday, 9:00am to 12:00pm

www.sylvapres.org

Our Mission:

*To make disciples who love Jesus Christ, love the church,
and love their neighbors as themselves.*

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Dear church family,

Happy spring! This is, hands-down, my favorite time of year. I used to like autumn the most, but ever since moving to the mountains nearly eight years ago, I prefer spring. The flowers in bloom, the birds chirping and bees buzzing, and the mountains greening up all around us serve as a reminder of Easter and the hope we have in Jesus' resurrection.

Spring is also a time when we get work done. After months of hibernation, we emerge to tackle jobs that might have been neglected in the wintertime. We clean out our houses, fix up our yards, and tend to our gardens. Some folks get back to the golf course or tennis court; others spend Saturdays on the soccer or baseball fields with their young ones. We join the rest of God's creatures in enjoying and cultivating God's creation in its many forms.

And this is certainly true around the church. April 9 marks the beginning of the season of Easter (also called Eastertide), which leads all the way to Pentecost on May 28. This is a time where we "practice resurrection," as the poet Wendell Berry says, leaning into the new reality that God has opened up for us in Christ. To help us with this, I will continue preaching through the Gospel of John on Sunday mornings. We will look at what happens after Jesus' resurrection, then we will circle back to other Scriptures in John to prepare us for Pentecost. I hope you'll join us for worship and life together.

(Continued on next page)



Spring mulch project at the Daniel home

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

In addition, we will be getting ready for some changes on the outside of our church building. You may have noticed that our church grounds are looking quite bare, and that's intentional. Our Landscaping Task Force, with approval from the Session, has been hard at work removing previous plants to make room for new arrangements. We will have a church work day on Saturday, May 6 to install new plants and to do some other necessary spring cleaning. Bring your tools and come help if you can!

On the inside of the church building, we will soon be upgrading our balcony seating, replacing the folding "movie theater" seats with new, padded chairs. Be on the lookout for more information about this process. Additionally, we will soon be replacing our current hymnals with our new hymnals, *Lift Up Your Hearts*. The Worship Committee will be coordinating a hymn sing and dedication service to celebrate this event, so look for more information about that, too. Thank you again to all who gave financially towards this effort!

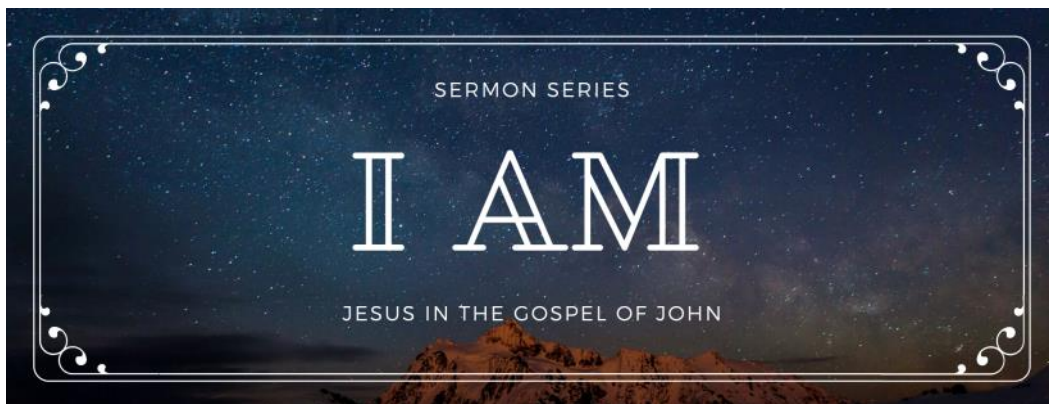
Speaking of finances, pay special attention to Judy's *Dollars & Cents* article this month. While the Lord continues to bless us as a congregation, we do need to keep an eye on our financial situation. Please consider giving or increasing your giving to our general fund. Every little bit helps us fulfill our mission. And please pray for God to bless our efforts throughout the springtime, because "unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain" (Psalm 127:1).

Yours in Christ,

Blake



WORSHIP UPDATES



Worship News

Join us for worship on Sundays as we give praise to God, study Scripture and learn about its relevance for our lives, and go deeper in life together. In-person services take place in the sanctuary at 11:00am, and live-stream online worship is available via our [YouTube page](#).

Sunday Scriptures:

- 4/02/2023 - John 12:12-19 - *I Am the King*
- 4/09/2023 - John 20:1-10 - *I Am Alive!*
- 4/16/2023 - John 21:1-14 - *A Miraculous Fishing Trip*
- 4/23/2023 - John 21:15-25 - *Reinstating Peter*
- 4/30/2023 - John 14:15-31 - *Jesus Prays for the Holy Spirit*

WORSHIP UPDATES

HOLY WEEK & EASTER

at First Presbyterian Church

- April 2 - Palm Sunday Worship at 11:00am
- April 6 - Maundy Thursday Dinner & Worship at 6:00pm
- April 9 - Easter Sunrise Worship at Bridge Park at 7:00am
- April 9 - Traditional Easter Worship at 11:00am

EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE

SUNDAY, APRIL 9TH AT 7AM
BRIDGE PARK

*A joint offering from the First Baptist, First Presbyterian,
and First Methodist Churches of Sylva*

CHURCH UPDATES

DOLLARS & CENTS

There are a lot of similarities between church finances and personal finances. There are the bills that must be paid right away, such as Board of Pension dues or our rent or mortgage at home. There are those bills that are due quarterly, such as homeowners' insurance or lawn care. And there are bills that are unexpectedly high, such as the water bill after the pipe freezes or the electric bill after a cold snap. All of this can build into a cash flow event. Last week, I had to use money from our contingency fund to process the payroll. While I am glad we can use that fund when we need it, I get nervous doing it. And I hope we eventually will be able to pay it back.

A big difference between church finances and personal finances is how we get our income. Whereas we know what our paycheck or Social Security check is going to be, we do not have a firm monthly income figure for the church.

Our Finance Committee will be studying our fiscal policies and health, and giving some suggestions of ways we can ease the pinch. In the meantime, please pray about what you give, thanking God always for our church facilities, our staff, and especially the wonderful community we enjoy.

In His service,

Judy Henderson

Treasurer



There are three easy ways to give:

- Visit our giving [webpage](#) and set up a one-time or recurring donation.
 - Mail a check to FPC: P.O. Box 2152, Sylva, NC 28779
 - Drop off a check during church office hours or in worship.

CHURCH UPDATES

SESSION UPDATE

One of many expenditures the Session approved at its March meeting was the “raising of the canopy” of the trees along Grindstaff Cove Road. This label for the trimming of the trees somehow seems an appropriate metaphor for Holy Week. James Walawender had led us in a devotion from a chapter in Peter Scazzero’s *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* that focused on us renewing our true selves by paying attention to our interior in silence and solitude, moving out of our comfort zones, and praying for the courage to do so. The sequence of celebrations of Last Supper, Crucifixion, and Resurrection during Holy Week involves a kind of raising of our personal canopies, opening room for new growth.

In addition to the funds for canopy raising, already available in the landscaping budget, the Session approved the purchase of new seating for the balcony from available funds. Low bids for new flooring, interior painting, and repair of the front door were approved. The repairs will be carried out when funds become available.

In other session news, the new hymnals have arrived. There will be a service of dedication in May. And the session meeting for April was moved from April 10 to April 17.

Happy Easter everyone!

Bruce Henderson

Clerk of Session

CHURCH UPDATES

DEACON UPDATE

I often look to nature for inspiration, for faith, but I look to my garden this morning after cutting the first asparagus spears of the season. Of course, spring is generally a time of planting and renewal in the garden, but no crop illustrates resurrection quite like asparagus. Unlike most vegetables, it is perennial. Each plant grows again year after year following winter dormancy, bright green shoots erupting from the earth and reaching toward the sky. Then almost as soon as the shoots emerge we harvest them, cutting them back to the ground for our tables. The bed again appears lifeless. But defying its apparent death, the wonder of asparagus is that just days later a new shoot appears.

A wonder of our church is its generosity. You stepped up for the children of the Black Mountain Home. All 47 of the children will receive Easter baskets thanks to you. These baskets, filled with treats selected for each child, are a reminder to the children that they are loved.

Other upcoming deacon projects are study bags for college students, Mother's Day flowers, and a spring hike in early May (date TBD).

A constant concern for the deacons is our prayer list. At our last meeting we updated each other and reviewed the ways we can support those on the list in prayer. If you would like to add to the prayer list, please email pray@sylvapres.org or call the church office (828-586-4256).

The deacon of the month for April is Susan Gingerich (239-634-2249) and the alternate is Peg Shafer (828-586-5049).

Kelder Monar

CHURCH UPDATES

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

We had a wonderful time teaching our children about **Holy Week**. Our children made palm leaf crosses, washed each other's feet to learn about serving others, prayed and reflected while planting seeds, and made resurrection biscuits. Thank you to all who helped make this event possible, and especially thank you to Courtney Umphlett, Kathy Grace, and Ali Large for volunteering their time.



We need volunteers to help with **Vacation Bible School!** This year it will be held June 12-June 16 from 9 am-12 pm at Bridge Park. Our church has been assigned to the registration table, so we need volunteers who can help check campers in and out each day. We also need volunteers to be group leaders. Group leaders help walk the campers from station to station. We will have groups ranging from pre-k to 5th grade. Please let me know if you are interested in volunteering, or want to know more about it. This has been such a wonderful community event, and we need your help to make sure our campers have another great year of VBS!

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CHURCH UPDATES

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY, CONT.

We have two exciting camp opportunities coming up this spring. The Presbytery of Western North Carolina is hosting an **Adventure Day on Saturday, April 29**. It will be a one-day event held from 10:30 am to 6:30 am at Camp Grier in McDowell County. This event is open to middle and high school youth, and I am getting clarification on whether our rising middle schoolers can attend. Please let me know if you are interested and we can work together on registering.

Camp Patton Springs will be held the weekend of May 19-21 at Camp Tekoa in Hendersonville, NC. This camp is open to ages pre-k through high school, with an overnight camp for rising 2nd graders through high school. Families, please let me know if you are interested in these two camps, or camp opportunities in general. If we can get a group of our children together to attend camps, I believe it would create a lasting impact on them. And it would be great fun!

Speaking of fun, I am arranging a **family kickball event** for our church! Anyone from our church is welcome to come and play, or cheer on our players! This will be a great opportunity for our church to have fun and play together. Families, please let me know through our Doodle poll which weekends are tentatively available to you so I can make reservations at Mark Watson Park.

Warmly,

Heather Monar

Children & Youth Ministry Director

CHURCH UPDATES



Save the Date

Community Vacation Bible School

Bridge Park, Downtown Sylva
June 12-16, 2023
9:00 am- 12:00 pm

VBS programming open to pre-k-5th grades.
Youth, 6th-12th grades will have service opportunities throughout the week.

Leadership provided by First Baptist, First Presbyterian, First Methodist, St. John's Episcopal, and The Summit churches.

Babylon
Daniel's Courage in Captivity™

We need volunteers to help with Vacation Bible School!

Please contact Heather Monar if you can help:

fpcsylvakids@gmail.com

CHURCH UPDATES

MISSIONS COMMITTEE

Cove Cleanup (Roadside Trash Pickup):

Thanks to our Trash Team including Tom Tabor, Bruce Henderson, Larry Selby and Lynda Parlett, we picked up 5 partial bags of trash from Grindstaff Cove Road on March 25. Picking up the plastic straws and eating utensils, drink cans and bottles, food wrappers and containers and other litter prevented that much from getting into Scotts Creek, our water system and into our wildlife! You can see in these pictures that it's very easy for these things to wash into culverts and on into Scotts Creek.



On the left, a dirty foil food wrapper sits ready to wash into the culvert. On the right, trash is floating down toward Scotts Creek.



Our next Cove Cleanup will be in June so stay tuned for details and join us.

Special Olympics:

The Special Olympics is an international organization providing opportunities for children and adults with intellectual disabilities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

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CHURCH UPDATES

MISSIONS COMMITTEE, CONT.

In Jackson County, the Special Olympics will be held on **Friday, April 28 at Smoky Mountain High School football field starting with the opening ceremony at 9:30 AM** and concluding at approximately 2:00. FPC Missions Committee is hosting a tent for water, snacks and a bit of shade for athletes from Cullowhee Valley Elementary School and we are in need of donations of small bottles of water and snacks such as individual packages of Goldfish crackers. Donations of these items can be left on the designated table in the Fellowship Hall. We'd also love to have members of our congregation to come cheer the athletes on as they compete so they can experience your support. Please watch the weekly email for further details on how you can help our athletes have a wonderful experience!

God's Creatures and Creation:

Did you know that Saturday, April 22 is **Earth Day**? It is a day observed around the world to draw attention to the environment and our impact upon it. God created our beautiful Earth and all of its creatures whether two legged or four legged, finned, feathered or furred, and He gave US the duty to cherish and maintain His creation. When our teams participate in Cove Cleanups, it's easy to see through all of the trash we collect that humans have been failing in that duty. But it's not just here in Jackson County. The average U.S. citizen's carbon footprint (the amount of methane and carbon dioxide humans create) is about four times larger than the rest of the world's! It's so easy to carry on day-to-day without thinking about the environment such as when we toss plastic packaging into the garbage but think about this... nearly 400 million tons of plastic- half of which is single-use products- are produced worldwide each year to meet consumer demands.

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CHURCH UPDATES

MISSIONS COMMITTEE, CONT.

According to an abundance of research, not only does the manufacturing process create harmful emissions (carbon footprints), the plastics will eventually break down into micro plastics (tiny particles) that wreak havoc on the environment and wildlife. Just do a search online for the pictures of the islands of plastic waste floating in our oceans or the photos of the dolphins, whales and other marine life that ingest or get caught by these products. Plastics also contain chemicals that can disrupt the human endocrine system as we're chronically exposed to them. What is that doing to our health?

On this Earth Day, think about changing just a few habits to positively impact the planet on which we're so fortunate to live. What about gradually changing from plastic storage containers to glass? (Yes, what was old is now new again!) What about taking your own reusable shopping bags to the store, or asking for paper bags instead?

What about using refillable containers for cleaning products and using environmentally friendly clothes washing detergents and dish detergents so you're not putting so many chemicals into the groundwater? What about composting your food waste? What about making your purchases from companies that have sustainable practices? And, how about doing your shopping locally so you're not only reducing your automobile emissions (or those of the online companies shipping your purchases to you) but also supporting our local business owners and economy?

We hope you'll celebrate this Earth Day with us and make every day a celebration of the Lord's creation.

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CHURCH UPDATES

MISSIONS COMMITTEE, CONT.

UCM Donations for April:

Spaghetti sauce/any pasta sauce; canned chicken

UCM *Diaper Day* is Coming in May:

Sunday, May 14 is Mother's Day and it is also FPC's "Diaper Day" for UCM. In honor of mothers throughout our community, we are collecting infant and adult diapers to provide for those unable to afford them. Diapers (and incontinence products) are essential but their costs are not supported by any government aid programs and they are quite expensive. Please plan to bring your donations throughout the month of May (but especially on Mother's Day) and place them on the UCM Giving Tree in the Fellowship Hall. Infant/toddler size 3, 4 and 5 diapers are especially appreciated as are adult male and female incontinence products.

UCM is Hiring!

United Christian Ministries of Jackson County is a faith-based ministry offering a food pantry and financial assistance to Jackson County residents in crisis. UCM is seeking a permanent part-time (25-30 hours per week) Executive Director. Duties include managing day-to-day operations; training and overseeing all staff and volunteers; collaborating with other local agencies; overseeing operational procedures and budgeted expenses; etc. The Executive Director reports to the Board of Directors and manages 2-3 staff members. Preferred qualifications include experience in client service, financial oversight, and staff supervision; computer proficiency; valid driver's license required. To apply, email resume to chairucm1@gmail.com. Closing date: March 30.

Lynda Parlett

CHURCH UPDATES

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

The Personnel Committee is busy interviewing candidates for the Administrative Assistant position. We have received some promising resumes and are looking forward to meeting these possible choices for the position. Thanks so much to Grace Reed, Beth Baxley, Peg Shafer, and Judy Henderson for filling in for us in the office while we continue our search for the new Administrative Assistant. Keep us in your prayers as we continue the interview process!

Kathy Grace

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Terms of Employment: 20 hours/week: Monday through Friday, 9:00am to 1:00pm

Compensation: Hourly range of \$15-17, based on education and experience

Duties: Including, but not limited to: assisting Pastor and other staff members; taking and relaying messages with accuracy; greeting and assisting visitors; maintaining website and social media accounts; production of church publications; scheduling of church calendar; other duties as assigned.

Qualifications: High School graduate required; additional education and experience preferred; high level of computer proficiency required including email, Microsoft Office, Excel, and Publisher; ability to work with confidential information; good communication skills; organization; dependability, with good job attendance record with previous employers. This position also requires a background check.

Application information: Please complete an application, downloaded from sylvapres.org/jobs. You may submit your application via mail to the church office (P.O. Box 2152, Sylva, NC 28779) or via email to Kathy Grace (kakieg9@gmail.com).

CHURCH UPDATES



The Presbyterian Women's Circle met on our usual third Thursday of the month to continue our study of Celebrating Sabbath. This month we discussed "Sabbath and Self-Care." When we think of self-care we usually think of things like making time for our interests, perhaps exercising, maybe pampering ourselves. But self-care as it relates to Sabbath is about making space for whatever transformation may come when we consistently accept God's invitation to honor Him on the Sabbath, whether we can see anything in it for ourselves or not. We are there for the glory of God, rather than treating the day mostly as an opportunity to recharge for the week.

We also completed our mission project for the women of Malawi by sewing 32 reusable feminine pads, which were taken along with many more made by other PWC groups to Malawi so that the women there can more fully participate in work and school. We were so grateful to the Presbyterian Women of western NC who provided us with the pattern and fabric and answered all our questions, and to the women of our church who cut and sewed and had a great time doing it. We've decided that even though this batch has gone on to Malawi, we will continue, because the need continues. We will announce plans for this soon and will be looking for volunteers of all ages, whether attending the Circle meeting or not. As always though, all women of the church are welcome to our regular monthly gatherings. Our next meeting will be on Thursday, April 20 at 10 am and we will discuss "Sabbath and Justice."

Beth Baxley

CHURCH UPDATES

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE



YOUR HELP NEEDED

Sign up for:

- ✓ FLOWERS FOR THE SANCTUARY
- ✓ GREETING & USHERING
- ✓ HELPING IN THE NURSERY OR CHILDREN'S CHURCH

AUDIO / VIDEO HELP NEEDED!

We are looking for volunteers to help run the sound and video for Sunday morning services. Want to learn how and sign up for a shift? Please contact the church office at office@sylvapres.org

Interested in serving on a church committee? Notify the Church Office or our Pastor!

- Christian Education
- Finance
- Hospitality
- Mission
- Personnel
- Property
- Transition House
- Worship

Do you have a prayer request?

Send prayer concerns or updates to our church prayer email address:

pray@sylvapres.org.

CELEBRATE!

Birthdays

4/1 Pat Mikula

4/3 Alisha Thomas

4/5 Pat Hill

4/6 David Kelley

4/6 Tim Boyer

4/10 Erin Daniel

4/11 Will Murajda

4/14 Brenda Hill

4/15 James McManus

4/18 Sam Hale

4/21 Bruce Henderson

4/21 Ben Pendry

4/24 Linda Kelley

4/25 Alex Sparling

4/30 Dennis Stewart

Anniversaries

4/7 Steve & Beth Baxley

4/11 Doug & Doris Cody

4/17 David & Jenny Porter

4/24 Ben & Jenna Pendry

4/26 Blake & Erin Daniel

If you would like your birthday or anniversary listed in future newsletters, please send the information to office@sylvapres.org.

If you would like a copy of the church directory, please notify the church office as well!

CONTACT INFORMATION

Pastor: Blake Daniel

Music Director: Courtney Umphlett

Organist/Pianist: Margaret Hale

Children & Youth Ministry Director: Heather Monar

Children's Ministry Assistant: Sydney Kugel-Humphrey

Treasurer: Judy Henderson

Financial Secretary: Grace Reed

Assistant Financial Secretary: Lynda Parlett

Deacon of the Month:

Susan Gingerich (239-634-2249); alternate, Peg Shafer (828-586-5049)

Church Office:

Phone: 828-586-4256

Email: office@sylvapres.org

www.sylvapres.org

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46 Presbyterian Drive

Sylva, NC 28779

Mailing address:

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