

CONTACT INFORMATION

Pastor: Blake Daniel

Administrative Assistant: Mary Ferrick

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: Beth Baxley (alternate: Jeff Pope)

Church Office:

Phone: 828-586-4256

Email: office@sylvapres.org

www.sylvapres.org

Physical address:

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Sylva, NC 28779

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P.O. Box 2152

Sylva, NC 28779



2023

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SYLVA

Rev. Blake Daniel

Pastor

blake@sylvapres.org

Mary Ferrick

Administrative Assistant

office@sylvapres.org

OFFICE HOURS: Monday - Friday 9:00 to 1:00

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,

If you've watched TV over the past few months – especially a major sporting event – you've likely seen advertisements for a new campaign called "He Gets Us." The ads are in black in white, depicting images of ordinary life and people while a narrator describes a particular theme and how, surprisingly, it points to Jesus. (One ad, for example, addresses loneliness and culminates with the words, "*Jesus felt alone, too. He gets us.*") The ads then direct viewers to learn more at a website: hegetsus.com.

Intrigued by all this, I recently listened to an interview with Jason Vanderground, a marketing professional and one of the campaign managers for He Gets Us. I learned a lot. For instance, Vanderground explained that the ads were devised by Christians trying to use journalism to spread the gospel to a wide audience. He said they have spent approximately \$100 million on the ads, with plans to double that amount over the next year. And he said that reactions to the campaign have been predictably diverse. For instance, surveys indicate that some people (Christians and non-Christians alike) have been intrigued and drawn in, while others have interpreted it as contrived and gimmicky; some have questioned its theological and political orientation, while others have questioned the ethics of spending so much money on an ad campaign. What's undeniable, he said, is that it has a lot of different people talking about Jesus.



(Continued on the next page)

CELEBRATE!

Birthdays

2/1 Sherry Bauknecht
2/2 Amanda W. Murajda
2/9 Betty White
2/13 Doug Cody
2/14 Jeff Ollar
2/20 Bailey Simpson
2/20 Cecilia Umphlett
2/23 Amy Moore Adams
2/25 Asa Daniel
2/28 Cole Ollar
2/28 Ike Kennerly

Anniversaries

2/27 – Fred & Sherry
Bauknecht

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!

PRAYER REQUESTS



do you have a
prayer request?

Send prayer concerns or updates to our church prayer email address:
pray@sylvapres.org.

This email will be monitored by our Pastor, Administrative Assistant, and an appointed Deacon. You may also contact the church office at 828-586-4256 to share a request. In an effort to consolidate our prayer list, we will no longer be posting requests in the weekly bulletin. Instead, a copy of the prayer list will be included in Pastor Blake's weekly email and mailed out to those without internet. Please notify the church office if you have questions.



FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

I'll admit: in listening to the interview, I was won over by the campaign's intentions. For the first time, or the first time in a long time, we all need to get to know Jesus — to take a good look at him in Scripture; to read about what he says and does in the gospels; and to consider if our lives line up with his life, if our mission look like his mission, if our spirits are immersed in his Spirit (and not vice versa). Indeed, as Dietrich Bonhoeffer once wrote, *"When Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die."* To die to sin, and to rise in him.

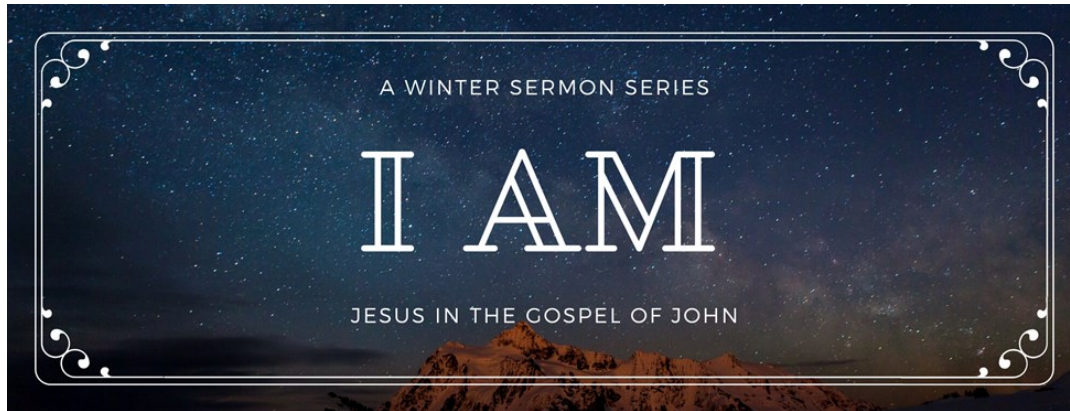
This is the motivation behind our current winter sermon series. From now through Easter, we're taking a closer look at Jesus by reading sections of the gospel of John. John gives us a perspective like no other, in which Jesus identifies himself with the God of Israel, the great "I Am," in some creative and powerful ways. *"I am the bread of life,"* he says. *"I am the true vine."* *"I am the resurrection and the life."* Each of these descriptions shines light on the one who came as the light of life, the very presence of God with us and for us. I hope you'll join us this month for Sunday worship and other events in our life together as we take a deeper look at the ways he gets us.

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. We are live-streaming for those who prefer to worship from home via our [YouTube page](#).

Sunday Scriptures:

- 2/05/2023 - John 14:23-29 (*Guest preacher: Royce Browder*)
- 2/12/2023 - John 6:25-51 – *I am the Bread of Life*
- 2/19/2023 - John 8:12-30 – *I am the Light of the World*
- 2/26/2023 - John 10:1-21 – *I am the Good Shepherd*

CHURCH UPDATES

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE



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

CHURCH UPDATES

FUN & FELLOWSHIP



Join us for dinner in the Fellowship Hall on Wednesday, February 1st at 6:00pm! If you're able, please bring covered dish to share (side, salad, dessert, or some kind of entrée). If not, come anyway! We would be honored to host you.



Family Night Supper in the Fellowship Hall

WORSHIP UPDATES



February 22 is [Ash Wednesday](#), which marks the beginning of the season of Lent. We will gather for worship in the sanctuary at 6:00pm. If you didn't grow up with Lent (and I know many of you didn't, myself included), here's a bit of background.

The word "Lent" comes from the Old English word for "springtime." It refers to the length of time before Easter, traditionally forty days, when the Church prepares to commemorate Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. Just as Advent helps us prepare spiritually for Christmas, Lent helps us prepare spiritually for Holy Week and Easter.

You may be asking, *Do I have to observe Lent?* The first answer is, *Of course not!* But the second answer is, *Why wouldn't you?* This season is a gift to us in which we may pause and reflect on our lives in light of Jesus Christ. So, I encourage you to observe it this year. Typically folks use this time as a chance to give something up: certain foods, certain media, certain habits. In recent years it's become popular to take something on: daily prayer, for instance, or journaling and letter-writing. Regardless, the goal isn't self-promotion (pride) but self-effacement (humility). What will help you humble yourself over the next forty days, so that you can see Jesus more clearly?

(Continued on next page)

WORSHIP UPDATES

LENT, CONTINUED

For a special focus during Lent, we will be offering a weekly prayer group beginning on March 8 at 6:00pm in the Fellowship Hall. This will be an opportunity both to learn more about prayer, and to pray! Be on the lookout for more information in our March Newsletter.



JOIN THE CHOIR!



Courtney holds rehearsals on **Wednesdays at 7:00pm** for the main choir, and again on **Sundays from 9:30-10:00am** for children’s music. Singers of all abilities are welcome to attend! We are also looking for more bell choir participants. Bell choir rehearsals take place **every other Thursday from 4:30-5:15pm** at Sylva First United Methodist Church.

Questions? Contact courtney@sylvapres.org.

CHURCH UPDATES



Introducing

Lift Up Your Hearts

The new hymnal for First Presbyterian Church!



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Hymnals: \$20 each

*Donations can be made in honor or in memory of others.
Donation forms are available at the church or by [clicking here!](#)*

CHURCH UPDATES

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Hymnal Update

The Worship Committee would like to thank everyone for the feedback you have provided as we have researched newer hymnals that might enrich our worship together.

We reviewed several hymnals and are excited to report that we have found one which we feel will support our worship for years to come. ***Lift Up Your Hearts*** is, as the editors write, a collection of hymns that is “biblical, Reformed, balanced and accessible.” It contains the hymns we have treasured for generations as well as the best of new hymns, songs from the global church and settings of all the psalms. In addition the hymnal is a rich source of prayers, litanies, scripture readings and creeds that will enhance our worship.

We will be making a more detailed presentation about the hymnal at Family Night Supper on Feb. 1. We encourage you to attend to learn more about *Lift Up Your Hearts*. We think you will agree that the creators of this hymnal succeeded in creating a resource that “is deep enough to give voice to our praises and laments, contain both our sung prayers and God’s words to us, and play a significant role in the faith formation of Christians young and old alike.” The purchase of new hymnals will be totally supported by donations. Each hymnal will cost \$20 and there will be the opportunity to designate hymnals in honor or memory of loved ones. Donations can be made by check or online to the Hymnal Fund.

Steve Baxley

CHURCH UPDATES

Dollars and Cents

If you contribute to our church with checks or online, you should have received your 2022 giving receipt. Please look it over and let the Finance Committee (Alisha Thomas is our new chair) know if you see any discrepancies. We can search back through the teller reports and straighten things out.

And while you are looking at your statement, prayerfully consider ways you can increase your giving to cover the increase we have in our budget. The total budget is 4.4 % higher than last year’s. Approximately half of that is due to cost of living raises for pastor and staff and the other half is due to improvements to landscaping and needed repairs to the Transition House. I believe that what you give is between you and the Lord. He knows what you can give and the blessings that abound to the “cheerful giver,” 2 Corinthians 9:7.

Also, if you are interested in being part of the Finance Committee, contact me, or Alisha Thomas. The only requirement for this particular committee is that you be a member of the church. We meet directly after the worship service in the garden room on the Sunday before the Session meeting. Our next meeting will be February 12th.

Alisha Thomas - 828-736-9385; Judy Henderson - 828-399-0685

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

CHURCH UPDATES

SESSION UPDATE

At the Session's January meeting we welcomed two new elders. Frances Hess, who has served as an elder several times before, and Alisha Thomas, who recently served as a deacon.

Frances will be chairing the Hospitality Committee and Alisha will chair Finance.

James Walawender will be the new chair of the Christian Education Committee.

We took care of numerous housekeeping chores and planned to read a book together (Emotionally Healthy Spirituality). The Session charged the Property Committee to assess the need to make updates in the sanctuary balcony.

Perhaps the most significant thing we did was to note the passing of two long-time church members, Steve Parlett and Dr. Will Nash. We will continue to pray for Lynda and Besan and their families.



Bruce Henderson

Clerk of Session

Welcome New Church Members:

- Joella Bennett
- Sally Hinson

CHURCH UPDATES

MISSIONS, CONT.

United Christian Ministry Needs for February:

Dish detergent, laundry detergent, shampoo

Roadside Trash Pickup:

Our next roadside trash pickup along Grindstaff Cove Road will take place on March 25

Watch next month's newsletter and emails for details.

Lynda Parlett



Scot and Carol Musser, our supported missionaries from Madrid, Spain, will be with us on Sunday, Feb. 5. They will give a presentation from 9:45-10:45am in the Fellowship Hall, and will also speak during the service. All are welcome to attend!

CHURCH UPDATES

MISSIONS

Did you know that we, Sylva First Presbyterian Church, support mission efforts in our community, region, nation, and around the world? Our benevolences to these groups ensure that the Lord's work is carried out well beyond our own reach. Here's who we support:

Serving our Community:

United Christian Ministries - Serving Many Needs

UKirk Ministry at WCU - Serving Students

The Community Table - Fighting Hunger & Loneliness

AWAKE - Child Advocacy Center for the Abused and Neglected

Circles of Jackson County - Ending the Cycle of Poverty

HERE - Helping Those without Homes

Serving our Region:

The Presbytery of Western NC

Black Mountain Home

Montreat Wee Kirk Conference

Serving our Nation and World:

Presbytery Hunger Fund

Gideons

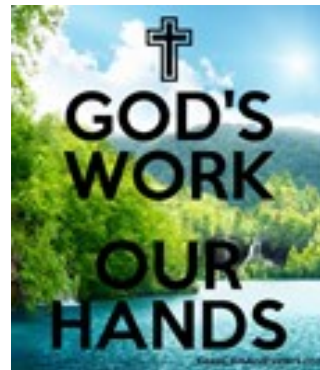
RCE International/ Scot & Carol Musser in Spain (visiting Feb. 5!)

Wycliffe/Jenna and Tim Reed - Brazil

Antioch Partners/Jim and Juliana Gieser - South Africa

Young Life - Nicaragua

Presbytery Disaster Assistance



(Continued on next page)

CHURCH UPDATES

DEACON UPDATE

At first glance the trees in a dormant winter forest might look dull, missing the showy leaves, flowers and fruits we know them by so well. But with a second glance, the same trees reveal features otherwise hidden during leafier times of the year. Look at a tulip poplar. Some people don't like this tree, and call it a weed. Others who do like it admire its flowers, its size, its timber. But look at its leaf buds. Almost unique among the common trees in our area, they split in two to release new leaves in spring. In winter, the two parts of the bud look like two hands pressed together in prayer. It's just one of the countless ways Creation points to God's kingdom.

As for the deacons, we spent our first meeting organizing ourselves for the year ahead. We introduced ourselves, so that new members and old could understand each other a little better. We discussed what it means to be a deacon (hint: it means to serve!). We signed up to be deacons of the month, and to lead the year's deacon projects. We are looking forward to the rest of 2023!

In addition to the events we plan and other care for the congregation and community, the deacons pray for our church's prayer concerns. 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 February is Beth Baxley (828-399-0735) and the alternate is Jeff Pope (828-736-7867).

Kelder Monar

Seed Head of the Tulip



CHURCH UPDATES

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Greetings!

We are hosting a Valentine's night out for our young families. This will be on Tuesday, February 14th from 6-8 pm. We will provide dinner, games, and a movie for the children while their parents get an evening out together. If you are interested in helping Sydney watch the children please let me know.

Looking ahead to the season of Lent, the children's ministry team is planning an event for families toward the end of March, to help celebrate the coming of Easter. There will be more on this to come, but the team is so happy that our families can meet together again to celebrate!

If you are interested in learning more about our children and youth programming, or interested in volunteering, I'd love to talk with you!

Warmly,

Heather Monar

**VALENTINE'S NIGHT OUT FOR
PARENTS!**

**ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14TH
FROM 6-8 PM**

**DINNER, GAMES, AND A MOVIE
FOR THE CHILDREN!**



CHURCH UPDATES

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Sunday School

You're invited to Sunday School! Children's Sunday School meets upstairs in the main church building at 9:45am. Bruce Henderson leads a class for adults, also at 9:45am, in the upstairs classroom of the MJPC, and Pastor Blake leads a class at 9:45am in the Garden Room next to the Fellowship Hall.

Questions? Contact the [church office](#). We'd love to have you!

Presbyterian Women

The Presbyterian Women's Circle met on Thursday, Jan. 19th for our monthly study. This was our first meeting without our long-time leader, Sylvia Smythe, who has moved to Greensboro. We will surely miss her and pray for her and Jim in their new home.

This year we are taking an in-depth look at what Sabbath means and how God calls us to celebrate and rest in Him on the Sabbath. It continues to be a wonderfully rich journey. We will continue this study until May. We are discussing continuing to meet through the summer, with the agenda still to be decided. A new study will begin in the fall.

We warmly welcome all the women of the church to join us in this new year for study and outstanding fellowship. We meet every third Thursday of the month in the Garden Room of the Fellowship Hall from 10-11:45 AM. Afterward, those who can, go out to lunch together. Please join us at our next meeting on Feb 16th at 10 AM! For more information, please call Donna Mason at (828) 507-2210, Betty White at (828) 586-4641, or Beth Baxley at (828) 399-0735.