


2024

*February
Newsletter*



FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH, SYLVA



(828) 586-4256
office@sylvapres.org
www.sylvapres.org

**46 Presbyterian Drive,
Sylva, NC 28779**

**Mailing Address:
PO Box 2152, Sylva, NC 28779**

**OFFICE HOURS:
Monday - Friday
8:00am - 12:00pm**

Blake Daniel, Pastor
Jean Chance, Administrative Assistant
Courtney Umphlett, Music Director
Margaret Hale, Organist/Pianist
Heather Monar, Children/Youth Ministry
Lilly Matheson, Children's Ministry Assistant
Judy Henderson, Treasurer
Grace Reed, Financial Secretary
Lynda Parlett, Assistant Financial Secretary

February Deacon of the Month:

Beth Baxley (828) 399-0735

Billy Noell - alt - (828) 506-3702

OUR MISSION

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

PASTOR'S NOTES

Dear church family,

“I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.” – Philippians 3:10-11



If you've been in church over the past few weeks, you've heard me quote this Scripture from Paul's letter to the Philippians. It's a passage that I believe God highlighted for me at the beginning of the year, and it's been guiding my study, preparation, and preaching through the Gospel of Luke this winter. I share it with you because perhaps it reflects your desire, too: *“I want to know Christ...”*

But how do we know Christ? We are, after all, Christians (or “little Christs”), so shouldn't knowing Jesus be our primary focus? Our *modus operandi*, our *raison d'être*, our mission in life? Absolutely! None of us would disagree – yet we might admit that such a task is easier said than done. After all, we can't meet Jesus for a cup of coffee the way we might meet each other at City Lights or Bojangles; we can't shake his hand or give him a hug or hear him laugh. But that doesn't mean we can't *know* him.

This is where **Scripture** comes in. We can open our Bibles and learn more about Jesus in the Old and New Testaments, because we believe that *“every story whispers his name.”* And this is why **prayer** is so important. We can speak to Jesus and invite him to speak to us in return, as *“deep calling out to deep.”* And this is why **worship, fellowship, and service** are integral to being the church, too. We can spend time together as the body of Christ, remembering the one who said, *“I will be with you always.”*

So, I invite you to get to know Christ at First Presbyterian Church as February begins, and especially as we celebrate the beginning of Lent, the 40-day period of repentance and renewal before Holy Week and Easter. Lent provides us with the opportunity to examine our lives and our spiritual walks — not in order to feel miserable because of our sins, but to feel

grateful and to live gratefully because of our Savior. Lent is, therefore, the perfect time for us to commit (or re-commit) ourselves to the dusty road of discipleship, and to get to know Jesus together. I hope you'll come along.

See you Sunday,

Blake



Do you have a prayer request?

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



WORSHIP

Join us for worship on Sundays as we offer our praise to God, study Scripture and learn about its relevance for our lives, and go deeper in fellowship and life together. In-person services take place in the sanctuary at 11:00am. We are also live-streaming for those who are not able to attend via our [YouTube page](#).

SUNDAY SCRIPTURES

Feb 4—Luke 4:31-44

“The Savior’s Shalom”

Feb 11—Luke 5:1-11

“You Gotta Serve Somebody”

Feb 18—TBA

Feb 25—Luke 5:27-39

“Good Trouble”

Books for the Season of Lent in our Church Library

- *The Confessions* by St. Augustine
- *Practicing the Way* by John Mark Comer
- *A Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster
- *40 Days Living the Jesus Creed* by Scot McKnight
- *The Screwtape Letters* by C.S. Lewis
- *Knowing God* by J.I. Packer
- *Liturgy of the Ordinary* by Tish Harrison Warren
- *The Spirit of the Disciplines* by Dallas Willard
- *The Day the Revolution Began* by N.T. Wright

DOLLARS & CENTS

I am looking forward to February because that means that all the “end of January treasurer chores” will be done. You should have received last year’s contribution receipt. The W2s for our pastor and staff and 1099s for contract workers will be in the mail. The January payroll will be done with updated salaries and tax tables used. The financial part of the statistical report for the Presbytery will be submitted. Lots of numbers are involved and they must be correct. We always used to tell our children, “Numbers are your friends,” especially when they were complaining about a tough math assignment. Good thing I like numbers. Of course, February means

it is time to work on our own personal tax returns. It gives us a chance to take a hard look at what came in and what went out in taxes, medical expenses, donations, etc. How can we be more intentional with our finances?

Have a lovely February and know that your Finance Committee, under the leadership of Bob Porter and your team in the office (me, Grace Reed and Lynda Parlett, and Jean Chance), are faithfully crunching the numbers to the Glory of God.

In His Service,

Judy Henderson, Treasurer



SESSION

Although the Christian Church is founded on a time unit of eternity, we find it convenient to use calendar years to do our business. So, this month, the Session took on a new member (and re-upped two others) and reorganized. Several elders have taken on new roles.

James Walawender takes over from James McManus as Chair of the Property Committee. Newly elected elder, **Bob Porter** takes over as Finance Chair, **Alisha Thomas** is our newly elected Clerk of Session, and I move over to Christian Education. **Kathy Grace** remains with Personnel, **Lynda Parlett** with Missions, **Frances Hess** with Hospitality, **Steve Baxley** with Worship, and **Blair Yount** with the Transition House. A particularly important person for members of the congregation to know is Alisha in the Clerk's role. In the presbyterian system, clerks are seen as individuals who facilitate communication, in this case, between the congregation and the session and the session and the presbytery. Alisha can help you find your way through the hallways of church governance.

In his introduction to our year-long series of session devotions on the

"Psalms of Ascents," Pastor Blake distributed an introductory piece by Eugene Peterson that distinguished between short-term tourists of religion and long-term disciples, pilgrims, or apprentices of religion, ready to follow Jesus. Let us get in for that long haul in 2024. We know we have the time. We have a whole extra day to use.

Bruce Henderson,
Outgoing Clerk of Session



DEACONS

I have a special spot in my heart for our native prairie grasses. They are a delight wild on the landscape, and a great choice in the garden. You've probably noticed the switchgrass among the new plantings around the church. These are remarkably resilient plants, their deep roots insurance against drought. Conversely, a heavy rain will knock them down but they always pull themselves back upright afterward. And while most herbaceous plants in winter fade to crisp gray, switchgrass, little bluestem and their kin grow always more lovely, bright tawny fountains standing up against the gloom. The Lord in his wisdom gave us these grasses. We should look to them and take heart whenever

we feel discouraged in this world. The deacons recently welcomed two new members to our ranks, **Diane Scott** and **Billy Noel**, and said goodbye to two others after completing their terms of service, **Jenna Pendry** and **Peg Shafer**. With the changeover comes new ideas, and at our last meeting we deacons talked about ways we could deepen the opportunities for fellowship and service that we offer the congregation.

We also assigned roles for the diaconate. **Jeff Pope will be moderator, Billy Noel co-moderator, Susan Gingerich Secretary, Tom Tabor our finance liaison**, and I will continue writing our newsletter entries. We started dividing responsibilities for the deacons' annual events, but had such good discussion for each one that we only got halfway through the year.

As always, the deacons reviewed the prayer list. If you would like to add to the prayer list, please email pray@sylvapres.org or call the church office (828-586-4256).

Kelder



MUSIC

Hello everyone! I hope everyone has had a fabulous new year so far! We are so excited that our music programs are back in the swing of things. I want to say a quick thank you to all who attended our Christmas program and helped us raise money for HERE of Jackson County. Your donations truly made a difference in our community as they work to end homelessness.

I hope you have been enjoying our worship services and feeling full when leaving church on Sunday. Our new hymnal is offering a wealth of new and it has been a fun journey over the past 8 months getting to know it. If you

“If you happen to see a song in the hymnal that you would like to incorporate in to our worship service please let me know.”

happen to see a song in the hymnal that you would like incorporated into our worship service, please let me know at courtney@sylvapres.org. As always, we always welcome new members in our music programs! Here is a little detail about them:

***Sunday Choir:** Ages 13 and up. We practice on Wednesdays 7:00-8:15 PM and sing nearly every Sunday except in the summertime. No musical experience is necessary, just a love of singing and a desire to help lead worship.

***Handbell Choir:** Ages 12 and up. We practice on Wednesday 5:10-5:50 PM at FUMC Sylva. The only requirement is you must be able to read music. We will teach you the rest.

***Children's Music:** Ages 3-12. Sunday morning practice 9:00-9:45 AM. We do a little bit of everything!

Lastly, if you **play an instrument** and are interested in partici-

pating in our church services, please email me at courtney@sylvapres.org. We are always looking for folks young and old to lead the prelude. In addition, I am looking at putting an instrumental ensemble together over the summer.

Have a musical and blessed month everyone!

Courtney



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY
Greetings!

Our church is so pleased to announce the confirmation of Aleah Murajda and Whitney Murajda! Please continue to pray for Aleah and Whitney as they continue to grow in their faith.

In February, we will be hosting our third annual **Valentine's Night Out** for parents with young children! We will provide dinner, games, and a movie for the children while their parents get an evening out together. Since Valentine's Day falls on Ash



Above: Confirmation

Right: Aleah & Whitney as children



Wednesday this year, the event will be on **Thursday February 15th from 6-8 pm**. RSVP to me if you'd like to take advantage of this evening. And if you are interested in helping watch the children to give parents a little break please let me know!

Sunday School for our children and youth meets each Sunday morning from 9:45 to 10:45 am. Here is a reminder of our classes and their teachers:

- Nursery (infant through 3 years old)**- Lilly Matheson (downstairs across from the bathrooms in the fellowship hall)
- Pre-K through 1st grade**- Heather Monar and Anne Sylvester (upstairs across from the balcony, last door on the right)
- 2nd grade through 4th grade**-

Sam Hale (upstairs across from the balcony, second door on the right)
5th grade through 8th grade- Erin Daniel, Marjorie Eyre, Amanda and Roger Murajda, Jess Jones (upstairs, first door at top of the stairs)
High school- Casey Walawender (Mary Jay Patten Center)

If you have any questions about Sunday School for your children, please email me at fpcsylvakids@gmail.com

Warmly,
Heather



MISSIONS

United Christian Ministry needs:

peanut butter, jelly, dry beans, pasta sauce. Always needed are toothpaste, shampoo, body wash/bar soap, laundry detergent, toilet paper and pet food.

Cove Cleanup: Our next Adopt-a-Highway clean up for Grindstaff Cove Rd will take place in March. Watch the March newsletter for the date and time.

Missions Committee Meetings take place on the 4th Sunday of each month at 9:00 in the Parlor. Please join our team and help us carry out the much needed work of the Lord here on earth.

Lynda Parlett



HOSPITALITY

The Hospitality Committee met in January and looked at annual events such as Maundy Thursday, Rally Day, etc. to put on the calendar. We also looked at planning other events for the church. No specific dates are set yet. As always, our soup and sandwich ministry, cards and calls to those in need are ongoing. Please let anyone on the committee know if you have a need or call the church office

and Jean will pass it along to us. Frances Hess is our chairperson. Other members of the committee this year are Beth Baxley, Susan Blair, Jae Crawford, Betty Foti, Robin Gorman, Pat Mikula, David Porter, Jenny Porter, and Dianne Scott.

Beth Baxley



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

In our January meeting we studied Jesus' healing of the ten men with leprosy. We learned how leprosy was defined in Jesus' day and how it is diagnosed, treated and can be cured in the early stages today. We talked about the significance of the fact that the only one of the ten who returned to thank Jesus for his miraculous healing was a despised Samaritan. This Samaritan was not only cured of his leprosy but found salvation as well. Jesus demonstrated in this miracle that His compassion and His salvation was for all. He calls us to love the unlovely, and to be thankful to Him in all things.

Our next meeting will be on **Feb. 15th, at 10 AM**, in the Youth room of

the Mary Jay Patten center, when Marjorie will be leading us in discussing "A Person with a Physical Disability Encounters Jesus", Lesson 6 in Sacred Encounters.

Also, we are sorry to say good-bye to our Circle sister, Sally Hinson, who has moved to Stone Mountain, GA. We wish her well and will be lifting her in prayer as she settles into her new home near her dear son, Russell.

Beth Baxley



January Donations
(12-28 / 01-31)

AVERAGE WORSHIP ATTENDANCE
FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY: 101

REGULAR FUND: \$ 32,100.07
CONTINGENCY FUND: \$ 275.00
MISSIONS FUND: \$ 400.00
ORGAN FUND: \$ 277.07
DISASTER: \$ 300.00

TOTAL DONATIONS: \$ 33,352.14

3 Ways to Give

Recurring Donation
Set up a one time or recurring donation:
<https://www.sylvapres.org>

Drop It Off
Drop off a check during
office hours or at worship.

Mail a Check
Mail a check to:
First Presbyterian Church
P.O. Box 2152
Sylva, NC 28779

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

A purple background with a floral pattern and scattered hearts in various colors (pink, blue, white).

HELP NEEDED

SIGN UP FOR:
Greeters/Ushers; Audio/Video;
Children's Church; Flowers;
Coffee Fellowship; Nursery

Interested in serving on a church committee? Notify the pastor or the church office.

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

Don't forget to look at the clip boards in the fellowship hall each week to see if there are vacant spaces that need to be filled for the following week.

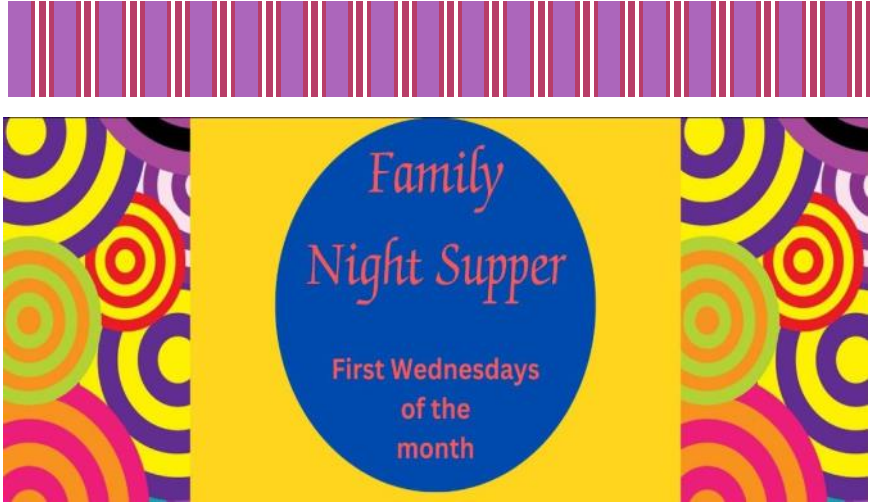
A pink background with a floral pattern and scattered hearts in various colors (purple, blue, white).

USHER/GREETERS NEEDED

If you are willing to serve as an usher/greeter on Sundays, please sign-up in the fellowship hall on the clipboards where you see a vacancy.

A decorative horizontal bar consisting of vertical stripes in shades of purple and white.

UPCOMING EVENTS



FEBRUARY 7 @ 6:00 pm

Come enjoy a simple potluck dinner with our church family.
Please bring a side dish, entrée, salad or dessert if you are able.
If not, come anyway!



UPCOMING EVENTS



Ash Wednesday

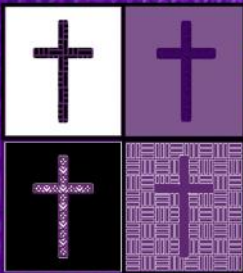
Worship Service

February 14 @ 6:00PM

FPC Sanctuary



ASH WEDNESDAY



Lenten Prayer Group

Wednesday nights at 6:00pm

February 21 through March 20

FPC Garden Room



COMMUNITY



United Christian Ministries

NEEDED FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY:
pasta and pasta sauce, canned chicken,
peanut butter, jelly, dried beans

ALWAYS NEEDED:
shampoo, body wash, dish detergent,
laundry detergent, paper towels,
toilet paper, diapers, and pet food



FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE



CHURCH DIRECTORIES

UPDATED DIRECTORIES ARE AVAILABLE AT YOUR REQUEST FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE. A FEW COPIES ARE KEPT AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE SANCTUARY.

To keep the directory current, send all changes/corrections to office@sylvapres.org



**DON'T FORGET TO WEAR YOUR
NAME TAGS**

IF YOU DON'T HAVE A NAME TAG,
WRITE YOUR NAME ON THE PAPER PROVIDED
AND WE WILL MAKE ONE FOR YOU.

February Birthdays

- 2-1 Sherry Bauknecht
- 2-2 Amanda W. Murajda
- 2-9 Betty White
- 2-13 Doug Cody
- 2-20 Cecilia Umphlett
- 2-25 Asa Daniel

Anniversaries

- 2-27 Fred & Sherry Bauknecht

