



A PASTORAL MESSAGE FROM DR. MIKE GARRETT

I have a treasured book in my library that has the following inscription written just inside the cover:

To my good friend and young brother in the faith, Mike Garrett. (Mark 10:45)

It's inside a commentary on the Gospel of Mark by the author of the book, Cullen I.K. Story, a retired New Testament professor and Greek scholar from Princeton Seminary. One day, I walked into our sanctuary in Atlanta to preach and there he sat with his wife, Wilma. He was a very old man, nearing the end of his years, but I confess I was intimidated. His name and reputation preceded

him. We struck up a friendship that day and discovered we both had a love for the Gospel of Mark. Cullen was kind enough to share with me some of the fruits of his life's work on that gospel. The verse he quoted in the inscription is a reminder of Cullen's character, a good word for me and a summary of the Jesus we meet in Mark:

45 "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Jesus came into a hard world to serve it, die for it and leave us a pattern for being his apprentices.

After Christmas and through Easter we will focus on Jesus as we meet him in Mark's gospel and look to him as a pattern for faithfulness in our own trying times. I'll also offer some midweek teaching on Mark and suggest some helpful resources for your own study.

We enter January both encouraged about the possible end of the Covid pandemic and concerned about the immediate months ahead. Please know we will do all we can to be creative, safe, and faithful in our ministry at First Presbyterian Church.

[continued on the next page](#)

HOPE IN THE MIDST OF DARKNESS

Advent Celebration



Pastoral Message, cont.

As the situation changes we will respond, with an eye to returning to face-to-face ministry opportunities as soon as possible. In the meantime, please keep yourself and others safe by wearing a mask, washing hands, maintaining a safe social distance, and getting the vaccine as soon as you are able.

Thanks for your partnership and support as our congregation moves through this time together. Please let us know how you are and how we can encourage you in the days ahead. Along with our staff, I look forward to beginning another year in ministry with First Presbyterian Church!

Blessings,

Mike

Parables Jesus Told

from
**Growing in
God's Love**

a Story Bible Curriculum

Join Ms. Britany for the next quarter of virtual Sunday School where First Kidz will learn about the parables, Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.

SUNDAYS AT 10 a.m.

Please email britany@firstprez.com for Zoom meeting IDs and passcodes.

A SHARED WORD OF PASTORAL CARE

It's a new year, and I feel we're all glad to put 2020 behind us. Donna and I will joyously sing, "Na na na na, na na na na, hey hey hey, goodbye" to 2020. The new year slides in with the same burdens of old, but with a healthy serving of hope. COVID still plagues us, but a vaccine has arrived. Unrest is a daily part of life, but there are new hopes of peace.

Hope is what drives us to creating, and hopefully committing to, New Year's resolutions. If there was ever a year to have them, 2021 is it! But, they also come with their own bit of controversy. The pros: resolutions can be a fresh start and a boost for self-esteem. The cons: procrastination, which ends with more self-doubt. Surveys show 80% of New Year's resolutions fail by the end of February. That has been consistent over the years. It is shown it takes 21 days to make a new life skill a habit. Most fail long before that. How can we beat the odds? In the days ahead you will be inundated with advice. But, let's take a spiritual approach to positive change...

"What shall I return to the Lord for all his goodness to me? I will lift the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord. I will fulfill my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people." Psalm 116:12-14

Let's focus on a desire to improve ourselves for God's glory. First, look inward. What can we do for God? How can we use all of the blessings he has given us? Thank him for salvation through Jesus Christ, and then pray for Him to reveal improvements that need to be made, to reveal the true resolutions that we ought to aspire to.

If our desire for lifestyle changes are based on what God sees best for us, we cannot fail! We can share and encourage each other so that God can help us succeed and fulfill all of our resolutions!

I hope in sharing this you are encouraged to make a spiritually based resolution to better yourself. This new year, may we all desire a new hope, and seek to improve ourselves as individuals, as a church, a community, and nation! And may we commit to following Christ wholeheartedly.

Rev. Mitch Watson
Director of Pastoral Care

GET READY! GET SET! WORSHIP!



-and- **CATECHISM**
have been postponed.

**Stay posted for updates
and start dates!**

Get Ready! Get Set! Worship! is a program designed to introduce 1st and 2nd graders to worship participation and the sacraments.

Catechism classes are offered to 5th and 6th graders to cover all basic doctrines of our Presbyterian belief and faith.

Email britany@firstprez.com if you have any questions.

CLUB 543

A First Presbyterian Church Children's Ministry program designed for 3rd-5th graders to promote discipleship, fellowship, and mission projects.

2021 Meet-Up Dates:

January 24

February 21

March 21

April 18

May 16

**MEET US FOLLOWING
THE 11 AM WORSHIP
SERVICE**



MEET THE NEED

THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

We must not let this pandemic and our inability to host Rise Against Hunger packing events prevent us from serving those in need.

Together, we can make an impact and provide life-nourishing meals to those who need them most. Join us in this virtual campaign and impact a family through the new year. Join us in our fight to end hunger.

During this time of global crisis, your gift may mean more to a family or community at risk than any gift ever has before. Your donation today will help Rise Against Hunger meet its goal and continue the fight to end hunger against all odds!

Visit firstprez.com and click on the Rise Against Hunger slide to give, or click on the QR code to the right.



WEDNESDAY TOGETHER RESUMES JANUARY 13






WEEKLY PROGRAM STARTING AT 5:30 PM

We can't to see you again for Wednesday Together evening fellowship! With all safe church policies applied, and the measures in place for safe congregating, we saw great attendance last fall.

Adult Christian education and Children's Ministry programs continue with a focus on Jesus' ministry as we meet him in Mark's gospel.

Kinlaw's meals will be available again, boxed and ready for pickup to enjoy safely at home. Scan the QR code below for more details on program offerings and the new winter-spring menu.







Although we are unable to mobilize volunteers during this pandemic, we know that our mission and ministry continues at home and abroad—all the way to Cite Soleil, Haiti. Our church family is funding the repair work on the windows and stucco of this beautiful children's church.



Missions utilize 25% of the FPC annual budget. Each of our ministries is a priority, and an avenue for reaching the community and welcoming them into a family of believers.

Call the church office if you'd like to be a part of a future mission team to Haiti or email tdpole57@gmail.com for more information and ways to help.

Please Welcome Alice Ann Campbell as Accompanist/Associate Organist

DR. MARCIA MERVIN

Please join with me in welcoming Alice Ann Campbell back to the First Presbyterian Church Music Ministry Team.

We are delighted that she has agreed to accompany the All Church Choir as well as to play the organ for choral anthems and worship services as needed.

An accomplished organist and pianist, Alice Ann brings years of experience with her. She began studying piano at age 4 and organ at age 11, and began accompanying at age 14. She studied organ with Dr. Richard Tappa and Dr. Larry Archbold, has served as organist at two churches and has substituted at multiple other churches in the region.

She also served as accompanist for the Cumberland Oratorio Society (now Cumberland Choral Arts), for the University of North Carolina at Pembroke, for the Grays Creek High School Choral Program, as well as previously here at First Presbyterian Church for the Celebration Choir and Chapel Choir.

Thank you, Alice Ann, for your willingness to return to the music ministry team to share your talent!



New Children's Music Ministry Leadership

Elementary Music: Jennifer McFadyen Hammond will be continuing in a new capacity with the First Presbyterian Children's Music Ministry. Previously the director of the PreK/Kindergarten music, Jennifer will step up to become the new volunteer music director for the lower and upper Elementary groups beginning January 13, 2021. Please tell your children to expect a wonderful and familiar face at Wednesday Together this winter. Thank you so much, Jennifer!



Percussion Scholar: Zach Fegan serves as Percussionist for the Music Ministry Team. He provides percussion for both worship services and the All Church Choir rehearsals. Zach, a freshman at FTCC, will also begin assisting Jennifer Hammond with Elementary Music this spring. Thank you, Zach!



PreK/Kindergarten Music: Erin Jackson, a freshman at FTCC, will be joining Dr. Marcia Mervin in a musical internship to direct the PreK and Kindergarten aged children in music on Wednesday evenings this winter. We are excited to have Erin joining the Children's Music Ministry Team!



All Church
CHOIR
REHEARSALS
RESUME JAN. 10
5 PM SUNDAYS
in-person and virtual

Handbell
ENSEMBLE
REHEARSALS
RESUME JAN. 10
3:30 PM SUNDAYS

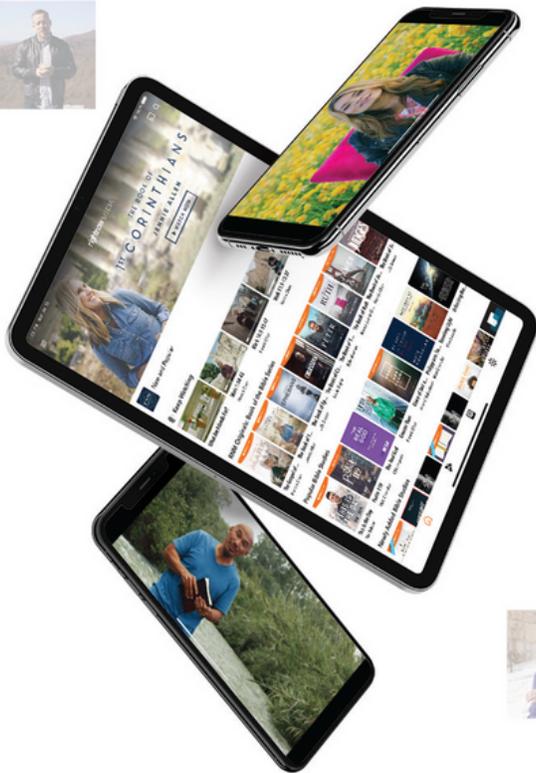
rightnow MEDIA



First Presbyterian's Bible study library is now digital...

AND GIGANTIC.

Hundreds of discipleship videos for kids, youth, and adults.



GET FREE ACCESS

- 1 Receive your invitation email to register for RightNow Media on Jan. 10. (Be sure to check your SPAM folder)
- 2 Click the **Get Started** button in the email.
- 3 Create your profile. Then **explore!!**

android chromecast iPhone & iPad **ROKU** apple tv fireTV

www.rightnowmedia.org

In this time when face-to-face ministry is limited, it's more important than ever before to provide our church family with tools and resources that will help guide you in your spiritual walk with God.

For many of us, technology has become a bridge to the outside world and a powerful educational tool. We want to help make your use of technology even more effective. With our new partnership with RightNow Media, our entire membership will have access to Christian Bible studies, resources, videos, family activities, and much more! **Consider it the "Netflix of Christian education."**

RightNow Media has videos for everyone—kids, youth, parents, married couples, college students, single adults, working professionals—all aimed at helping you grow.

It is our hope that this investment in the spiritual lives of all in our congregation will enable us to become what God wants us to be. All of the content can be viewed anytime, anywhere- for daily devotional time, for parenting or marriage advice, faith-based counseling resources, popular children's Bible shows, and so much more.

We hope that these resources will help you tackle whatever you may face as an individual, as a family, as we all grow in our faith, and as we "connect" with our community of believers.

You will receive an official invitation email on January 10 to give you FREE access to RightNow Media (be sure to check your SPAM folder, and alert us if you do not receive it). Once you find the email, simply click the link, sign up for an account, and you're all set to explore. We pray that RightNow Media will be a blessing for you and your family!

January Birthdays

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Mona McFadyen | 18 Flora McRae |
| 1 Tommy Myers | 19 Claire Hill |
| 2 Baker Alderman | 20 Jerry Teele |
| 2 Cornelia Holmes | 20 Reid Furman |
| 4 Nicole Brown | 20 Charles Baker Jr. |
| 5 Rebecca McAlister | 21 Sammy Short |
| 5 Lynn Leath | 21 Clara Moffitt Moorman |
| 6 Barbara Meek | 21 Stacy Pritchett |
| 6 Paul Regensburger | 21 Jenny MacKethan |
| 7 Harold Godwin | 23 Sue Cain |
| 7 Sophia Pridgen | 24 Owen Smith |
| 8 Max Richter | 24 Fran Primeaux |
| 8 Sue Stevens | 24 Matt Plyler |
| 9 Scott Tolbert | 24 Timothy Davidson |
| 11 Terry Ciccone | 24 Charlotte Spivey |
| 11 Will Battles | 25 Lea Ann Morris |
| 12 Joan Daughtry | 26 Abigail Jolly |
| 12 Ella Beal Navejas | 26 Laurie McLaurin |
| 13 Christian Barkman | 27 Betty Lewis |
| 13 Ainsley Plyler | 28 Paul Spartzak |
| 14 Jennifer Plyler | 29 Margarett Dunn |
| 14 Ben Taylor | 29 Hector Davis |
| 14 Crystal Helmke | 29 Cameron MacKethan |
| 14 Matthew Pritchett | 29 Emmalee Wauford |
| 15 Jim Hankins Jr. | 29 Bill Deaton Jr. |
| 15 Sarena Myers | 29 Britany Spivey |
| 16 Rob Hasty Jr. | 29 Mitch Watson |
| 16 Tommy Spencer | 30 Michael Petti |
| 17 Marian Boyette | 30 Diane Regensburger |
| 17 Carrie Hall | 30 Madison Spencer |
| 18 Theodore Schwamm | 31 Maude Bledsoe |
| 18 Ashlee Cleveland | |

FRIENDLY HOLIDAY REMINDERS!

THE CHURCH OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED



JAN. 18
MLK HOLIDAY

HONORARIUMS

Sherry and Michael Blight by Linda and Ralph Huff.

Melissa Cole by Loretta and Roger Holmes.

Amy and Tripp Loyd by Ann and Buzz Loyd.

Buzz Loyd by Perry Olive.

Debbie Loyd by Ann and Buzz Loyd.

Dan McInnis by Linda and Ralph Huff.

Carol and Sammy Short by Linda and Ralph Huff;
Daphne and Ray Manning.

Mary Ann Tally by Linda and Ralph Huff.

Michelle and Cary Thompson by Ann and Buzz Loyd.

MEMORIALS

John and Celia Purdie by John and Barbara Purdie.

Frances and Bob Hasty by Loretta and Roger Holmes.

Ann and Mackie Holmes by Loretta and Roger Holmes.

An honorarium is an expression of gratitude to an individual(s) for their service for others and the church. Those who wish to leave a gift in honorarium or memorium may contact joan@firstprez.com or visit the church office.