



NEWSLETTER

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Serving the Newton Conover Area since 1858

Partners with Iglesia El Redentor, Guatemala

www.fpcnewton.org

January 2022

Dear Saints,

As we begin the new year, we all think of resolutions: things we ought to do, need to do, need to start, so that we can improve our life. We want to lose weight, read more, stop smoking, stop... you fill in the blank. The new year seems like a good time to do these things, to make these commitments to ourselves. Of course, we won't make it, we will fail, we will get sidetracked, we will find that life is harder to change than we thought.

The Session of the church is in much the same place. Later this month we will begin a process of discerning where God is leading the congregation to go next. It may be something simple, or it may mean radical changes; I don't know. What I do know is that we go into these discussions with much the same mindset as we all do in setting our new year's resolutions: we want them to succeed, but we know the chances of making real change will be difficult.

We have all heard that old saw, "to continue doing the same things but expecting different results is the definition of insanity." In many ways, this is the trouble with the church; we keep doing the same things, but somehow we hope that the result will be different. We want to see real results, but we somehow can't bring ourselves to do the work to make them happen.

For example, I was told once by a woman who was a leader in one congregation that she wanted to see it grow. But at the same time, she didn't want to see the congregation change in any significant ways. I used to wonder what would happen if we took in fifty new members — that would mean significant changes in any congregation! So at times what we say is "out of sync" with what we do.

The Session will be setting priorities for the new year, and the next few years. Not everyone will agree with them, whatever they are. Not everyone will want to participate in all of them. *That is all okay!* It is just fine to disagree, or to want to go more slowly, or more quickly!, than the Session does. What unites us is far stronger than any disagreements we may have! Jesus is the One who calls us together, and his love is stronger than any arguments we may have.

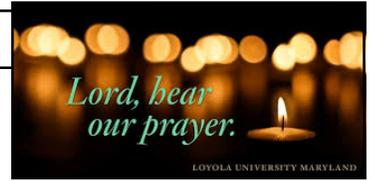
I don't mean to say we are going to have arguments. Perhaps the Session will set priorities that everyone will agree on. I just want to point out that Jesus' love will be the standard for whatever we agree to do, and that love will hold us together no matter what the new year brings!

I for one hope that it brings an end to the pandemic and sets us free again. Won't that be nice? Let's continue to pray for that, and for God's will to be done.

See you in church!

David Roquemore

News of the Church Family



Prayers for those with Recent Health Concerns

CHURCH MEMBERS: Frances Ennis, Frankie Sigmon, Lee Cranford, Julie Jones, Sondra Phillips, Nancy Gargis, Jan Clarke, Laurie Joplin, Ernestine Buff, Wanda Hicks, Ron Valentini, Ann White, Clayton Brooks, Jim Teubner, the Foley family, the Inscoe family, Paula Haissig, Tom & Linda Witherspoon, Frances Ervin, Frances Inscoe, Mitzi Moody, Joan Inscoe

FRIENDS & FAMILY: Pam Bruner, Caitlan Reese, Lynne Watts, Elaine & Gordon Hall, Ann Hunsucker, George McClellan, Nan McAlpin, family of Patrick Gouge, Ann Moose, Tim Moose, Katie Cloninger, Jose & Marie Palacios, George Lindstrom, Melissa Burns, Calvin Jenkins, Randy Roper, Billy Ray Fox, Tiffany Locke, Kirsten Kerr, Ken McColley, Mike Beard, Vonda Krueger & Danny Barkley, Hunter & Adrienne Scott, Chuck & Vicki Scott family, Cindy Bensen, Dannie Schermerhorn, Pauline Fox Cooke

Prayers for those in Assisted Living/Homebound:

CHURCH MEMBERS: Virginia Coley, Dennis DeBalso, Betty Epps, Betty Fieselman, Charlie Major, Johnsie Abernethy, Frances Inscoe

Prayers for those with Long-Term Health Concerns:

Janet Drum, Richard Foley, Pete Keel, Robin Miller

Condolences:

To Clayton & Jo Todd and the Morgan family on the death of Jo's brother, Reece Morgan, Jr., December 2nd.
To the Beers' family on the death of Nancy Beer's cousin's granddaughter, Triston, December 5th in Minnesota.
To Bruce & Cathy Murdock & family on the death of Cathy's sister, Kim Elliott, December 11th.
To Jean Nolley, the Nolley, Rhinehart and Sparks families on the death of Jean's brother, Albert Weast, December 13th.
To Tom & Linda Witherspoon & family on the death of Linda's brother, Calvin Kirby, December 20th.
To Gary & Karen McDougal & family on the death of Karen's brother, Dr. David McAlpin, December 25th.

Prayers for those in Military:

- John Hardin, U.S. Army, Ft. Sill, OK
(*Cindy Baldwin's nephew*)
- LCDR William G. Bickel, Jr., U.S. Navy, Norfolk, VA
(*Bruce & Cathy Murdock's son-in-law*)
- Captain Joshua Smith, U.S. Marines, Camp Lejeune, NC
(*Brenda Smith's son*)
- Captain Christopher Walker, U.S. Army, Fort Knox, KY
(*Tammy Walker's son*)
- Logan Lewis, U.S. Air Force, Naval Air Station, Pensacola, FL
(*Dana Williams' nephew*)
- LTJG Max Morrill, U.S. Navy, Washington, DC
(*Joan Inscoe's grandson*)

Prayers for Missionaries and International Faith Partners

- Lawrence & Inge Sthreshley in Congo;
- Our partners at *Faith Ministry* in Reynosa, Mexico;
- Rev. Dr. John McCall in Taiwan;
- Eliane Menezes, Guatemala

Prayers for El Redentor, our Sister Church in Guatemala:

- For the well being of all members of our sister church
- For all scholarship students as they begin a new school year
- For students receiving university scholarships: Dayana Rodas, who is in her last year of nursing & Uzias Rodas, who is in his 2nd year studying to be a teacher
- For Humberto Robles, an elder of the church, who received a theological education scholarship and is studying at the seminary in Coatepeque
- We have received word that everyone that had Covid at our sister church, El Redentor, has recovered and all are doing much better. Thank you for the prayers.



Recently, several members of the congregation have expressed an interest in the missions programs at our church and how they might participate in these worthwhile efforts. We are very active in local missions. Like everything else in the world, Covid-19 has deeply affected many of our efforts but here is an overview of our activities.

FPC-Newton has worked with *Rise Against Hunger* several times, packing meals in our Fellowship Hall. This was a great activity with jobs for all ages of volunteers. At our last event in the spring of 2019, we had over 60 participants and packed nearly 15,000 meals that were sent to several countries in Africa and South America. We hope to resume our relationship with them as soon as things open up...possibly later in 2022.

Our Sunday Community Suppers occur each week of the year and we are currently feeding between 50 to 75 guests on a takeout basis. We receive much help with this program from several other churches and civic groups in the community. Several meals are supplied by the committees, small groups and women's Circles here at the church. Some dates are filled by individual families, such as the Gabriel family. Dr. Aron Gabriel is the Superintendent of the Newton-Conover City School System and he and his extended family provide multiple meals each year. There are volunteer opportunities here to package and serve the meals. We generally meet around 4:30 p.m. and are finished by around 6:30 p.m.

For the last decade, we operated a cold weather shelter, aptly named "*Room In the Inn*", which opened the Fellowship Hall on nights forecast to be 25° or less. Unfortunately...and this really hurts...we haven't operated this in the last two winters. This was primarily due to Covid, but also due to a lack of volunteers. There is only one overnight shelter in Catawba county. I can't imagine having to sleep out in the woods on these cold nights! We recently received a great response to an invitation to donate winter coats. These have been distributed through our Sunday Community Supper and by several other ministries who work directly with our homeless population.

Our church also host two Red Cross Blood Drives each year and can really use help with these. Volunteers register the donors and work at the snack table.

Our church works closely with several other helping ministries in our community:

- The Corner Table (www.thecornertable.org) operates a soup kitchen in Newton and also coordinates the Backpack Program in the county.
- Eastern Catawba County Ministry (www.ecccm.org) helps feed several thousand families and offers financial assistance and counseling. Both of these organizations have "Volunteer" sections on their website and you can get an idea of opportunities there.
- On the international front, we are primarily involved with the Partnership Program between the Presbytery of Western North Carolina and two presbyteries in Guatemala. Around 28 churches in PWNC have sister churches in Guatemala. We are associated with El Redentor Presbyterian Church, a small congregation located in Los Cerritos, a small fishing village in the southwestern part of the country. We offer scholarship support to 21 of the youth in the community and also scholarship two university students and one adult who is pursuing a theological curriculum. We have sent several mission teams to visit Guatemala and members of their church have visited Newton...again, "pre-Covid!" In the past...and hopefully again in the future...we were able to communicate directly with our partners through a pen pal system. We also have a relationship with a hospital and Christian school located in Malawi.
- FPC-Newton supports three mission co-workers at this time. Larry and Inge Sthresley are serving in the Democratic Republic of Congo, John McCall serves in Taiwan, and Eliane Menezes is our co-worker in Guatemala. The Missions Committee would like to have a volunteer from the congregation to correspond with these servants of the church.

This is just an overview of some of our current mission activities at the church. We appreciate the support of the congregation and would love to have new members on our committee. We are currently meeting virtually on the second Monday of each month.

For more information, or to volunteer in any of these areas, please contact me, the church office, or any member of the committee.

Thanks and God Bless!
Bob Neill, Missions Cmte. Chair
828-323-7806

The Missions Committee would like to offer a big Thank You to the congregation!

In the height of the pandemic this spring the PWNC coordinated a relief effort for our partners in Guatemala and Malawi.

More recently, we sent relief funds to Afghanistan and to the areas devastated by tornadoes. We had a great response when we participated in the Parade of Cans, the Hunger Walk and the collection of school supplies.

When we requested warm coats and sleeping bags for the homeless you stepped up with an amazing number of items. Many of you have helped with the Sunday Community Suppers, and offered a little Christmas cheer to shut-ins by helping pack the SMO bags. It has been quite a year and our church has offered comfort and care to brothers and sisters all around the world...We Thank You!



Update on Chapel Organ Repairs

In the December newsletter, I shared with you that the chapel organ is in need of major repairs. We have begun the process toward these repairs being done. The parts will be ordered by the organ maintenance company. They do not expect to have all the needed parts until later in the spring, so we do not expect this work to be completed until sometime in the summer of 2022. We will keep you updated on this project.

Worship services and music

The music shared this season has brought great meaning to our worship services. The instrumental music was beautifully shared. Despite the concerns about COVID, we have been so thankful to be able to continue sing hymns and anthems each week for our worship services. It is not fun wearing a mask to sing. I am sure those of you in the congregation who are singing feel the same way; but we will continue to wear them so we can continue to sing safely in worship. Another thing we are thankful for is that we were able to share handbell music for this Christmas season in the use of small group handbell arrangements. We plan to continue using those type arrangements so our bell groups can continue to share worship music. We continue to pray for the day when we will be able to unmask and play and sing together without fears and concerns about this virus that continues to haunt us. Until then, we will be patient and do what we have been doing to continue to worship our God with hymns and songs of praise each week in our worship services.

Cathy Murdock – Director of Music



- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|
| 2 Walker Brown | 10 Jon Joplin | 24 Sandra Teubner |
| 4 Ada Lail | 12 Lee Combs | 25 Madeline Stockburger |
| 5 Lee Cranford | 14 Elise Yaussy | 28 Ann White
Addie Joplin |
| 7 Richard Arrowood | 17 Lauren Holcomb | 30 Jim Gargis
Jim Payne
Madelyn Philhower |
| 9 Carolyn Shetler
Tommy Yount | 18 Bob Neill | |
| | 21 Jeannie Clark
Michelle Deese
Lucinda Jones
Mimi Michael | |
| | 22 Ann White
Lucy Miller | |
| | 23 Peggy Templeton | |

Humble Hearts Ministries received around 40 coats that FPC Newton members have donated to the church. They will distribute these to the homeless in Newton, Conover and Hickory. Please continue to bring heavy warm coats and sleeping bags.



They also give each family that comes to Sunday Community Supper a bag of food for the week.

The Congregational Ministries Committee enjoyed preparing meals for Sunday Community Supper on December 5th. We served ham, green beans from Ray Rhinehart's garden, Mac and cheese and rolls. We prepared and packed 70 meals.



The church office will be closed Monday, January 3, 2022 for New Year's and will re-open Tuesday, January 4th at 9:00 a.m.



I just want to thank everyone for showing so much concern over the loss of my cousin's granddaughter. She leaves behind three children, ages 17, 20 and 23. I really appreciate the cards and caring that has been shown to the family.

*Thank you,
Nancy Beers*

*Dear Church Friends,
Words can never convey how much we appreciate the cards, the kind words, the food, the hugs and all the love expressed to our family after the death of my sister, Kim Elliott. It has been a hard year watching her suffer through this dreaded disease of cancer. It gives us some comfort that she no longer suffers here in her earthly body and that she now is healed in her heavenly body with Jesus Christ in heaven. Thank you all for your care, love and concerns. We are so blessed to have such a loving church family to be of support during this difficult time. - Bruce and Cathy Murdock*

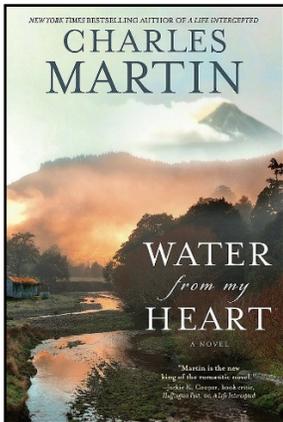


January Circle Meetings



- Circle #2** Circle 2 will meet Tuesday, January 4th at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom.
- Circle #4** Circle 4 will not meet in January.
- Circle #5** Circle 5 will meet Wednesday, January 12th at 11:30 a.m. at Nagano Japanese Restaurant in Conover.

Women's Ministry Events



Circle of Sisters Book Club

Come join Circle of Sisters Book Club as we discuss "Water From My Heart", by Charles Martin.

We will be meeting on Thursday, January 27th at 6:00 p.m. in the church fellowship hall. A light dinner will be provided. Our discussion will begin around 6:30 p.m. Amy Loyer will be leading our discussion.

Need a book? We have book scholarships available! Books can be purchased on Amazon or we have 3 available for purchase in the church office for \$16.99.

Sign up in the narthex or church office. All are welcome! We hope to see you there!

Thanks to all the Circle 5 members that made the Piedmont Village Assisted Living project a success! We were able to adopt 11 residents this year and provide them with gifts to open on Christmas morning!



Congregational Meeting

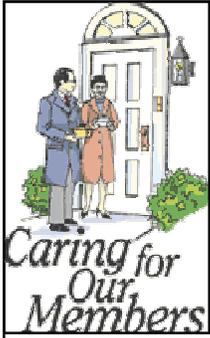
The Session has called a congregational meeting for **Sunday, January 30th at 10:45 a.m.** in the sanctuary. The purpose of the meeting is to elect our new elders for the year, and get them ordained and installed at the same time. The nominees for elder are to be determined.

Other business for the meeting includes changes in the terms of call of the pastor. The annual report will be available to everyone at this meeting.



Financial Stewardship Report

2021 Pledge Budget	430,000.00
Pledge Budget through 11-30-2021	394,166.63
Pledge Receipts through 11-30-2021	405,345.03



FPC Newton is blessed with an excellent and thorough program of congregational care. **The Care Team Ministry** is an active ministry and available to all members of our church family, in good times and bad. If you are facing particular challenges or difficulties, or you just feel like you need additional love and care, we are ready to care for you!

Care Team Members are:

<i>Sylvia Bajorek</i>	<i>Faye Morgan</i>
<i>Texie Doolittle</i>	<i>Sylvia Payne</i>
<i>Lottie Ethridge</i>	<i>Carole Roddy</i>
<i>Barb Forshey</i>	<i>Susan Roquemore</i>
<i>Robin McGraw</i>	<i>Penn Waldron</i>
<i>David Roquemore</i>	

The Care Team will meet Tuesday, January 18th at 5:00 p.m. in the conference room.

We've been making phone calls on behalf of the church to make sure folks are okay! Please contact any of us if you have a request or need!

"I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength."

Philippians 4:12-13



Newsletter Article Deadline

The newsletter is usually published *monthly* on the last Wednesday of the month. The deadline for articles is Wednesday noon prior to the Wednesday that it is published. This is a FIRM DEADLINE. E-mail articles are preferred. Send them to Kim at kberry@fpcnewton.com. However, handwritten articles are welcome.

To Our Visitors . . . If you are receiving our newsletter for the first time, perhaps it is because we just heard that you had moved into our neighborhood or you have visited FPC. We would like to extend to you a warm welcome to this community and most especially to any activity in our church. If there is any way we can help you, please let us know.



Community Sunday Suppers
Sundays - 5:30 p.m.
Fellowship Hall

Hosts

<u>January 2nd</u>	Beth Eden Lutheran
<u>January 9th</u>	Trinity Baptist
<u>January 16th</u>	Mt. Pleasant UMC Youth
<u>January 23rd</u>	FPC Staff
<u>January 30th</u>	FPC Choir

All Dinners Will be Carry-Out Only!



The Book Club meets on the **fourth Tuesday** of each month at 10:00 a.m. One of the biggest pleasures of reading a good book is discussing it with other readers. There's no better place to do that than a book club. Everyone is welcome and you can join anytime! Join in as your schedule permits. Please e-mail Becky McRee at raiamnc@gmail.com if you have questions about the Club.

January 25th

"The Spendid and the Vile" (Churchill's family)
Erik Larson

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS

Youth Connections

Upcoming Events



JANUARY 2022

Sunday, January 9th

Noon - 3:00 p.m. - Youth Lunch and Homebound Communion

Sunday, January 16th

Noon - 3:00 p.m. - Young Disciples Lunch & Defy

Sunday, January 21st - 23rd

Youth Ski Retreat



2020 Youth Ski Retreat

December Recaps



December 12th the Youth enjoyed lunch at Casa Azul Mexican Restaurant! They played the Dirty Santa game and enjoyed yummy food and each other's company!

December 19th our Youth and Missions committee joined together to serve up some Christmas cheer. With an amazing ham dinner and Little Caesars gift cards. It was truly a wonderful evening for all! A special thanks to everyone who made desserts!



The Youth would like to thank the congregation for their support of Matthew's Market. Thanks to your generous contributions we were able to raise \$5,413 to the following mission projects:

Seminary Scholarship- \$50
Guatemala School Scholarships- \$1,074
University Scholarships- \$1,215
Stoves- \$1,159

Books for Guatemala- \$490
Ebenezer School in Malawi- \$500
Nkoma Hospital in Malawi- \$375
Rise Up Against Hunger Project - \$550

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Church Office Hours:
9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday-Friday
Sunday School: 9:45 a.m. Sunday Worship: 8:45 and 11:00 a.m.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
701 North Main Avenue
Newton, NC 28658

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Place Address Label Here

January 2nd

2nd Sunday of Christmas

10:30 a.m. worship in **sanctuary**
David Roquemore preaching

January 9th

Baptism of the Lord

8:45 & 11:00 a.m. worship
Sacrament of Holy Communion at both services
5¢-a-Meal Offering received
David Roquemore preaching

January 16th

2nd Sunday after Epiphany

8:45 & 11:00 a.m. worship
David Roquemore preaching

January 23rd

3rd Sunday after Epiphany

8:45 & 11:00 a.m. worship
David Roquemore preaching

January 30th

4th Sunday after Epiphany

8:45 & 11:00 a.m. worship
10:40 a.m. Annual Congregational Meeting
David Roquemore preaching

