


REPORT TO THE CONGREGATION

August 2019 - July 2020

First Presbyterian Church



**"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
and with all your soul, and with all your strength,
and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself."** Luke 10:27



Do justice.



Love kindness.



Walk humbly with your God.

Introduction

Dear FPC Family and Friends,

When we gave our last annual report 12 months ago, no one could have known what lay ahead. Truth is we never really do; we had simply gotten used to enjoying the illusion of planning ahead and moving safely through public space much more than we do now. Since March, we have had our usual buffers to isolation and many of our supports disassembled as we have contended with the pandemic of COVID-19. That being said, you also never know what strengths you have until you are tested. This season has drawn out many of the strengths and talents of our congregation in ways for which we give thanks to God.

We rejoice in the creative ways we've been able to continue to worship God. Both through our recorded services, and now through our safe socially distanced Sunday services. While our annual retreat had to be postponed, the education of all ages was creatively reconceived in online offerings, Unroll the Scroll for little ones, and tailgates for our teens. We have continued to care for the economically fragile and those who face food insecurity through our Soup Kitchen work, which was relocated to the Haven. We've also continued providing support to the addiction support groups, who normally meet at our Carriage House, by providing space on our lawn.

All of this is made possible by the grace of God, the creative problem solving and financial support of members like you, and our incredible staff. We remain grateful to God for all the ways God continues to lead and sustain us as we walk by faith and not by sight in this season.

With affectionate faith,

David, Aram, and Liz

“He has told you,
O mortal,
what is good;
and what does the
LORD require of you
but to do justice,
and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly
with your God?”

Micah 6:8



Do justice.



Love kindness.



Walk humbly with your God.

Connecting on Park Street

Faith Grows Here



The Faith Grows Here Campaign is still underway. Since the public launch of this Capital Campaign in January 2019, we have raised nearly \$3 million in pledges and gifts. This represents about three-fourths of the amount needed to complete all phases of the project. We are grateful for the 208 pledges/gifts received so far on the project. First Presbyterian Church has indeed been generous in your giving and your patience.

The design of the project has continued safely during the pandemic through teleconferencing. The Board of Architectural Review approved the design last month, and we have submitted our site plan for review by city engineers and zoning officials.

We are thankful to all those who have donated to the project and to those who remain faithful in paying on your pledges. Gifts and pledges are still being received, and we look forward to being able to say we have raised all that we need.

We also look forward to the time when we can break ground and celebrate completion of the project. Until then, the faithfulness and hopefulness of our congregation remains!

Faith Grows Here Workgroup

Terry Forbes, Shana Pack, Craig Redinger, Tracey Schoch, Jim Snead, Bill von Reichbauer, David Forney, and Debbie Rexrode (Moderator)

Right: Construction on Phase I, the Preschool and 7th Street entrance, was completed in the fall.



Do justice.



Love kindness.



Walk humbly with your God.

Do Justice

SERVE one another, our community, and the world with humility and love, relying on the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to lead us in witnessing to the love of God in Jesus Christ.

FPC continued its partnerships with organizations that serve those in need. With the leadership of the COC, First Pres is committed to seven local mission partners: Abundant Life Ministries, Alliance for Interfaith Ministries, Building Goodness Foundation, Habitat, The Haven, International Neighbors, and PACEM. We also support the First Pres Preschool, Presbytery of the James, Montreat Conference Center, and seasonal projects that involve our congregation members, such as the SWVA mission project with Binns County Community Center.

We hosted PACEM during our usual December weeks, added an additional week in the fall under the leadership of seminary intern Gary Hatter, and participated in additional service projects during the pandemic. We continue to be active with our weekly Soup Kitchen and adjusted during COVID to help The Haven streamline all Soup Kitchen lunches at their site. We have ongoing partnerships with Blue Ridge Area Food Bank, Loaves & Fishes, and the annual Lenten drive of personal items for Love INC.

This year the COC focused its efforts in creating two new events that will continue in the life of the church: Rally Round Mission Partners (Outreach Fair) in the fall and Mission Madness (Outreach Activities) in the spring. Rally Round Mission Partners introduces, communicates, and educates members on our mission partners, with each local mission partner hosting a table with information. The energy was high, and the spirit engaged. Mission Madness provided “bite-sized” opportunities for members to become involved with one mission partner on a Saturday morning. The participation for Mission Madness was strong, and the goals met as we have more members involved with our mission partners. We have supported expansion of ALM’s vacation bible school activities by being one of four churches to host a week of VBS.

Finally, thanks to the vision and counsel of COC, First Pres committed a \$100,000 gift earmarked for Southwood redevelopment in order to help Habitat reach a matching \$5 million grant goal. Some of this commitment came from our Mission & Benevolence Endowment. Another wise use of this endowment was used towards the support of IRIS (International Response to Improve Sight), specifically for the purchase of an ophthalmoscope for an ophthalmology practice in Cameroon.



Do justice.



Love kindness.



Walk humbly

Love Kindness

NURTURE our faith in Jesus Christ through education and fellowship, growing in wisdom, and deepening our relationship with God and one another.

Fellowship is an integral part of life of First Pres. As part of our fellowship together, we held churchwide summer and fall suppers and a fall picnic. The spring picnic could not go on as scheduled because of social distancing.

We enjoyed a lovely dinner and decorating time for Hanging of the Greens in December. Various groups and individuals hosted Sunday Fellowship Time each week up until early March.

A new member class was held in the fall to invite those interested in membership to learn more about the church and discern whether or not they would like to join. The scheduled spring one was postponed. Eleven people joined this past year.

Additional ministries nurtured and supported members and the larger community: Blood Drive, Card Ministry, Flower Delivery, Prayer Team, 30 Minutes of Care, Transportation, Visitation, and more.



Do justice.



Love kindness.



Walk humbly with your God.

Family Ministries

Our year was rich with study, fellowship, and service both before and during our time of separation. We began with a Blessing of the Backpacks, Fellowship Time in Snack Alley, and four classes blessed with new and returning teachers. A bumper crop of 2's and 3's brought much energy to Sunday school as did the addition in Godly Play of weekly "BOOSTS" that enlarged each lesson with hands-on activities and friendship building. LEAP—Learning/Engaging/Artistic/Playful allowed elementary groups to "switch" class spaces so all could experience Godly Play and/or other learning styles.

Working with Adult Ministries, we continued All-Church Suppers around a meal and a theme including: UVA Basketball Players Austin Katstra and Jay Huff, our first annual Chili Cook-Off, Hanging of the Greens, and Advent activities.

An intergenerational Ash Wednesday with a Mardi Gras supper and worship began the Lenten season. Lenten activities were shared with families in the Faith and Family class anchored by Michelle Katstra. Families were also present at the first Mission Madness in March.

The stay-at-home orders encouraged us to be creative! Activity bags were delivered to each family in April, May, and June. Pentecost Parade! Families remained socially distanced, but decorated cars with a host of red for a car parade around the church. Unroll the Scroll anchored summer as each family received a large scroll with Bible stories and activities, including stories of current day young heroes. We used these in morning Zooms.



Do justice.



Love kindness.



Walk humbly with your God.

Youth Ministry

Youth @First Pres are committed to each other like family. Together we worship, study Scripture, engage in serious life talks, and express faith in the larger Charlottesville community through outreach events. Our youth have baked desserts for Soup Kitchen guests, volunteered for PACEM, cooked and served breakfast at The Haven on Sunday mornings, shared meals with the hungry during the annual Pilgrimage weekend in Washington, DC, and have initiated and planned a joint fellowship event with youth from one of our local mission partners, Abundant Life Ministries.

Fellowship and discipleship opportunities include weekly Sunday Youth Group, mid-week morning devotionals at Panera, picnic on a horse farm, and “couch conversations” that involve discussions around relevant themes such as stress, social media pressures, purpose and planning, and the true meaning of friendship.

Due to the COVID pandemic in mid-March, some of our end-of-the-year and summer programs were either canceled or modified. We pivoted our resources and adjusted. Our graduating seniors led an inspirational service for Youth Sunday at the end of April, with each leader recording their testimonies and prayers for the audio worship service and even putting together a video expressing their deep affection for one another, commitment to faith, and encouragement during the pandemic. Youth continued to meet online with Zoom Bible studies, weekly Zoom devotionals, and regular FaceTime dates with Aram by grades. We even had a few picnics on the church lawn with no more than 10 youth, with safe distancing measures. Our team of committed adult mentors, teachers, and volunteers has been a steady presence for our youth. The biggest disappointment was the cancellation of our annual summer trip to Montreat. However, our youth are resilient and their faith strong. They are already scheduling next year's summer plans around Montreat 2021.



Do justice.



Love kindness.



Walk humbly with your God.

Adult Ministries

Adult Ministries at First Presbyterian Church have remained vital and vibrant even during the pandemic. Our conversations and classes have taken us from...

“Forgiveness” to “Chosen-ness”

“What Can’t Wait” to “The Wilderness”

When the real-life wilderness, called a pandemic, kept us from being together in-person, we took to Zoom and remained together in our own special way. We have traveled...

The Jerusalem highways with Abraham and Sarah

The path of “resilience” to “gratitude”

In all of it, we have prayed and studied and encouraged one another. In our newly developed mission statement, Adult Ministries at FPC are:

Learning

Nurturing

Centering

Engaging



Do justice.



Love kindness.



Walk humbly with your God.

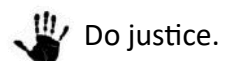
Walk Humbly with God

WORSHIP God faithfully and joyfully,
prayerfully seeking God's direction for our lives.

First Pres members, regular attendees, and guests worshiped together on Sunday mornings and participated in other opportunities at special times throughout the year. The beauty of church seasons was enhanced with Hanging of the Greens for the Advent season and poinsettias for Christmas.

We had a short Ash Wednesday service after a group meal. Just a few weeks later, in early March, we had to close the church due to COVID-19. For Maundy Thursday, we had the opportunity to have communion at home as we listened to the virtual service. Palms and Easter Lilies were available to pick up at the church entrance, and many were delivered to shut-ins. Online services were unique and special. Members were able to listen at their convenience online. This year we celebrated Pentecost with a car parade. Families gathered to decorate their cars and then drove around the block a few times to celebrate. Starting in August, we reopened the Sanctuary with limited and social distance seating.

More than 200 volunteers supported Welcome and Worship at First Pres, including communion servers and preparers, chancel teams, ushers, greeters, musicians, and more.



Do justice.



Love kindness.



Walk humbly with your God.



Do justice.



Love kindness.



Walk humbly with your God.

Music at First Pres

The members of First Presbyterian's music ministry play an important role in helping to lead the congregation in worship each week throughout the church year. This year, the ability to make music together was cut short, however the ensembles provided great musical leadership through the Christmas season, including handbell concerts at the church and in the community, and the annual Christmas Eve services. The choir was preparing for a presentation of Gounod's Requiem, which will hopefully be scheduled for next year. In addition, we continued to present several concerts in our Music on Park Street series as well as host many other concerts by community musical organizations.



Do justice.

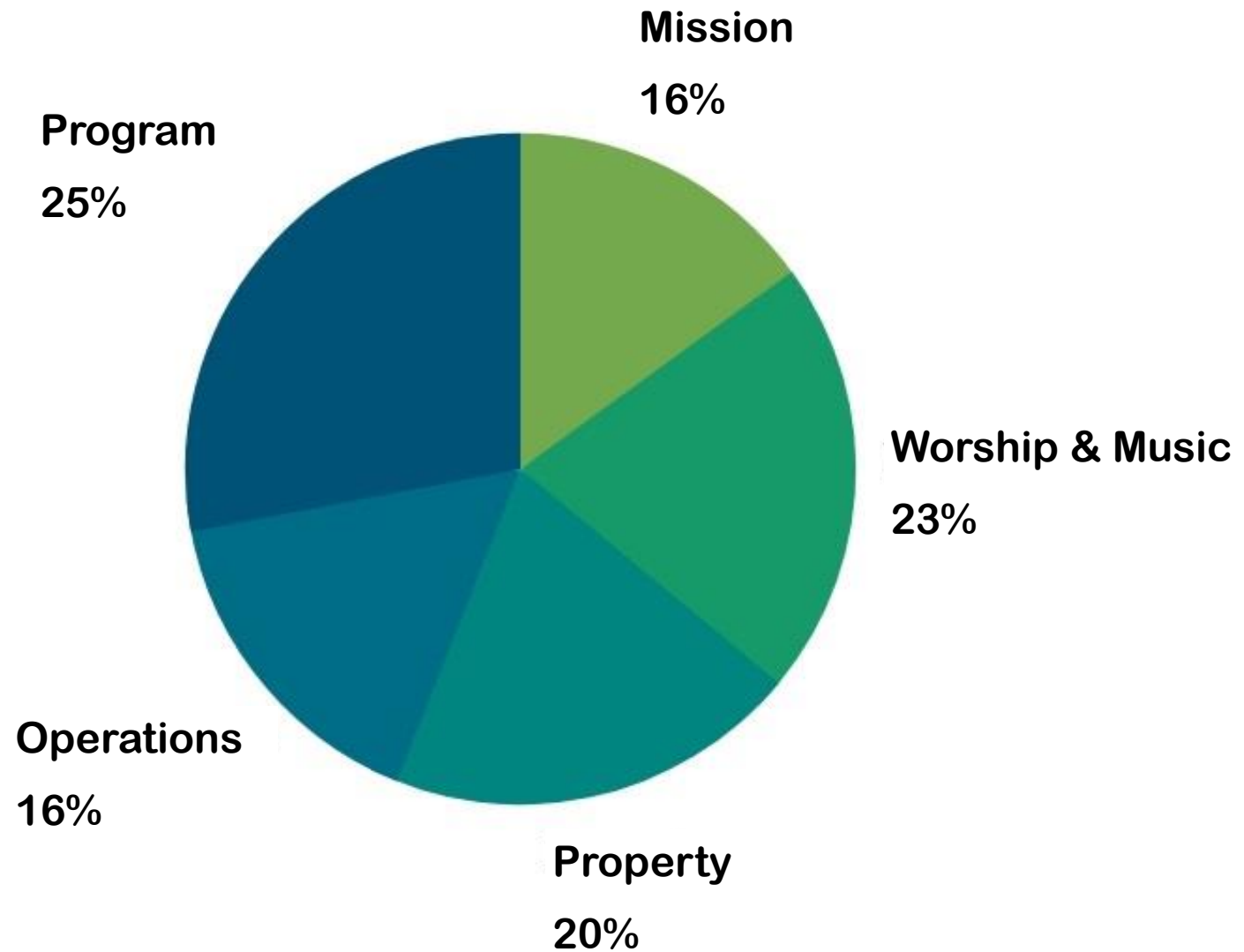


Love kindness.



Walk humbly with your God.

First Presbyterian Church Expenditures



Do justice.



Love kindness.



Walk humbly with your God.



Active Members

1,041

Average Worship Attendance

283

New Members

11

Faith Grow Here Pledges

208

Baptisms

8

Services with Communion

38



Do justice.



Love kindness.



Walk humbly with your God.

Yearly Outreach Contributions

\$122,000

Financially Serving Our Neighbors

Abundant Life Ministries (ALM)
Alliance for Interfaith Ministries (AIM)
People And Congregations Engaged in Ministry (PACEM)
Building Goodness Foundation
Habitat for Humanity
The Haven
International Neighbors
Blue Ridge Area Food Bank
Loaves & Fishes
The Pilgrimage in DC
Binns County (Southwest VA)
Union Presbyterian Seminary (Richmond)
Montreat Conference Center (North Carolina)



Monthly Events Held at First Pres by Outside Groups

18

Our Building Supports Events for

Adult Children of Alcoholics
Alcoholics Anonymous
American Needlepoint Guild
Arc of the Piedmont
Art exhibits
Blue Ridge Church of Christ
Boy Scout leaders
Charlottesville Area Spiritual Directors
Charlottesville Music Teachers Association
Charlottesville-Albemarle Bar Association
Charlottesville Symphony
Community Baroque gathering
CASA training
Eagle Scout projects
Fire concerts
First Presbyterian Preschool
Habitat for Humanity
Homeschooled Teens dances
Hospice of the Piedmont
MACAA Head Start Fatherhood Initiative
Narcotics Anonymous
Oratorio Society
PACEM hosting (three weeks this year)
Piano recitals
Virginia Consort
Wednesday Music Club



Do justice.



Love kindness.



Walk humbly with your God.

Staff



Rev. Dr. David G. Forney	Pastor and Head of Staff
Rev. Dr. Aram Bae	Associate Pastor for Youth & Mission
Rev. Liz Forney	Covenant Pastor
Donna Buchanan	Preschool Director
Cathy Dalton	Assistant Preschool Director
Gary Hatter	Seminary Intern
Laura Holbrook	Director of Family Ministries
Michael Joyce	Facilities Manager
Susan Lawson	Office Administrator/Receptionist
Claire Linden	Finance Manager
Nancy Lutz	Faith Community Nurse
Ashley Ravitsky	Assistant Director of Children's Music
Tracey Schoch	Communications Director
Jen Snook	Program Coordinator
David Thompson	Custodian
Dr. Jeremy Thompson	Director of Music

Leadership

Class of 2020

Elders of the Session

Michelle Katstra
Donna McCauley
Jim Patterson
Natalie Peck
Deborah Rexrode
Marta Ruggles

Board of Deacons

Jane Brennan
Anita Brockette
Diane Brownlee
Anna Farrell
Shelley Matthews
Richard Myers
Tom Phelps

Class of 2021

Elders of the Session

Robert Brewbaker
Lori Chapman
Terry Forbes
Susan Howard-Smith
Jennifer Jones
Gary Selmeczi
Tom Towberman

Board of Deacons

Allen Bailey
Anne Bear
Brenda Lipscomb
Yvonne Rice
Ellen Roberson
David Swett
Missy Witherow

Class of 2022

Elders of the Session

Christine Dean
Amy Gillespie
Rich Lutz
Cathy Meaney
Monika Mentzer
Wayne Mullins
David Schmidt

Board of Deacons

Nancy Brewbaker
Susan Carl
Julie Merchant
Allison Scholl
Thom Waite



Do justice.



Love kindness.



Walk humbly with your God.

In Memory

Barbara Herath

Lyle Rogers

Phyllis McMinimy

Jimmy Westbury

Blair Gammon

Jim Adams

Betty Leake

Ted Felger

Mary Felger

Hollis Proffitt

Liz Smith

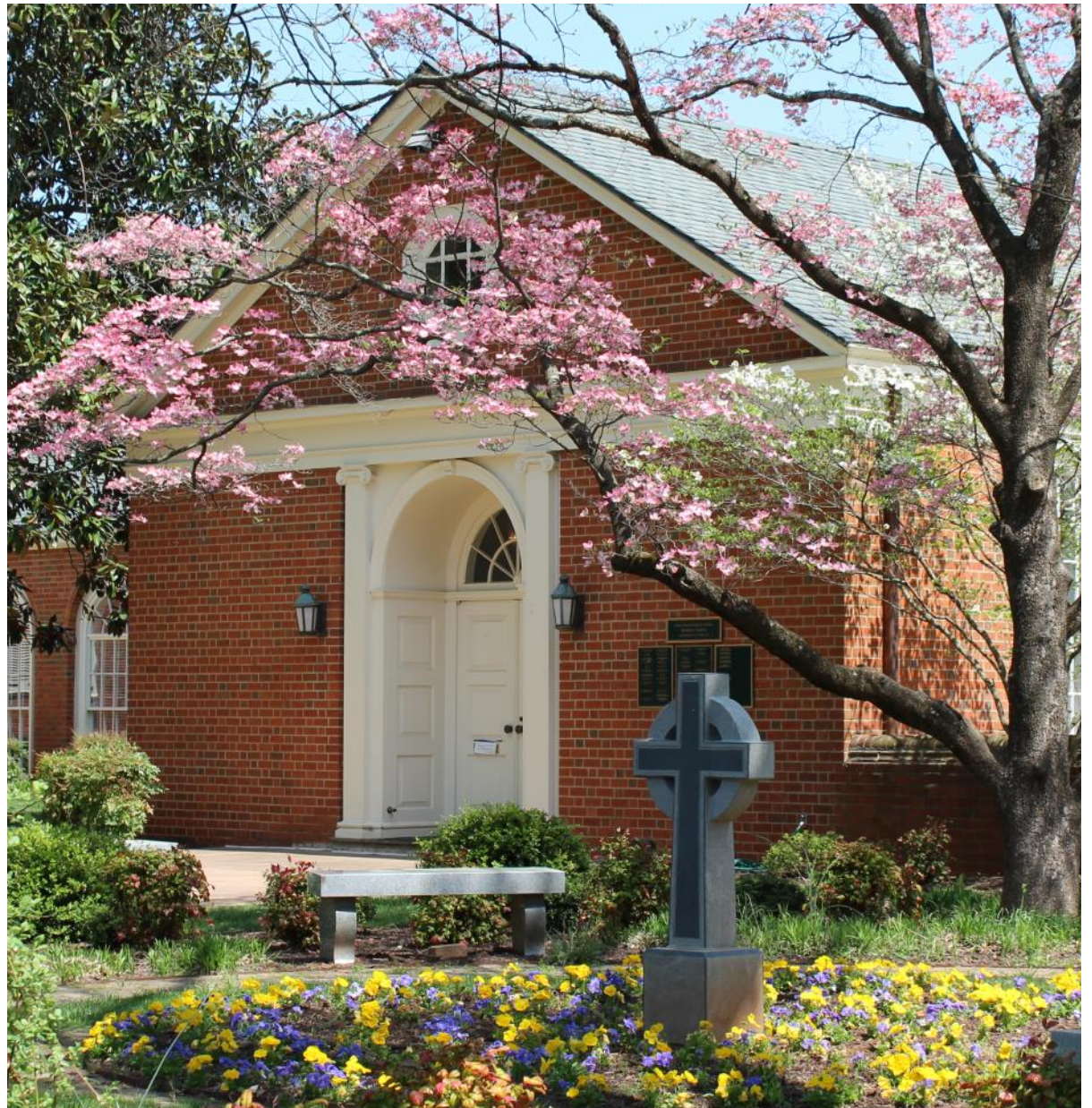
Cary Jean Breeden

Howard Craddock

Beverly Kocotas

Lucille Melton

Judith Heyde



Do justice.



Love kindness.



Walk humbly with your God.