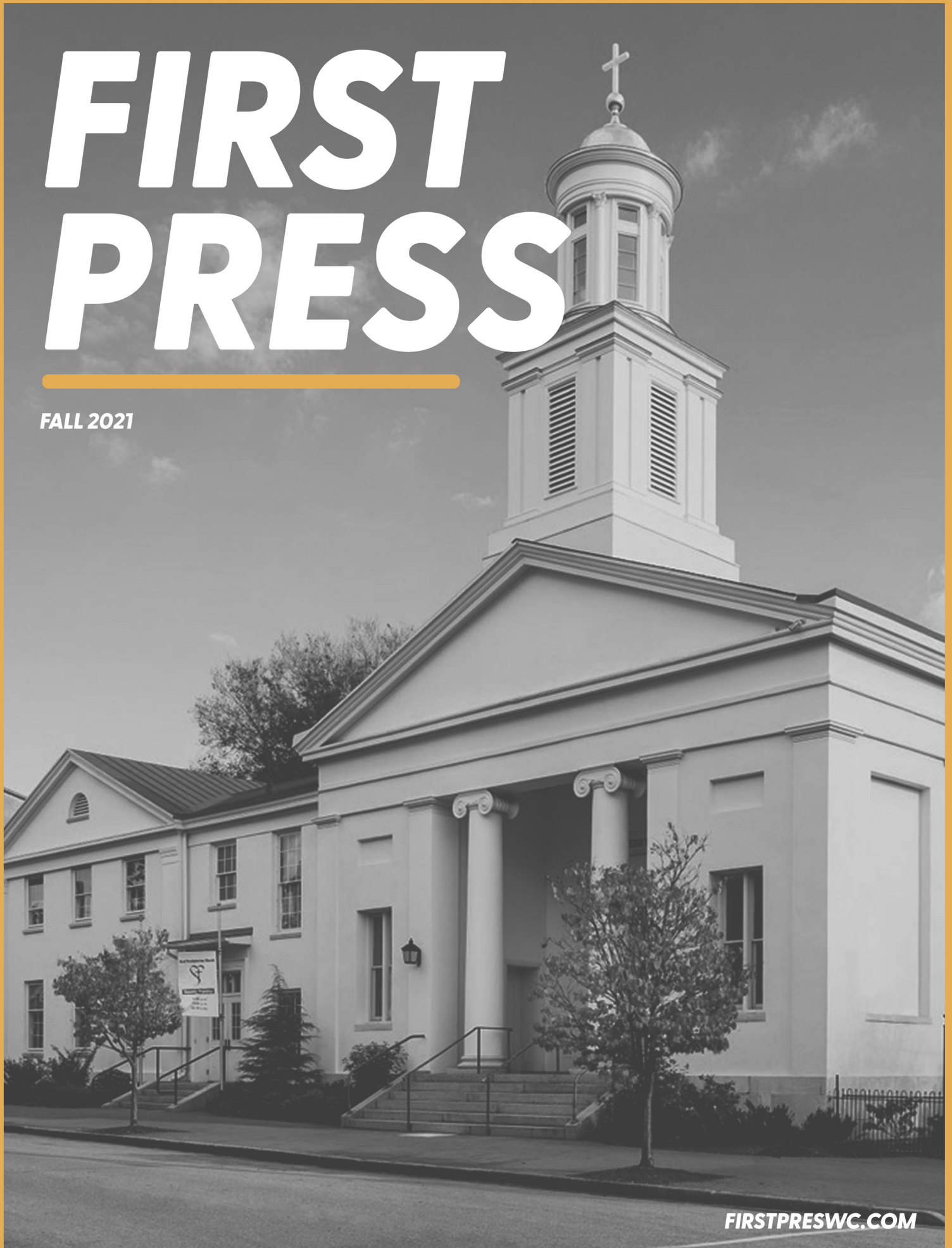


FIRST PRESS

FALL 2021



FIRSTPRESWC.COM

A Note from Pastor Caroline

“It’s just a reminder that there are good people out there,” the man said before hanging up the phone. The caller was First Pres’s latest recipient of Matthew 25 funding, a veteran who had been living in a tent in West Chester while waiting for the heart surgery that would allow him to get back to the work he loved. Matthew 25 gifts helped this neighbor with a motel room stay while more permanent housing could be arranged. More importantly, he shared that the comfortable bed and food were an experience of God’s provision in challenging times.

As Presbyterians we tend not to use the language “good people.” We know that we are far from perfect. We do try to be people who respond to God’s love by caring for our neighbors and for one another, and it is this response that I am privileged to witness each day as your pastor. In challenging times our congregation has come together with an energy and sense of purpose that is a joy to behold. Whether it was the choir scheduling shifts to offer respite to a caregiver, the Stephen Ministry team expanding their caregiving reach into the community, First Crew’s latest playhouse project, over a hundred people packing a congregational conversation, or the youth and Safe Harbor teams providing thousands of meals, the impact of these months goes far beyond counting. And that does not take into account the innumerable ways that you care for one another through Men’s Ministry, PW Circles, fellowship groups, Prayer Band, deacon reach-outs, and deep friendships. Following Christ by caring for one another and caring for our neighbors are the twin melodies that have run through this chapter of First Pres’s history.

While summer is often a quiet time in churches, the past few months have been filled with planning and projects. Committees have been hard at work on property research, financial organization, hiring support staff, and the many pieces of the pastoral transition process. We have baptized and buried, navigated the changing covid-19 landscape, and started new ministry programs like assisting with the Melton Center, Music Camp, and English Sunday School classes. There is growing lay leadership in worship, and we see a number of new faces in the pews each Sunday.

I look forward to restarting many of the practices and programming that we paused during the pandemic. Beginning September 12, Sunday worship will take on more of a pre-pandemic feel, with three hymns, passed offering, and live children’s messages. We will continue to monitor local covid transmission rates and eagerly anticipate dropping mask mandates as they fall. In-person Bridge programming is returning in a slightly shifted format, as are the Chancel and children’s choirs. The nursery will be back up and running on Sunday mornings. Though hybrid and zoom meetings have become valuable tools for the church’s ministry, every in-person gathering reminds me that there is no substitute for being together.

While we are all longing for a little stability these days, I am aware that this chapter of our church’s life is also a gift. These months have proved that while the path forward is not always clear, the Holy Spirit is continually at work, equipping all of us to meet the challenges we face. God is very much present at the corner of Miner & Darlington, raising up capable leaders in all areas of our congregation’s life and putting teachers in our midst. There seems to be something about this time that is lighting a fire under our ministries, propelling new energy, creativity, and growth. Whatever the future holds (hopefully a new pastor in short order!), I will always be grateful for the joy you have given me in serving alongside you.

*Pastor Caroline Cupp,
Executive Pastor*

Kickoff Sunday – September 12

It's time to begin a new year of programming here at First Pres! So many church groups and programs found ways to meet together despite the challenges of last year. We are excited to begin anew this fall, offering both in-person and online options to help everyone find ways to grow in their faith in the coming months.

Sunday mornings for kids

- Nursery care will be available for newborns- 3 year olds during both services.
- Sunday School for kids ages 4 – 5th grade will take place during the 9 am service.
- Kids Connect program will be offered for children during the sermons of the 10:42 service.
- New plans for the Young Justice Builder's Club are in the works.

Sunday mornings for adults

- Worship services at 9:00 and 10:42 (The children's message and a 3rd hymn will return to the 9:00 service, the Chancel Choir will be leading worship at 9:00, and the offering plate will resume being passed at both services).
- Coffee will continue to be offered in Fellowship Hall between services.
- The Christian Faith & Issues class will resume meeting at 10:15 am once a month at church (with a hybrid option for those who prefer it). To receive more information about this class's meeting schedule and the topics it will be considering, contact Dan Campbell at campbelldt@verizon.net.
- The Sunday School class that met in the Chapel at 9:00 am before the pandemic will continue to meet on Zoom this fall on Sundays at 7:00 pm. The class will be studying what God reveals to us in the book of Deuteronomy and how it might guide how we live.

Weekday adult groups

Please go to firstpreswc.com/adult-groups for updated information on the many groups available.

Kick-off Bridge – Wednesday, September 15

Our Wednesday night Bridge program will be resuming in person this fall with a slightly adjusted schedule as we continue to navigate our way to a new normal. We look forward to having this mid-week time to check in with one another and participate in our faith lives in various ways together.

- 5:15 – 6:15 pm Children's Choir & More
- 6:00 – 6:30 pm Dessert & Coffee in Fellowship Hall
- 6:30 – 7:30 pm Adult Bible Study (hybrid participation will be available), Middle School Bible Study, and various other committee/group meetings

Youth Ministry

Like the rest of our church, the youth ministry will kick off September 12. Unlike the rest of our church, we will be doing so by flinging excessive quantities of food at one another! Our Kickoff event is happening at a church member's house, and we'll be filling kiddie pools with beans, oatmeal, applesauce, ketchup, and various other delicacies as a "Crud War" takes place. This Crud War kicks off what we hope to be an incredible ministry season for our students. Bible studies are back, we're planning a couple of fall retreats, Confirmation is happening, and Youth Group is getting a new twist. For a full and up-to-date schedule, visit firstpreswc.com/youth. If you have any questions or would like to connect or be involved in the youth ministry in any capacity, please email our Youth Director, Eric Hankins (ehankins@firstpreswc.com).

Continuing the Transition Conversation

Sailboat Church: Helping Your Church Rethink Its Mission and Practice

The next opportunity to participate in a church-wide conversation about our current time of transition will be built around the book *Sailboat Church: Helping Your Church Rethink Its Mission and Practice*. The book's content challenges churches to examine how well they are connecting with the Spirit of God, versus running on human power – an important concept to consider as we move into the season of searching for our new head pastor. There are 3 ways that you can engage in this conversation:

- **In-person presentation and conversation:** Join us in Fellowship Hall on Sunday, September 12 from 11:45 – 1:00 pm. We will share lunch, listen to a presentation on the book, and have ample time for small group conversation.
- **Zoom presentation and conversation:** If you are not comfortable gathering in person (or simply not able to attend on September 12), an online version of this conversation will be offered on Thursday, September 16 at 7:00 pm.
- **40 days of prayer:** Regardless of whether you attend these events or not, all church members are encouraged to participate in 40 days of intentional prayer after Kickoff Sunday. This period of praying for the church will coincide with the work of forming our Pastoral Nominating Committee, a process we especially want to be bringing to God in prayer.

You don't need to read the *Sailboat Church* book to participate in any of these events but can if you desire. It is available for purchase on Amazon.

Please sign up to let us know you are attending the in-person or online event by going to the sign-up tab of the church's website. Contact Sara Pantazes with any questions.

The Brass in the Silver Lining

Since the beginning of the pandemic, music directors have been trying to do their best to keep their ensembles active and engaged. I remain impressed and humbled at the level of dedication and participation I've seen here at First Pres, with singers and instrumentalists alike joining together to make music in a safe environment. I never would have thought that despite the unprecedented situation a new ensemble would have been created. Earlier this year, one of my tuba players whose name is Charity reached out to me regarding her brass students. Many of them go to private schools and don't have an opportunity to play in a brass ensemble. She wondered if her students could play with the adults of Miner Street Brass and learn from them. I ran the idea by the adult players who loved the plan of creating a new intergenerational ensemble. We started rehearsing with six students in May 2021, and by the end of June we had another six join the group which resulted in a 20-player ensemble. The new ensemble's goals are promoting live brass music in the West Chester community, as well as playing in church services and concerts here at First Pres. Miner Street Brass Next will lead worship for the first time on Kickoff Sunday, which is September 12.

Sándor Kádár,
Director of Music

Matthew 25 Update

Over the past months the Matthew 25 program has continued to support our neighbors in need. While federal aid and eviction moratoriums have cut down on the number of individuals requesting emergency rental assistance, we are finding that many of our neighbors continue to slip through the cracks of the systems meant to support them. Long waiting lines at local agencies have increased the number of people seeking temporary aid while they wait for more permanent support. Recently Matthew 25 supported two disabled veterans, both waiting for housing from the VA. We have found that many of those receiving aid are employed, such as one family of four living in their car, but their wages are not sufficient to provide for their families. Most of those who come to us are struggling with some kind of health or childcare challenge. Sometimes the needs are simple but heartbreaking, like a new pair of shoes for a man living on the street. The original hope for the Matthew 25 program was to not only provide concrete supports but also to engage in meaningful relationships with those experiencing housing instability. A gift of this program is that lasting friendships have been formed as a result of these efforts. We get calls from these folks when they need someone to pray with in the hospital, or when they have something to celebrate. We deliver cheeseburgers and milkshakes to hotel rooms and join in team meetings with social workers. As this program grows in our community, we look forward to seeing how God continues to make use of it in the lives of our neighbors and in our congregation.



Seniors – You’re Invited...

This fall, First Pres seniors are invited to join First Pres children for Sunday School! Kids 4 years old –5th grade will be together in one classroom to learn and grow in faith through the Godly Play curriculum. Seniors who attend Sunday School with us will join the children in worshipfully listening and watching as the teacher tells the Bible story and then participating in the reflective group discussion and an individual reflection activity. Seniors who want to participate do not need to commit to attending on a regular schedule, do not need to complete background clearances, and won’t be responsible for any planning. This invitation is an opportunity for you to minister to the church’s children simply through your presence (and hopefully to be blessed by their presence in return). If you are interested in participating, please contact Sara Pantazes by calling the church office or at spantazes@firstpreswc.com.

Alfred Miller Turns 104!

Alfred Miller, member of First Presbyterian Church since June 2, 1946 and oldest member at age 104, was recently honored at the American Legion Post 134. He was given the award by Congresswoman Chrissy Houlahan. He is the oldest living United States Army Veteran of the China-Burma-India Theater of World War II. He also received a flag pin from President Biden, as well as a White House Medallion. In addition, Al is the oldest member of his American Legion post. Congratulations to Al for a well-deserved award!

Bucket School Update

Gearing up for a new school year at First Presbyterian's Bucket Preschool!

At The Bucket School this month, our teachers are hard at work getting classrooms and lessons together for a school year filled with fun, learning, and fond memories!

On September 10, students at The Bucket School will enter our faith-centered community that offers small class sizes, development of Christian values, and a play-based learning philosophy to help our students build a solid foundation to become lifelong learners. The Bucket School's curriculum is aimed at nurturing the whole child through developmentally appropriate, hands-on thematic units. It is our mission to foster a child's growth in mind and spirit – "to fill buckets," so to speak, with such values as love, knowledge, joy, thankfulness, kindness, friendship, generosity, and wonder.



Our Christian Values in Action

This year at The Bucket School our Christian values will be incorporated into a monthly theme that is a backdrop for initiating age-appropriate conversations and engaging lessons about important topics that are relevant to children in today's world.

Below is a sampling of our values mission at work:

- **Love** – Students will learn about love for our community, each other, themselves, their family, and God's love for them.
- **Friendship** – In this unit, students will learn about sharing, cooperation, how to be a kind friend, and how to use problem-solving skills to resolve conflicts.
- **Kindness** – Our students will create greeting cards for members of our congregation to learn about kindness and promoting joy in others.
- **Generosity** – Students will learn about the world beyond their preschool classroom community and what it means to give with generosity. Our service-learning project will include a collection of winter clothing and canned goods for those in need.

2021-2022 Programs at A Glance

The Bucket School is pleased to offer half -day programs with extended day options such as lunch bunch and enrichment programming for the 2021-2022 school year. Our extracurricular activities such as mini-worship, library, music, and gym offer students opportunities to gain developmental skills in a fun and engaging way.

Our full program list includes: 2-day and 3-day Older Twos, 2-day and 3-day Threes, 3-day and 4-day PreK READ + STEAM Enrichment Program

If you are interested in learning more about The Bucket School, please contact the preschool's director, Dr. Kiepert Truong at mtruong@firstpreswc.com.



Opportunities for Women

A warm invitation is extended to all women who are interested in finding a place where they can nurture their faith and develop friendships in a caring community, while serving Christ together in our church, community and world.

Below are details about some of the groups/circles which meet monthly, September - June, as noted for each group. The focus of most groups is on fellowship, Bible/book study, and outreach, service and mission projects. The Circles are connected through a denominational group called Presbyterian Women, which serves to help them coordinate their outreach efforts, while valuing and recognizing the individuality of each group. Please contact any of the women listed below to learn more or to express interest in participating at any point in the year.

Grace Circle: 2nd Monday of the month at 1:00 PM

Bible study: *What my Grandmothers Taught Me: Learning from the Women in Matthew's Genealogy of Jesus*, by Meryll Blair

Contact: Vicki Gansner, 610-399-3059, gansner@comcast.net

Location: Members' homes or Zoom

Peace Circle: 2nd Tuesday of the month at 2:00 PM

Bible study: *What my Grandmothers Taught Me: Learning from the Women in Matthew's Genealogy of Jesus*, by Meryll Blair

Contact: Barbara Lidle, 610-692-4588, bjtlidle@gmail.com

Location: Members' homes

Praise Circle: 2nd Wednesday of the month at 10:00 AM

Book study: *Women of the Bible Speak*, by Shannon Bream

Contact: Judy Mackleer, 484-356-3005, JudyMackleer@verizon.net or Lynne Carter, 610-291-1282, lscjrc@aol.com

Location: Community Center - Malvern Room at Hershey's Mill

Hope Circle: 2nd Thursday of the month at 9:00 AM

Bible Study: *What my Grandmothers Taught Me: Learning from the Women in Matthew's Genealogy of Jesus*, by Meryll Blair

Contact: Becky Gamble, 610-889-0928, sandbgamble@comcast.net

Location: Church, members' homes or Zoom

Faith Circle: 3rd Tuesday of the month at 6:30 PM

Fellowship and Service oriented: refreshments/fellowship; serves monthly by taking on a small projects in the church or local community

Contact: Nancy Ohms, 484-678-1627, nmohms@verizon.net

Location: Members' homes or Zoom

Summer Music Camp

Ingredients of a Successful Summer Music Camp:

Excellent team spirit, three amazing presenters, six patient chaperones, three helpful volunteer receptionists, eighteen cheerful kids and their supportive parents, toys, snacks, musical instruments, and lot of music.

We had a wonderful time filled with music, laughter, and fun!

Summary of the kid's comments:

"I wish camp was ten days long."

"The organ pipes are very precious and only Mr. Sandor may touch them."

The pipes work by sucking music up."

"I would like to come to camp again if I can play the organ."

"I loved Mr. Eric's drum class."

"My favorite activity was singing with Ms. Sara."

"I don't like music camp.... I LOVE it!"

"Mr. Eric is so great at musical chairs!"

"I loved the snack time and playing the pipe organ!"



Confirmation 2022

Our Confirmation program will begin with the first Round Table Discussion on October 10 of this year. Confirmation is a program available to students entering grades 8-12. There are several components of Confirmation designed help a student ask big questions and explore a life of Christian faith. At the end of the program, each student will have the opportunity to join the church as a member if they so choose. If you, or your child, are interested in receiving more information about this year's program, please visit firstpreswc.com/youth or email Eric (ehankins@firstpreswc.com). Our hope and prayer is that each student finds a life of faith that energizes their lives and engages our world.

Fall Stewardship

Your Gifts Empower the Missions of First Pres

First Pres is blessed in many ways. Our church family members faithfully give their time to many church activities, their talents serving in the choir and on various church committees, and their treasure in funding the church's ministries and missions.

Financial support through donations to special programs, such as the Mathew 25 initiative, and through pledge and non-pledge giving throughout the year empower First Pres to meet the needs and well-being of those within our church and within communities around us. Our ministries and missions continue to help build God's Kingdom here on Earth.

This Fall, First Pres is continuing its Annual Fund stewardship pledge drive. Once again, our goal is to achieve a slight increase in the amount pledged during last year's Annual Fund. We realize not everyone can commit to an increase in their pledge. We are prayerfully hoping, however, that those who may be in a position to increase their pledges will do so.

Like last year, we are condensing this year's campaign into just three weeks. And at the end of the campaign, we'll have a celebration of the gifts received.

Look for more details of this year's Annual Fund stewardship pledge drive in upcoming Wednesday eNews, letters, worship bulletins, and announcements during church services.

First Crew

First Crew Assists North Carolina Flood Victims - October 24-29, 2021

First Crew volunteers will once again lead a mission trip to assist flood victims in rebuilding homes and lives after Hurricane Florence hit North Carolina. We will partner with the Fuller Center Disaster Relief organization with whom we have worked in New Orleans, Houston and North Carolina in previous years. Our trip to New Bern, North Carolina is scheduled for October 24 – 29. Our tasks mostly involve the refurbishment of the inside of the homes such as drywall and flooring installation and lots of painting. We will work in the New Bern, NC area. All gifts and talents are welcome. The main qualification is your interest in helping others in need. Fuller Center supplies both materials and tools for the assigned tasks as well as supplying a manager to oversee the project. Each year we have about an equal number of men and women participating. If you are interested in learning more about this mission opportunity to serve others, please contact Jim Serum at jwserum@verizon.net or 610-793-1920.

Weekly Email Updates

Do you want to stay connected to First Pres during the week?

If you're not already receiving them, our weekly email updates come out every Wednesday with all kinds of updates and information about the happenings at First Pres. It always contains the best and most up to date information. Sign up at firstpreswc.com/email!



You are cordially invited to a

Women's Luncheon

SEPTEMBER 21, 2021 • 11:30 AM

Fellowship Hall
First Presbyterian Church
rsvp to Elizabeth at ehess@firstpreswc.com

Please bring a jar of jelly or jam to donate to
the West Chester Food Cupboard

Church Office Hours

The church building is open from 9am-1pm, Monday-Thursday. We expect to expand these hours when a new office administrator joins our team in the coming weeks. This person will work alongside Karen Goldstein and Jeff Somers to provide administrative, building, and financial support. The church's open office hours are based on the availability of our current administrative staff and volunteers. The ministry and program staff are also on-site throughout the week, so please do not hesitate to contact us if you need to come to the church building outside of the 9-1 timeframe. We are always looking for more front office volunteers – if you are interested in learning more about this hospitality ministry, please contact Pastor Caroline at ccupp@firstpreswc.com.

In Memoriam

- Charles L Young, member from June 3, 1945 to May 16, 2021
- Gwendolyn Haines, member from November 11, 1951 to May 12, 2021
- Howard C. Stevens, former member from November 17, 1985 to October 24, 2016, passing away May 2021
- Landon M. Spilman, member from February 23, 1969 to June 8, 2021
- Arthur J. Massey, member from October 28, 1991 to June 8, 2021
- Alexander M. Barry, member from April 28,1987 to May 25, 2021
- Judy Newell, member from April 26, 1993 to June 29, 2021
- Edwin L. Taylor, member from November 23, 1987 to July 3, 2021
- Elizabeth H. Chandler, member from March 3, 1948 to August 14, 2021

The sympathy and prayers of the congregation are extended to:

- Faith Battan and family in the death of her daughter, Joy Pietschmann
- Geraldine Young and family in the death of her husband, Charlie
- Susan Casso-Rogers and family in the death of her mother, Gwendolyn
- Darrell Cook and Diane Pazdalski and families in the death of their father, J. Edwin Cook
- Frank and Kathleen Skomorucha and family in the death of Frank’s father
- Former member Diane Stevens and family in the death of her husband, Howard
- Shirley and A. Michael Barry and family in the death of Shirley’s husband and Michael’s father
- Bill and Sue Mertz and family in the death of Sue’s sister
- Betty Sue Spilman and Kane and Betsy Bender in the death of Betty Sue’s husband and Betsy’s father
- Ann Massey and family in the death of her husband Arthur
- Scott and Becky Gamble and family in the death of Becky’s mother
- The family of Judy Newell
- The family of Edwin L. Taylor
- Don and Thalia Evons and family in the death of their grandson
- The family of Elizabeth H. Chandler

We celebrate the baptism of:

- Tyler Patrick McClure, born April 11, 2020, son of Justin and Mandy McClure
- Ivy Faye Quinlan, born September 12, 2020, daughter of Brian Quinlan and Dana Rutledge
- Cameryn Ruth McDivitt and Sloane Ann McDivitt, born September 14, 2020, daughters of David and Heather McDivitt and granddaughters of David and Ann Dickey

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

	July Actual	July Budget	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Full Year Budget
Income	\$77,180	\$83,889	\$757,380	\$764,952	\$1,260,105
Expenses	\$104,017	\$132,516	\$681,110	\$771,791	\$1,260,105
Difference	(\$26,837)	(\$48,627)	\$76,270	(\$6,839)	\$0

FIRST PRES
CONTACT

Executive Pastor

Rev. Caroline Cupp (ccupp@firstpreswc.com)

Program Staff

Director of Music:
Sándor Kádár (skadar@firstpreswc.com)

Choir Accompanist:
Kira Boros (kboros@firstpreswc.com)

Children’s Choir Director:
Marc Major (mmajor@wcupa.edu)

Director of Engagement:
Elizabeth Hess (ehess@firstpreswc.com)

Director of Faith Formation:
Sara Pantazes (spantazes@firstpreswc.com)

Preschool Director:
Marissa Truong (mtruong@firstpreswc.com)

Director of Youth & Contemporary Ministries:
Eric Hankins (ehankins@firstpreswc.com)

Church Office

Director of Operations:
Jeff Somers (jsomers@firstpreswc.com)

Office Manager:
Karen Goldstein (kgoldstein@firstpreswc.com)

Administrative Assistant:
Claire Kramer (ckramer@firstpreswc.com)

FALL KICKOFF

SEPTEMBER 12, 2021

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

130 West Miner Street
West Chester, PA 19382

