



first notes

first presbyterian church • fpcgreensboro.org • mid-fall 2025

let us not
grow weary in
doing what is
right, for we
will reap at
harvest time,
if we do not
give up.

galatians 6:9

CAMP WEAVER SUNDAY

October 19

Gather under the pavilion. Coffee & doughnuts starting at 10 am. Creative Sunday School at 10:15, worship at 11 followed by lunch. & lunch. From 1-3, sit & visit or have fun with arts & crafts, playground, canoeing, archery, rock climbing & yard games. Come for all or part of the day.

Bring preemie & newborn diapers for the Family Room Foster Care Resource Center. Guilford has 740 children in the system, the most in the state.



COMMUNION SUNDAYS

November 2, December 7

GENEROSITY SUNDAY

October 26

*Dedicating our gifts
toward ministry in 2026.*

ALL SAINTS' SUNDAY

November 2

*Remembering those
who have died this year
and lifting up the whole
communion of saints who
nurtured our faith.*

MIDWEEK WORSHIP

Now on second & fourth
Tuesdays, 5-5:30 pm in
Mullin Life Center

*Music, prayer and a
message of care with Hot
Dish & Hope guests.*

FALL MUSIC



... moments of achingly beautiful stillness

A REQUIEM FOR ALL SAINTS

November 2 at 5 pm

Our Chancel Choir welcomes the choir from Westminster Presbyterian in a joint offering of *Requiem* by Grayston Ives. This piece was commissioned by Magdalen College, Oxford, to mark its founding. Ives served as *Informator Choristarum* (music director) at the college for 18 years. He has been composing for church and cathedral choirs for more than 50 years. This *Requiem* was first performed in 2008 by the Chapel Choir of Magdalen College.

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF THE LETOURNEAU ORGAN

John Alexander will perform in recital on November 23 at 5 pm. The program features Julius Reubke's virtuosic Sonata on the 94th Psalm and Widor's Symphony no. V, ending with his famous Toccata.

Generosity is a gift of the Spirit



JILL DUFFIELD

Senior Pastor

I remember distinctly a time I felt called to make a financial gift in faith. The notice came via email as I recall, in the early days of GoFundMe. A young woman, a high school classmate of my son, had gotten into some legal trouble, nothing major, an offense that could be considered in line with normal, adolescent experimentation. However, given her circumstances the fallout threatened to ripple and upend her future. She couldn't cover the required fines and a court mandated class. She needed \$800 if she was going to move forward with her hoped-for post-graduation plans.

I'd never met this person, and my son knew her only in passing, but her story struck me because I knew of her peers who'd been caught doing similar things. The outcome wasn't nearly so potentially catastrophic for them because they came from families who had personal connections and the means to afford attorneys. I could feel her fear and desperation as she threw out a plea to anyone listening on the internet.

I read her words several times. I saw a singular donation of \$25 had been made. I thought I'd make a small gift, but when I went to put in the amount, I felt compelled to pay the rest of what she needed to get a fresh start. While it wasn't exactly a sacrificial gift, it was enough at the time to make me shift some other obligations around. Nonetheless, I didn't give it another thought. It just felt right, like the Spirit said, "Do this." And I did. I wanted her to know that she'd been heard and that she was worthy of a second chance. I hoped the gift would help her feel that she wasn't alone and that people cared.

Not long afterward, I got a response, "I don't know you, but I can't thank you enough." I tell this story not as some humble brag or righteousness signaling or to pat myself on the back, but because of the motivation I had and the feeling that making the gift evoked. I was simply moved to share without calculating the outcome or cost. I didn't worry about the recipient's response. I just knew God was calling me to share.

Have you ever felt like that?

That brief, long-ago experience stayed with me through the years and prompted me to pay attention to the nudge that says, "Be generous with whatever you have." Now let's be clear, I don't always have the ears to hear, but every time I listen and follow through, I receive another fruit of the Spirit: the gift of joy. I've discovered, too, that the fruits of the Spirit grow exponentially whenever they are shared, be it kindness, goodness or self-control. Never once have I made an offering in faith that God didn't bless and grow.

I am grateful for the generosity of so many of you who've shared your gifts of time, talent, and treasure not only for the ministries of this church, but also for the sake of the world God loves. I am inspired, daily, by the countless ways I see you heeding the Spirit, and the lives your faithfulness impacts for good. I can't thank you enough.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT



The Interfaith Housing Initiative (IHI) started in 2023 as a group of faith communities coming together to explore what we could do to address Greensboro's housing crisis. In the past two years, it has grown into a network of 45 faith communities and organizations, and received its 501(c)3 non-profit status this past March. IHI has collaborated with and made donations to Guilford County Schools Homeless Support Services, The Pathways Center, YWCA, and Greensboro Urban Ministries Winter Emergency Shelter program.

Putting its faith and mission into practice, IHI's first project with building is a six-apartment unit with Partnership Homes to provide safe and affordable housing for low-income families. This building will be added to the existing buildings Partnership Homes owns and operates at the corner of West Terrell Street and Short Street in southeast Greensboro. To learn more about IHI and the exciting project with Partnership Homes, visit [IHIGSO.ORG](https://ihigso.org).

FEAST OF CARING

November 20

This is a great event for your small group: The Feast of Caring takes place each year on the Thursday before Thanksgiving and reminds us that during the holiday season, many face hunger and will be unable to sit down to a holiday feast. Guests are asked to make a minimum donation of \$35 to attend. Hundreds of participants gather for either lunch or dinner, and each guest can leave with a thank-you gift of hand-crafted pottery or seven holiday honor cards. Lunch is served from 11:30 am - 1:30 pm, and dinner is served 5-7 pm. To-go order tickets are available as well. The meals are served at First Baptist Church, 1000 W. Friendly Ave. Tickets go on sale soon at [GREENSBOROURBANMINISTRY.ORG/FEAST-OF-CARING](https://greensborourbanministry.org/feast-of-caring)

FAITHACTION TOY DRIVE

For several years, we have partnered with FaithAction to provide Christmas gifts to families. Your gift not only brightens a child's holiday but also eases the burden for families facing financial hardship. In early November we will receive the list of children and will ask you to sign-up to purchase gifts and then drop them off in the Welcome Center by Tuesday, December 2.



Help our
CROP Walk
team meet
its goal of
\$10,000!



LAW AND PROPHETS SYMPOSIUM

November 6

Join in a discussion about what it means to be a neighbor — from civic, legal, and religious perspectives — and how those understandings relate to people experiencing housing insecurity in Greensboro. Matt Bussell is part of a panel that includes: Zack Matheny, Greensboro City Council; Andrea Harrell, Greensboro Assistant City Manager; Rosa Newman, Assistant Professor of Law; Sherea Burnett, Partners Ending Homelessness; and Vachel Pollard, Greensboro resident. The event is co-hosted by Elon Law and West Market United Methodist Church. We'll examine where faith and law intersect, asking: What are our duties to one another as neighbors? 5:30-8:30 pm, West Market UMC.

1K WORDS

THE JOY OF
HELPING OTHERS
IN OCTOBER



CROP Walker Tim Hanlin took this great pic of our team reflected in Matt Bussell's shiny shades.



The Weekday Preschool had beautiful weather and smiling faces for its first 5K fund-raiser. Anne Albert, our worship director, finished second in her age group.



When worship bags had stickers of public service workers, one of our logical kids put a plumber on a men's room door.



After a game of pool noodle Foosball, the Kids Disciple Club stuffed Halloween treat bags for Hot Dish & Hope guests. They also talked about fears & what the Bible tells us about not being afraid.

HUNGER AMONG US

34% of Guilford County residents are considered low-income.

The federal poverty threshold is an annual income of \$15,060 for an individual or \$31,200 for a family of 4.

21% of children under 5 in Guilford County live in poverty.

16% of Guilford County residents are food insecure.

SOURCES: NC Budget & Tax Center, Feeding America, United Way of Greater Greensboro

GENEROSITY SUNDAY IS OCTOBER 26



These are our neighbors – literally. Our church is in the poorest ZIP Code in Guilford County, 27401.

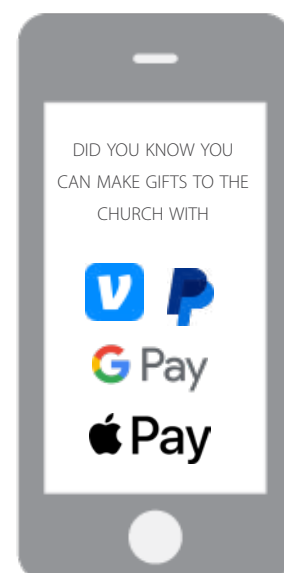
We respond with cups; *Hot Dish & Hope*; plastic bags; email; electricity; *Food Drive-by*; plumbing; chairs; staff to plan, set up, and take down; *Meals on Wheels*; meeting rooms; *CROP Walk*; tables; internet access; *Neil's Meals*; red wagons; gas for the van; brooms.

Your annual giving makes all the big and the little parts of our ministry possible. Please be generous.

Giving: Now and later

Can you name a need in our community that this church has not had an impact on? Think about hunger, homelessness, employment, refugee needs, environmental issues, and more. We could not have had these many impacts without the generosity of our members year in and year out. But, what happens to your generous support when you leave this mortal world for your heavenly reward?

There's an easy pathway to continue supporting our mission in the future. Planned giving from your estate can be this path. Maybe you've never even thought to include our church in your plans. Maybe you're at a place where you are considering estate planning or are thinking of making changes to your current plans. If so, there are a number of options to assist you in making those decisions. Our website contains helpful educational materials on all kinds of giving including bequests, endowments, retirement assets, life insurance, etc. You can find all of this under the "Give" tab, then click on "Plan your Legacy". Christine Ciccio, our director of finance, can assist you if you have questions or want to proceed. She can be reached at 336.478.4750 or CCIACCIO@FPCGREENSBORO.ORG.



Get ready to welcome Rev. Dr. Erin Bowers



There is a lot to be learned from Jonah's story about God's willingness and ability to work through us, despite our bad attitudes and worst intentions.

Erin will join FPC in November as associate pastor for Christian Formation.

Tell us a bit about you.

I grew up in Raleigh and most of my family is still there — my parents and my brother and his family. I went to Duke University for undergrad, then worked for a few years before I enrolled at Princeton Theological Seminary. That is where I met my husband, Jay, who is a United Methodist pastor in Davidson County. (Because he serves a church as well, you may not see him frequently — but he is real!) After meeting Jay, and then completing my M.Div., I stayed at Princeton to begin my Ph.D. By the time I finished in 2011, I had also gotten married (in Scotland!), moved back to North Carolina, had our first child, and been called to First Presbyterian Church of High Point. We've been in our home since June of 2005, and for now we plan to stay there — it works well because it is located between our two churches, and my youngest (Helen) can stay at her middle school. Our oldest (Martha Glenn) just left for Coastal Carolina University in Conway, SC, pursuing a BFA in Musical Theatre.

You have a Ph.D. in systematic theology. What exactly is that and why is it important?

Systematic theology is the in-depth study of Christian thought, focused on organizing, interpreting, and articulating Christian beliefs in a coherent way. Systematic theology asks questions like: *Who is God? Who is Jesus? How do we understand salvation?* As I understand theology as a discipline, it is always a discipline that is for the church — not just a discipline for theologians to mull over in academia. This doesn't mean everyone needs to have a Ph.D. in theology, though! But theologians have a particular calling to help the church be the church. Theology shapes teaching and preaching. It helps ground the church in its



Erin with her husband, Jay, and daughters, Martha Glenn and Helen.

own tradition — in our case, in the Reformed tradition — while also being able to engage with contemporary issues and figure out how Christian faith speaks to the present moment. It deepens our understanding of faith and guides the witness of the church to speak faithfully in the world.

This fall our children are studying favorite Bible stories. What is your favorite Bible story and why?

I love the parables of Jesus, and so many stories from the Gospels — especially the Gospel of Luke — that is my favorite Gospel. And I always kind of forget about Acts, but then, whenever I spend any time reading or studying it, I am reminded about how compelling some of those stories are. But probably my very favorite story in the Bible is the story of Jonah. It is appealing to children (who doesn't love a story about being swallowed by a giant fish and then vomited out again!) and I think that there is a lot to be learned from Jonah's story about God's willingness and ability to work through us,

CONTINUES, NEXT PAGE

despite our bad attitudes and worst intentions.

What is the first thing you will move to or hang up in your office at FPC?

Books. I have so many books! A lot of people say you need to own 1,000 books for a collection to be considered a library. I definitely have more than 1,000. I will probably have to find some creative storage solutions in my office for all these books. I have been trying to cull as I pack and unpack, but it isn't easy — I always think, "I might just need that book someday..."

What are a few of your favorite things?

Some things I love: musicals (everything from Broadway to elementary school productions — I'll go see anything); Tervis tumblers (it's like a cup that comes with its own coaster!); a Cobb salad; jigsaw puzzles; reading (physical books, Kindle, audiobooks inclusive); a Disney vacation; a crisp fall day; New Yorker cartoons; knitting things that are either squares or rectangles (if you knit, you'll understand my skill level); strong black coffee.

What is one thing about you that would surprise those who know you best?

I run an anonymous Instagram page. I don't want to say too much, because I don't want any of my 42 followers to find out I'm the person behind it. But suffice it to say ... it is mostly about litter. My daughters describe my weird hobby as "taking pictures of trash."

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL, 10 AM

October 12, 26 November 2, 9, 16

fear
illness
loneliness
financial insecurity
failure
insignificance
aging
hope

UNAFRAID: Living with Courage and Hope in Uncertain Times

Memorial 304

Our pastors will lead this series on Adam Hamilton's book on understanding and managing big fears and everyday anxieties. In the Faithful Families class.

October 12, Newton Cowan

October 26 & November 2, Matt Bussell

November 9, Jill Duffield.

November 16, Erin Bowers

Through October

READING SOME OF THE MOST FAMOUS TEXTS IN THE BIBLE

Redhead Hall

Exploring ways to look for new insights in familiar texts, led by Sandie Gravett in YMBC & Agape.

Ongoing

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

Main 125

A deep scriptural study led by Gerard Davidson in the Seekers class. Contact Gerard, GDAVIDSON@WARDBLACKLAW.COM.

October 26-November 16

Garden Room

In biblical interpretation, *prediction* and *prophecy* are very different concepts.

Learn why it matters. Led by Samuel

Moss, a freelance scholar with an M.Div from Duke University and 30+ years of teaching experience. In the Come as You Are class. Contact Philip Lopp, PHILIP.LOPP1988@GMAIL.COM.



November 30-December 14

WHAT MAKES MATTHEW SPECIAL

Garden Room

It is the only gospel to mention the magi and to use the phrase "kingdom of heaven." It references the Old Testament 130+ times. Samuel Moss leads in the Come as You Are class.

Sign up now to chat, listen, play, and ponder with FPC women

Spots are filling fast for the upcoming FPC Women's Retreat, which promises to be full of faith, fellowship, and fun. The keynote speaker, Niki Hardy, will delve into her book *God, Can We Chat?* and help us explore our relationships with God, "one doubt at a time." In addition to three keynote addresses over the course of the retreat, attendees will have opportunities to connect with friends old and new and grow in grace together.

Attendees will participate in breakout chat groups, which will be assigned at random and include women of all ages and backgrounds. Conversations will tie in closely with Niki Hardy's keynote addresses.

Saturday afternoon will bring free time. Optional activities include some favorites from years past as well as some new ideas:

- A book discussion led by Jill Duffield on her latest, *Appreciate These Things: Eight Ways of Cultivating Compassion*;
- A meet-and-greet with FPC's new Associate Pastor of Christian Formation, Erin Bowers;
- Flower arranging with FPC member Mary Holderness;
- Singing & discussing fave hymns with FPC member Jill Hare;
- Yoga with FPC member Terri Maultsby;
- Open-play mahjong.

CONTINUES ON BACK COVER

2026 FPC Women's Retreat

God, Can We Chat?

January 24 & 25 at Grandover

Friday, January 23 – Optional pre-retreat reception at Grandover art gallery.

Saturday – keynote addresses, music, chat groups, optional activities & free time, lunch & dinner.

Sunday morning – breakfast & worship with communion.

REGISTRATION IS TWO-THIRDS FULL! It will be open until November 21 or spots sell out, whichever comes first.

Register now:

- Use the QR Code. Point your phone's camera at the code and click on the link that pops up, or



- Go to FPCGREENSBORO.ORG/WOMENSRETREAT, or

- Pick up paper forms in the Welcome Center.

SMALL GROUPS

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS: Teens & adults of all abilities explore the Bible and spread God's love through service and fellowship. Second and fourth Tuesdays, 6:30-7:30 pm. Info: Anne Chamblee, ANNECHAMBLEE@GMAIL.COM.

STUDY OF MINOR PROPHETS: The Tuesday Evening Bible Study is for all ages & levels of spiritual experience. Meets weekly, 5:30-6:30 pm on Zoom. Info: Jim Hoeger, JIM.HOEGER@GMAIL.COM

GRACE: Women engaging in meaningful Bible study and fostering fellowship. We are focused on Jill Duffield's book, *Appreciate These Things*. Meets one Tuesday a month, 7-8 pm in homes. Info: Lisa Witherspoon, LWITHERSPOON@FPCGREENSBORO.ORG

COMMUNITY SERVICE GROUP: Wednesdays, 10 am-noon, Garden Room. Make blankets, hats, small quilts, etc. to be distributed by social workers and missionaries.

YOGA FOR HEALTHY AGING: Thursdays, 4:25-5:30 pm in the Virginia Gilmer Room (Smith 239). No fee, freewill offering accepted. For all levels. Bring water, a mat, a strap, and a block (if you have one). Led by Virginia Wood, REVVIRGINIAWOOD@GMAIL.COM.

FIRST FAMILIES: Casual gathering for families with young kids. Dinner provided, small fee for onsite child care. First Fridays, 6-8 pm. Contact Lorie Jones, LORIEJONES88@GMAIL.COM.

CURRIE LIBRARY BOOK CLUBS: Second Mondays at 10:30 am, and second Tuesdays at 1:30 pm, both in the Garden Room. **October 13 & 14:** *Unsheltered* by Barbara Kingsolver. **November 10 & 11,** *Three Days in June* by Anne Tyler. **December 9 & 10:** Book & snack sharing for Christmas.

WOMEN OF FAITH SPEAKER LUNCHEONS: **November 10**, Rev. Maria Hanlin. **December 8**, Weekday Preschool Christmas program. Noon in Mullin Life Center, \$10. Make a paid reservation by Wednesday prior online at FPCGREENSBORO.ORG/SIGNUP, by calling 336-478-4799, or at the Welcome Center desk.



YOUTH

SUNDAY MORNINGS

Grab a doughnut, play some air hockey, chat about the week, have a brief bible lesson. 10 am in Memorial 303 through December 14. *No meeting October 19, November 23 & 30.*

SUNDAY YOUTH GROUP

Games, bible study, food & fun, 5-6 pm, Middle School; 6-6:30 pm, dinner for all; 6:30-7:30 pm, High School. Through December 14. *No meeting October 19 & 26, November 23 & 30.*

BREAKFAST CLUB

First & third Wednesdays, Chick-fil-A on Pisgah Church Road. Pick your time – 7:15 or 8 am. October 15, November 5 & 19, and December 3 & 17.

CONFIRMATION

Eighth-graders spend several months in study, service, worship, & fellowship. The Opening Retreat is October 25. Info: Lisa Witherspoon, LWITHERSPOON@FPCGREENSBORO.ORG.



MIDDLE SCHOOL MISSION WEEKEND

We will participate in service activities organized by the Raleigh Youth Mission November 7-9. Use the QR Code to learn more and register!



REGISTRATION WILL OPEN THIS FALL!

Meet our Youth Council

The council shares feedback and ideas to make our program awesome. Thanks to the students serving this year: *6th grade* – Madeline Faucher, Webb Sheaff, Ward Permar and Carolina Medlin; *7th grade* – Caroline Lowe and Charlotte Freeze; *8th grade* – Mac Payonk and Andrew Wilson; *9th grade* – Jack Barnett and Katie Wile; *10th grade* – Audrey Faucher and Drew King; *11th grade* – Charlie Wile, Chase Oakley and Ward Permar; *12th grade* – Emma Ballenger, Hodges King and Catherine Faircloth.

CHILDREN

MILESTONE CLASSES

An important foundation for a lifelong faith. 10 am Sundays through November 9, third floor of the Corl Building. *No meeting October 19.*

KIDS DISCIPLE CLUB

Fun, service & bible study for grades 3-5. 3-4:30 pm in Mullin Life Center. November 2, and December 7 (Christmas Party).

LIVING IN FAITH TOGETHER SUNDAY

Volunteers will join our children for games, bible study & fun. November 16, 10 am, Life Center.



Trunk decorators needed and trick-or-treaters welcome! Pizza will be served while it lasts.



TRUNK OR TREAT

The Mental Health Ministry Team is decorating a mental health trunk, and will hand out candy and helpful information for all ages! October 26, 4-5 pm in front of the sanctuary.

FORK & FAITH

Join other women for lunch and fellowship, noon in Mullin Life Center, \$10. October 22 (RSVP by October 17), November 19 (RSVP by November 14), and December 17 (RSVP by December 12). RSVP to Dolly Jennings, 336-854-2663 or DJ6871202@GMAIL.COM.

VETERANS FELLOWSHIP LUNCHEON

The group will celebrate Veterans Day on November 11 with a luncheon at noon in Mullin Life Center. The speaker will be Chaplain (MG) Steve Schaick, USAF. Retired. RSVP by October 24 to Debby Foster, DFOSTER@FPCGREENSBORO.ORG or 336- 478-4702.

KEEP THESE THINGS IN MIND

PASTOR ON CALL: For sudden illness, death, or personal crises, call 336-908-8615, leave a message and a pastor will respond.

VISITS: Pastors make hospital, home, and care center visits. *Let us know if you or a loved one is in the hospital or very ill at home. Contact the Pastor on Call, above.*

PRAYER: Send your confidential request to NCOWAN@FPCGREENSBORO.ORG.

PLANNING IN ADVANCE: Plan for a meaningful memorial service before an illness or crisis happens. Contact Debby Foster, 336-478-4702 or DFOSTER@FPCGREENSBORO.ORG.

Renovation update

Although scaffolding has begun going up on the Greene Street side of the sanctuary, its completion has been delayed. The upper anchoring is being re-engineered and tested for safety. Other work is going on, however. Mortar mixes are being prepared and tested, and bricks are being reviewed to make sure they match. As tests before the full project begins, several 10x10 sections of brick will be tuckpointed and reviewed. As soon as we have the updated schedule we will let you know.



It's on the highway!

Our new web site is in the process of being uploaded and will be live in a few days. We'll send an email when it arrives, and there will be a brief guide to using the site. You are welcome to send feedback to AALEXANDER@FPCGREENSBORO.ORG.

2025-26 Committee Chairs & Vice Chairs

Adult Formation: John Sullivan, Lisa Ganem.
Youth Formation: Layne King, Catherine Freeze. *Children's Formation:* Lorie Jones, Katie Rich.
Church Officer Development: Graham Farless, Nancy Abrams.
Communications: Ty Buckner, Jean Pinckard.
Discipleship: Nancy Courts, Alice Moore.
Finance: Dave Thompson, Hugh Williams.
Hospitality: Bet Vanderwerff, Patrice Newman.
Human Resources: Lisa Cook, Rhonda Youngdahl.
Outreach: Rhonda Wakefield, Hoke Huss.
Pastoral Care: Sheri Evans, Marshall Brown.
Property: Sam Simpson, Jonathan Wade.
Stewardship: Tom Gillespie, Sue Cole.
Technology: Adrienne Woods, chair.
Worship: Margaret Benjamin, Gay White.
Nominating: Ross Harris, Andrew Spainhour.
Appointments: Leigh Jones, Allison Cochran.

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PERMIT 95

Women's Retreat

from page 9

You can also choose to explore the grounds at Grandover, visit the spa, or simply relax

Back by popular demand, after dinner on Saturday will be the third annual Music Bingo, led by the dynamic duo of Jenny Ledford and Aimee Scott.

New to the retreat this year is an optional Friday night reception featuring Niki Hardy and talented local artist, Ashley Vanore. Meet Niki and Ashley and hear about the intersection of their faith with their creativity.

The retreat will wind down Sunday with a casual breakfast followed by worship. Niki Hardy will preach, and FPC's new Associate Pastor of Christian Formation, Erin Bowers, will lead communion. It is our hope that retreat attendees head home on Sunday feeling refreshed and recharged, with a boost in their spiritual lives and a closer sense of connection to other women of the church.

We hope you will join us for what is sure to be a meaningful and memorable retreat!



I am very excited to attend the retreat this January for the first time and am most looking forward to hearing from Niki Hardy – her book was witty and relatable, and I appreciate her words so much.

*– FPC member
Morgan Hood*