

first notes

first presbyterian church | fpcgreensboro.org | summer 2026

CURING COMPLETE: 4/9/26	CURING COMPLETE: 4/9/26
START: 3/31/26 - FINISH 4/2/26 CURING COMPLETE: 4/8/26	START: 4/2/26 - FINISH 4/9/26 CURING COMPLETE: 4/15/26
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START: 4/14/26 - FINISH TBD CURING COMPLETE: TBD	START: 4/14/26 - FINISH TBD CURING COMPLETE: TBD

creating something **useful** and **beautiful**
for the **glory of God** and the **good of all**



summer SUNDAYS

CHURCH SCHOOL AT 9 AM | WORSHIP IN THE SANCTUARY AT 10 AM

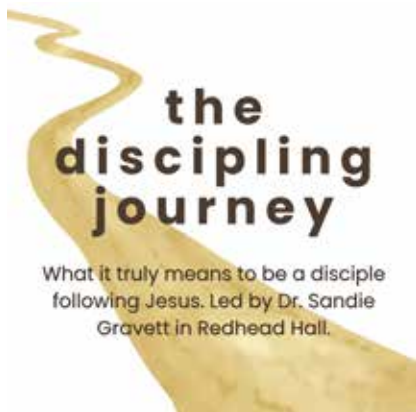
Nursery available 9:30-11:30 am | Lemonade after worship in the Virginia Gilmer Room

**PENTECOST
SUNDAY,
MAY 24**

Church School at 9: *Presbyterians and the Holy Spirit:* Discover how this profound relationship shapes our faith. Led by Matt Bussell, Redhead Hall. *Christian Theology*, led by Gerard Davidson, Main 125

Potluck after worship: Fried chicken provided, bring sides & dessert!

ADULT CLASSES



SPECIAL SUNDAYS



COMMUNION

June 7 | July 5 | August 2



BAPTISM

June 21 | July 19 | August 16



SUMMER CHOIR

August 23 & 30 | September 6

INSTALLATION OF ELDERS



August 30

KEEP THEM COMING!

Drop off in the Welcome Center or in red wagons around campus:

- Canned and nonperishable food for Greensboro Urban Ministry's food pantry. With the rise in fuel costs and inflation our neighbors need the pantry more than ever.
- Empty pill bottles that go to an international medical mission through Matthew 25 Ministries. Completely remove labels and wash bottles.
- Aluminum can tabs for the Ronald McDonald House in Winston-Salem.

REGULAR SCHEDULE WILL RETURN ON FALL KICKOFF SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

God's Coworkers



JILL DUFFIELD
Senior Pastor

Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians, attempting to bring a diverse group of believers together, calls them God's coworkers, each with gifts to help build God's building on the foundation of Jesus Christ. Knowing there could be no better cornerstone, we can be confident that the structure we build in faith will be strong and sure. Our job is to do our part in creating something useful and beautiful for the glory of God and the good of all.

Given our current state of scaffolding both within and outside of the sanctuary, Paul's metaphor resonated with me. Furthermore, our just-kicked-off strategic planning process is being led by Ministry Architects.

I can't thank you enough for your enthusiastic participation in our recent listening sessions. Over the course of three days, we heard from 139 of you. You showed up on a Saturday evening and early on a Sunday morning.

You came to worship and returned that afternoon. Those unable to attend in person filled out the forms and submitted them. Many of you came on Monday evening to hear our consultants' report. You hung around afterwards to talk about how we can get moving on their initial recommendations. Your love for this congregation and your hopes for it to thrive are evident and encouraging.

As I prayerfully pondered all that was shared, one sentence from their presentation stood out to me: "Reframe the next 18 months as a time of building long-term infrastructure for the ministry." As providence would have it, this coincides with our capital campaign project of tuckpointing the sanctuary. It seems fitting that we are working on all kinds of infrastructure so that we can be poised to take God's next big leap of faith in this place. To that end, we are populating the strategic plan implementation team, sending some of the recommendations to existing committees to tackle, working diligently on getting the member database accurate, and continuing our year-round stewardship efforts which include exploring how to use our property to generate revenue.

This is indeed a time of building long-term infrastructure so that we can enact God's vision for us in our next 3-5 years. Putting mortar in bricks isn't exciting. Correcting addresses, not the most riveting of activities. Making sure we speak to people, ask their name and remember it, seemingly not that big of a deal. And yet, as God's coworkers, as we simultaneously discern together God's blueprint for our future, this is how we will build something beautiful and useful on the sure foundation of Jesus Christ.

Get out your gloves, hard hats and reflective vests because it is time to get to work!

Peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jill". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and personal.

Supporting other changemakers with grants from the Richardson Trust

The L. Richardson Trust board has selected 13 organizations to receive 2026 grants totaling \$68,000.

The trust is part of the legacy of Lunsford Richardson, an elder and Sunday School teacher at FPC. At his death in 1919, his will provided for the trust to make grants annually “for the benefit of Home and Foreign Missions and the benevolent causes of the church.” This year 21 groups applied. The recipients are:

BackPack Beginnings

BACKPACKBEGINNINGS.ORG

Connects children and their families to resources needed to thrive. The grant will support, strengthen, and expand the soup-kitchen program, increasing the availability of prepared meals for families who use the group’s family market.

Barnabas Furniture Bank

THEBARNABASNETWORK.ORG

Provides free home furnishings for people when they need it most. This grant will help with truck, warehouse and administrative expenses.



Children’s Home Society of North Carolina

CHSNC.ORG

Founded in Greensboro in 1902, strengthens families, supports children and foster care, and helps children achieve permanent homes. The grant will help with specialized training for program specialists who help families during the critical first years of a child’s life.

Family Room Foster Care Resource Center

FAMILYROOMTRIAD.COM

Provides beds, mattresses, baby bottle supplies, and more items needed when children enter a foster home. The grant will help make sure that every child has what they need the first night because the shelves will be fully stocked.

Glenwood Together

GLENWOODTOGETHER.COM

Connects residents in that neighborhood with opportunities to give, receive, and serve one another. Funds will help expand their programming, including a community center, Urban Farm, art and science clubs, family night, summer camp, health screenings and more.

Guilford Community Care Network

Guilford Adult Health

GUILFORDCCN.ORG/GUILFORD-ADULT-HEALTH

The dental access program provides preventative and restorative dental care to uninsured adults earning zero to 200% of the federal poverty level. Funds will upgrade their electronic medical record system and add software for communication and scheduling.

Interfaith Housing Initiative

IHIGSO.ORG

Funds will be used toward the start of the construction project at Partnership Place. (More info, next page.)

Kids Poetry Basketball

KIDSPOETRYBASKETBALL.COM

Helps ages 4-13 develop creative and critical thinking skills and enhance literacy through the use of poetry and athletics to build self-esteem and self-awareness. Encourages kids to live a healthy lifestyle through physical play and healthy, eating habits to compact childhood obesity, improve, academic outcomes, and introduce financial literacy and entrepreneurship. Funds will help expand and support their youth LIFE programs.

Mustard Seed Community Health

MUSTARDSEEDHEALTH.ORG

Provides primary health care to Guilford County residents who are uninsured or underinsured.



With a special focus on the Cottage Grove Community, this group is expanding its services by moving into a larger building in the Glenwood neighborhood. Funds will help support the new facility and clinical staff to meet the increasing need in the communities they serve.

Peacehaven Farm

PEACEHAVENFARM.ORG

Serves adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities on an 89-acre farm between Greensboro and Burlington. Funds will help support and fully fund an accessible gathering space with shaded seating areas along its Permaculture pathway. The space will welcome individuals with mobility challenges, sensory differences, or communication needs making the ordinary acts of sitting, noticing, and being present together genuinely possible.

Rebuilding Hollers

REBUILDINGHOLLERS.ORG

Born out of the response to Hurricane Helene, helps restore homes, businesses, farms, and lives of the people of Yancey County and Mitchell County. Funds will help streamline workers to fulfill a long list of projects.

Recovery Cafe Greensboro

RECOVERYCAFEGSO.ORG

Supports individuals suffering from trauma, homelessness, addiction, and/or mental health challenges by fostering a support community where people can find refuge, healing, and encouragement. Funds will provide kitchen upgrades, especially a freezer and stove.

Tiny House Community Development

NCTINYHOUSES.COM

Works to reduce homelessness in Greensboro. Funds will help support Roman's Closet, providing hygiene products, clothing, shoes, towels, and other basic needs for life on the streets, and Bins for Friends, providing a bin in a secure trailer where people who are homeless can store personal items, clothing, and documents.



Opportunity to support affordable housing

Many of us are cozy and secure in our homes, but many in our city who are not. We can help our unhoused neighbors by supporting the Interfaith Housing Initiative. This group of area churches (including FPC, Holy Trinity, West Market Methodist, Westminster Presbyterian, New Garden Friends, St. James Presbyterian, Temple Emanuel and more) plus community partners has land ready and plans in place to build 6 townhomes in Partnership Place, a Greensboro Urban Ministry-supported community. The apartments cost about \$225,000 per unit, for a total of \$1.35 million. More than \$830,000 has been raised. Building can begin this summer if the remainder is in hand by June 30.

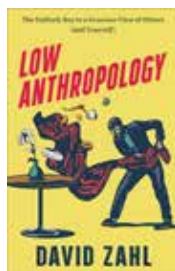
Please consider a generous donation. FPC has been a leader in assisting with housing needs through the years, including our capital campaign gift to Habitat. Several FPC members have made gifts totaling \$36,000 toward FPC's \$100,000 goal. You may donate by check to FPC with IHI on the memo line, or at ihgso.com. Contact Matt Bussell (MBUSSELL@FPCGREENSBORO.ORG or 336-478-4705) or Nancy Abrams (ABRAMSNE@AOL.COM or 336-314-2694) with questions.

summer

PSALMS | SMALL GROUPS | SEEING

Rev. Dr. Erin Kesterson Bowers invites you to dive deep into thought-provoking books this summer. She will facilitate three studies, each meeting once a month. Mark your calendars for this opportunity to connect, learn, and grow together!

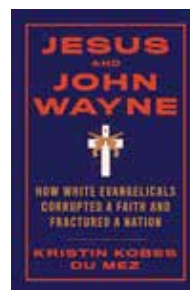
LOW ANTHROPOLOGY:
The Unlikely Key to a Gracious View of Others (and Yourself)
by David Zahl



Consider the idea that you aren't the only one with problems, and that, in fact, no one has their act together! This is a liberating view of human nature, sin, and grace, demonstrating why the good news of Christianity is both urgent and appealing.

MONDAYS
June 22, July 13, and August 3
4:30 pm, Garden Room

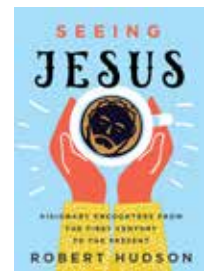
JESUS AND JOHN WAYNE: *How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation* by historian Kristin Kobes Du Mez



Follow the evolution of evangelicalism over the past 75 years with a particular interest in the emergence of the idolatries of rugged masculinity and Christian nationalism.

TUESDAYS
June 23, July 14, and August 4
5:30 pm, Garden Room

SEEING JESUS: *Visionary Encounters from the First Century to the Present*
by Robert Hudson



Learn about people throughout Christian history, from St. Francis to Julian of Norwich to Sojourner Truth to the person who saw Jesus in a coffee cup.

WEDNESDAYS
June 24, July 15, and August 5
2 pm, Garden Room

MORE BOOKS & PODCASTS

Find reading recommendations from staff and the Currie Library book clubs on page eight. The library also has an online catalog you can search (use the QR code) and several carts of giveaway books outside the office door. The library is next to the Solarium, near the Welcome Center.



Read all the Psalms from June 1 through August 31 with a day-by-day plan created by Erin Kesterson Bowers. Go to FPCGREENSBORO.ORG/ADULT-FORMATION, or pick up a copy or two around campus and share!

2

MOVEMENT AND MINDFULNESS
Walk and meditation, led by FPC member Marianne Harris. Meet 9:15 am at the Life Center. Also June 9.

7

CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING
for anyone interested in volunteering in our children and youth ministries, 9-10 am in the Garden Room. Also offered July 13 and 14. Sign up: FPCGREENSBORO.ORG/SIGN-UP.

17

COMMUNITY SERVICE GROUP
Monthly in summer, 10:30-noon in the Garden Room. Handcraft items such as blankets layettes for local nonprofits. Also July 15, August 19.

19

CAMPUS CLOSED
for Juneteenth

22

FORK & FAITH LUNCHEON
For women, noon-1 in the Life Center. \$10. RSVP by June 12 to Dolly Jennings, dj6871202@gmail.com, or 336-854-2663.

June

29

LOW ANTHROPOLOGY
Book discussion, 4:30 pm, Garden Room. *More info, opposite page.* Continues July 13 and August 3.

22

JESUS AND JOHN WAYNE
Book discussion, 5:30 pm in the Garden Room. *More info, opposite page.* Continues July 14 and August 4.

23

SEEING JESUS
Book discussion, 2 pm in the Garden Room. *More info, opposite page.* Continues July 15 and August 5.

24

PASSPORT CAMP
Rising 4th- through 7th-graders will leave for Lees McRae College, returning July 2. Please pray for safe travels and amazing experiences!



Help meet the summer blood shortfall: Donate 1-6 pm June 3 in Redhead Hall. Walk-ins welcome; make an appointment to get through faster, 1-800-RED-CROSS or FPCGREENSBORO.ORG/SIGN-UP.

Financial concerns should not hinder spiritual growth. The **Donna Chase Retreat Fund** provides scholarships for members who need help meeting conference and retreat fees. Please support the fund with a check or at FPCGREENSBORO.ORG/TOGETHER-IN-GIVING. Note that the gift is for the retreat fund.

July



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
Ages 3 through rising 3rd-graders will take off on a mission to explore God's greatness July 20-23. Have astronomical fun with bible stories, science, games, art, music & snacks. Sign up by June 30, FPCGREENSBORO.ORG/SIGN-UPS.

3

CAMPUS CLOSED
for Independence Day

8

MASSANETTA SPRINGS CONFERENCE
Keep our middle school youth in your prayers as they leave for this annual conference, returning July 12.

13

CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING
For anyone interested in volunteering in our children and youth ministries, 10-11 am in Main 125. Register at FPCGREENSBORO.ORG/SIGN-UP. Also offered July 14.

LOW ANTHROPOLOGY

Book discussion, 4:30 pm in the Garden Room. Second of three, concludes August 3.

14

JESUS AND JOHN WAYNE
Book discussion: . 5:30 pm in the Garden Room. Second of three, concludes August 4.

15

COMMUNITY SERVICE GROUP
10:30-noon in the Garden Room. The group handcrafts items such as blankets, lap quilts and layettes for local nonprofits.

SEEING JESUS

Book discussion, 2 pm in the Garden Room. Second of three, concludes August 5.

16

MONTREAT YOUTH CONFERENCE
Our high schoolers for this annual experience, returning August 1. Keep them in prayer as they *Wonder and Wander*, this year's theme.

August

3

LOW ANTHROPOLOGY
Last book discussion, 4:30 pm, Garden Room

4

JESUS AND JOHN WAYNE
Last book discussion, 5:30 pm in the Garden Room

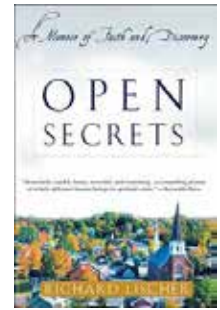
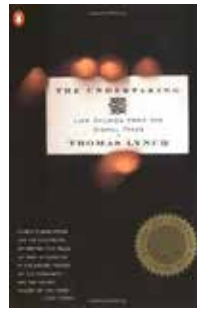
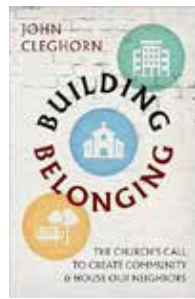
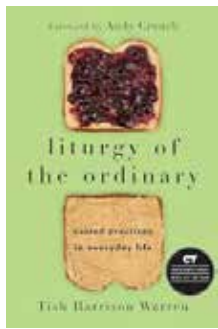
5

SEEING JESUS
Last book discussion, 2 pm in the Garden Room

19

COMMUNITY SERVICE GROUP
Handcraft blankets and more for local nonprofits, 10:30-noon in the Garden Room. Returns to weekly gatherings in September.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FPC'S STAFF



POVERTY, BY AMERICA
by Matthew Desmond

A comprehensive study of U.S. poverty which helps us imagine solutions through becoming poverty abolitionists.

BUILDING BELONGING: The Church's Call to Create Community and House Our Neighbors by John Cleghorn

How churches can embrace love and create community to house our neighbors and recognize our shared humanity. Based on Cleghorn's experience of leading Caldwell Presbyterian Church's process of transforming underutilized space into affordable housing in Charlotte.

LITURGY OF THE ORDINARY
by Tish Harrison Warren

Exploring and meditating on the small

practices and habits that form us, such as making the bed, losing your keys, checking email, and sleeping.

OPEN SECRETS by Richard Lischer
Based on Richard Lischer's (professor emeritus, Duke Divinity School) own experience, a humorous and touching look at serving as a small-town pastor.

THE UNDERTAKING by Thomas Lynch
The reflections of a poet and funeral director on dying and living. A lot more hopeful than you might imagine!

HOW TO READ CHURCHES
by Denis R. McNamara
A reference book for anyone interested in church architecture and indispensable for those planning to visit the churches and cathedrals of

Europe. Filled with beautiful diagrams and interesting facts!

DEVOTIONS: THE SELECTED POEMS OF MARY OLIVER

Oliver finished arranging this book just before her death in 2019. It has poems across her career, from her first book in 1963 to her last in 2015.

PODCASTS

THE SACRED SPEAKS, hosted by John Price. Episode 118: Author and Fr. Richard Rohr talks about his most recent – and, he says, his last – book, *The Tears of Things*.

ON BEING with Krista Tippett. Twenty years of conversations about what it means to be alive, with guests such as Mary Oliver, Thich Nhat Hanh, and Desmond Tutu.

FROM CURRIE LIBRARY BOOK CLUBS

Lady Clementine and The Only Woman in the Room, both by Marie Benedict

The Berry Pickers by Amanda Peters

Theo of Golden by Allen Levi

The Correspondent by Virginia Evans

Skylark by Paula McLean

By Any Other Name by Jodi Picoult

James by Percival Everett

The 1619 Project by Nikole Hannah-Jones

The Road That Made America by Jim Dodson

Calling by Frank Dew

Judge Stone by James Patterson and Viola Davis

Another Life and *The Things We Do for Love* by Kristin Hannah

The Sea Beyond That by Laura Spence-Ash

1,000 WORDS



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: getting ready for the palm parade in Rejoice; interior work in the sanctuary; building a Mr. Rogers neighborhood; spring Neil's Meals crew; and feet in the sand at the children's choir party.



SAVE THE DATES

FALL KICKOFF – September 13

KIDS MILESTONE CLASSES – begin September 20

YOUTH KICKOFF – September 20

BLOOD DRIVE – September 23

CAMP WEAVER SUNDAY – October 18

ADVENT – begins November 29

2027 WOMEN'S RETREAT – January 30-31

Contact Erin Bowers if you would like to contribute to our Advent devotional.



THEIR Legacy | OUR Ministry

Thank you for all the ways you bless our wonderful church. The church is also blessed by the legacies of those who have gone before us. The list on this page shows a few of the ways that legacy giving has supported our ministries so far this year.

The Generosity Committee invites you to consider your legacy by becoming part of the Paisley Heritage Fellowship, a group of members who have included the church in their estate planning. Hear their words:

“It is with joy and thankfulness that I support The Paisley Heritage Fellowship,

Betty Hilliard says. “It is a very easy but important way to ensure that FPC’s important ministries can be present and available for future FPC families and the community.”

“This church has been an instrumental part of our lives for over 50 years. In planning for an estate gift to FPC we can continue Christian ministry in our community and world,” share Al and Ginni Lineberry.

“You are friends in whom we have confided, with whom we have laughed and cried, played and prayed. You are part of our children’s village, as we have been part of yours,” Jack and Betsy Harrington say. “Including FPC in our estate planning was a decision aligned with our values.”

You can add your testament to our faith in many ways – a bequest, charitable

2024-25 LEGACY GIFTS	
Organ Preservation & Maintenance	\$200,000
Choir & Music Fund	\$61,000
Neil Dunnavant Hunger Ministries	\$113,304
Batts Pastoral Resident	\$30,270
Building Preservation Fund	\$250,000
Property Restricted Fund	\$161,579
Memorial Fund	\$300
Capital Campaign	\$3,567,708

CONTINUES, BACK COVER

Meet our newest pastoral resident

Ryan Obray graduates from Austin Seminary this spring and will join the staff in August. A bequest to the Sid & Cathy Batts Pastoral Residency Fund made it possible for the church to call him.

Tell us a bit about you.

I loved growing up in the Florida panhandle in the city of Pensacola. An only child, I frequently visited the Naval Base since my dad is a retired Air Force navigator and my mom is the food and beverage director at the NAS Pensacola. Growing up, I spent most of my summers in Maryland with my grandparents and cousins. I attended college in my hometown at the University of West Florida, earning my bachelor's of history, exploring the idea of a career in public history or ministry. While there, I met my amazing fiancée, Jessica. We are excited to get married in late June.

How did you get to Austin Seminary and what has that experience been like?

I have felt a call to ministry since high school and am grateful that it led me to Austin Seminary. During college and the year after graduating, it was not an easy yes to enroll in seminary. I struggled to discern if this was truly my calling. I learned about Austin while working at a college Montreat conference. I knew it was the right decision when I visited for a Discovery Weekend and fell in love with the community and campus. Seminary allowed me the space to grow in my faith and understand the role of a pastor. The community of friends and future colleagues here is loving, joyful, and passionate about their calling to ministry, which encourages me to live into my gifts as well.

What drew you to FPC? What are you most excited about?

While looking for pastoral residency programs, FPC constantly remained my top choice. What stood out to me is the authentic community. I got the sense that FPC is an environment where people, questions, and new ideas are welcomed. I particularly loved learning about the ways that FPC is active in caring and loving the local community through ministries such as Hot Dish & Hope. When we were visiting Greensboro, the love and care poured on us further affirmed our sense of call. I am excited to get started in ministry in a supportive and caring community and to join a skilled and collaborative pastoral staff.

Who is your favorite theologian and why?

Liturgical scholar Gordon Lathrop. During my final



Ryan with his fiancée, Jessica. They will marry in June in Pensacola, Fla.

semester of seminary, I took a class where we practiced serving the Sacraments and focused on the minister's role in them. We read Lathrop's book *The Pastor: A Spirituality*. The way Lathrop talks about the Sacraments' power and the minister's responsibility to help communicate it has been eye-opening for me. Lathrop expands that the gospel is the food being served and it's the minister's job to "set out the food." His work helps me to expand my understanding of my role as a minister.

What are some of your favorite things?

Food: Spaghetti and gummy worms
Hobbies: Golf, building Lego sets, Photography
Podcast: And Also with You, The Sporkful, NPR
Throughline
TV Show: The Office
Movie: La La Land
Holiday: Flag Day
Liturgical Holiday: Ash Wednesday

What is something about you that might surprise the people who know you best?

I am a metalhead. My middle and high school friends at my Christian school listened to metal and punk music. We were still good kids. The worst I got in trouble for was wearing a rock band t-shirt to school. Metal and rock got me into learning guitar and appreciating music more. I have continued to love metal and this past year, I went to an AC/DC and Megadeth concert in Texas with a friend (also now pastor) from high school.

First Presbyterian Church
617 N. Elm St.
Greensboro, NC 27401-2095

Non-Profit Org.
US POSTAGE PAID
Greensboro, NC
PERMIT 95

Legacy

FROM PAGE 10

remainder trust, life insurance, IRAs and more. Your gift may be designated for something specific or can be used as needed. For example, at this time general gifts are used first to replenish the maintenance emergency fund and then the Neil's Meals Hunger Ministries fund, to maintain their planned balances. After that, undesignated legacy gifts are added to the church budget.

Legacy gifts – of any amount – will have incredible meaning to you and your family and those who come after you. Please let the

church know of your intention to leave a legacy. The finance office has a simple form which is not binding or irreversible; we all know that circumstances can change.

“If we can help sustain our missions to love and to bring joy in life and in death, then we want to do so,” the Harringtons share. “Our final gifts will not be earth-shattering, but coupled with yours they may be life-giving.”

We welcome you to join these friends and others in the Paisley Heritage Fellowship.

LEARN MORE

Use the QR Code and look for Plan Your Legacy on the page, or contact:



- Christine Ciccio, Finance Director, CCIACCIO@FPCGREENSBORO.ORG
- Rob Peddrick, RPEDDRICK@GMAIL.COM
- Nancy Abrams, ABRAMSNE@AOL.COM

for information and the simple form to fill out.