
FIRST WORD



The Monthly Newsletter of
First Presbyterian Church of Lenoir, North Carolina

No. 4 of 2024, A.D.

April, 2024

WORD FROM THE SCRIPTURE

- ¹ Answer me when I call, O God of my right!
You gave me room when I was in distress.
Be gracious to me, and hear my prayer.
- ² How long, you people, shall my honor suffer shame?
How long will you love vain words and seek after lies? *Selah*
- ³ But know that the LORD has set apart the faithful for himself;
the LORD hears when I call to him.
- ⁴ When you are disturbed,^a do not sin;
ponder it on your beds, and be silent. *Selah*
- ⁵ Offer right sacrifices,
and put your trust in the LORD.
- ⁶ There are many who say, "O that we might see some good!
Let the light of your face shine on us, O LORD!"
- ⁷ You have put gladness in my heart
more than when their grain and wine abound.
- ⁸ I will both lie down and sleep in peace,
for you alone, O LORD, make me lie down in safety.

Psalm 4
New Revised Standard Version



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

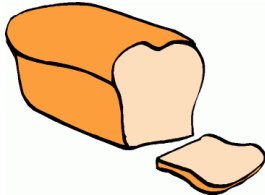
Yoke to Go will be Monday, April 8. We will meet at the church at 12:30 to pack the bags.



We are finishing our study of *FORGIVENESS: A Lenten Study* by Marjorie J. Thompson this month. Please join us for this very meaningful time of learning and fellowship.

BREAK BREAD SUNDAY

Break Bread Sunday is the first Sunday of the month and we meet for breakfast and a short program before worship. Sunday April 7 2024 the program will be on looking back as we plan for our future . Please join us at 9:15 for a bite to eat and bit of learning.



"³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you something to drink? ³⁸ And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you or naked and gave you clothing? ³⁹ And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' ⁴⁰ And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.'" Matthew 25:37-40

We are collecting non-perishable food for donation to the Pay It Forward Food Pantry as an on-going mission project. There will be a basket for donations just inside the sanctuary doors. So pick up some extra cans of vegetables and fruits, some mac and cheese dinners, or maybe some canned meats or breakfast cereal when you are at the grocery store and bring them with you when you come to church.

PASTOR'S WORD

Dearest Friends,

Within this past year I have spent much time in prayer and conversation with family and close friends about my time in ministry with you. I never hesitate to say these have been the richest years for me as a pastor. You have given me the opportunity to teach, lead you in worship and spend wonderful times of friendship and fellowship with you. You have encouraged and allowed me to stretch and grow. It has been so freeing to be with a congregation who live out the inclusive love of God. My faith in and commitment to follow Christ has only become stronger. I am so very grateful – and still in awe – that I have had the privilege to be you pastor. You are a gracious, loving, servant congregation – and a lot of fun as well!

However, the time has come for me to pursue retirement. Having just turned seventy, I do covet time with my family and opportunities to explore some other ways to use my pastoral skills. As you know I have long wanted to invest time in teaching and training churches to welcome people with disabilities into the full life of the church. I also hope from time to time to be able to lead some retreats or seminars on any number of issues. Through I will miss you greatly, I also have peace about this decision.

Louis is retiring July first this summer. We are so looking forward to having the chance to be together, with the freedom to visit, travel and spend time with relatives and friends. Above all we cherish the time with Sara Grace and Seth.

My official date of retirement will be August first. From now until then, it is my commitment to work with the Thriving Congregations team and you to prepare for the next phase of First Presbyterian's ministry and future. I believe that God has much more for you to do.

Together we need to prayerfully discern God's guidance. I hope and pray that you will commit to gathering together at certain times so we can express our gratitude and joy for God's goodness to us and also to have time to grieve what we will miss.

Another important part of this process will be looking to the future. How will First Presbyterian Church continue to serve our community? What is the legacy you want to be building?

I have every reason to believe that there is a pastor with the energy, creativity and vision to continue to lead you forward as a thriving church. I do truly believe it is time for someone with fresh ideas and a deep commitment to Jesus Christ to lead you forward.

I want to inform you of this decision now so we do have time to pray and plan together. It is the policy of the presbytery that upon my retirement there is a one-year period of time that will extend to after a new pastor is called when I cannot return to officiate at funerals, weddings, preach or attend other church related functions. Although it will be difficult to be apart it is essential for you to learn to work with, trust, and love your new pastor.

Know how deeply I love you and how grateful I am for each of you. Above all, I give thanks to God for the gift of sharing in ministry with you. I will hold you in my heart and prayers always.

Lovingly and Sincerely,

Beth Ann

CALENDAR EVENTS

8 – Yoke-To-Go

WORD IN SONG



HIS EYE IS ON THE SPARROW

Why should I feel discouraged? Why should the shadows come? Why should my heart be lonely and long for heaven and home, when Jesus is my portion? My constant friend is he: his eye is on the sparrow, and I know he watches me; his eye is on the sparrow, and I know he watches me.

REFRAIN

I sing because I'm happy, I sing because I'm free,
for his eye is on the sparrow, and I know he watches me.

"Let not our heart be troubled," his tender word I hear, and resting on his goodness, I lose my doubts and fears; through by the path he leadeth but one step I may see: his eye is on the sparrow, and I know he watches me; his eye is on the sparrow, and I know he watches me.

REFRAIN

Whenever I am tempted, whenever clouds arise, when song gives place to sighing, when hope within me dies, I draw the closer to him; from care he sets me free: his eye is on the sparrow, and I know he watches me; his eye is on the sparrow, and I know he watches me.

REFRAIN

TEXT: Civilla Durfee Martin, 1905
MUSIC: Charles H. Gabriel, 1905



11 – Dotty Groom
13 – Dianne Graber
20 – Donna Fellers



Our Prayer List

Don Austin
Bob Carter (Beth Ann's brother-in-law)
Bonnie Dale
John Frayser (Harriet's nephew)
Nancy Moore (Jana Wike's mother)
Susan Powers
Scroggs Family
JJ (Jennifer) Sime
Rev. Byron Wade
Anne White (Lynda Renegar's sister)
Kristen White (Lynda Renegar's niece)
Frank White (Harriett's nephew-in-law)

