

# The Window

The Newsletter of Fort Hill Presbyterian Church

## Message From the Pastor

### Is There a War on Christmas?

Each year at this time, this question rises up. We had the “Starbucks red cup” controversy. Some were offended that they had dropped the images of snowflakes, sleds, and wreaths for the simple red cup. Since those images are not biblical anyway, most people I know were not really offended. Nor has there been outrage over the mermaid-siren who graces the cup every day of the year. According to Greek mythology she lured sailors to their deaths with her beautiful, mesmerizing song and seduction.

I wonder what Jesus would say about our fascination with consumer products that sell Christmas. In early American history the Puritans were against the Christ-Mass. They would likely be against images of Christ or Christmas being on products. Christmas celebrations were illegal for part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. But in 1870 Christmas became a Federal holiday.

In today's world it seems we need to ponder the prophets of old and reflect on Jesus coming into the world rather than fuss about a war on Christmas. We would do well to worship with expectant hearts the coming of the Christ-child into a world torn apart by violence, greed, and hate. I hope Christians would focus on caring for the needy, serving the lonely, clothing the naked, welcoming the stranger, and loving God through daily and weekly worship. That is what Christmas is about.

Each day our family prays the Moravian blessing which begins, “Come, Lord Jesus, our guest to be and bless these gifts bestowed by thee.” May we welcome our Lord Jesus this year like we would our most honored guest. May we welcome his children and one another the same way.

We are on the Way to Bethlehem...

*Laura Smith Conrad, Pastor*



***Joining together on a journey of Christian faith, we seek to be Disciples of Christ and to share God's love in our community and around the world.***

***We do this as we Glorify God, Grow Disciples, Meet Human Needs.***

December 2015

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#### Fort Hill Presbyterian Church

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[www.forthillchurch.org](http://www.forthillchurch.org)

Laura Smith Conrad, Pastor

Mary Morrison, Associate Pastor for Discipleship

Kelly Roman, Associate Pastor for University Ministry

Maggie Alsup, PSA Intern for University Ministry

Cyndi Davis, Children's Ministry Coordinator

Margaret MacKay, Director of Music

Lori Houck, Administrator

Judy Crawford, Administrative Assistant

Scott Thrailkill, Facilities Caretaker

## Scriptures for

- 12/6 2nd Sunday of Advent**  
Mal. 3:1-4; Luke 1:68-79;  
Phil. 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-6
- 12/13 3rd Sunday of Advent**  
Zeph. 3:14-20; Isa. 12:2-6;  
Phil. 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18
- 12/20 4th Sunday of Advent**  
Micah 5:2-5a; Luke 1:46b-55;  
Heb. 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45  
(46-55)
- 12/27 1st Sunday after Christmas Day**  
I Sam. 2:18-20, 26; Ps. 148;  
Col. 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52

### January

#### *The Window* Deadline

The deadline for announcements, articles, and features for the January issue of *The Window* is Wednesday, **December 15, 2015**

Please email your item as a Microsoft Word document to the church office at [window@forthillchurch.org](mailto:window@forthillchurch.org) or type the item directly into your email and send. If you don't have access to a computer, you can leave the item in Lori Houck's box in the FHOG office.

## Join Us as We Prepare for Christ's Coming!

### Advent Season begins November 29

*Join your Fort Hill Church family as we celebrate the Advent and Christmas Season together.*

#### Sunday Morning Worship Service Times:

8:30 am in Tartan Hall / 10:30 am in the Sanctuary

#### Advent Christian Education Studies: *(beginning November 29)*

##### *Sent: Delivering The Gift of Hope at Christmas*

Sundays, November 29—December 22 from 9:30—10:30 am in Room E205 with the Seekers.

##### *Mary Had a Baby: An Advent Bible Study based on African Spirituals*

Sundays, November 29—December 22 from 9:30—10:30 am in Room E212 with the Netmenders.

##### *Taste and See: Experiencing the Stories of Advent and Christmas*

Sundays, December 6—December 22 from 9:30—10:30 am in the Club Room with the Sojourners.

##### *Mary Had a Baby: An Advent Bible Study based on African Spirituals*

Will be offered on Wednesday mornings, December 2, 9, and 16 from 10–11:30 am in the Club Room and Wednesday evenings, December 2 and 9 from 6:15–7:15 pm in the Club Room.

#### Special Events:

Saturday, December 12 — **Children's Gift Day** from 2:00-4:30 pm

Sunday, December 13 — **A Service a Lessons & Carols** *(both services)*

Sunday, December 13 — **Angel Vespers**

Dinner at 5:00 pm in Tartan Hall followed by real live nativity and carol singing in the Sanctuary at 6:00 pm. Children's choirs will lead our program.

#### Christmas Eve Services of Worship in the Sanctuary:

5:00 pm — Family-friendly Christmas Eve Service

9:00 pm — Candlelight Communion Service with the Chancel Choir

#### New Year's Sunday, December 27:

One worship service at 10:30 am in the Sanctuary. No 8:30 am worship or Sunday school this day.

## The Clemson University Singers

present their annual  
Christmas Concert

Sunday, December 6  
at 7:00 pm

in the sanctuary of  
Fort Hill Presbyterian Church

Directed by Dr. Justin Durham &  
accompanied by Trevis Young

Sponsored by the FHPC Music  
Ministry

## Bless the Food Before Us, the Family Beside Us, and the Love Between Us

Starting on November 29, you will have the opportunity to "adopt" a family within our local community and provide them with food for the holidays. This is a new way to do Christmas food baskets at Fort Hill! Fort Hill Church is sponsoring a blessing tree that will be located in the main foyer. This is a very hands-on family-oriented activity. Please consider choosing a card off of the blessing tree with the intention of praying for, shopping for, and delivering the food listed on the card to the family you have adopted (expect to spend \$45). On December 19 at 9:00 am we will meet for a pancake breakfast in Tartan Hall. We will pray over this mission and the food we are about to deliver within our community. Food delivery will be from 10—noon on December 19 after the pancake breakfast. What if you can sponsor a family but can't shop or deliver the food? Please let us know and we will find someone to shop and deliver for you. What a blessing to be a blessing.

Heather Wright, Helen Mohr, and Beth Durham are leading this mission.

## Choir Corner

As I prepare to write this last article for 2015, I am in the middle of working with choirs to polish up the notes, rhythms, dynamics, etc. for our Advent and Christmas seasons. Lots of behind the scenes work taking place.

Typing the phrase “behind the scenes” makes me think of many parts of my own life and the life of any church. There are many wheels that have to turn to make all run smoothly. I will go ahead and say up front that I am not trying to name everything I can think of because I would inadvertently omit some, but I am mentioning a few that come to mind.

With our Angel Vespers program given by our children and youth, I know there are people working behind the scenes to assure that costumes are ready, parts are assigned, the stage is set, the choirs are rehearsed, an accompanist and sound tech are notified, the scripts are available, etc. Lots of hands and minds working together.

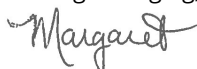
With Lessons and Carols, we secure readers at both services for the various scriptures, the bells are ready to ring, the choirs are ready to sing, the plan is laid out for who moves where and when and to what microphone, guest instrumentalists are contacted, music is sent, an extra rehearsal is scheduled, bulletin information is typed and proofread many times (we still miss a few things), a sound person is in the booth, etc., etc.

At home, I am texting our children and family members to see who will be home and when, food is planned, names are drawn, lists are share of who wants what, there are enough bed and pack-n-plays to sleep in and for goodness sake, try to get any and everything the grandchildren want!!!

You know how it works — lots of list-making, emails, texts, phone calls — to make things come together as you hope. And in the midst of it all — don't forget the true meaning of these special times and events. Let's be thankful for all the blessings bestowed upon us, and not pat ourselves too much on the back! Let's remember as we sing “O Come, All Ye Faithful”, what it truly means to be faithful and “what child” we are faithful to.

I am grateful to all of our staff, musicians, and this wonderful body of Christ at Fort Hill. Merry Christmas to you all and many blessings in the new year.

Smiling-n-Singing,



## Children's Ministry Update

December is full of wonderful family traditions and exciting times. We hope you are planning for your children aged 2 years through 5th grade to join us for **Gift Day on Saturday, December 12** from 9:30—11:30. Gift Day has been a long standing tradition of Fort Hill. Children are able to make special gifts for their loved ones. This year a mission component supporting the Food Basket Delivery is being added. We are asking you to donate any unused Christmas stockings you may have among your decorations. Items will be added to these stockings and given to families receiving the food baskets. Please be sure to add your child's name to the roster located in the covered arcade. Each group has a limited number of spaces to ensure ample time and supplies for planned projects. The registration fee is \$15 per participant.

Angel Vespers is another long standing Fort Hill tradition. This retelling of the Christmas Story involves children of all ages with the help of our youth and congregation. Some of the participants' parts are assigned prior to this special evening, other parts are given to the children attending Angel Vespers. The congregation participates by singing Carols while our young actors find their places. Whether this is your first of fiftieth Angel Vespers, you will find a special spirit of Christmas here. Angel Vespers is Sunday, December 13 in the Sanctuary. It begins at 6:00. A 5:00 soup supper (chicken strips for children) is planned in Tartan Hall. Make reservations to join us for supper to [cyndi.davis@forthillchurch.org](mailto:cyndi.davis@forthillchurch.org).

Advent Calendars for each family may be found in the Covered Arcade.

Wishes to all for a very special holiday.



## Sunday Servants

### Pastor on Call

12/6 Mary Morrison  
12/13 Laura Conrad  
12/20  
12/27

### Elder at the Font—8:30 Service

12/6 Bob Jones  
12/13 Wayne Madison  
12/20 Jerry Reel

### Elder at the Font—10:45 Service

12/6 Jay Jones  
12/13 Tina Mostertz  
12/20 Nancy Spittler  
12/27 Gail Williams

### Infant - Infant/Toddler Walking 2's

12/6 Stella Hudak  
12/13 Billie Jackson  
12/20 Ally Young  
12/27 Janna McKale

### 2 & 3 Year Old Nursery

12/6 Lisa Britt  
12/13 Stephanie Scott  
12/20 Jenifer Griffis  
12/27 Susan Beckwith

### 4/5 Year Old Nursery

12/6 Jackie Ellis  
12/13 Erika & Mandy Hays  
12/20 Elizabeth Bost  
12/27 Claudette Bennett

## PSA Meals

Thank you to all the groups and individuals who provided meals for PSA this semester! The food was delicious and provided nourishment and fellowship to all students who entered PSA's doors. The meals you provided are a true affirmation of Fort Hill's support of Clemson students.

As we begin for spring 2016 semester, we are seeking your help. If you or a group you're a member of would like to support our Clemson students please consider signing up for a Sunday meal for the spring semester. The open dates are: January 10, 17, 31, February 21, 28, March 6, April 3, 17, 24. Please sign up for a meal by contacting Maggie Alsup at [psa.intern@forthillchurch.org](mailto:psa.intern@forthillchurch.org).

Thank you again for all of your support of PSA and it's mission to serve Clemson students. Your support and prayers make this program possible!

## Announcements & Concerns



### Christian Sympathy is extended to:

- **Rita Van Lenten and family** in the death of Rita's sister, Connie DiMarzio.
- **Betty Pettigrew and family** in the death of Betty's step-son, **Bob Pettigrew** on November 7 in Savannah, GA.
- **Helen Efland and family** in the death of her husband and church member **Tom Efland** on November 10 in Lexington, SC.



### Congratulations on the birth of:

- **Harrison Boggan Trammell**, son of Harrison & LaBruce Trammell, born October 29, 2015. Proud grandparents are **Hack & Cheryl Trammell**.

**Men of the Church. Tuesday, December 1, 8:00 am at Paws Diner**, Hwy 123 toward Seneca, across from Bountyland Exxon, for breakfast. They will expect us and provide a separate area for us. In addition, we are planning on three or four evening meetings a year, with dinner, and a speaker that would be attractive to our younger members and their sons. We want to encourage young boys in particular to come with their fathers and enjoy an all male atmosphere. A number of our current members remember starting their association with Men of the Church in that fashion and it had a positive influence on their lives. Meeting times are in a state of flux due to reconstruction, but we will keep you informed.

**Advent studies begin November 29.** Join your friends in celebrating Advent by studying together. See the Advent events article on Page 2 for more details regarding the different Advent study opportunities available.

**Gift Day will be Saturday, December 12 from 9:30-11:30 am.** This is a wonderful event for ages 2 years old through 5th grade. Sign up sheets are in the Narthex or you can email Ally Young at [allytiger@hotmail.com](mailto:allytiger@hotmail.com).

## News From Presbyterian Women

### FAMILY PROMISE: OUR HOME MISSIONS AT HOME!

**Family Promise Coordinators Linda Gahan and Mary Barron wish to thank First Baptist Church for the use of their facilities during our scheduled week to host Family Promise.** Due to our current renovation project, we were unable to house our guests on our church campus. We also thank all of the volunteers from Fort Hill Presbyterian and the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Clemson who donated hours during the week of November 15–22 to care for our Family Promise family in need. Our volunteers provided our guests with hot cooked evening meals, continental breakfasts, sack lunches, evening activities, and a comfortable, safe environment. Fort Hill Presbyterian showed HOSPITALITY in a big way! The next week to house families will be February 28—March 6, 2016. Please put that date on your calendars and be a part of our Mission-at-Home opportunity! Share the good feeling of offering a hand-up to those families in our own county who are in need! It is one way our congregation can address the problem of 1,506 children in our own Pickens County designated as "homeless".

We would also like to extend a big **thank you** for all of you who donated boxes for **Samaritan's Purse** benefitting underprivileged children. Your generosity means so much to so many! Thank you, also, to those who cooked and cleaned up for the **Minister's Cook-off on November 5!**

### Honorary Life Membership Nominating Forms

Each year we honor a member of our church with the Honorary Life Membership Award at our annual PW Birthday Luncheon. This award is given to a dedicated Christian whose witness, long and dedicated service, and spiritual influence in our community reflect the love of God and His church. Prayerfully consider the Presbyterian woman (or man) you would like to nominate for her (his) outstanding lifetime contributions to Fort Hill Presbyterian Church. Nomination forms are due by **January 11, 2016**.

### Attention ALL WOMEN for all Fort Hill Presbyterian

**Mark your calendars now for our Winter Retreat on Saturday, January 23, 2016, 9:30am—3:00pm at Keowee Key Lakeview Room. The cost of \$20 includes a soup and salad lunch.** Ready to be inspired and renewed? Come and join us for our annual January retreat designed with you in mind! Our guest speaker is Patricia Sprinkle, Presbyterian elder, author, and humanitarian. Her topic is "God's Women Dream Big". **Get your name on the list by contacting Jayne Fort at 944-0347, Susan Brown at 654-6625, or Helen Wooten at 654,4201.**

This retreat is open to ALL WOMEN of our church. You do not need to be a member of a circle to attend. We want every woman hungry for fellowship and spiritual renewal to come and join us for this soul-nourishing event!

### Dates to Remember

- ◆ **January 11, 2016**      **Deadline for Honorary Life Membership Applications**
- ◆ **January 23, 2016**      **PW Retreat**

Submitted by Mary Barron, PW Publicity Chairman  
[mb1cb1@bellsouth.net](mailto:mb1cb1@bellsouth.net) or (864) 885-9342

## 2016 Stewardship Campaign

Seeing so many come forward with their pledges on Commitment Sunday to show their support for the missions of Fort Hill Presbyterian Church for next year was a truly exciting event. For all of you that have submitted your 2016 pledge, THANK YOU! For those who haven't pledged yet, it certainly is not too late. You may mail your pledge, drop it by the office, drop it in the collection plate on any Sunday, or pledge online at:

<http://forthillchurch.org/worship/stewardship/online-pledge-card>

We are working on the 2016 budget and your pledge is very important to that process. The overlap between the Stewardship season and the Thanksgiving season is very appropriate. Our pledges to support the diverse missions of the church are a very tangible expression of our thanks for our many blessings.

The 2016 Stewardship Committee



## FHPC Staff Spotlight

### Mary Morrison, AP Discipleship

In October of 2013, the Reverend Mary Morrison was called to serve as Fort Hill's Associate Pastor for Discipleship. In this role Mary primarily is responsible for coordinating pastoral care, staffing the Deacons, the Christian Education Ministry and the Fellowship Ministry, and preaching, administering the sacraments, and conducting memorial services.

She works closely with the Deacon Executive Committee in their roles of Moderator, Vice Moderator, and Secretary to help oversee, equip, and support the deacons in their many ways of serving the congregation through Compassion, Witness, and Service Ministries. Mary is pleased with the faithful work our deacons provide to members of the congregation, especially in times of challenge, illness, death, and transitions.

In the area of Christian Education, she is charged with helping Fort Hill develop its adult educational/spiritual formation opportunities as well as oversight of the entire CE Ministry providing guidance to the ministry volunteers and working with staff in children's and youth ministries. She has cultivated The Seminary at The Fort with intentional focus on topics of Bible, Theology, Church History, Practices of Faith, and Engagement with the World. Having visiting scholars has added to the depth of study on various issues.

In the area of Fellowship, Mary supports the work of this ministry by encouraging the congregation to participate in cross-generational opportunities. These times connect church families with college students in casual settings to help build relationships beyond the sanctuary on Sunday mornings. Many of the Fellowship Ministry events are focused on children and families, such as Trunk or Treat or Angel Vespers, but all are open to the entire congregation to celebrate what God is doing in our midst.

Mary's days are spent between pastoral care visits, meetings with ministries and leaders, including the Session, reviewing curriculum, teaching Bible studies, dropping in on PW Circles, the Prayer Shawl Ministry, and occasional Circles of Care gatherings and SALT groups. Wherever her ministry of discipleship takes her, Mary most enjoys engaging in life through conversation and serving alongside Fort Hill members.

Currently Mary is also staff liaison to the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee that is searching for an associate to serve with youth and missions ministries. In the interim, Mary mentored Kristyn Ball last year and is staffing the newly formed Youth Ministry Team that grew out of the Youth Architects assessment.

With the renovation project at hand Mary helps to check on the progress of the educational spaces and communicate with teachers and leaders. Mary looks forward to the completion of the project and already can see how the renovated classrooms that we presently can use are making a difference.

Mary's husband Mark joined Fort Hill when she was called here. Mark is active through the choir and serves as a Bridge Builder with the Senior Highs on Sunday mornings. He is also active in a SALT group. Together Mary and Mark have two daughters, Hannah and Sarah. Hannah lives in Charlotte and is working on her masters in teaching at Winthrop. Sarah is a member of Fort Hill and is active in the choir, the young adult ministry, and serves on Session as an elder for the Worship Ministry. Sarah works in regulatory services of the plant industry at the university.

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### Lori Houck, Office Administrator

Lori joined the staff at Fort Hill as Office Administrator in April of 2009. Her primary responsibilities are the day-to-day financial operations, office/facility management, and supervision of the Administrative Assistant and Facilities Caretaker. Her previous work experience included office management, accounting and human resources positions in church, non-profit, and corporate environments. Lori lives in Seneca and has two grown children, Sean and Sarah. In her spare time, she enjoys knitting, reading, and spending time with family and friends.

## Announcements & Concerns

**Sunday, December 13 — Lessons & Carols** in the morning services and **Angel Vespers**, a special event for all ages to enjoy in the evening. Our children perform the Christmas story and the congregation helps by singing carols. Our drama presentation begins at **6:00 pm** in the Sanctuary. Join us for supper fellowship at **5:00 pm** by sending a RSVP with the number of adults and children attending to [cyndi.davis@forthillchurch.org](mailto:cyndi.davis@forthillchurch.org).

**Children's Advent Calendars** (one per family) are available in the covered arcade.

**Christmas stockings** are being collected by **Children's Ministry** to be used with the Christmas food delivery. Please leave donated stocking in the Christmas baskets in the Narthex and the Education Building by **December 6**.

**Bless the Food Before Us, the Family Beside Us, and the Love Between Us.** Fort Hill Christmas Food Boxes are being revamped. This year, you will have the opportunity to "adopt" a family within our local community and provide them with food for the holidays. This is a new way to do Christmas food baskets at Fort Hill! Fort Hill is sponsoring our own blessing tree that will be located in the covered arcade. This is a very hands-on family oriented activity. Please consider choosing a card off the blessing tree with the intention of praying for, shopping for, and delivering the food listed on the card to the family you have adopted (expect to spend \$45). Contact **Heather Wright, Beth Durham, or Helen Mohr** with questions. More details to come!

### Camp Buc Fundraising Effort

For years the BUC Outdoor Center has been a place where children, youth, college students, and adults have met God in the wilderness of the North Carolina mountains. With reductions in giving to the Foothills Presbytery, the Presbytery voted to have a Commission determine the next steps for the Buc Outdoor Center whether to set up a 501c3 for ongoing mission, place in land conservancy, or to sell the property. To operate summer camp in 2016, a fundraising deadline has been extended to December 31, 2015. \$220,000 is needed to make repairs and fund staff for the summer program. If you are called by the Spirit of God to support this ministry, please do so.

# December Fort Hill Church Activities

## Tuesday, December 1

8:00 am Men of Church Breakfast — Paw's Diner  
5:30 pm University Ministry Meeting — PSA Student Center

## Wednesday, December 2

10:00 am Advent Bible Study — Club Room  
6:15 pm Advent Bible Study — Club Room

## Thursday, December 3

7:00 pm Young Adult Bible Study — Spitlers' Home  
7:00 pm Hollywood Jesus — PSA Student Center

## Friday, December 4

10:00 am Construction Progress Meeting — Conference Room

## Saturday, December 5

9:00 am Rehearsal Clemson University Singers — Sanctuary

## Sunday, December 6

11:45 am Deacon's Meeting — Club Room  
6:00 pm PSA Dinner & Communion Service — PSA Center  
7:00 pm Clemson University Singers Concert — Sanctuary

## Monday, December 7

12:15 pm PW Circle 1 — Club Room  
3:00 pm PW Circle 5 — Club Room  
4:00 pm Brownie Meeting — Room E209

## Tuesday, December 8

5:00 pm Christian Education Meeting — Room E208  
5:00 pm Girl Scouts — Club Room  
6:30 pm Finance Meeting — Club Room  
7:30 pm PW Circle 2 Meeting — Tartan Hall

## Wednesday, December 9

8:30 am Preschool Snow Houses — Club Room  
10:00 am Advent Bible Study — Conference Room  
6:15 pm Advent Bible Study — Conference Room  
7:30 pm Senior High Youth Bible Study — Tartan Hall  
9:00 pm PSA Sardines — Sanctuary/Tartan Hall

## Thursday, December 10

8:30 am Preschool Snow House Assembly — Club Room  
7:00 pm Young Adult Bible Study — Spitlers' home

## Saturday, December 12

9:30 am Gift Day — Education Bldng/Tartan Hall/Club Room

## Sunday, December 13

Lessons & Carols Services — 8:30 & 10:45 worship  
5:00 pm Angel Vespers — Tartan Hall/Sanctuary

## Monday, December 14

9:30 am Preschool — Sanctuary  
9:30 am PW Trinity Circle — Club Room  
4:00 pm Brownies — Room E209  
5:00 pm Christian Action Meeting — Conference Room

## Tuesday, December 15

9:30 am Preschool — Sanctuary  
9:30 am PW Coordinating Team Meeting — Club Room

## Wednesday, December 16

10:00 am Advent Bible Study — Club Room  
12:15 am Pastors' Lunch at Foothills Community  
7:30 pm Senior High Youth Bible Study — Tartan Hall

## Thursday, December 17

9:30 am Preschool Christmas Program — Tartan Hall

## Saturday, December 19

9:00 am Pancake Breakfast/Food Box Delivery — Tartan Hall

## Sunday, December 20

4:00 pm Christmas Caroling in Community — Tartan Hall

## Tuesday, December 22

5:30 pm Member Meeting — Conference Room

## Thursday, December 24

Christmas Eve — Church Offices Closed  
5:00 pm Family Friendly Christmas Eve Service — Sanctuary  
9:00 pm Candlelight Communion Christmas Eve — Sanctuary

## Thursday, December 24

Christmas Day — Church Offices Closed

## Sunday, December 27

One Worship Service Only

## Thursday, December 31

New Year's Eve — Office Closing at 12:30 pm

## Recurring Weekly Activities

### Sunday

8:30 am Worship Service — Tartan Hall  
9:30 am The Bridge Faith Formation Groups  
10:45 am Worship Service — Sanctuary  
4:30 pm Middle School Youth Group  
6:00 pm Senior High Youth Group  
6:00 pm PSA Dinner & Program — PSA Student Center

### Tuesday

9:30 am Staff Meeting — Conference Room  
7:15 pm Foothills Chorale — Choir Room

### Wednesday

6:15 pm Children's Choirs (K-3rd grade) — Room E208  
6:15 pm Chancel Bells — Choir Room  
6:45 pm Children/MS Choir (4th—8th grades) — Room E208  
7:30 pm Chancel Choir — Choir Room

### Thursday

7:00 pm Young Adult Bible Study — Spitlers' home

### Weekly AA Meetings

Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday evenings at 8:00 pm and Friday at 12:30 pm in Room A104 of the Admin Building Basement.

# December Birthdays & Anniversaries



- 12/1 Oron Broome
- 12/2 Ryan MacRae  
Vernie Roberts
- 12/3 Donald Spitler
- 12/4 Elise Halbig  
Linda Newmark
- 12/5 Lynn Carlson  
Chip Egan  
Alice Kennedy  
Jensen McInnis  
Hazel Sparks
- 12/6 Laura Hunter  
Emily Miller
- 12/7 Melissa Cason  
Marchita Culpepper  
Joanna Walling
- 12/8 Maddie Bruce  
Blackie Cook
- 12/9 Olivia Mueller  
Addie Nebesky  
Elizabeth Sisson
- 12/10 David Collins  
Meredith Lecroy

- 12/11 Lori Houck  
Helen Wooten
- 12/12 Amelia Alexander  
Leslie Hicklin
- 12/13 David Bruce  
Nikki Wald
- 12/15 Danny Gregg  
Melanie Job  
Carter McInnis  
Mike Money
- 12/16 Crew Lecroy  
Betty Long  
Allen Smith  
Katherine Thomas
- 12/17 Cleo Gregg  
Jillian McLaurin  
Nickie Mueller
- 12/18 Lee D'Andrea
- 12/19 Eric Mueller
- 12/20 Chuck Conrad  
Sarah Pollard  
Stephanie Pollard  
Fred Shepherd  
Geoffrey Wilson  
Maggie Alsup
- 12/21 Will Hiott  
Mike Nebesky

- Rick Waldrop  
Tipton Wright
- 12/22 Bryce Smith  
Jason Wilson
- 12/23 Debbie Collins
- 12/24 Linda Gahan  
Dan Greene  
Errett Jacks  
Jan Kahle
- 12/25 David Alverson  
Anita Fredman  
Hilarie Sehorn
- 12/26 Elaine Prock  
Bob Stout
- 12/27 Marcia Barker  
Judy Koch  
Stephanie Sefick  
Dorothy Vedder
- 12/28 Jacob Dahill  
Alice Dorn  
Andy Martin  
Terri Smith  
Heather Wright
- 12/29 Brooke Hudak
- 12/30 Cheryl Aaron
- 12/31 Calia Worley



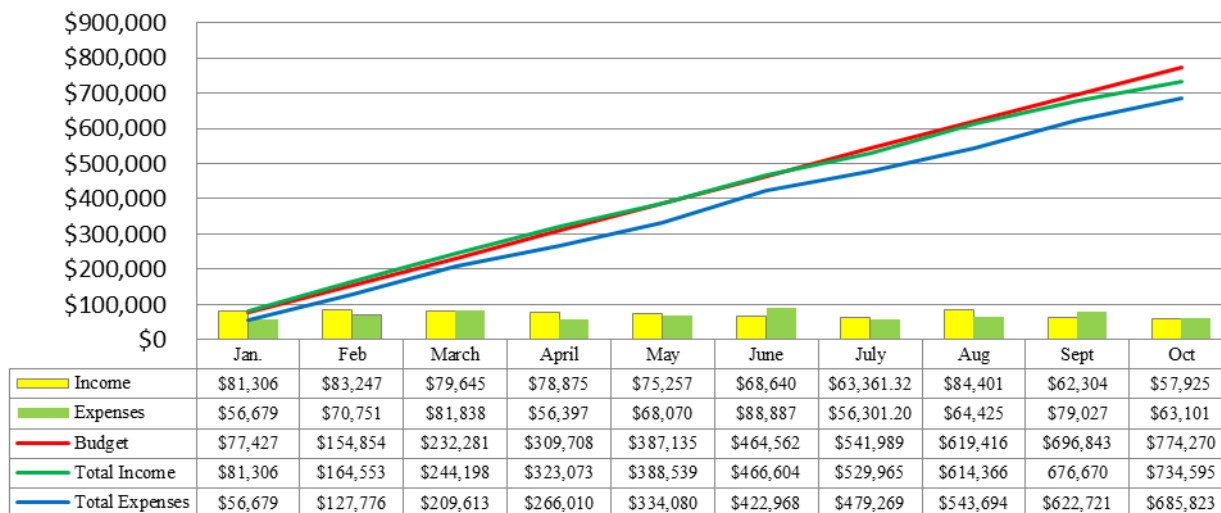
- 12/1 Jimmy & Jill Weir
- 12/5 Greg & Jane Sosebee
- 12/8 Jason & Stella Hudak
- 12/10 Eddie & Megan Chavis
- 12/13 Kevin & Jessica  
Christenbury
- 12/14 Philip & Meri Kate Marcum  
Bryan & Lauren Young
- 12/17 Jay & Alice Kennedy  
Wes & Judy Koch
- 12/18 Andy & Reagan Blondeau  
Pat & Lisa Street
- 12/19 Kelly & Donna Crader
- 12/22 Eric & Elizabeth Bost
- 12/23 Michael & Jeannie Bailey
- 12/26 John & Claudette Bennett  
Hugh & Peggy Garner

## From the Finance Ministry

Through October, total income was \$734,595 while expenses were \$685,823 for a surplus of \$48,772. Overall expenses are at 73.8% of budget, while income is at 79%. Expenses, year to date, are approximately 9% below budget while income is roughly 4% below budget. Session ministry chairs continue to do a great job of managing expenses, and your continued financial support is needed for Fort Hill to sustain its ministries to members, community and around the world.

**Bridging Generations Update:** Pledge giving for the month was \$14,570.79. Non-pledge giving was \$185, undesignated memorial gifts were \$175 and interest income was \$36,39 for a total of \$14,967.18. Total income year to date is \$696,053.91. Total expenses year to date: \$1,540,485.14.

**Fort Hill Income/Expenses 2015**



# Fort Hill Presbyterian Church Mission Team Update

## El Faro, Guatemala

Saludos!

On Monday, October 19, 2015, the mission team, led by Beth Chapman left before daylight to begin our trip to Guatemala, excited to begin this journey of faith. Beth's team members included Susan and Bob Brown, Marsha Ayers, Laura Conrad, Stacey Miller, Kim Phillips, and Elaine Richardson. When we arrived in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, we boarded a van for a 2.5 hour ride around the mountains to get to the Guatemalan border. Soon after we crossed the border, we were warmly greeted by David Valquez, the director of El Faro. When we arrived in Puerto Barrios, we boarded the boat for the 15 minute ride to El Faro (The Lighthouse). The views were breathtaking and the people so friendly and loving; it felt like we were coming home. We met Tommy and Katie, our missionary leaders and heard their story at dinner. Tommy was in charge of all our projects. After dinner, we attended the Monday evening church service at the El Faro chapel.

We started Tuesday bright and early with breakfast at 7:15 am. Juanita is one of the cooks at El Faro and we were introduced to her that morning as we started the first project, painting her house. We left the compound in 2 trucks loaded with the team and painting supplies. Everyone grabbed a roller or brush and we started the transformation inside and out of the small house with the kitchen structure behind it. We replaced 2 doors that were rotten and 5 windows.

Wednesday morning our project was to build walls around a concrete pad for a kitchen at a village home, so that the old cooking area built from concrete blocks could be dismantled. We picked Wilmer up on the way to the project, to help us. More about Wilmer later. The team got to work and completed the project that day. Before we left, we prayed with Pauline, the homeowner, and asked that God bless her, her family, and her new kitchen. We finished the day back at Juanita's house to touch up paint and hang curtains. Both homeowners were so grateful for the transformation to their houses. After dinner we heard Nelita's (Nellie's) story of her faith journey to El Faro and how she is spreading the gospel, especially with the young girls of Guatemala.

On Thursday morning, we took the boat to Puerto Barrios. We began by visiting the different areas at the children's hospital, spending time in the malnutrition ward, neonatal ward, and the girls' ward. We distributed toys and clothes and spent time loving on and playing with the children. One child in particular touched our hearts. The Guatemalan courts had ordered that Maria be placed in the children's home run by nuns. Her mother is not able to feed her. The baby sister (6 months old, but very tiny) has a heart defect and spina bifida, so she will stay in the hospital. The mother was devastated as expected; Katie (El Faro missionary) and Stacey stayed with the family to comfort and pray for them. We also visited the girls' ward which had 13 patients, many with respiratory problems. Most areas of the hospital had minimal air conditioning, but in this wing it was broken — it was sweltering!

We took a break for lunch and went to the Subway shop in Puerto Barrios mall. While the subs were ordered, Nelita took Beth and Elaine to the grocery store on the other end of the mall. We were purchasing some toy trucks to take to the boys' wing at the hospital. Now Wilmer, who we met the day before, is a little 9 year old boy; he and his family live just outside the gates to El Faro. We had noticed that Wilmer's little croc-like shoes had holes in the soles. We found some in the grocery store and decided to purchase a new pair for him. When Nelita informed us that Wilmer had 7 siblings who all probably needed shoes, we decided to buy enough for each of them.

Tommy and El Faro are preparing a "Ronald McDonald" like space at the hospital. It will be for mothers only to provide a place for them to take a break, get a shower and to sleep. The only option currently is to sit/sleep in the plastic chair beside the bed. In the hallway in the hospital or even on the street. The space was in an existing building that was being used for storage. The afternoon was spent building a wall to separate a sitting space from sleeping area, cleaning up and painting the walls.

Friday morning we went back to the Children's Hospital. We delivered blessing bags to the mothers before visiting the boys' wing and the neonatal area to deliver toys and clothes. Then we went back to our project to paint, clean up the courtyard area and finish the dividing wall. We convinced Tommy that at least one wall needed to be a color and we painted it blue. Beth then painted clouds on it and added "Jesus loves you" in Spanish. The result was a very peaceful calming area for the sleeping room.

Saturday morning we went back to the hospital to work a short while and then headed to the Children's home for a pizza party. We gave out balls, jump ropes and shirts, spent time with the toddlers and infants, and then had a short orange blue soccer game. The children were so loving and fun; the language difference was not a barrier. We did see the little girl from the hospital who had been placed at the home. Sadly these children will most likely not be adopted (Guatemalan government requires that at least one parent be a citizen and the Guatemalans rarely adopt), but it is evident that they are in a loving Christian home.

Sunday was the national election day for Guatemala and we decided to not stray too far from El Faro. We packed up 6 of the stoves and were able to install 5 in homes in the nearby village, including one for Sergio and his family. Sergio is employed by El Faro, and he assisted with most of our projects. The mission team had raised money for over 70 stoves, so it was very rewarding to get to install several of these. At each home, after the installation was complete, a member of the mission team led a prayer of blessing for the family and their new stove. After dinner, missionary John Keehn shared his journey to get to El Faro and how God was using him in Guatemala, especially to work with the men.

*Continued on back*



On Monday we took the boat to Livingston to visit a church construction site (that El Faro is building) and to deliver water filters with John. All recipients of the water filters were connected to the church, and several of the spouses were working on the construction of the church. At each of the 8 homes, we talked with the families, explained how the water filters worked and prayed with them for their families. It was very rewarding to know that the projects and stoves and filters were being used by the El Faro missionaries to strengthen their relationship with the communities and minister to their spiritual needs. The Monday evening worship service at the El Faro chapel was led by John. At the end of the worship service, each mission team member had an El Faro missionary stand behind him or her and pray for them. This was a very emotional and moving way to close the day.

Tuesday was a planned day of relaxation. Tommy took the mission team on a boat trip; we traveled up the coast by Livingston, up the Rio Dulce and across Lake Izabal to a hot spring water fall. It was BEAUTIFUL!! When we returned, Stacey and Elaine helped Tommy and Bob build the swinging doors for separating the two areas at the hospital project. After dinner, El Faro missionaries, Brittany and Gavin Dozier shared their journey of faith. They are using their talents in sports to minister to the youth of Guatemala.

On Wednesday, our final work day, we returned to the hospital in Puerto Barrios. We built an outside wall for the private sink area and the adjacent courtyard. We made final painting touch ups, adjusted the swinging doors, and stained and shellacked them. The resulting area is a beautiful peaceful spot for mothers of hospitalized children to relax and get some rest. We are excited to see the final result after the bathroom area is complete and the furniture added.

When we returned to El Faro, we delivered shoes, shirts and blessing bags from Wilmer's family. What a precious and loving family! After dinner we were able to purchase handmade items from women and children from the village — items like jewelry made from detailed rolled paper, small and large bags made from beautiful repurposed fabric. We made sure every person there sold at least one item. At the end of our shopping spree, two of the girls (whose families had each received a stove) each prayed for us.

As our time in Guatemala came to a close, each mission team member was feeling very blessed for the opportunity to allow God to use our physical abilities to support the outreach of the missions at El Faro as they share the love and grace of our God with the people of Guatemala. And as we traveled back to South Carolina on Thursday, we realized what a great blessing the experience had been for us. We are grateful to the Fort Hill Presbyterian family for the love, prayers, and financial support.

We have created a virtual space to share our photo albums with you. Please click on the links below. You will have to put in your email, name and create a password, but then you can view all the pictures that will at least give you an idea of the amazing experiences we had in Guatemala. Enjoy.

<https://churchsnaps.com/i/278WBG>

<https://churchsnaps.com/i/6ZSZLZ>

<https://churchsnaps.com/i/6RGBF2>

<https://churchsnaps.com/i/P4U7JB>

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## Deacons Promote Awareness of Ways to Help Caregivers and Others Affected by Alzheimer's/Dementia

*Caring for caregivers can be costly, but it does not have to be expensive or complicated. It can be as simple as weeping with those who weep, being there when loneliness threatens to put out the lights of the soul, taking a hand and squeezing it tight. It doesn't take much, just paying attention, taking the initiative and being creative.\**

On October 25, the Deacons hosted a speaker, Gail Marion, who gave a presentation on caring for those with Alzheimer's/Dementia. Gail is currently Director of the Rhodes Respite Dementia Care Program at First Presbyterian in Anderson, and her program serves persons with early to moderate-stage dementias in a day program which is designed to provide socialization for patients and respite time for caregivers. Stating that 70% of dementia cases are attributed to Alzheimer's, that aging is the greatest risk factor, and that friends and family members are most often the first to be aware of problems, Gail stressed that early intervention and diagnosis are important for the best treatment options.

Forming a strong support system for the caregivers as well as for those suffering from the disease is crucial. Those attending Gail's presentation received brochures from The Alzheimer's Association ([www.alz.org/SC](http://www.alz.org/SC) or 800-272-3900) and other handouts; material that described the "seven stages of caregiving" and provided real-life examples of the concerns faced by caregivers as they go about their daily lives. Gail offered a wealth of helpful information and recommended two books, *Learning to Speak* by Joanne Koenig Coste, and *Creating Moments of Joy* by Jolene Brackley. Additionally, Gail offered a list of Caregiver Support Groups that are free and open to anyone caring for a person with Alzheimer's or related dementia. Two such groups close to Fort Hill community are the Oconee Medical Center (every 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday at 11:30 am; 864-643-8449) whose facilitator is Eunice Lehmacher, and the Corley Activity Center at Clemson Downs (every 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday at 2:00 pm; 864-356-1174), whose facilitator is Gail Marion.

For a more complete list of support groups, and to find out more information, contact your deacon. Many deacons have already shared Gail's information with their circle members, and the responses have included such positive feedback as, "Since being with (my mom) over the last three days, I have seen significant, upsetting memory lapses that seem to be dementia. The document you attached was very helpful for me to frame my mind with more listening and patience." It is important to remember that help is available.

*There is no more important ministry given to the church. We may not be able to heal the sick as Jesus did, or cast out demons, or raise the dead. But we can walk alongside our friends as they pass through the dark places of life. We can make the inhospitable places more friendly. We can bear one another's burden, and demonstrate decisively that love is strong, stronger even than death.*

\*From Gail's "Tips for Congregations" handout