



The 2020 Annual Report to our Congregation

101 Edgewood Ave ♦ Clemson, SC 29631
(864) 654-2061 ♦ www.forthillchurch.org

Fort Hill Church Staff

Laura Conrad — Pastor
Mary Morrison — Associate Pastor for Discipleship
Michael Sanchez — Associate Pastor for University Ministry
Jacob Kennedy — Associate for Youth & Mission (Jan 2021)
Beth Olker — Interim Youth Director (Jan 26-Oct 30, 2020)
Katie Wilson — Children's Ministry Coordinator
Margaret MacKay — Director of Music and Children's Choir Director
Judy Bonham — Organist and Handbell Director
Julie Bryant — Administrative Assistant
Lori Houck — Church Business Administrator
Scott Thrailkill — Facilities Caretaker

Fort Hill Church Session (2020)

(Note: this is last year's Session, March 1, 2020 – February 28, 2021)

Moderator

Laura Conrad

Clerk of Session

Gail Williams

Treasurer

Mike Blackwell

Building & Grounds

Bob Jones – Moderator

Christian Action

Beth Durham – Moderator

Annette Halbig

Ralph Ricks

Congregational Fellowship

Eddie Payne – Moderator

Olive Mueller (Youth Elder)

Discipleship

Mark Kwist – Moderator

Pat Street

Tipton Wright (Youth Elder)

Finance

Hack Trammell – Moderator

Jerry Chapman

Membership

Ronda Ricks – Moderator

Erika Hays

Nominating

Donna Crader

Personnel & Program Support

Josh Young – Moderator

Robin Weeks

Planning

Dusty Oates – Moderator

Tom Shealy

Stewardship

Art Williams – Moderator

Worship

Caroline Thomas – Moderator

Garland Gravely

University Ministry

Denise Anderson – Moderator

Michael Steele

Board of Deacons (2020)

Terri Smith (Moderator), Mark Morrison (Secretary), Maggie Bandy, Greg Bearden, Susan Beckwith, Leanne Broome, Bill Carnes Eddie Chavis, Grace Cook, Joan Dixon, Beth Griffin, Eva Henry, Jay Jones, Cathy Keaton, Tom Lawrence, Barbara Madison, Heidi Martin, Sally Martin, Cathy Spragins, Robbi Stokes, Jim Thomas, Johnnie Van de Sande, Jane Van Senus, and Pam Waddle

Fort Hill Church Preschool

Dana Armstrong – Director; Donna McCubbin – Treasurer

Teachers: Cecilia Arthur (2020-2021), Jennifer Blackwell, Ann Wesley Carter, Jorie Feltus, Janet Harrell (2019-2020), Renee Heiliger (2020-2021), Meredith Lecroy (2019-2020), Sharon Match, Kelly McRoberts, Ellison Reid, Natasha Revis, Anita Rinz (2020-2021), Jennifer Swain (2019-2020) and Christy LaFrance Williamson (2019-2020)

Board: Marcia Barker, Board Chair; Donna McCubbin, Treasurer; Dana Armstrong, Director (ex-officio); Donna Crader, Clarice Gustafson, Heidi Martin, Sally Martin, Katie Wilson (ex-officio)

Fort Hill Pastoral Counseling Center

Counselor: Jane Barker, LISW

Fort Hill Presbyterian Church Vision Statement, Mission Statement, and Faith Practices: WHAT ARE THEY AND HOW DO THEY FIT TOGETHER?

Vision Statement

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

Mission Statement

Glorify God, Grow Disciples, Meet Human Needs

Faith Practices

Worship Weekly, Pray Daily, Serve Eagerly, Give Generously, Build Relationships Intentionally, Study Scripture Purposefully, Share the Good News Joyfully

Question

What are these three things and how do they fit together?

Answer

Our Vision Statement undergirds all that we do. It is what we aspire to do: share God's love in our community and around the world. It is the "What."

Our Mission Statement lays out our areas of focus to accomplish the aspiration in our Vision Statement. It is the "How."

Since Disciples are required to live out our vision and mission, Session decided that growing Disciples should be our top priority at Fort Hill. Therefore, Session adopted Our Faith Practices to help us grow Disciples who will Glorify God and Meet Human Needs as we share God's love in our community and around the world. Since we must have Disciples to live out our vision and mission, our Faith Practices are a blueprint for growing Disciples to support the "What" and the "How."

Ministry Reports

Building & Grounds Ministry

Bob Jones, Moderator

Building & Grounds maintenance and upgrades continue to work through the COVID-19 shutdown.

Major accomplishments were:

- Replacement of two cracked windows in Sanctuary Windows overlooking the Courtyard. Also replacing the 30-year-old cracked rubber bladder seals around all four windows to prevent rainwater from entering the walls.
- Rebuilt the damaged porte-cochere car entrance and reattached the siding under the roof overhang by the handicap parking lot.
- Continued improvement in the Courtyard and spread two truckloads of mulch. PSA students repainted the lines in the parking lots.
- Installed hand sanitizing units through the facilities. Performed sanitize cleaning on regular basis.
- Clean and wax all hardwood floors and floors in the Educational Building plus performed deep maintenance on air handling system in main and PSA facilities.

Christian Action Ministry

Beth Durham, Moderator,
Annette Halbig and Ralph Ricks

- Christian Action Ministry (CAM) provides direct support to mission partners and charitable organizations locally, nationally, and internationally.
- CAM currently supports 17 local and 5 international charities with a 2020 budget of \$50,000.
- In addition to the annual budget, four special denominational offerings are collected every year. These include the One Great Hour of Sharing offering collected at Easter, the Mother's Day Offering that benefits the Foothills Retirement community, an offering for Thornwell Children's Home collected at Thanksgiving, and the Joy Gift Offering at Christmas.
- The Christ Child Box initiative during Advent also focuses on providing food to those in need. In 2020, Fort Hill Presbyterian Church collected 81 boxes of food and over \$2,000 in financial support to Clemson Community Care through this initiative. This is almost five times the amount of financial support provided last year and just slightly fewer boxes.

- A Mission Master Plan was developed by CAM to offer guidelines regarding the use of church resources for mission trips.
- Our church has historically provided shelter to local families four weeks per year through a collaboration with Family Promise. Given the Covid protocols in place this year, we were not able to offer shelter to families, however we provided financial support to offset expenses equivalent to our annual commitment.
- With contingency funds, CAM was able to offer financial support to Camp Fellowship as they provided food and shelter to a children's choir that could not return home. We were also able to offer financial support for the purpose of tornado relief to our Seneca community, and we made an additional donation to Safe Harbor given their challenges with sheltering women and children in 2020.
- With the generosity of our congregation, CAM was able to offer an additional donation to the local organizations most impacted by the circumstances of 2020. These organizations received a percentage of \$25,000 that was equivalent to the annual budget percentage. Although Family Promise does not receive a financial support, they were included as recipients of this one-time additional donation.
- CAM's focus in 2020 was to continue to understand the needs of our community, engage the congregation in mission work to meet those needs, and to develop a mission master plan.

Congregational Fellowship Ministry

Eddie Payne, Moderator

- **LIVE** YouTube Sam Burchfield Concert was held on June 21, 2020 with nearly 300 views.
- Donation of School Supplies – Before school began, in person or online, Fellowship Ministry coordinated a back to school drive for supplies. Enough supplies were gathered to donate large tubs of supplies to schools in Oconee and Pickens County School Districts. At the same event free-trade coffee was sold to make use of the supplies available.
- September 21st brought us together for the Blessing of the Pets – the Fellowship Ministry used this opportunity to assist with gathering donation of pet supplies for Clemson's Paw Partners.
- October 25th, the Fellowship Ministry joined with our Children to assist with a Trunk or Treat. Members of the committee helped give instructions and guide traffic as well as share in games and prizes for participants.
- November 15th, the Fellowship Ministry assisted the Stewardship Committee assisting in the serving of box lunches for an outdoor lunch on Stewardship Sunday. Attendees were socially distanced and ate outside under the porte-cochere.
- December 20th brought use a new and updated Drive Thru Nativity. Families were asked to join by acting out tableau-styled nativity scenes. Drive by viewers were estimated at over 100 cars.

A new FM transmitter was purchased and used to broadcast the pre-recorded Christmas message read by Chip Egan.

- The Fort Hill Presbyterian Women have remained strong during the pandemic and are continuing to have meetings via Zoom.
- To conclude 2020, Fort Hill Presbyterian 125th Anniversary signs were designed and donated by member, Chris Bandy, and made by Tiger Town Graphics. Signs were set for distribution in early 2021.

Discipleship Ministry

Mark Kwist, Moderator
Pat Street

The Discipleship Ministry as a whole supported the Fort Hill Preschool in developing operational protocols to allow for re-opening in the Fall. The Pansy Duke Scholarship was awarded to Ashley Mason Brown, and Ashley hosted an Art Workshop for the church in December. Volunteers helped organized daily Advent devotional videos from members of the congregation. The Associate Pastor Nominating Committee worked faithfully throughout the year, and in January 2021 we welcomed Jacob Kennedy as new Associate for Youth and Missions. Each of the Teams that make up the Discipleship was active throughout the year.

- **Children's Ministry Team**

- Fort Hill Church Children's Ministry faced the challenge of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic by getting creative, learning new technology, and putting faith formation into the hands of our families.
- In an effort to continue connecting with our children on Wednesday nights as much as possible, Bible Study and Storytime were held on Zoom video conferencing.
- Monthly drive-thru events were held May-September, giving opportunities for seeing one another safely and handing out at-home Bible School packets and activities and other prizes.
- At our June drive-thru, Children's Ministry distributed age-appropriate Bibles to every child who had not yet received their Elementary Bible.
- On November 29th, we delivered Advent bags to each family containing supplies for making Advent crafts, gifts for family members, and a book titled, "Look! A Child's Guide to Advent and Christmas" by Laura Alary and Ann Boyajian.

- **Youth Ministry Team**

This year has been a year of adaptation. Due to the pandemic and the inability to meet in person for much of the year, Youth Ministry had to adapt. Below are a few highlights:

- Early in the year, we pivoted our weekly Youth activities online with Youth Group meeting on Zoom. While this was a different type of fellowship, it was a nice opportunity for the Youth and our advisors to be able to meet.
 - As with our youth activities, our Confirmation Class also had to pivot. Led by Robin Weeks, our nine confirmands and their covenant partners participated in an exceptional “virtual” confirmation experience. It was awesome to see our confirmands and their covenant partners grow and bond in spite of not being able to meet in person.
 - In April, one of Fort Hill’s very own, Sam Burchfield, joined Youth Group for a special night of music and fellowship. During their time together, Sam and the Youth were able to discuss the pandemic and the impact it was having on everyone, but the real highlight was singing along with Sam as he lifted us up with music.
 - Finally, Fall brought an opportunity for our Youth Group to meet outside, socially distanced. After almost 6 months of Zoom meetings, the ability to meet in person was welcomed. Before the weather turned cold and wet, the Youth were able to have multiple socially distanced meetings where they played games, helped lead the annual Trunk-or-Treat, and just good old in-person fellowship.
- **Adult Ministry Team**
 - Because of the pandemic there was no Scholar in Residence as is usual in the spring. However, Dr. Bryan Bibb, Associate Professor of Religion at Furman University led the Sojourners Sunday School Class in an extensive study of the Old Testament prophets. The class met via Zoom and averaged 60 participants.
 - Plans for developing a church history website were begun initially in the hopes of it being part of Fort Hill’s 125th anniversary in 2020. These plans are still in development.
 - Pastor Mary Morrison led weekly Bible study groups on Wednesdays and Sundays.
 - The Adult Ministry Team reorganized in September. The current members of the team are Vernon Burton, Cathy Keaton, Mark Kwist, Jim London, Cindy Trammell, Karen Ware, and Jacquie Worley, moderator.
 - MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers), a Christian-based support group for young mothers, is a program that is being considered for Fort Hill after the pandemic.
 - Book studies in response to the racial unrest apparent in our society provided a safe place for dialogue, raising awareness, and personal growth in learning how to live more faithfully in our present days.

Finance Ministry

Hack Trammell, Moderator

Jerry Chapman

Art Williams, Stewardship Moderator

2020 Income and Expenses:

- Income levels for 2020 were 99% of plan, but significantly above our expenses. Clearly 2020 was a unique year as the church was closed for almost nine months due to the Covid-19 virus. Actual income was \$764,000 pledged and \$168,000 plate for a total of \$932,000. Clearly an amazing year!
- Expenses were significantly under budget, driven by the vacant Associate Pastor, Youth and Mission position, as well as significant constraint and limitation on other programmatic activities kept expenses down. In the fall, Session approved the commitment to support the community and FH's mission with an additional \$50,000. We expended \$25,000 to support community pandemic needs in December.
- The General Fund ending the year with a surplus of \$72,000.
- Pre-School ended the year with a deficit of \$24,000; this deficit – and related decrease in cash – will be redressed when we receive forgiveness of the Paycheck Protection Plan (“PPP”) loan, which the church applied for and received in the early part of the year.
- University Ministry ended up with a deficit of \$34,000; this is with zero funds being transferred over from the Crucial Calling Special Funds. This deficit will also be covered when we receive forgiveness of the PPP loan.
- In the face of all the adversity of the pandemic, it was a gratifying year for which we should all be grateful to the faithful financial witness of the Fort Hill disciples!

2021 Plans and Projections

- In preparing the 2021 budget, the Finance Ministry and the Session took the view of looking over the longer stretch, fully considering the positive 2020 results in addressing anticipated shortfalls in 2021: the 2021 Budget being presented has a deficit of \$42k. This “Faith Budget” seemed the only reasonable view to take given the great uncertainties that 2021 still holds.
- The 2020/2021 stewardship campaign was also greatly impacted by the pandemic, as our entire campaign was done virtually. Still, we were able to receive pledges equal to our 2020 pledge giving of \$764,000. Although this was a decrease of 5% from 2020 pledges. Of greater concern was the decrease in pledge units, which was down 11%.
- Generally, expenses are budgeted “same as last year’s” budget. We did include the Session-approved (Nov. meeting) “Community Mission Initiative” or the second \$25,000. Additionally,

Personnel & Program support is budgeted at \$57,000 over 2020 actual with the filling of the Associate Pastor vacancy.

- The deficit will be addressed with the surplus generated in 2020 as well as the anticipated forgiveness of our PPP loan.
- The Finance Ministry and the Session are gratified by the continuing witness of the Fort Hill Church disciples in their commitment to God's kingdom in Clemson.

Membership Ministry

Ronda Ricks, Moderator
Erika Hays

- QR Code for church in order to have attendance numbers and contact tracing abilities.
- Purchased Welcome New Baby signs for front yards of our newest baby members.
- Rallied mask makers among congregation and those no longer members to provide masks for members.
- Partnered with PSA to establish "Masks for Neighbors". Banner in front of PSA has masks and prayer in ziplock bag for people to get masks for free.
- Established procedures to welcome new members and potential members into congregation while in a pandemic.

Personnel & Program Support Ministry

Josh Young, Moderator
Robin Weeks

- Personnel & Program Support Ministry (P&PS) conducted their yearly staff reviews with a revamped and improved evaluation process to provide more detailed yearly feedback for ongoing growth and development.
- Work by the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee to successfully complete the hiring process for the new Associate Pastor for Youth and Missions.
- Successful work by the Media Team to purchase, install, and begin usage of video cameras and software to allow for the successful transition to live-streaming of church services.
- Upgrade of internet system and completed transition to VOIP phone network service.
- Introduction of Realm software system to congregation for church communications and organization.

Planning Ministry

Dusty Oates, Moderator
Tom Shealy

- Planned and managed the annual Session Retreat.
- Worked to continue to integrate Fort Hill Faith Practices into the overall fabric of the church.
- Led FH Session through *Neighborhood Church* by Krin Van Tatenhove & Rob Mueller in order to identify our church assets and how FH can use these assets effectively in our community.
- Coordinated Fruits of the Spirit Faith Practice videos for Sunday's after Easter.
- Established the Inclusion Learning Action Team, charged with learning about diversity in our community and how FHPC can connect as a Christian Church.
- Identified 2020 goals for Session and assisted with implementation when needed.
- Monitored COVID-19 restrictions and recommendations from Fort Hill's COVID Task Force.

University Ministry

Michael Steele, Moderator
Denise Anderson

- Conducted Zoom social events including end of semester drop in.
- Held men's and women's Bible studies via Zoom.
- Published three newsletters.
- Developed and shared a short video highlighting May 2020 graduates in place of in-person church recognition.

Worship Ministry

Caroline Thomas, Moderator
Garland Gravely

- Implemented Live Streaming for Sunday morning worship services.
- Ministered to FHPC families at summer outdoor services at Old Stone Church.
- Incorporated Narthex TV in support of liturgical calendar of events for all ministry areas.

- Supported and contributed to Joy offering for underserved communities and families of church workers.
- Adapted worship services to comply with CDC/DHEC guidelines exercising safe practices during world-wide critical health crisis.
- Supported creative ways of worship during pandemic.
- Administered sacrament of baptism for three infants of Fort Hill Presbyterian Church.

Board of Deacons

Terri Smith, Moderator

- In February the Deacons held their annual retreat and welcomed in a new class of deacons. Changes made to the retreat allowed for more interaction for group building among the deacons. These changes were well received.
- In March 2020, a novel coronavirus pandemic caused many church activities to be shut down. The Deacons were instrumental in their constant contact with their Circles of Care to help the congregation to stay connected in these uncertain times. The Deacon Meetings were held by Zoom meetings in May, August, and November.
- Among Deacon ministries that were continued and adapted were the following:
 - Bereavement meals were replaced with gift cards
 - Collected and delivered Christ Child boxes from Circle of Care families
 - Porch, window, phone, and driveways visits to COC members
 - Many connections to COC via social media and email
 - Flowers dropped off to COC members

Fort Hill Officers for 2021

Fort Hill Church Session (2021)

(Note: this is the current year's Session, March 1, 2021 – February 28, 2022)

Moderator

Laura Conrad

Clerk of Session

Donna McCubbin

Treasurer

Mike Blackwell

Building & Grounds

Bob Jones – Moderator

Bill Cato

Garland Gravely

Christian Action

Beth Durham – Moderator

Annette Halbig

Ralph Ricks

Dulcie Mohr (Youth Elder)

Congregational Fellowship

Eddie Payne – Moderator

Cyndi Davis

Discipleship

Mark Kwist – Moderator

Pat Street

Finance

Jerry Chapman – Moderator

Gregg Morton

Membership

Erika Hays – Moderator

Cindy Trammell

Nominating

Donna Crader

Personnel & Program Support

Robin Weeks – Moderator

Planning

Tom Shealy – Moderator

Stewardship

Gregg Morton – Moderator

Worship

Caroline Thomas – Moderator

Mark Stokes

University Ministry

Denise Anderson – Moderator

Nancy Spittler

Board of Deacons (2021)

Jim Thomas (Moderator), Jay Jones (Vice-Moderator), Cathy Keaton (Secretary), Susan Beckwith, Georganne Burton, Bill Carnes, Joan Dixon, Chip Egan, Beth Griffin, Eva Henry, Ann Howard, Melanie Job, Heidi Martin, Sally Martin, Stacey Miller, Mark Morrison, Peggy Rutland, Cathy Spragins, Robbi Stokes, Chris Torres, Johnnie Van de Sande, Pam Waddle, and Heather Wright

To Be Nominated to the Congregation

Cyndi Davis, Elder

Paige Durham, Elder

Elder, vacancy

Deacon, vacancy