

Responding to God's love and grace, we WORSHIP with joy, NURTURE with faith, and SERVE others with love.

Nurturing with Faith: Children/Youth Ministries

Did you know—

-there are 4 different Sunday School classes offered each week for people under age 18? (Plus the nursery!)

-the Children's Choir practices together EVERY week?

-there are four confirmands in confirmation class?

-the youth group meets twice a month for fellowship and faith formation?

-the roster of children and youth continues to grow and grow?

-new members say one of the reasons they joined FPCR is for the Christian Education program?

-YOU can support FPCR's children's ministry and youth ministry?!

Children and youth ministries are so much more than the calendar of events and opportunities we offer. They are a way for the youngest members of the FPCR family to feel connected to their church and its members. It's a part of the church they can call their own and where they can be the leaders.

To minister is to attend to the needs of someone and that is what children and youth ministries are all about, attending to the needs of children and youth. They need to be nurtured. They need to feel loved and cared about within their church. They need their questions answered and their doubts

recognized while they figure out life. They need to know they are supported by this church even when they are no longer youth. But most importantly, they need to know God and what a relationship

with God looks like, especially as they prepare to go out into the world as adults. Everyone is welcome to help guide and love on these children of God. We all made this vow when these children and youth were baptized into the family of God.

There are so many ways YOU can keep your promise and support our children and youth, and the education ministry. Here are a few ways you can be involved:

-Pray for our children and youth. (Growing up can be tough!)

-Welcome children and youth to worship. Say hello and make them feel welcome. The sounds of children in worship (even in quiet moments) are a sign of congregational vitality.

-Volunteer as a "helper" in a Sunday School class one time or a handful of times. There's no preparation. Just show up and be an extra set of eyes in the room. (It takes 8 adults each and every Sunday to make Sunday School happen).



-Serve on the Children's Education committee or the Youth Ministry committee, and help with some of the behind-the-scenes work.

-Sponsor a child or youth's registration for weekend retreats, conferences, or trips.

-Attend FPCR's intergenerational events, such as bingo night or caroling. Sit next to a child or youth and get to know them.

When the prophet Samuel was born, his mother, Hannah, said, "For this child, I have prayed." Our congregation has prayed for children and youth to be among us. A few years ago, only a child or two would come to the chancel for children's time during worship. And now, it's often pretty crowded on the chancel! God has answered our prayers. Children and youth are a part of the FPCR family, and are hungry to be nurtured in faith. How will you nurture FPCR's children and youth this year?

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Next newsletter:
February 5

Deadline:
One week prior.

Submit articles to:
editor@
fpcrichardson.org



Won't You Be My Neighbor?

Happy New Year! As we head into the 150th anniversary year for FPCR, I am very excited about all the year will bring. This January, our congregation will begin its 150th year celebrations by thinking and talking about mission. Mission is always where the church's calling begins. We are called to be servants of Christ by telling the story of Jesus and by helping our neighbors.

We are familiar with what that kind of service looks like in our interactions with those close to us. We see it alive and well in Sunday School, VBS, PW Circles, and in all other sorts of Christian Education opportunities. We also see it when we minister to the members of FPCR who need our support.

But mission is also about service to the community. Even when we are not actively talking about mission – what we do provides a model for others to see our faith at work. When we volunteer with NETWORK, or volunteer at the neighborhood elementary school, or go on a mission trip, we are engaging in that kind of action mission ministry. Don't get me wrong. Both kinds of mission, telling and acting, are important!

However, there is a third level to mission. More deeply, we engage in the mission of the church when we address the issues in our community – things like poverty and hunger, homelessness and gun violence. Looking at root causes of these issues, and finding ways to address them in a Christian manner is also a form of mission.

There are times, probably in the life cycle of every congregation, where the most common mission is one of action. Over time though, we find

ways to address our neighborhood issues administratively. Often, in the church, that can evolve into the congregation supporting ministries with dollars more than by giving of time and talents.

Don't get me wrong – sometimes money will be the primary tool to address local issues. But sometimes, and it is even safe to say too often – we find ourselves stuck in transactional mission projects. Some days it is easier to just write a check to help the hungry. It is easier to text a donation to the Red Cross when disaster strikes. But when we do that, we are able to hold the human need at arm's-length. When mission becomes too easy, too remote, we lose the opportunity to embody Christ's call to service. But when mission is transformational – all involved see God at work in the process.

On January 25, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. (lunch provided) we will host a conversation about mission in church. We will use a book, recommended by the Co-Moderators of the PC(USA), to look at the ways we engage with mission in our own community. The book is entitled *Neighborhood Church* and copies are available in the church office for \$13. We also have a few copies that have been donated, available on a first-come-first-serve basis.

All are invited to participate in the conversation. This may be just the thing you have been craving. I know that it will be impactful for our congregation, and maybe even transformational. Let's discuss how we can truly be a neighborhood church!

I hope that you will pick up a copy of the book and join us for that special Saturday. I look forward to the year ahead of us – and the next 150 years of ministry and mission for FPC Richardson.

Blessings,
Pastor David

P.S. - In December, I completed my service to Grace Presbytery as Moderator. The Moderator is the symbolic head of the regional body, made up of 140 congregations in our area. This past year, I had the pleasure of moderating installation and ordination services for new pastors. I also, by way of my office, served on the Presbytery Council, Personnel Committee, and Administrative Commission on Property for Grace Presbytery. It was a busy year and I am glad I have rolled off of those committees. The work a presbytery does is always in support of its member congregations and ministers. During my visits with our sister congregations, I was delighted to see the mission work that is being done in PC(USA) congregations of all sizes.

Session News

The Session held its annual budget retreat at the church on Saturday, December 14. While the final calculations are still being completed, the Session is confident that the final result will meet projections. The final budget for 2020 will be presented at the congregational meeting January 26.

The Session commended the Finance Committee for their work in preparing the budget. That committee: Rick Rickman, Kathy Rice, Sarah Quilici, Bob Relyea, Sarah Godecke, and Martha Mathieu. Shirley Hawkins is also recognized for her assistance.

The Session has sent a letter of appreciation to Molly Cowan, a lawyer with the firm of Hallett @ Perrin. P.C. Molly, who works with Rick Rickman, has provided valuable legal assistance to First Presbyterian for the past several years.

Lowell Long, Clerk of Session

I remember receiving my first Bible one Sunday at Black Mountain Presbyterian Church when I was in the third grade. On the Saturday night prior, I had stayed the night at my friend Kaitlyn's house. Kaitlyn's family and my family were close friends, and Saturday night sleepovers at one another's homes were a regular part of Kaitlyn and my friendship throughout our childhoods.

At both houses, we would stay up too late and watch movies together, but there was one big difference between sleepovers at Kaitlyn's house and sleepovers at my house: on Sundays following Saturday night sleepovers, we would always go to church if we had stayed at Kaitlyn's house, whereas if we had stayed at my house, we probably wouldn't go to church. My family attended church occasionally (usually just on Easter and Christmas), but Kaitlyn's family attended most Sundays.

My parents could have picked me up from Kaitlyn's house before church, but going to church with Kaitlyn and her family was something I looked forward to on those Sundays after our sleepovers. Kaitlyn and I would go to Sunday School, to classrooms where we heard Bible stories, sang of God's love, and prayed together. And then we would join her parents for worship, where we would sit on red pews, drawing on bulletins, and singing out of blue hymnals.

I learned from an early age that Black Mountain Presbyterian Church was a place where I was loved (even though my parents often weren't there) by a community of people. This was a community of

people who cared about me, who modeled faithful living, and who reminded me again and again that I was a beloved child of God. These were folks who took their baptismal vows seriously: *Do you, as members of the church of Jesus Christ, promise to guide and nurture this child by word and by deed, with love and prayer? Will you encourage her to know and follow Christ and to be a faithful member of his church?*

Throughout my childhood and adolescence, my involvement at Black Mountain Presbyterian Church increased. My faith was consistently nurtured by family and friends, Sunday School teachers, pastors, worship greeters, and countless others in the congregation. And it was there where I first started feeling inklings of God's call upon me to pursue ordained ministry.

In 2019, eight babies and children were baptized at First Presbyterian Church! At each baptism, we vowed as community, to guide and nurture these children and to encourage them to know and follow Christ. How have you lived into these vows in 2019?

As 2020 begins, I hope that you will pray and consider the ways you can live into these baptismal vows in the coming year. There are over 60 children who call FPCR home. We've vowed to nurture these children in faith, and each of us, no matter how young or how old, have a part to play.

Journeying together,
Pastor Rosy



Leave anxieties at the foot of the cross in this new year

The start of a new year always gives me a peaceful feeling and reminds me of a new box of crayons or a blank canvas, full of possibilities and hope. As you flip over to a new year, recite Psalm 51:10: *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.*

Whatever anxieties bogged you down last year, leave them at the foot of the cross as you begin this new year. That's where they belong anyway, isn't it? And, don't just meekly lay those burdens down — truly cast them away like you are casting a fishing line as far as your strength will allow (1 Peter 5:7).

Whether you are in Syria or Sacramento, Taiwan or Tallahassee, God is there with an ample supply of new mercies each morning. (Lamentations 3:23).

I recently volunteered to listen to young children at church recite Scriptures from memory. It was convicting for me, as I haven't memorized Scripture consistently since I earned my way to a weeklong camp in elementary school. Listening to these faithful kids do a great job with Scripture memorization has encouraged me to memorize at least one Scripture verse each week. I have faith that the Scriptures I commit to memory will help to protect my heart and nourish my soul, regardless of the storms that come my way.

Hebrews 11:1: *Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*

Author Tammy Warren is Communications Associate of the Presbyterian Mission Agency



As faithful readers you know that I'm very proud of our sanctuary choir. I wanted to share with you an article written by Brian Hehn, a local church musician who serves on the executive board of the Hymn Society of the United States, about the importance of church choirs. I have edited the article for space but the essence of Brian's message is intact. Hehn makes four points about church choirs:

The church choir leads and enlivens the congregation's song.

This may come as a surprise to some readers that the first and most important function of the church choir is to lead the congregation's song. It is important, however, that this be the top priority. Let's not forget that without a congregation, there could not be a church choir! The singing group would instead be a community choir. But why is it important that the congregation's song be supported instead of just focusing on the church choir's musical success? Choral musicians inherently know the answer. We become what we sing. When we take words and put them to music, it becomes part of who we are. Therefore, it becomes imperative that we put as much of the Word into the bodies of the congregation as possible. If the congregation can sing it but we don't let them, we miss an opportunity to transform people's lives in the most direct way possible. By giving the congregation new singing skills and confidence, we empower them for the rest of their lives to better embody God's word through music.

The church choir sings music that the congregation cannot.

Let's be real. There's lots of great music that needs to be sung that just cannot reasonably be done by a congregation. Whether it's too complex to be done by untrained musicians, or just too difficult to be done without extensive rehearsal, there's a lot of music that cannot or should not be done by a congregation. That's why this function is number two on the list. There are some texts set to challenging music that congregations need to hear, whether it's because it is comforting in times of crises, praising in times of joy, or inspiring in times of apathy. By spending the time and effort to rehearse each week, the choir provides a great service to the congregation by opening up the amount of literature the congregation can be ex-

posed to. Used appropriately, this has significant theological and musical implications, broadening the congregation's experience of the divine.

The church choir serves as a small-group within the church for faith formation.

I imagine that we all have stories about our choral groups taking care of each other or holding someone up in a time of need. When we sing together, a bond is created that unites us unlike any other activity. In a church setting, this function can be intentionally formed and nurtured. Because we meet together once a week to do work for the glory of God and benefit of neighbor, taking care of each other is no longer an option, it's a responsibility. As the leader of this small-group, a church choir director's job is no longer limited to musical direction, but also spiritual direction.



The church choir sings beautiful and challenging music to praise God and to edify the congregation.

The music that we create should be beautiful and challenging. This is where the majority of our rehearsal time is taken up, because singing challenging music beautifully is difficult to do and takes lots of practice. It is important that when we sing, we sing beautifully, because it touches people's souls. The reason that we work so hard to create beautiful music together is so we can glorify God and help deepen the faith of both singer and congregant alike. It is important, however, that the first three points in this article are not forgotten when digging deeper into the rehearsal process to try and achieve our most beautiful sounds. A church choir's job is not just to sing beautifully, but rather it is to minister to the congregation and to each other in a variety of ways, helping to change the world into a more loving and peaceful place through God's gracious gift of music.

Membership in FPC's Sanctuary Choir is open to anybody who loves to sing and is willing to dedicate themselves to weekly rehearsals and services. Though some prior experience in music is very helpful, it is not required. Contact me during normal office hours and let me help you find your place in the choir.

Grace and Peace and Happy New Year!
Ralph

I Believe the Children are Our Future

I had a newborn. But I figured: never too early to learn. Subsequently, there I was, attending a class for parents on teaching children to drive. First question: "At what age does a child learn to drive?" One called out, "Sixteen." Another, "no, no, no. Fifteen, that's when they start taking driver's education courses."

Silence.

After what seemed a rather dramatic pause, our presenter said, "I'd like to suggest that your children are learning to drive from the moment you buckle them into their car seat. Do you slow down for yellow or speed up? Do you lock your doors? Do you wear your seatbelt?"

As a Christian educator, I think about those wise words and ponder: When does a child learn he or she is a child of God? I'd like to suggest from the moment we welcome them into the family. Are we keeping God's words in our hearts? Do we recite them to our children? Do we talk about them when we're at home? When we are away? When we lie down? When we rise?

I was a preschool teacher for fourteen years. Over those years, I came to realize that if I really wanted to impact the life of a child, (and what teacher worth his or her salt doesn't?) I had to reach the parents. Let's be honest, as a teacher I had access to the hearts, minds, souls and bodies of my little learners twelve hours a week, if they were in school every day.

As the Director of Children and Family Ministry, I have access to the hearts, minds, souls, and bodies of my little disciples-in-training, at best, two hours a week, eight hours a month, and fifteen hours over the summer, if a family is EXTREMELY active. That means the church, assigned

with the task of "guiding and nurturing by word and deed, with love and prayer, encouraging the body of Christ to know and follow Christ and to be faithful members of the church of Jesus Christ," has a grand whopping one hundred and eleven hours a year to fulfill its baptismal promise. On the other hand, parents have access to the hearts, minds, souls, and bodies of their children twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, for a minimum of eighteen years! I think that is why the writer of Deuteronomy addresses Israel:

Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates... When your children ask you in time to come, 'What is the meaning of the decrees and the statutes and the ordinances that the LORD our God has commanded you?' then you shall say to your children... —Deuteronomy 6:4-9

What? What shall we say? As parents and teachers and pastors, we are not asked to make up answers on the fly. Rather, we are charged to hear God's Word; to love God with all of our heart, an undivided faithfulness; and with all of our soul, a commitment unto death; and with all of our might, everything we have and are — the totality of the human creature. Throughout the Bible, there is a recognition that it will take the whole of Israel —

parents, teachers, preachers, and neighbors — to instruct children into the household of God.

An exasperated mom tells me that every day she fights the same fight: She gathers her eight-year old daughter's cleats, socks and shin guards, fixes a water bottle, makes a snack and places everything by the front door so that all her daughter has to do when she gets in from school is pick up her bag, grab her snack and get in the car. And yet, each weekday afternoon her daughter finds some reason or is flustered by some event that prevents her from doing just that, making them late to soccer practice every. single. day. And I wonder: Why do we expend so much time, energy, and money for our children to partake in soccer, basketball, baseball, swimming, tennis and on and on and spend either no time or very little time worshipping God, praying, and studying the Bible with our children?

Where on earth did we get the idea that children are little bodies devoid of souls? We may not sacrifice our children to fire gods anymore, but I fear we are sacrificing them to soccer fields, basketball courts, baseball fields, swimming pools, tennis courts, and the like. Children are born unto us as curious, searching, longing, spiritual beings. They ask the deepest questions of life: Who am I? Why isn't life fair? Where am I going? How am I going to get there? Why? Why? Why?

Then we shall say to our children... What? What will we say?

This blog, on *Next Church*, is by Kim Lee, the part-time Director of Children's and Family Ministries at Selwyn Avenue Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, NC.



News You Can Use

Sunday Book Club

On January 12 we will discuss *The Regal Art of Poison*, by Eleanor Herman. Come to the church library at 5 p.m. for a lively discussion. For more information contact Ginger (Doug) Anderson.

Thursday Evening Circle

Come at 6:30 p.m. on January 9, when we resume our study. For more information contact Linda Yeager.

Retire-eze

Come join our group Wednesday, January 15, for lunch at 11:30, followed by Bingo. Bring a White

Elephant gift to use for prizes. For more information, call Beverly Gallagher.

Monday Book Discussion

We meet the last Monday of most months to discuss all kinds of books. Join us at 2 p.m., in the church library - all are welcome! Our choice for January is *Educated*, by Tara Westover. In February we'll discuss *Becoming Mrs. Lewis*, by Patti Callahan. If you have questions contact Anne Healy.

Wednesday Morning Circle

We meet next at 9:30 a.m. on February 5. For more information contact Sue Pochyla.

Hello to my Church Family!



I've been asked to share a little about my experiences growing up at FPCR and to tell you the hopes I have for the children growing up in our church today. It's been fun to reminisce about all the things we did back then; I know so much work went in to making all these things happen that my child eyes didn't see, so a huge heart-felt thank you

to everyone who played a part. I hope you all enjoy my memory highlight reel!

My favorite elementary school memories of FPCR come from Vacation Bible School and Sound and Spirit Camp (for those who weren't here then, yes, we used to have two whole weeks of all-day camps for kids during the summers. Can you imagine?). I remember the youth group shepherding all us crazy little ones around at VBS, doing Energizers, discovering all the different percussion instruments with "Jay the Drum Guy", learning to play the chimes with Becky Lormor, and laughing while we sang "Peter, James and John in a Sailboat" with Peter Elsea, James Swindle and John Wadleigh sitting together in a toy boat.

I remember the Sunday school rotations, dressing up to reenact Bible stories in the drama room, playing Bible Baseball in the computer room and making all kinds of crafts in the art room.

Middle school was just as much fun: I loved singing in the musicals put on by the Joyful Echo – I still have the cassette tape for one of them and sing bits of it occasionally with my parents. I remember memorizing the names of all the books of

the Bible and, in Confirmation class, talking about how the Presbyterian Church is structured, and why the Reformation happened. Middle school was also when I started going on retreats like Youthquake. One of the themes I still remember was "DON'T GET CAUGHT NAKED! Put on the full armor of God!" (we talked about Ephesians 6, of course).

That brings me to LIFE. For those who are unfamiliar with the group, that's Living In Faith Everyday, our youth group whose home-base is God's Garage, upstairs in the CE building. It's a cool room if you've never visited before. We did so many fun things together from more retreats, to Mo Ranch, to Mess Fest, hosting the annual Spaghetti dinner and singing under Ralph's direction in The Joyful Noise.

Through all those years, one of the things that had the biggest impact for me was knowing that every Sunday morning I would go to Sunday school, see my teachers and every one of my friends, then I'd go to worship (or I'd do that first when TJN sang in the 8:30 service). Then every Sunday evening, I'd get to go back to see all my friends again, sing together, share a meal together, do some team building and have Bible study.

While the children and youth growing up in First Presbyterian Richardson today won't have all the same experiences as I had, my hope is that their faith is nurtured, and they see FPCR as their home-away-from-home, the place they WANT to go every Sunday.

Christine Pitsenbarger

January/February 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29 9:00 Christmas Potluck ESL class 10:30 Worship	30	31 6:30 Prayer Group 10:00 Bible Study 11:00 Staff Mtg New Years Eve Office Closed at Noon	1 New Years Day	2 10:00 Tai Chi Art "Therapy" 12:30 Fit For Life 1:00 Twin Rivers Bible Study	3	4 8:00 Men's Bible Fellowship
5 8:00 Early Worship 9:00 Sunday School ESL class 10:00 Children's Choir 10:30 Worship/Communion 5:00 Young Adult	6	7 6:30 Prayer Group 10:00 Bible Study 11:00 Staff Mtg	8 8:00 Sometimers 9:30 Morning Circle 12:30 Sew 'n Tell 5:45 Handbell Choir 7:30 Sanctuary Choir	9 10:00 Tai Chi 12:30 Fit For Life 1:00 Twin Rivers Bible Study 6:30 Evening Circle	10	11
12 8:00 Early Worship 9:00 Sunday School ESL class 10:00 Children's Choir 10:30 Worship 5:00 Book Club	13 7:00 Faith Sharing	14 6:30 Prayer Group 10:00 Bible Study 11:00 Staff Mtg	15 8:00 Sometimers 11:30 Retire-eze 12:30 Sew 'n Tell 5:45 Handbell Choir 7:30 Sanctuary Choir	16 10:00 Tai Chi Art "Therapy" 12:30 Fit For Life 1:00 Twin Rivers Bible Study 7:00 Wordsmything	17 International Day of Peace	18 8:00 Men's Bible Fellowship
19 8:00 Early Worship 9:00 Sunday School ESL class 10:00 Children's Choir 10:30 Worship 12:00 Session 5:00 Young Adult	20 God's House Party	21 6:30 Prayer Group 10:00 Bible Study 10:30 Stewpot 11:00 Staff Mtg	22 8:00 Sometimers 10:00 Care Ministry 12:30 Sew 'n Tell 5:45 Handbell Choir 7:30 Sanctuary Choir	23 10:00 Tai Chi 12:30 Fit For Life 1:00 Twin Rivers Bible Study	24	25
26 8:00 Early Worship 9:00 Sunday School ESL class 10:00 Children's Choir 10:30 Worship Congregational Meeting	27 2:00 Book Discussion	28 6:30 Prayer Group 10:00 Bible Study 11:00 Staff Mtg	29 8:00 Sometimers 12:30 Sew 'n Tell 5:45 Handbell Choir 7:30 Sanctuary Choir	30 10:00 Tai Chi Art "Therapy" 12:30 Fit For Life 1:00 Twin Rivers Bible Study	31	1 8:00 Men's Bible Fellowship
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Week OF
Prayer
FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

January 18—25