

CONNECT@FIRST

A Weekly Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church, Greenville, SC

VOLUME 4, NO. 29 | July 23–29, 2026



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Children's Ministry, Tina Jones

BACKPACK BLESSING—SUNDAY, AUGUST 9

As a new school year begins, we invite all children, students, teachers, administrators, and others who work in education to join us for a special time of prayer during our worship services on Sunday, August 9. Children are encouraged to bring and wear their backpacks as they come forward for the Backpack Blessing. We look forward to praying God's protection, wisdom, and blessing over everyone as they begin the new school year.

LAST CHANCE TO CLAIM YOUR ITEMS

Have you misplaced a pair of glasses, car keys, or a water bottle? A Lost & Found table will be located by the elevators in the main hallway of Building D from **Sunday, August 2, through Sunday, August 9**. Please stop by and see if anything belongs to you. All unclaimed items remaining after August 9 will be donated to Miracle Hill.

DISCIPLESHIP

Congregational Care, Don Feuerbach

GRIEFSHARE BEGINS IN SEPTEMBER

GriefShare is a weekly seminar and support group designed to help you rebuild your life after losing a loved one. Our group is led by caring people who have experienced grief and want to help you through the difficult days ahead. GriefShare will be held on **Sundays, September 13–December 13**, 3:00–5:00pm in Room D305. Register online at <https://find.griefshare.org/groups/298175>. Questions? Contact Sarah Emore at semore@firstpresgreenville.org or 864.565.0966.

Discipleship Ministry, Claire Ripley

ALPHA IS COMING

Whether you're exploring Christianity for the first time, returning to faith after years away, or simply curious about life's biggest questions, Alpha is a welcoming space to have honest conversations in a relaxed, judgment-free environment. You don't have to have all the answers. Come as you are. Bring a friend. Everyone is welcome! Alpha begins **Wednesday, September 9**. Register now at FirstPresGreenville.org/events. Questions? Please email class leaders, Sara Rieser (riesershine@gmail.com) or Bob August (raugust6@yahoo.com).

Worship & Music Ministry, Susan Messer

SAVE THE DATE FOR BROADWAY AT FIRST!

Join us on **Wednesday, September 2**, at 5:15pm as we kick off our fall Grow@First season with a memorable evening of music, fellowship, and great food at *Broadway at First* in Fellowship Hall. Enjoy dinner while being entertained by a live performance featuring the talented professional singers of the First Presbyterian Choir. These accomplished vocalists will bring some of Broadway's most beloved songs to life in an unforgettable cabaret-style setting. Space is limited, so be sure to RSVP early at FirstPresGreenville.org/events! Dinner prices (payable at the door): Adults: \$10; Children (ages 4–12): \$5; Children (3 and under): Free; Family maximum: \$40. Childcare for children 3 and under is available by registration to Evelyn Penkert at epenkert@firstpresgreenville.org.

EVENTS

Fine Arts Ministry, Chelsea Fraser

JUST ANNOUNCED: AN ACTIVATE LECTURE WITH W. DAVID O. TAYLOR—"Art for the Life of the World: How Artists Participate in the Mission of God"

Join us on Friday, September 4, at 6:00pm in the Student Ministry Area for an evening of thoughtful conversation, encouraging fellowship, and fresh inspiration for artists, makers, and creatives of all kinds. Whether you write, paint, compose, build, or make, this special lecture with W. David O. Taylor will explore how the arts participate in God's mission and why creative work matters in His Kingdom. Come be encouraged, challenged, and inspired as Dr. Taylor shares biblical insights into faith and creativity. Then stay for a panel discussion and Q&A featuring Dr. Taylor, FPC Arts Director Chelsea Fraser, and other local faith and arts leaders. A light reception will follow. Tickets are \$20 and go on sale August 1 at FirstPresGreenville.org/events.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

Children's Ministry, Tina Jones

HELP SHAPE THE NEXT GENERATION OF FAITH

Do you have a heart for helping children grow in their faith and come to know Jesus? We invite you to join our Children's Ministry team for the 2026–27 ministry year. We have a variety of opportunities available. Most volunteers serve just one Sunday each month.

To learn more, contact Tina Jones, Children's Ministry Director, at tjones@firstpresgreenville.org, or review the available volunteer roles by scanning the QR code. Your investment today can have an eternal impact on the life of a child.



Missions, Eric Swofford

HOLLIS ACADEMY BACK-TO-SCHOOL DRIVE

Help support the students and teachers at Hollis Academy as they prepare for a new school year! Pick up a paper apple from displays located in the Loggia, Abbott Gathering, and the Worship & Arts reception area this Sunday. Each apple lists needed snacks for children or gift card options for teachers. You can also click the QR code for a wish list of items. All donations are due back to the church by **Wednesday, July 29**. Thank you for helping us bless Hollis Academy with a strong start to the school year!



HOLLIS ROOM PARENTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

As we begin our 17th year of partnering with Hollis Academy, we're looking for caring volunteers to serve as Room Parents in every classroom. This meaningful ministry supports teachers, encourages students, and helps build strong connections with families throughout the school year. Simple acts of kindness—reading with students, tutoring, listening, offering encouragement, or sharing a hug—can make a lasting difference in a child's life. We currently have 13 Room Parent openings across several grade levels. If you'd like to be part of this rewarding ministry or learn more, please contact Edith Parks at hollisroomparents@gmail.com.

2027 DOMINICAN REPUBLIC MISSION TRIP

Applications are now being accepted for our mission trip to the Dominican Republic, **February 10–17, 2027**. Team members will serve alongside our mission partners, Misiones Maranatha/El Buen Samaritano and Eastern Dominican Christian Mission, providing care for families through food distribution, medical, dental, and vision clinics, and building relationships with the community in Brisas del Mar. No medical training is required to participate. To learn more or express your interest, please email missions@firstpresgreenville.org by **Saturday, August 15**.

Worship & Music Ministry, Susan Messer

CHRISTMAS@FIRST PREVIEW—JOIN THE CHOIR!

Although we're in the middle of summer, our Worship & Music Ministry is already preparing for *Christmas@First*, happening December 12–13, and we'd love for you to be part of it! Join us for a special Christmas in the Summer Preview Night on **Wednesday, August 5**, 6:15–7:30pm in the Choir Room. You'll get a first look at this year's *Christmas@First* theme and music, meet the team, and learn how you can participate in one of First Presbyterian's most anticipated worship events of the year. Whether you're a longtime choir member or simply enjoy singing, everyone is welcome. Rehearsals begin in September, and additional details will be shared at the preview. Come discover how you can help bring the joy of Christmas to our church and community this December!

RING WITH THE HANDBELL CHOIR!

Have you ever played handbells—or always wanted to learn? The First Presbyterian Church Handbell Choir invites you to join us! Whether you're an experienced ringer or new to handbells, we'd love to welcome you. Rehearsals begin **Wednesday, September 9**, at 7:30pm in the Choir Room. If you're interested in becoming part of the Handbell Choir or have questions, please contact Director of Traditional Worship Susan Messer at smesser@firstpresgreenville.org.

SUNDAY WORSHIP

July 26, 2026

SERMON SERIES:

"Christ in the Psalms"

Psalms 1

Rev. Dr. Mark Hutton preaching

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

8:30am | Sanctuary

10:45am | Worship & Arts Center

11:00am | Sanctuary

SUNDAY EDUCATION

8:30am Nursery

9:30am Children's Sunday School

9:45am Student Life Groups

9:45am Adult Life Groups

10:30am Kids Church

LIVE STREAMING

All services

YouTube.com@FirstPresGreenvilleSC

"Like" and "Subscribe" for easy access

FirstPresgreenville.org Watch menu

WEDNESDAY

There will be no Pastor's Bible Study or meals in July. Watch for the Fall Grow@First schedule in August.

SUMMER ICE CREAM SOCIAL FOR ADULTS

Wednesday, August 12

1:00pm

Fellowship Hall

\$3 at the door

LOOKING AHEAD

JULY

29: Hollis Back-to-School Drive Ends

31: Church Office Closed

AUGUST

5: Christmas@First Choir Preview

7: Buddy Break

7: "An Evening at the Opera"

12: Summer Ice Cream Social

9: Backpack Blessing

16: Promotion Sunday

SEPTEMBER

2: Broadway at First!

2: DivorceCare Support Group

4: Activate Lecture

9: Fall Grow@First Begins

9: Alpha Class Begins

9: Handbell Choir Rehearsal

13: GriefShare Support Group

14: Catch Up Hour with Our

Neighbors: FCA Furman

17: Congregational Care

Senior Lecture Series

This newsletter offers highlights of announcements, events, and opportunities. For more information, visit firstpresgreenville.org/about/connect@first.

MEMBER NEWS

CONGRATULATIONS ♦ *The pastors and congregation extend blessings to Mr. and Mrs. Jimmy Benson Jr. (Murray) on the birth of a daughter, Jennings Louise Benson, on July 16.*

SYMPATHY ♦ *The pastors and congregation extend sympathy to Mrs. Judy Erickson in the death of her husband, James “Jim” Erickson, on July 17; to Mr. and Mrs. Paul Halphen (Kaci), Mr. and Mrs. Meece (Erin), and Mr. and Mrs. Michael Melvin (Jeni), in the death of their father; and to Harper, Ellie, James, and Hattie Halphen, and Mary Frances and McCall Meece in the death of their grandfather.*

IN MEMORIAM
James Richard Erickson ♦ *August 25, 1950 – July 17, 2026*

PRAYER LIST ♦ **Bold** = New *Italics* = In Hospital
Nancy Adams, Bill Anthony, Sandra Banks, Betty Bennett, Harry Bolick, Dan Boling, Dick Brennecke, Jim Childers, Matt Covington, Brantley Daniel, Peggy Denny, Harry Hightower, Don Hobbs, Charlie Hutton, Joe James, Al Johnson, Anne Lide, Jenny McCorkle, Rachel Mullinax, Tom Pettigrew, Ed Reed, Carolyn Rice, Thom Robelot, Louise Robinson, Bob Shell, Donna Steeves, Lewis Tollison, Steve Waddell, Charlotte Watson, Beryl Wickliffe

MEMORIALS & HONORS
TRANSFORMING THE HEART OF THE CITY FUND
In memory of Burton Manning Jr. by Charles W. Radcliffe
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FOUNDATION
In memory of Jack and Dot Whitesides by Brian and Karen Burrell

FRIDAYS AT FIRST SUMMER PODCAST SERIES: ON A MISSION!
JULY 24—Episode 2: Serving Our Neighbor

What does it look like to live out your faith on a college campus? In this episode of the *Fridays at First* Summer Series, “On a Mission,” Michelle Ward and Eric Swofford sit down with Josiah Howard and Amarilis Harper of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) at Furman University to discuss how God is transforming lives through campus ministry. Whether you’re a student, coach, parent, or simply interested in seeing how God is at work through local missions, this episode will inspire you to engage your own community with purpose and faith.
Tune in this summer on our YouTube channel (@FirstPresGreenvilleSC) or wherever you listen to the *Fridays at First* podcast.

IMPORTANT PARKING REMINDER

We are thankful for the wonderful things God is doing at both First Presbyterian Church and Buncombe Street Methodist Church. As both of our congregations continue to grow, Buncombe Street now needs all of its parking spaces for Sunday morning worship. To help support our neighbors in ministry, we ask that our congregation use First Presbyterian’s parking lots on Richardson Street and Washington Street, as well as the Richardson Street Parking Garage, rather than parking in Buncombe Street’s lot. We also ask that you park only in clearly marked parking spaces and avoid parking at the ends of rows or in areas that are not designated for parking. Thank you for helping us love our neighbors well and celebrate all that God is doing in both of our churches!



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CHURCH

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email | contactus@firspresgreenville.org
youtube | @FPCGreenville
facebook | facebook.com/FirstPresGreenville
instagram | @FPCGreenville
mobile app | FPC Live
podcast | Fridays at First
e-newsletter | FirstPresGreenville.org/about/connect@first

TELEVISION
First and Foremost Program
on WHNS-TV FOX Carolina
Sundays at 10:00am

ONLINE GIVING



@fpcgvl

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Christmas@First Preview:
Join the Christmas Choir!

For more information about
FPC, visit FirstPresGreenville.org

JULY 23–29, 2026



FULL
BODY
OPERA

It’s a full body experience.

FPC FINE ARTS MINISTRY *presents*

“An Evening at the Opera”

Friday, August 7 | 7:00pm

FPC Harper Chapel

Full Body Opera helps build a bridge to the power and beauty of operatic music for modern audiences.

You won’t want to miss this night at the opera!

Visit FullBodyOpera.com/events for more information and tickets.