

Bi-Weekly Newsletter

August 25, 2026



The journey to this new staff...

Over two years ago, in anticipation of four staff retirements, a “Retirements Committee” began to consider our current administrative staffing model. Their research, interviews, conversations, and study resulted in a model that transitioned...

[New Staff Bios, Photos, and Contact Info](#)

Handy Links

For full details on how to submit announcements and which communication channel to choose, please [click here](#) to view our Church Communications Submission Guide.

[Online Giving](#)
[Online Calendar](#)

[Ways to Give](#)
[August Birthdays](#)

The churchlife app can be used to locate address information for sending cards to individuals and families. If you do not already have the app, you may not be able to download it from the app store. Some Androids do not support the app.

In the Next Two Weeks...



New to FPC? Join Us for Presbyterian 101

What's with the robes and stoles? What's a session? How do I get involved? If you're a visiting friend (or new member!) with questions like these, join FPC leaders for Presbyterian 101 — a conversation on Presbyterian theology, polity, worship, and how to get connected.

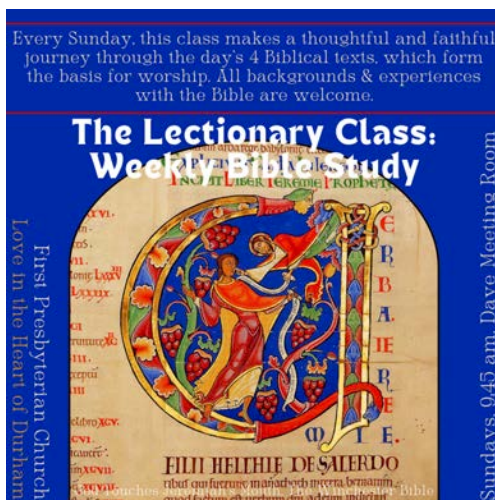
When: August 16, 23, and 30 at 9:45 a.m.

Where: Room 205 | Education Building

Come as you are, with all the small questions or big doubts. We're excited to have you!

Lectionary

Robert Daye Meeting Room



Join us each **Sunday at 9:45** for discussion of the lectionary readings. (Check the Weekly Reminders email for each week's class location.)

August 30: God spoke words of command to Moses from the burning bush, and Moses argued. Jesus told the disciples some things they didn't want to hear, and Peter argued. Do we have the right to argue with a divine message? Do we have the nerve?

September 6: What does the Lord's vengeance look like? How does the Lord treat sinful people or sinful nations?

Join Us for Worship



August 30

Mindy Douglas, preaching

September 6

Esther Hethcox, preaching

Children's Ministries



Children's Faith Formation Teacher Training

Teaching Children's Faith Formation this year? We'd love to have you at a short training session on **Saturday, August 30, from 9:30 to 10:00 a.m.** in Room 205 of the Ed Building.

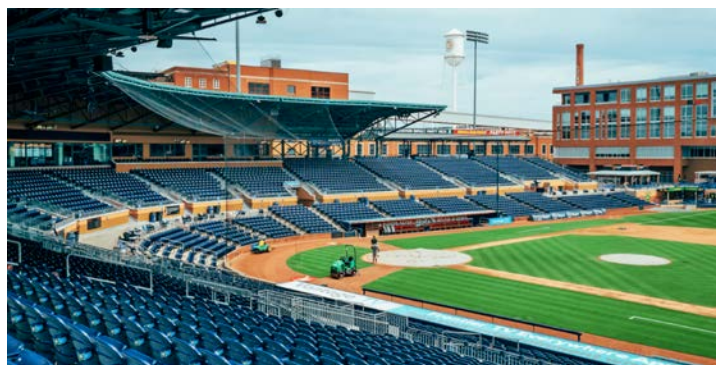
We'll walk through curriculum, classroom logistics, and answer any questions before the year gets underway.

Events

Mary Berry's Ordination

You are joyfully invited to **Mary Berry's** ordination at FPC on **Sunday, August 30 at 4:00 PM**. With the support of FPC and New Hope Presbytery, Mary will be ordained as a Teaching Elder in her role as Assistant Professor of Old Testament at Campbell University Divinity School. We hope you will be able to attend!

In order to get a headcount for a reception following the service, please RSVP using this link: <https://evite.me/9ykpz5yPzy>.



Fellowship Night at the Durham Bulls:

Before your fall routine resumes in full, enjoy a late summer evening at the ballpark! The Fellowship Committee has reserved a block of 30 seats for the game against the Norfolk Tides on **Saturday, August 29 at 6:45 p.m.** The seats are in Section 117 by 3rd base and cost \$22 each. The deadline to purchase tickets is this **Thursday, August 27**.

If interested, please use this link to purchase your tickets:

<https://www.gofevo.com/s/other/Sarahcunninghams2?purl=c0f9f37894b8>

The Somethings Annual Retreat 2026

It's time for our annual fall retreat! Join the FPC Somethings (our 20s and 30s ministry) **October 16-18** for a weekend of connection, spirituality, and rest at Ocean

Isle, NC. We'll be staying at a beautiful house right on the water, and worship will include a newly commissioned communion set, plus more surprises to come.

Cost is \$150-\$175
(scholarships available).

Please let **Pastor Esther** (e.hethcox@firstpres-durham.org) know as soon as possible if you can join us, and if you're interested in helping plan the weekend, the planning team would love more hands.



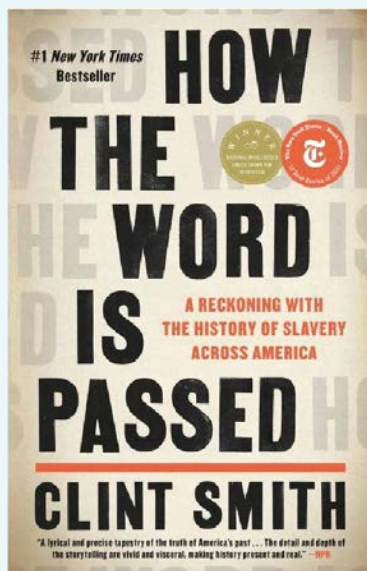
Get Involved

CHOIR REHEARSALS SET TO BEGIN!!

Our official choir season rehearsals begin on **Wednesday the 2nd of September** in the choir room (upstairs in the Faith Formation hallway and around the corner) at **7:00 p.m.** Of course we welcome all our current members, plus a few new faces. If you have any experience singing in a choir (no matter how long ago) you are also welcome!

For more information contact our Minister of Music -- **Matthew Moore** -- at music@firstpres-durham.org or find him after church on Sunday.





Fall Book Club: How the Word Is Passed

Join FPC's Racial Equity Task Force this fall for a book club tour by Zoom, from Monticello to the African American History Museum in DC. We'll be reading *How the Word Is Passed: A Reckoning with the History of Slavery Across America* by Clint Smith, one of the New York Times' top ten books of 2021.

Six sessions on Zoom, **every other Thursday night from 7 to 8 p.m., September 10 through November 19**. Please have your book ready before the first meeting (local booksellers encouraged).

To get the Zoom link or sign up to lead a discussion, RSVP here:

<https://forms.gle/wZ3U4YpmVKkMRQUZ6>

First Acts Reads *The Crucible*

First Acts Reads The Crucible

Please register to join us for a reading of Arthur Miller's award-winning drama about the Salem Witch Trials on Saturday, Oct. 3, from 9 am to 12 pm in the Daye Meeting Room.

The play's themes of community and family being torn apart by ideology, theology, and mass hysteria in New England in the 1600's, sadly, still provide valuable insights to our world today.

Whether you prefer to read or listen, all are welcome. Please register by September 27th at the link below to help us prepare.



Volunteer in the Office

Share your time to support the daily work of the church.

[Read More](#)

Building Update



Building Update: Rebuilding Together

Construction on our Rebuilding Together building project begins **October 1, 2026**. Made possible by the generosity of donors to the 2022 Building Beloved Community Capital Campaign, this project will greatly improve accessibility throughout our building and breathe new life into some of our most beloved shared spaces, including a renovated Watts-Hill Fellowship Hall, a new elevator, reconfigured volunteer and Walk-In Ministry offices, a columbarium extending from the memorial garden, a renovated chapel, and new basement showers to support mission teams and emergency shelter. The project also includes roof, organ, window, and HVAC repairs, along with completed solar panel installation.

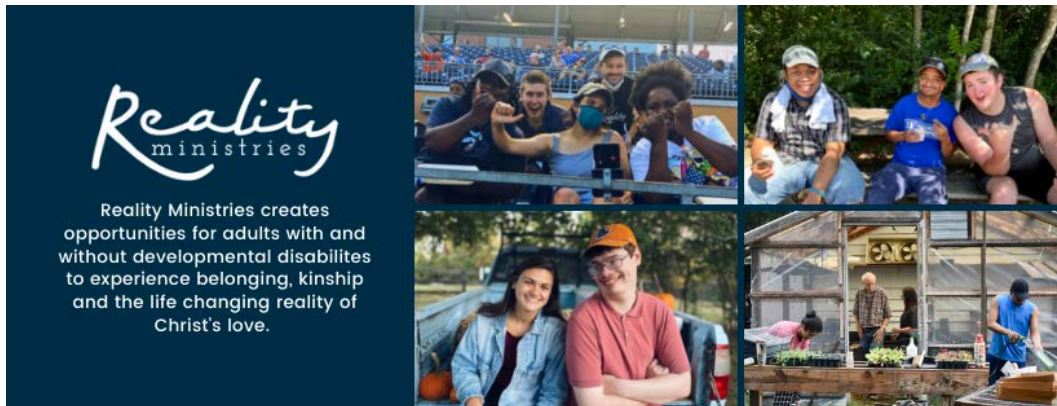
What to Expect Once Construction Begins:

- The Fellowship Hall and volunteer offices will close for renovation.
- The kitchen will remain available for use.
- Church staff offices will be temporarily reconfigured.
- Some programmatic events may be held offsite or in alternate church spaces.

Questions about the project or how it may affect a specific ministry or event? Reach out to communications@firstpres-durham.org.



Community Events



Reality Ministries: Seeking 30 Volunteers

Reality Ministries is a Durham nonprofit that builds community with people with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). **This September**, they're launching a new group centered on friendship and belonging, and they need 30 new volunteers to make it possible.

No experience with IDD is required, just a willingness to show up, build relationships, and help create a place where everyone belongs. Volunteers are especially needed **Friday mornings (10 to 12:30 p.m.)** and **Monday evenings (6 to 7:30 p.m.)**, though regular programming runs **Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.**, with additional evening groups on **Tuesdays** and **Thursdays**.

The new group begins **September 8**. To get involved, visit [Reality Ministries' website](https://realityministries.org) to register, or RSVP for their group orientation on **August 25 at 5 p.m.** by emailing tammy@realityministries.org.

Can't make the 25th? Register online and use Tammy's calendar link to set up a one-on-one orientation instead.

Questions? Contact **Tammy White Rodman** at tammy@realityministries.org.

Yoga Offerings

Monday at 4:30 p.m. | Watts-Hill Hall

Friday at 10:30 a.m. | Room 201

For more information email [Jane Wettach](mailto:Jane.Wettach@realityministries.org).

Please note that Yoga at FPC is cancelled throughout the rest of August and September dates are still being determined and will be announced via email.



yoga
CLASS

A class for you to relax your body and soul

MONDAY
Vinyasa Flow
4:30 PM

JOIN US FOR
YOGA AT FPC

FRIDAY
Chair Yoga
10:30 AM

CONTACT JANE WETTACH FOR MORE INFORMATION



Ends of the Earth

A Contemplative Retreat to Experience the Wisdom, Food, and Musical Traditions of Celtic Christianity

September 18–20

Avila Center for Community Leadership

Ends of the Earth will offer participants an opportunity to slow their pace, gather for thoughtful listening to each other and the natural world, enjoy nutritious communal meals, and restore energy for engagement in the world. The retreat will include teachings, practices, food, and music grounded in the Celtic Christian traditions, which took shape at the westernmost ends of Europe on the coasts of Scotland and Ireland beginning in the 5th century.

First Presbyterian Church | www.firstpres-durham.org

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