



2023 ADVENT LUNCH & LEARN



2023 GREENING THE CHURCH



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Faith Presbyterian Church

2023 *Annual Report*



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2023 Annual Report

Rev. Susan L. Haynes – Pastor

What a year 2023 was for Faith. We began the year living in the aftermath of the 2022 Christmas Eve flood of our building. There are not enough words to express my gratitude to those who led us through that challenging time. I particularly want to thank Bill Young and Bud Wheatley. They spent many hours talking with our insurance company, meeting with contractors, doing some of the repair work themselves, and ensuring everything was done as it should be. In spite of the inconvenience caused, as always, Faith's resilient attitude and trust in God, brought us through, and I believe we ended up better than we began. Some enhancements were added that made our wonderful space here at 1349 Blue Bird Road even more beautiful.

We have not been immune to other challenges as well, both as a church family and as individuals. This past year, Dr. Phillip Mitchell left as our Music Director in April and then after being hired in July, Dr. Mark Mentzer left at the end of 2023. Several of our beloved members joined the church triumphant and we gave thanks, and continue to do so, for their legacy of faith and service.

Amidst whatever challenges come to Faith Presbyterian Church, our desire to shine the light of Christ in our community and in our church continues and our resilient attitude, grounded in our love for God, for neighbor, and for each other,

propels us through the hard times and into the future God has for Faith Presbyterian.



The FPC Session continues to lead and serve through the ministries of our Planning Teams. Your faithfulness has been displayed in so many ways, including your participation in the many aspects of our worship, ministry, and mission. We continued to reduce our mortgage with the Presbyterian Investment Loan Program, and you will hear a report about our

loan's status at the Annual Meeting of the Congregation on Sunday, February 18, following the 10:30 worship service. Through your faithful contributions, we continue to be sound financially. I hope you will be there to hear the mortgage update as well as elect the members of the Church Nominating Committee, receive the 2023 Annual Report, receive the Session's 2024 budget, and approve the pastor's terms of call for 2024.

For me personally, the highlight of this year was my installation as your installed pastor on July 24. It has been a journey for me as I began as your part-time associate pastor on May 15, 2020, then transitioned to your interim pastor on October 1, 2021, and then was called as your installed pastor. I still laugh when I think about what *my* plans were back in May 2020. Obviously, God had other plans and I am so thankful to be where I am doing what I am doing, serving as your pastor.

To God be the Glory!

Susan

Mission Statement, Vision Statement and Priorities for 2023

MISSION STATEMENT

By God's love and grace, we are called, committed, and led to worship and serve.

VISION STATEMENT

Called by God to be Faith Presbyterian Church of the North Georgia Mountains. We welcome all to join together to worship God and want all to feel welcomed.

Committed to follow Jesus' example, we joyfully share God's love, grace, and gifts with all in our church family and community.

Led by the Holy Spirit, we invite all to grow spiritually in our community in faith.

CHURCH PRIORITIES for 2023

- Increase membership and participation through connecting with and serving those who reside in and beyond our community.
- Continue as a spiritual community worshipping God by the sharing of our time, talent, and treasure.
- Equip and encourage all to follow in Jesus' footsteps and to show God's love, grace, and care.
- Identify and develop effective church leaders.
- Communicate more effectively including the use of technology and social media.
- Explore expanding worship and the mission of Faith into surrounding counties.
- Search for the next installed pastor.



Faith's outreach effort at the Blue Ridge Senior Center. Once a month on a Friday it is the happening place in Blue Ridge.

Financial Operations Team (FOT) Report – 2023

It is always a pleasure to be able to report that Faith continues to enjoy a strong financial position. We do so again when we report as of the end of 2023. We are all aware of the “unusual” period we have experienced in recent years. There are many events in the life of a church that tend to cause financial uncertainty. Constructing a new facility, a pandemic that delayed its use, living with a mortgage for the first time ever, recovering from a casualty loss from broken plumbing and learning the true cost of being an “owner” as opposed to a “renter” all qualify as such financial disrupters.

But, as we have reported previously, the members and friends of Faith have remained strong in their commitment to the church and its missions with their time and financial support.

It has been the past practice of the FOT to review our financial year in terms of the actual cost of operating the church facilities and its missions (Operations) and the commitment of Faith to accelerate the repayment of our building mortgage (Accelerated Mortgage Reduction). This year we add a third summary (Casualty Loss-Flood) to recognize the rather extraordinary event that occurred when water pipes burst and damaged the church interior.

Operations . . .

Source of Funds

Stewardship Giving (Pledged and Unpledged)	\$273,771
Special Offerings and Designated Gifts	12,146
Gifts Designated for the ReKindle Program	11,580
Memorials	6,245
Grants	700
Interest and Miscellaneous Income	1090
Reserves from Previous Years	<u>4,625</u>
	\$310,157

Use of Funds

Personnel Expenses	\$129,226
Administrative Expenses	57,303
Congregational Care	3,474
Spiritual Development	12,506
Building and Grounds	9,992
Mission/Outreach	29,547
ReKindle Program	4,294
Memorial Garden	599
Required Mortgage Principal and Interest	<u>63,216</u>
	\$310,157

Accelerated Mortgage Repayment . . .

Source of Funds

Gifts Designated for Mortgage Reductions	\$87,848
Residual from Previous Year	<u>3,152</u>
	\$91,000

Use of Funds

Additional Principal Payments Made	\$91,000
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Casualty Loss – Flood . . .

Source of Funds

Insurance Payment for Flood Loss	\$157,155
Reserves from Previous Years	<u>10,060</u>
	\$167,215

Use of Funds

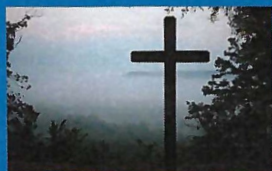
Building Repair/Furnishing Replacement	\$164,805
Replace Music Library (Partial)	<u>2,410</u>
	\$167,215

As a final note, we are pleased to report that the Stewardship Drive for 2024 substantiated the growing financial support of the church. Sixty-six families made pledges totaling \$261,432. An additional \$5,200 was pledged for mortgage reduction.



All the photos shown here and throughout the booklet are representative of countless hours of time and talent.

Thanks to all for a great year in 2023.



Community raised garden



Maundy Thursday
Worship Service



Fire and Ice
Community Festival



Saturday's Men's
Breakfast

*Please note, 1 working
and 3 talking. LOL*

Take time to review the images and information contained in this document and search for ways that you can be more involved in the life of Faith Presbyterian Church. There is definitely a place somewhere that is perfect for you.

Annual Report for 2023

Prepared by Candy Frank, Clerk-of-Session

Membership January 1, 2023 (corrected)	125
New Members	10
Losses	
By Transfer to other churches	2
By Death	3
Membership as of December 31, 2023	130

Class of 2025 Ruling Elders: Ordained and Installed-Diane Shillcutt, Sally Crawford and Bob Elwell

Ministry Planning Teams	Chairperson	Elder Class
Administrative	Bill Young	Class of 2023
Administrative	Al Gnann	Class of 2024
Congregational Care	Terri Charron	Class of 2024
Congregational Care	Diane Shillcutt	Class of 2025
Mission and Outreach	Lynda Ray	Class of 2023
Mission and Outreach	Sally Crawford	Class of 2025
Spiritual Development	Sylvia Goodyear	Class of 2024
Spiritual Development	Bob Elwell	Class of 2025
Clerk of Session	Candy Frank	Class of 2023

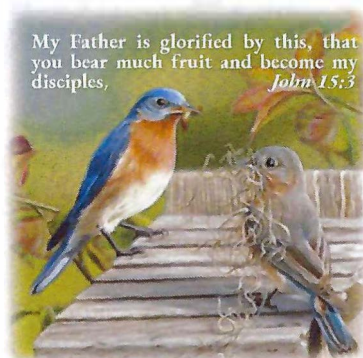
Message from the Clerk:

What a way to start a year . . . fixed pipes, installed new floors, new ceiling tiles, cleaned choir robes . . . Faith survived and thrived!

Throughout the year, a new pastor was installed, ten new members joined the congregation, food was delivered, vegetables were harvested, many volunteer hours were worked, meals were shared, studies completed and lessons learned . . . Faith participated and celebrated!

From beginning to end, we worshipped, and gave of time, talent and treasure . . . Faith glorified and praised the Lord!

Thanks be to God.



Administrative Ministry Team

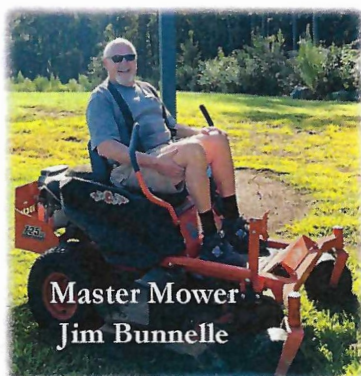
Prepared by Bill Young and Al Gnann, Co-Chairs

The Administration Planning Team is responsible for the care of the building, the personnel of the church, publicity, and the finances of the church.

Facilities

What can be said about 2023 that didn't first begin with Christmas Eve 2022 around 4 p.m. That's when the phone call went out notifying everyone that the church had sustained 8 broken pipes because of the frigid temperatures. The result, the entire facility was flooded. Many of the faithful arrived in record time with mops, squeegees, wet dry vacs and a great attitude. Standing water was quickly removed and thus 2023 began and the story continues . . .

Insurance companies, field adjusters, project supervisors, many service personnel, vast amounts of equipment, selection of replacement materials, industrial dryers, humidity sensors, mold mitigation, etc., etc., etc., seemed like it went on forever and suddenly lo and behold by holy week and Easter the vast majority of the damage had been completed. Some of the work included new flooring, drywall, painting and trim had all been completed and Easter was truly a period of resurrection. Included in the repairs were some upgrades and improvements that we had wished we had made during initial construction and this "disaster" actually gave us a chance to include some of those improvements. So if there was a bright side that was at least one thing the flood enabled the church to accomplish.



Everyone of the Administration Planning Team played a huge roll in the rapid recovery of our magnificent facility. A sincere thanks goes out to each and everyone of them.

Treasurer/Finance

The church has a strong financial management team consisting of Nancy Goodson as Treasurer, Bob Goodyear as Financial Secretary, and Doris Riggs as check writer. Supporting them are Al Gnann as support to Nancy and Terri Charon as support to Bob. This system not only shares responsibilities among five people but also provides a balance and separation of accounts payable and accounts receivable.

This financial team is commended for the job they have done in properly accounting for the church's income, paying bills expediently, and managing the resources our church receives. In addition, a team of counters is responsible for collecting the weekly offering on a rotating basis and depositing it into the church's bank account with records provided to the treasurer and financial secretary.

Communications/Technology

A team including Bob Goodyear, Bruce Burn, Steve Williamson, and Alison McKee continues updating and maintaining the church website with a focus on information for attracting new visitors and news for existing membership.

Stewardship

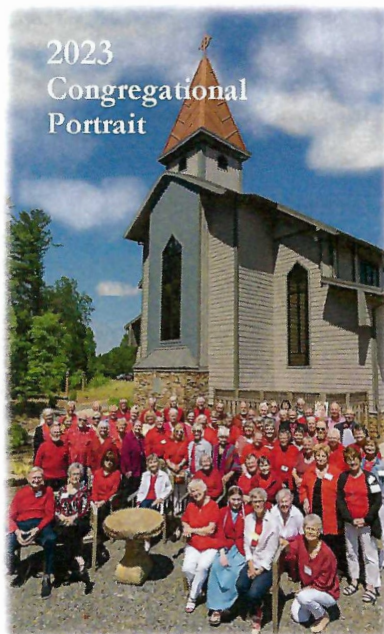


The 2023 Stewardship team included Susan Haynes, Bill and Carol Furtwengler, Connie Griggs, Steve Williamson, Patty Morris, Bill and Frances Young and Al-Gnann. **“Bee the Church”**. Like previous years it was a 12-month program to keep the congregation involved all year, not just during the short Stewardship season. Our approach was to monthly submit stories of Stewardship to the congregation delivering a message of thoughtfulness and hope when speaking of Stewardship. We had great response from members of our Faith community. In addition to a very successful Stewardship campaign we also implemented a new approach to the Time and Talent portion of stewardship. We organized a multi-week drive to recruit participants in the various programs offered by the church. The response was fantastic and resulted in record numbers

of the faithful signing up to participate in various activities and projects in the life of the church. We so appreciated the congregation’s participation and enthusiasm to all aspects of the 2023 Stewardship campaign.

Church Office Support

2023 was truly a year of improvement and growth. Our Office Angels increased their number dramatically. Many new Angels were recruited and as of right now the total number is 18. These ladies and gentlemen provide an essential service to Faith. The result is our church office is staffed 5 days a week and open from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 9 a.m. until 12 noon on Friday. Our Office Angels continue to develop skills that contribute to the high professional standards that have become the norm for the Faith office staff.



Church Directory

The newest news about the directory is the addition of new portrait photos of our members. Most of the images are of the highest professional quality thanks to the magic of Bob Goodyear, who continues to make us all look younger and more beautiful and handsome than ever.

The directory is continually updated from our membership database and is posted on the website with a hard copy available in the office upon request.

Publicity

Faith newspaper ads are posted each week along with annual participation in the Chamber of Commerce publications. All ads are to be approved by the Session, so if you have an outlet for publicity, let the Outreach Planning Team know. The Faith Monthly Newsletter is published the first week of every month and sent electronically as well as traditional mailing to those without internet service. The Newsletter is produced in-house and composed by Kim King. Kim also distributes the WAG (Week at a Glance) every week electronically and through traditional mail.



New for 2023 was the addition of the weekly news loop aired every Sunday morning prior to worship service. The events of the week are brought to you in living color by Betty Benedict and with magnificent color art for your viewing pleasure and providing important information about the upcoming events in the life of our church.

Personnel Procedures and Insurance

Frances Young continues to serve as Chair of the Personnel Committee during 2023. Susan Haynes serves presently as Pastor and has established innovative direction for the session as well as the direction our church has taken in 2023. The committee also completes an evaluation of the pastor and music director annually with salary recommendation made to the Session. Susan Haynes was hired as our permanent pastor during 2023 by an overwhelming majority. She brings enthusiasm, energy and humor to the position of pastor. The Personnel Committee continues to provide direction and support for our employees.

Congregational Care Planning Team

Prepared by Terri Charron and Diane Shillcutt, Co-Chairs

The 2023 Congregational Planning Team was composed of the following members: Terri Charron, Elder and Diane Shillcutt, Elder, Kim King, Betty Benedict, Sandy Cuppia, Debbie Peterson, Chris Martinez, Jaimiele Green, Kay Hewitt, Carol Furtwengler, Cynthia Salamone, Treva Wheatley, Shirley Copeland and Rev. Susan Haynes.

We met bi-monthly for a total of 6 times in 2023. Congregational Care's (CC) main goal is to find ways to connect and care for our members in a variety of ways. CC has several committees to help ensure our goals are met and those committees, including activities we've planned and carried out, are listed below.

Blue Bird Book Worms Club – Chris Martinez, Committee Chair. The book club met eleven times in 2023, with a combined meeting for November and December. Attendance averaged between 7 and 10 members. Members rotated facilitating the book discussions every month, with the exception of having Pastor Susan Haynes who facilitated the book *The Book of Longings* in June, and the Book-bound Book store owner Sharon Davis who facilitated the book *The Cicada Tree* in September. In addition to our guest facilitators, we had two special guests come and share their expertise in conjunction with books we had read– Dale Luengen spoke about his father's experience on the orphan train and John Thompson shared his adventures on the Appalachian Trail. The group met at Sherry Mikol's home for a Christmas party sharing food, books, and fellowship!



Knit Wits/Crafty Fridays – Kim King, Committee Chair.

The Knit Wits are simply amazing. A total of 497 hats were knitted by just two of our talented knitters and were distributed to our Snack In A Backpack recipients. A total of 4 prayer shawls, and 100 prayer squares were knitted by four of our knitters. These squares are included in our welcome bags and also were given to our Faith Veterans

on Veteran's Day. They are available in the Narthex to share as needed. Crafty Fridays only met once this year. The craft day was to prep for crafts that were carried out with seniors at the Fannin County Senior Center.

Faith, Hope and Hammers – Debbie Peterson, Committee Chair. Seventeen different Faith, Hope and Hammers' volunteers worked on 20 projects totaling 37 hours of effort in 2023. Projects included fixing broken pipes, moving furniture, electrical needs, replacing smoke detectors, tree removal, outdoor lawn work, ceiling lattice for a porch, moving railroad ties and miscellaneous small repair jobs. Contractor recommendations were also given out for concrete, insulation and roof work. John Thompson will be the FHH Committee Chair in 2024.

Memorial Garden – Jaimielee Green, Committee Chair. Charles and Betty Blair were interred in our Memorial Garden on March 18, 2023. Many continue to work diligently to beautify the Garden and what was planted in 2022 continues to grow and complete the landscape.

Receptions, Celebrations, Memorial Services – Diane Shillcutt, Committee Chair. The CC Reception Committee was instrumental in planning and carrying out these events:

On July 23rd, Faith celebrated the installation of Reverend Susan Haynes. Several members of the Cherokee Presbytery attended with members of our Faith Family. Beautiful charcuterie boards were made by several of our reception committee members for the reception after the installation. Susan was given a beautiful tree of life stole from the congregation and this wonderful event marked a new chapter in our church life at Faith.

A reception was held following Jeannine Lazenby's memorial service on 2/25/23 and CC also provided food for Amy McChesney's memorial service that was held at her home on 12/17/23.

Recognitions:

Graduates - There were a total of seven graduates, relatives of Faith members, that we recognized at the worship service on May 21st. Graduates were given a devotional, and their pictures and accomplishments were included as an insert in the church bulletin.

Veterans – Veterans were honored in November. They were recognized by name along with the branch of the military that they served in and were given a camouflage prayer square.

Mother's and Father's Day - Our mothers were honored on Mother's Day with a carnation and soup cookbook that was compiled with recipes from Faith members. Fathers were honored on Father's Day with a candy bar.

Octogenarians and Nonagenarians - members were recognized with a sheet cake in their honor on September 24th.

National Clergy Month - We recognized Reverend Susan Haynes on October 8th with a cake to celebrate National Clergy month.

Second Sunday Lunches - There were a total of 10 held in 2023, with a different Planning Team hosting each month. A large number of the congregation attended each month to gather around the table, share a meal and enjoy fellowship with each other. In September, our SSL theme was Football. We ate outside and enjoyed a cookout with hotdogs and hamburgers. Some Faith members played a Cheese Ball game, and fun was had by everyone.



- **Social Gatherings** – CC planned several fun get-togethers for our members to enjoy:
- **Sharing Stories 2/21/23** – Many Faith members participated in this first-annual event. Everyone brought baby pictures of themselves, and we matched faces to names, shared childhood stories, and enjoyed fellowship and lunch together.
- We showed **The Jesus Revolution** movie on July 24th and enjoyed ice cream and popcorn. A small group enjoyed an outing to Pickin-In-The-Park at Horseshoe Bend Park on September 14th.
- **Annual Ornament Exchange** – This event was started in 2021 and has been so popular, it's become an annual event. This year over 32 Faith women and friends attended the event at Vincent's Copper Top Restaurant, and after lunch, Christmas ornaments were exchanged. A raffle was held for a chance to win over 15 beautiful, donated items (many that were handmade). A total of \$215 was raised from the raffle and given toward our Christmas Blessing Gift.



Men's Breakfast – The men of the church meet on the first Saturday of each month for meaningful fellowship, devotion and a good breakfast feast. They met nine times in 2023, and collected \$621 that was used to help fund Faith Hope & Hammers.

T-Shirts - CC ordered t-shirts once this year to help provide all our members with the new "blue" long and short-sleeved Faith t-shirts. Our t-shirts help identify our Faith members who wear them out in the community while involved in our many missions.

New Member Directory – CC was instrumental in organizing a photo shoot for our new member directory to be completed in early 2024. Pictures were professionally done by our own Bob Goodyear.

Congregational Care has actively been a part of many aspects of our Faith Community. We continue to look for ways to bring our members together, offer spiritual support and care for one another.

Mission and Outreach Planning Team

Prepared by Lynda Ray and Sally Crawford, Co-Chairs

Mission and Outreach Planning Team: Sally Crawford, Lynda Ray, Debbie Peterson, Treva Wheatley, Patty Morris, Kim King, Frances Young, Sylvia Goodyear, Rev. Susan Haynes, and Phil Ray. Additional coordinators of various projects were at times included in the team's meetings.

2023 proved to be another successful year for the Mission and Outreach Planning Team. Led by coordinators, Faith members were active in many community activities. The generous members of Faith provided financial support to 17 community organizations. M and O members were active in 11 of these groups. Also, our members were actively involved in twenty five additional community activities. Eighteen Faith members served as liaisons for these organizations. In addition, Faith members served as board members on nine of these organizations.

While financial donations are essential, volunteer involvement is important to supporting our community. 2023 saw our members participating in multiple activities.

The first of several new Mission and Outreach projects was working with the newly formed organization of Fannin Foster Families. Several Faith members helped to wash and organize children's clothing that had been stored. The clothes were then divided by age appropriate sections and hung on racks for the children.

To further aid Fannin Foster Families, Mission and Outreach worked with Women of Faith to erect an angel tree in Faith's Narthex. Generous church members filled Christmas lists for three families which included 11 children. This allowed each foster child to have a Merry Christmas!

Another new project for Mission and Outreach was a plan to reach out to the homeless in Blue Ridge. Randy Griggs is currently constructing a structure similar to our Little Free Libraries which will be stocked with food and essential supplies for those who are currently homeless.

In 2023 the reKindle Grant from the Lily Foundation through Columbia Seminary ended. In order to continue this mission of helping Seniors to secure food, a grant was received from TriState Electric Co-op. Also, Faith received several contributions from generous community groups and Faith members. In 2023 the number of Seniors in Blue Ridge and McCaysville receiving deliveries increased from 135 to 158. Boxed foods, canned goods, and fresh fruits and vegetables were distributed monthly. At Christmas each of the Seniors was gifted a warm blanket.

As an outgrowth of the work with Seniors through the reKindle Grant, members of Faith worked at the Senior Center on the third Friday of each month. Many friendships were formed as around thirty Seniors engaged in making crafts, in singing, and in playing games. Faith members ended each visit by providing the Seniors with a delicious lunch. At Christmas each Senior was given hand knitted scarves and a pair of gloves as a reminder of Faith's love for them.



A huge crowd joined with the Jewish Congregation of Blue Ridge one Sunday afternoon to celebrate their week long celebration of Sukkot. Sukkot celebrates the fall harvest and their escape from slavery and the 40 years spent in the desert. A temporary shelter (Sukkah) is erected and used for meals, prayers, sleeping, and just spending as much time as possible in the structure during the 7 days of Sukkot.

The reKindle Grant was a joint project of Faith and the Jewish Community of Blue Ridge. 2023 saw both congregations join together to celebrate Sukkot. This activity has become an annual fall event which affords the congregates a time to socialize as they enjoy a picnic. Before the October Sunday, men from both congregations constructed a Sukkah which was used for the celebration. 2023 was the third year for this event.

Two other projects this year were UNDIE SUNDAY and SOCK IT' TO ME SUNDAY. A huge amount of underwear and socks for all ages and genders was donated to Family Connection and Fannin Foster Families as they prepared for the 2023 school year.

To aid the children and families of East Fannin Elementary, Faith provided two complete Thanksgiving meals which included turkeys, food for a dinners, and paper products. In addition to these meals, Faith members donated to the school \$99 in Coke Rewards and six pounds of flip tops to be cashed by 4H. Faith's Coke rewards donation has totaled \$965 since the project was begun.

Through Mission and Outreach, Faith hosted a welcome meal for the ladies and their families who enjoyed a week long retreat sponsored by Little Pink House. Meeting these ladies who have dealt with Breast Cancer, giving them huge gift bags and hosting a meal for them proved a rewarding outreach for Faith members.

As an Outreach Project in 2023, members of Mission and Outreach distributed flyers for Faith's activities and services during Lent. These went to parks, campgrounds, and lodgings in Blue Ridge and surrounding areas. This information was also circulated in our local newspaper.

Faith not only helped to support Mineral Springs in 2023 , but after Covid restrictions were lifted, Mission and Outreach members and other Faith congregates enjoyed interaction with students as they volunteered for Special Olympics in the spring and in the fall. This project is a great way to bond with students as well as it is an opportunity to work with others in our community.

Fall saw members of Mission and Outreach welcoming young people to Arts in the Park. The children were provided beads which they used to construct a personalized bracelet. Members enjoyed contact with over 100 children.

Another fall project was participation in the Halloween Safe Zones sponsored by Blue Ridge and McCaysville. M and O members handed out treats to over 1,000 children. Generous Faith members donated many pounds of candy which was packaged in bags with a note that wished the recipient a Happy Halloween and gave the location of the church.

During the spring, Mission and Outreach represented Faith as they welcomed the children to TroutFest. The young people were entertained with a Rivers Alive project which was followed by making sand art which represented fish and river beds. Over 100 sand art projects were completed by the children.

In 2023 not only was Snack in a Backpack given a monetary donation, one Mission and Outreach member and her friend knitted over 500 caps to be donated to Snack recipients at Christmas. Many of Faith's members also participated in the delivery of Summer Meals.

2023 sadly saw the retirement of our missionary in Zambia. To honor Melissa, the Presbyterian missionary that Faith helped to support, we continued our contributions to the school for girls that Melissa had started. This support ended in 2023.

Habitat for Humanity has always been a priority at Faith. 2023 saw the completion of a home for a mother and her children. Members of Faith supported the building of the house by supplying construction volunteers, meals for workers, and a financial contribution.

Mission and Outreach had two members that sponsored a geocache course on our campus. This year the course attracted 97 visitors! The course, started in 2018, has had many visitors who posted comments and pictures.

In March of 2023 Faith hosted a successful Red Cross Blood Drive. The day long drive yielded 18 units of blood which is the daily unit limit of the Red Cross.

The Chainsaw Ministry continued to respond to opportunities to cut up and clear downed trees for church members or identified community residents who are in need. Often, the downed trees were provided to folks for heating their homes. However, this year we had ministry members determine that most of the team was no longer able to travel outside the area to respond to natural disasters. The work of the Chainsaw Ministry was limited to the counties of Fannin, Gilmer, and Union.

2023 saw NAMI, a mental health support group for caretakers, meeting on the Faith campus. This program works in cooperation with other mental health initiatives in Fannin and Gilmer counties. 2023 proved to be a successful year for this organization.

With the coming of fall, members of Faith participated in helping to clean rivers and streams as a part of Rivers Alive.

Mission and Outreach was also responsible for bags to give each visitor to the church. These bags not only had information about Faith, but also contained small gifts.

One of the largest projects of 2021 was the establishment of three Little Free Libraries. This year, 2023, Mission and Outreach members maintained and stocked the libraries.

To say the least, 2023 was an outstanding year for The Mission and Outreach Planning Team.

Mission and Outreach 2023 Projects and Activities

Donations

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Fannin County Family Connection | 10. Summer Meals |
| 2. Open Arms of Blue Ridge | 11. Toys for Tots |
| 3. Habitat for Humanity | 12. Sunny D's Children Theater |
| 4. Good Samaritan | 13. Overseas Missionary Support |
| 5. Thornwell Children's Home | 14. One Great Hour of Caring |
| 6. N. Ga. Mtn. Crisis Center | 15. Christmas Joy Offering |
| 7. Mineral Springs Center | 16. Mother's Day Offering |
| 8. Snack in a Backpack | 17. Pentecost Offering |
| 9. Honduras Fund | |

Activities

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Thanksgiving baskets | 18. rekindle |
| 2. Little Pink House | 19. Family Connection |
| 3. Second Wind | 20. Red Cross Blood Drive |
| 4. Rivers Alive Volunteers | 21. Thanksgiving Food Collection |
| 5. Bowls of Hope | 22. Toys for Tots collection site |
| 6. Arts In The Park booth | 23. Coke Caps for Education |
| 7. Trout Fest booth | 24. Tabs for E. Fannin Elem. |
| 8. Visitor Welcome Bags | 25. Geocache site at Faith |
| 9. Meals on Wheels | 26. Little Free Library McCaysville |
| 10. Undie Sunday | 27. Little Free Library Faith |
| 11. Sock It To Me Sunday | 28. Little Free Library Family Connection |
| 12. "Entering the Mission Field" | 29. Mental Health Support Group |
| 13. Habitat Volunteers | 30. Chainsaw Ministries |
| 14. Second Sunday Lunch | 31. Special Olympics |
| 15. Garden Volunteers | 32. Fannin County Service Conf. |
| 16. Monthly Senior Center | 33. Halloween Safe Zone |
| 17. Summer Meals | 34. Throws for Seniors |

The above activities represent thousands of volunteer hours dedicated to the service projects that Faith members and friends contribute their time and talent to throughout the year.

Spiritual Development Planning Team

Prepared by Sylvia Goodyear and Bob Elwell, Co-Chairs

2023 was a year of challenges and new beginnings. The Spiritual Development planning team continued to lead all functions related to worship and spiritual growth. Faith members voted to call Susan Haynes as our installed pastor, and her installation was a high point of the year. Our director of music resigned and left in June. After a few weeks of scrambling to provide coverage, Mark Mentzer was hired to fill the position. We will be searching in 2024 for a new music director as Mark resigned at the end of the year.

Worship

Weekly worship services were conducted both live in the sanctuary and live-streamed on social media. We are still trying to determine the best way to stream our worship service and are currently using Facebook and YouTube. The AV team has been exploring Vimeo as an additional option and will proceed with this in 2024. To improve our worship experience and our broadcasts, sound absorbing panels were installed to reduce feedback from the sound system, and professionals were brought in to help us learn how to best use the equipment we have.

Plans are in the works to add hanging choir microphones above the choir.

In 2023, we also started providing communion via intinction. This form of communion started in February, and was provided to the congregation every other month. On the alternate months, regular communion and passing of the communion elements was conducted. A Communion team was formed and members were assigned to prepare the elements and arrange and assign elders for each Sunday service where communion was served.

Faith is fortunate to have many willing volunteers who run the sound system, serve as liturgists, serve as ushers, sing in the choir, provide special music, plan special services, and prepare elements for communion. Volunteers also reset the sanctuary for worship after it has been arranged to accommodate other church activities. Our choir devoted many rehearsals to preparing our annual Christmas Cantata, "Christmas Dreams", and we had a very moving and a record breaking attendance service for Christmas Eve.

Spiritual Development

In March, we began "The Year of the Bible", with over 50 members joining in the effort to read the entire Bible in 12 months. This will conclude at the end of February 2024. As part of this, bi-weekly discussions were held. These discussions were lead by Steve Baker and Pastor Susan Haynes. In the spring, the Tuesday Faith Group (led by Patty Morris and Chuck Huckleberry) and the Thursday Faith Group (led by Sylvia Goodyear and Greg Duncan) each did a study based on the Discipleship series. Our traditional lent study was skipped because of this, but Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services were held in addition to two services on Easter.

By summer we realized that the fellowship provided by the group studies was being missed, and we resumed our summer learning series using “Bible Stories for



Grownups” for a 5-week study led by Frances Young, Steve Baker, Patty Morris, Vicki Elwell, and Susan Haynes. Women of Faith, led by Frances Young began a new study in September. “Miracles of Jesus”. The Tuesday Faith group’s fall study was “The Chosen”, and the Thursday Faith group’s fall study was “Meant for Good”.

For advent, our four-week lunch and learn study was “An Unlikely Advent” led by Steve Baker, Frances Young, Patty Morris, and Pastor Susan Haynes. The sanctuary was beautifully decorated with our Chrismon tree, poinsettias, garlands and candles. Nativity scenes loaned by congregants graced the tables along the wall. Two services were celebrated on Christmas Eve, Sunday morning and a candlelight service in the evening. We concluded our 2023 worship with a reading and carol sing service on December 31st led by serving elders.

Two performances followed with the community being invited for an evening service. The choir continued to work hard to become a spiritual part of all services and grew during the year with new members.

Studies

Faith Groups continued during 2023, Sunday School classes were led by Steve Baker. Women of Faith also met led by Frances Young. Tuesday Group led by Patty Morris and Thursday Group led by Sylvia Goodyear and Greg Duncan.



Pictured above is a group picture of the Tuesday morning faith group. It's led by Patty Morris (seated 2nd from left) and Chuck Huckleberry (seated 3rd from left). Groups meet for a spring semester after Easter and a fall semester prior to Advent.

If you have not participated in one of the faith groups, please consider joining one for the upcoming spring semester.

The Spiritual Development Planning Team appreciates the dedicated volunteers and staff who made all the events during 2023 proceed smoothly and meaningfully for our congregation and friends.



Greg Duncan and Dwayne Collier a couple of the tortilla fry chefs for the Fire and Ice Festival in February. Spiritual Development was the host planning team for this annual event in Blue Ridge.

Faith Presbyterian Church USA

Sunday Worship Services are held weekly at 10:30 a.m.

Pastor Susan Haynes

susan.haynes@faithpresbyterianusa.org

Director of Music

Position is vacant at this time. Search Committee is formed and in the process of locating, interviewing and eventually hiring a music director.,

Church Treasurer

Nancy Goodson

nancygoodson@tds.net

Financial Secretary

Bob Goodyear

rrgoodyear@tds.net

Faith Presbyterian Church Session

Class of 2023: Candy Frank, Clerk of Session, Linda Ray, Bill Young

Class of 2024: Terri Charron, Al Gnann, Sylvia Goodyear

Class of 2025: Diane Shillcutt, Sally Crawford, Bob Elwell

Class of 2026: Sandy Cuppia, Greg Duncan, Bill Young

Rev. Susan Haynes, Moderator

The **Annual Meeting of the Congregation** has been called by the Session for Sunday, February 18, 2023, following the 10:30 a.m. Service of Worship.

