

Remembering
the past

Celebrating
the future



Faith Presbyterian Church
2004 - 2024



A Message from our Pastor



In the early 2000s, a group of 12 Presbyterians listened to God's call to establish a Presbyterian presence in the Blue Ridge area. By 2004, enough people had joined in that call to enable Faith Presbyterian Church of the North Georgia Mountains to become a Presbyterian Church (USA) chartered congregation. This commemorative booklet shares the story in words and photos of the past twenty years that officially began on June 6, 2004, but the vision for which was placed by God long before that day.

Not only was the dream of those founding members to establish a Presbyterian presence in the North Georgia Mountains, but that the church would also be a beacon of hope and love for those in the surrounding community and beyond. Through worship services, through countless mission endeavors, through spiritual growth opportunities, Faith has continually sought to be that beacon of hope and love.

Each church has an identity. Truly, the identity of Faith Presbyterian is one of service... service to and within the community and service to one another. The people of Faith have been amazingly generous, both financially and in the giving of their time and

talent. Through this booklet, we give thanks to God for all those saints who have come before us and those who are with us now who have brought Faith to this wonderful time of celebration and for those future saints who will continue to answer God's call to Faith Presbyterian Church.

Most of all, this 20th Anniversary Booklet bears witness to the amazing mercy, grace, and love of God in and through Jesus Christ who, by the power of the Holy Spirit, has led us this far, in faith together, and will continue to do so in the years ahead.

To God be the glory!

The Reverend Susan L. Haynes

2024 Faith Presbyterian Church Session



Candy Frank
Stated Clerk of Session



Bill Young and Al Gnann
Administration



Diane Shillcutt and Terri Charron
Congregational Care



Sylvia Goodyear and Sally Crawford
Mission



Sandy Cuppia
Outreach



Bob Elwell and Greg Duncan
Spiritual Development

A Brief History of Faith Presbyterian Church of the North Georgia Mountains

THE EARLY YEARS . . .

The roots of Faith Presbyterian Church grew from a vision of 12 individuals who saw a need for a Presbyterian church in the Blue Ridge, Georgia area. During the early days, the members would meet and worship at private homes. Soon, the group grew to what would be 32 Charter members.

With the quick growth came the need to find a larger worship space so the 32 charter members moved worship services to the local Seventh Day Adventist Church in the area. The new location soon fostered more growth and there was a need to find a new space devoted just to Faith's congregation that would allow space for worship, a pastor, and administrative support.

In 2011, Faith Presbyterian Church opened its doors on Mountain Street in downtown Blue Ridge. The location was a store space in the heart of Blue Ridge's downtown tourist center. During the early years at this location, Faith Presbyterian Church saw attendance growth of over 70% and membership rose by nearly 30%, making this one of the fastest growing churches in Cherokee Presbytery. The growth was primarily driven by the congregation's faith and belief in ministries. Faiths' commitment to this work continues to this day. Through these cornerstones of faith, the congregation and its ministries soon outgrew its downtown space.

BREAKING NEW GROUND . . .

In 2019, the congregation of Faith broke ground on a new church complex. It is located several miles from the original Mountain Street storefront on Bluebird Road in Mineral Bluff, Georgia. While the new church building was completed in July 2020, the doors would not open until much later due to the COVID pandemic. During the pandemic the congregation of Faith conducted their worship via Zoom and Facebook to meet the needs of the congregation. The interruption of in-person services only helped to fortify our faith and expand our worship outreach through these new tools. Faith also continued its commitment to its many ministries locally and abroad. Many of those ministries were devoted to those who are in critical need. Programs such as Feed Fannin, and the North Georgia Crisis Center are but two. You can find an extensive list of Faith Presbyterian Church's missions in the Ministries tab of the website. (www.faithpresbyterianusa.org) You may also contact the Church directly for more information on how to get involved.

FAITH TODAY . . .

At last, on July 21, 2021, Faith Presbyterian Church opened the doors for worship in the new sanctuary for more than 130 active members. The new facility, situated on 9 acres, has expanded our capability to serve God, our congregation, and numerous local ministries. It has also provided space for a beautiful and peaceful Memorial Garden, large vegetable garden for the Feed Fannin Food Pantry, as well as space for future growth,

We welcome all and invite you to become part of our growing and active church with deep roots in our community.

In the beginning . . .

2004

June 6

- Faith Presbyterian Church was chartered as a Church in the Cherokee Presbytery.
- The first slate of Elders was elected and installed. They were Tom Barrentine, Jim Burleson, Gerrie Jones, Bruce King, Joe Gregory and Jim Whitley.
- Reverend Carol Wade installed as Pastor of Faith Presbyterian Church.



September

- First Men's Fellowship Breakfast held.
- First Weekly Women's Bible Study held.

December

- First Session and spouse Christmas Dinner held.



Brian Barrentine, son of Faith Founding members Tom and Pat Barrentine, served as Director of Music for Faith Presbyterian Church, USA of the North Georgia Mountains.

2005

September 9

- First Inquirer's Class held for potential new members at the home of Carol Wade.

December

- First Chrismon Tree made by the Women's Bible Study Group.

2006

January

- Church office is moved to the Pastor's home since the downtown building in which it was housed was sold.

May

- **Mother's Day:** Faith Presbyterian Church celebrated the 5th Anniversary of the first worship service.

October

- The church began supporting "Open Arms," a children's emergency shelter.

2007

February

- Website developed, advertisements in telephone directories placed, publicity campaigns and press releases were developed to more actively reach out to the community.

July

- **First Faith Groups** began, 37 people participated. Hosts were Anne and Fred deBray, Gerrie and Hervey Jones, Elaine and Jim Whitley, Pat and Tom Barrentine, David and Suzanne Richterkesing, Katy and Jim Beno, and Reverend Carol Wade.

October

- Faith's first formal stewardship campaign launched.

2008

January

- Faith Presbyterian Church supported "**Open Arms of Blue Ridge**" throughout the year.
- Faith supported the **Good Samaritans of Fannin County** with volunteers for the Labor Day Bar-B-Que.

2009

May

- Faith Presbyterian Church "**Feed Fannin**" Garden was begun with the harvest in August.

2010

- January**
- Faith, Hope and Hammers, a project conceived at the Men's Breakfast, began as a new ministry of the church.
 - The Website was updated and managed by Carl Riggs.
 - Jenni St. Clair became the choir director.

2011

- October** - **Reformation Sunday-** Faith Presbyterian Church holds first worship service at its new downtown location at 56 Mountain Street.

- November** - New Building Dedication and Celebration with a Community Open House.

2012

- March** - Faithful Knitters knitting group began.

- July** - Shepherding Program began with various Flocks established.

- August** - Session accepts Reverend Carol Wade's plan to retire in November. Transition Team formed.

- November** - Reception for Reverend Carol Wade held at the New Orleans Bistro. Transition Team meets with Reverend Dr. Jim Simpson.

2013

- January**
- Reverend Dr. Jim Simpson becomes Interim Pastor.
 - Reverend Dr. Jim Simpson preached his first sermon as the new Interim Pastor. A Reception for Janice and Jim Simpson followed the worship service.
 - Merry Maids ministry to clean the church was implemented.

- March** - Lunch and Learn Programs were held during the Lenten Season.

- November** - Faith participated in the first Feed Fannin "Bowls of Hope" community fundraiser.

- December** - Lunch and Learn Programs were held during the Advent Season.

2014

May



Faith Presbyterian Church held a Congregational Meeting with the Reverend Dick Neely as Moderator. The congregation unanimously elected the Reverend Dr. James Simpson as the new Pastor.



June- **10th Anniversary Celebration and Worship Service.**

- Our Seamless Summer Program (Year 2) continued, serving more than 6000 lunches and snacks to children. This much needed mission program continues today.



2nd Decade Begins . . .

2015



For the first time, the membership passed the 100 level, increasing from under 60 members at the end of 2012 to 108 members in just 3 years.

January 1st the Session was increased from 7 to 9 elders.

In April, we said goodbye to longtime Faith Music Director, Jenni St. Clair.



Shortly thereafter we welcomed Kathy Cardwell as Faith's new Director of Music.

2016

Early in 2016, the Mountain Street Church building underwent a renovation to expand the seating capacity of the sanctuary and to remove a wall to increase the footprint of the Narthex for use as space for fellowship.



A women's Bible study group, **Women of Faith** was formed. This group annually supports a mission project with donations and various other assistance.

2016 *continued...*

Spring

A property search was completed and the Bluebird property was purchased for a future church building that Faith would occupy within the next 18-36 months. In a few weeks' time, generous donations contributed by members and friends enabled Faith to purchase the 9+ acres on Bluebird Road.



Summer

The Session appointed 2 committees: The New Building Committee and the Capital Campaign Committee. These 2 committees were charged with developing a design for our first church building and meeting the financial obligation of building a new church.

Fall

The New Building Committee began interviewing architects and commercial contractors.

2017

January

- Faith welcomed the Jewish Congregation of Blue Ridge to hold monthly worship services in our church. Strong bonds grew into important community based endeavors which continue to this day.

February

- Faith signed an agreement to work with a design build general contractor with an architect on staff.

August

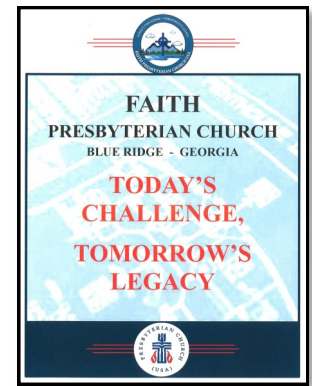
- First Bluebird property event was the viewing of a solar eclipse.



-
An excellent rendering of what the new church building would look like.



September - Faith began our 3 year Capital Campaign, “**Today’s Challenge, Tomorrow’s Legacy**” with informational meetings and dinners for members and friends.



2018

Summer - The bid from the original commercial contractor came in almost \$1 million over budget. We quickly found a new contractor; the same contractor used by the Blue Ridge United Methodist Church to build their new church. The new contractor’s bid came in under our original budget.

November - A big event in the life of Faith occurred late in November. Groundbreaking was celebrated by a huge turnout of members and friends on the 9 acres located on Bluebird Road.



- The **Faith, Hope and Hammers** team continues to be a ministry of our church enabling us to perform small tasks around and in members homes. The work include light landscaping, carpentry repairs, painting, minor electrical and minor plumbing repairs, picking up donated furniture and delivering to congregants who might need it or delivering to charitable organizations for help throughout the county. A spinoff of FHH is the more recent formation of our Chainsaw Ministry. This group of dedicated members have removed trees that have fallen and chipped up fallen branches, not only in Fannin County but throughout the southeast following storms.



January

- Our general contractor arrived on site at Bluebird Road and building construction on the new building began.



June

- 40 Faith members and friends enjoyed a trip to Scotland led by our pastor. A great time was had as they traced the roots of Presbyterianism, played golf on the ancient courses that were the birthplace of golf, walked miles and miles in the majestic highlands, explored castles where history was made, sampled Haggis cooked a dozen ways, enjoyed highland games, and every one shopped till they dropped.



July

- Faith celebrated our Halfway Home Celebration marking the midway point of our 3-year **Today's Challenge, Tomorrow's Legacy** capital fund raising campaign. The attendees at the celebration quickly realized that the 18-months of mortgage payments had placed us in a very strong financial position with the principal on the mortgage being significantly reduced resulting in a shorter mortgage duration.



December

The church steeple was lifted into place on a brilliant, sunny day that was bitterly cold. It took several hours to get it installed properly. Definitely a Fannin County landmark.

We closed on our Presbyterian Loan Investment Program mortgage.



May

The Reverend Susan L. Haynes was hired as our Pastoral Assistant.



June

Faith has long had a vegetable garden that provides produce to the local food bank. The first garden was located on Forge Mill Road and produced corn, potatoes and cabbages for many of the early years of FPC. The land was donated for our use by a generous landowner.

The Bluebird Road location gave us our own acreage and allowed for a larger garden. The Bluebird ground was turned and tilled for the first time in 2020. It has become a highly productive piece of property that has been nurtured for 4 years and is now prime farming soil.



July

- A milestone month, our new building was completed, under budget, on time, and we received the Certificate of Occupancy. Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the doors would remain closed for the next 12 months.



- The Mountain Street location was vacated and our furniture and equipment was moved to the Bluebird Road location and into our brand new building.



September

- Faith hosted a drive-in event in the church parking lot to dedicate our new building.



2021

March

- We began limited in-person worship services, restricting the number of attendees and maintaining spacing intervals to reduce the risk of contracting Covid-19.

July

- The Faith office opened and was fully staffed and operational. Our all-volunteer team of Office Angels worked 9-3 daily performing a variety of tasks to assist the pastors.



- On July 21, 2021, The doors finally opened with no restrictions on the number of attendees in worship in our new building.



- The reKindle program to feed seniors in Fannin County began and was a joint effort by members of Faith Presbyterian Church and the Jewish Congregation of Blue Ridge. It was immediately and enthusiastically received by the senior recipients. Since 2021 reKindle has continued to grow in volunteers and food recipients. Just one of many success stories of Faith's Mission projects in the community.

March

- **The Memorial Garden on the Faith Presbyterian Church is established.**
- The Faith property memorial grounds provide a quiet, serene area to sit and remember those who are no longer physically with us. The trees, the breeze and the sounds of nature call us to relax and clear our minds of the pressures and distractions of daily life. The Memorial Garden is also a place where ashes of Faith Members and their loved ones can be interred.



- **Establishment of three Little Free Libraries**

Little Free Libraries were designed and built by talented members of the Faith congregation. The 3 libraries are monitored and restocked on a regular basis by members of the Mission Planning Team.



May

Kathy Cardwell Wills retired as our Director of Music.



July

Dr. Phillip Mitchell was hired as Faith's new Director of Music.



August - **Pastor Jim Simpson** accepted a new position as Interim Pastor at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Marietta, Georgia.



September - **Reverend Susan Haynes** was selected to serve as Interim Pastor at Faith.

October - Faith held our first Second Sunday lunch in our new home. This special luncheon also kicked off our 2022 Stewardship Campaign.



December - The first Ladies' Ornament Exchange was held in December of 2021. It is a very popular activity and is always well attended.



April

- The **Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC)** was elected by the congregation.

- The Mission Planning Team erected a large mission sign at the entrance/exit of the Faith campus. As you enter the drive the sign reads **“ALL ARE WELCOME”** and upon leaving, the sign reads **“YOU ARE ENTERING THE MISSION FIELD”**.



The **reKindle Grant** from the Lilly Foundation through Columbia Seminary was renewed, allowing Faith to supply 135 senior citizens with monthly deliveries of fresh vegetables, bread, canned and boxed good, and personal products. This mission activity has continued to grow each year.



January-March

- **NEWS FLASH!** It took many weeks of hard work by many people to renovate the building after the Christmas Eve, 2022 flooding as a result of 8 pipes bursting from temperatures in the single digits. The frigid temperatures coupled with a power loss caused catastrophic damage to a major portion of the new building.

Many of the faithful showed up quickly and their hard work mitigated the damage and kept the water from causing even more damage.



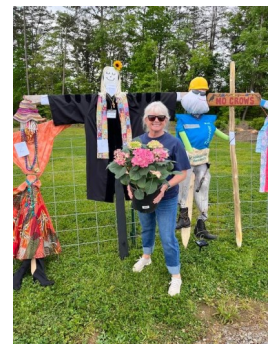
March

- At a called meeting of the congregation, Reverend Susan Haynes was called by Faith to serve as our installed Pastor.



May

- Faith PC held our **1st Annual Scarecrow Contest**, increasing awareness of the importance of supporting our church garden that supports the Fannin County Food Bank and Feed Fannin. A lot of hard work in the spring yielded a bountiful harvest of fresh vegetables in the fall.



July

- On July 23, 2023 Reverend Susan L. Haynes was installed as the third called pastor of Faith Presbyterian Church, USA.



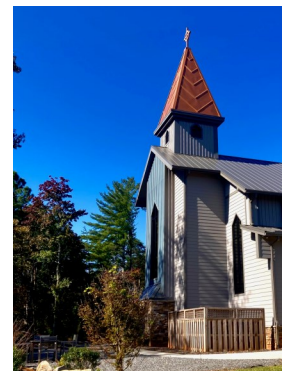
May

- **Faithful Knitters**, established in 2012, have been renamed **Knit Wits** and their ministry has been truly astounding. In 2023 they knitted 497 caps, 4 shawls, and over 100 prayer squares. All of these items have found their way into the hands of those needing prayers, warmth, guidance, a renewal of faith, and many other needs.



Tremendous Progress is Made . . .

- Throughout 2023, Faith continued to reduce our building mortgage principal balance with the Presbyterian Investment Loan Program. The initial loan balance was \$903,778.20 with the first payment due 10/01/2020. The January 2023 beginning loan balance was \$530,560.74. With the May 31, 2024 payment the outstanding principal balance has been further reduced to \$353,551.00. ***CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL and THANKS BE TO GOD!***



The actual result of Faith!

January

- The Session was expanded at the 2024 Session retreat with the formation of an additional planning team. The new **Outreach Planning Team** was a spinoff of the Mission and Outreach Planning Team.
- The duties of the new Outreach Planning Team will include raising community awareness of Faith Presbyterian's worship, ministry, and mission efforts throughout the north Georgia area.
- The Membership Directory located on the Faith Website has been upgraded with current photos of most of the current Faith membership. The Website is constantly expanded and updated with photos, worship services, and information about Faith's ministries. What better way to record the history of our church than an all inclusive, well designed website.



April-



- Dr. Phillip Mitchell returns to Faith as Director of Music. His return was celebrated with a reception for Phillip. His father and fiancé were present at the reception and well wishers were abundant. ***Welcome home Phillip!***



A new addition for the Easter season for 2024 was the addition of a flower cross for Easter Sunday worship service.

It was a favorite backdrop for many members and visitors alike for photographs displaying their Easter finery.



- Christian education plays a major role in the life of Faith. **Women of Faith** continues to grow and the addition of technology to the presentation makes it a highly anticipated event September through May. **Faith Groups** also play a huge role in the Christian education program of Faith Presbyterian Church. Classes are well attended and play an important role in ensuring both members and visitors feel welcome and encouraged in their spiritual growth.

May

- Prior to 2017, Faith began a program to honor the family members of Faith who have recently graduated from high school or college with a personalized devotional. This activity is held every May.

Graduates were honored most recently with a video presentation shown during Graduate Recognition Sunday.





Tom & Pat Barrentine



Chuck & Shirley Brewer



Jim & Sonya Burleson



Hervey & Gerrie Jones

Faith's Founding Families



Bruce & Ann King

*We were unable to locate a photograph for
Frank & Barbara Robetor*

The Charter Members of Faith Presbyterian Church

Tom Barrentine
Pat Barrentine
Betty A. Blair
Charles Blair, Sr.
Shirley A. Brewer
Charles H. Brewer
Beacher H. Brewer
Sonya Burleson
James W. Burleson, MD
Anne M. deBray
Fred deBray
Timothy Ewart
Susan C. Gregory
Phyllis Gunsalus
Barbara Haynes
William Haynes
Mary M. Hunt
Milton D. Hunt

Donna C. Houston
Jan L. Jewett
Richard B. Jewett
Monica Jolley
Brandon W. Jolley
Geraldine Jones
Hervey S. Jones
Robert Bruce King, Sr.
Ann King
Susan Kruse
Rick Kruse
Robert Barker-Kruse
Dolores G. Lockett
Rosa P. Mandon
Marsha Mooney
Edward Mooney
Betty Mullins
Alvin Mullins

Cynthia Reamsnyder
Terry Reamsnyder
Frank Robetor
Barbara Robetor
Mendy M. Roebuck
Marilyn Ruther
Rex Ruther
Mary Shinholser
James Shinholser
Gail M. Viars
Lynn Viars
Jeanne Warren
Malcolm Warren
Elaine Whitley
James Whitley
Martha Frances Zinsli
Ray W. Zinsli
Margaret C. Zinsli

First 20 years of Ruling Elders

Jim Burelson	2005	Dick Schmus	2017
Gerrie Jones	2005, 2010	John Thompson	2017
Joe Gregory	2006	Frances Young	2017, 2020
Jim Whitley	2006	Allan Edwards	2018
Tom Barrentine	2007	Jim Reich	2018
Bruce King	2007	Sylvia Goodyear	2019, 2024
William Haynes	2007	Patty Morris	2019
Charles Brewer	2008	Doris Riggs	2019
Fred DeBry	2008, 2011	Bruce Burn	2020
Susan Gregory	2009	Candy Frank	2020, 2023
Murray Wood	2009	Rick Borden	2021
Carolyn Bender	2009	Janice Glascock	2021
Joe Silva	2009	Lynn Hayes	2021
Elaine Whitley	2010	Chris Martinez	2022
James Shinholser	2011	Randy Griggs	2022
David VanVeld	2011	Lynda Ray	2023
Randy Blankenship	2012	Bill Young	2023, 2026
Judy Evans	2013	Terri Charron	2024
Treva Wheatley	2013	Al Gnann	2024
Ann Rand	2013	Sally Crawford	2025
Carl Riggs	2014, 2022	Bob Elwell	2025
Debbie Peterson	2015	Diane Shillcutt	2025
Kim King	2016	Sandy Cuppia	2026
Jamielee Green	2016	Greg Duncan	2026

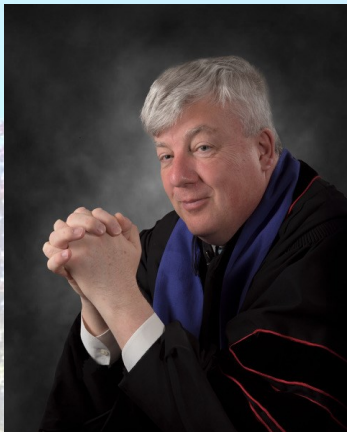
Faith's Installed Pastors and Dates of Service



The Reverend Carol S. Wade

Installed Pastor

June 6, 2004 - November 30, 2012



The Reverend Dr. James S. Simpson, Jr.

Interim Pastor

Jan. 23, 2013 – May 3, 2014

Installed Pastor

May 4, 2014 – September 30, 2021



The Reverend Susan L. Haynes

Associate Pastor

May 15, 2020 – Sept. 30, 2021

Interim Pastor

October 1, 2022 – July 23, 2023

Installed Pastor

July 23, 2023 - present