

2024



MISSIONS REPORT

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Gastonia

The Missions and Outreach of First Presbyterian Church.

Mission is more than what we do; it is why we are here, and it is who we are. While our community and nation continue to face challenges, First Presbyterian Church (FPC) has answered the call to mission. In our 2023 mission report, we spoke about being engaged in a post-pandemic revival of reengaging with partners in relationships that had become somewhat dormant during the shutdown. However, even as we revitalized our mission efforts in 2024, new and unexpected challenges arose both locally and in Western North Carolina. Most notably, our community faced unprecedented increases in food and other prices, and then the devastating effects of Hurricane Helene and the massive flooding that wiped away homes, churches, businesses, and the dreams of thousands.

Meeting those challenges head-on, our church provided countless hours of volunteer efforts and delivered tens of thousands of dollars of relief supplies to those in need. When coupled with our normal mission activities, benevolences in **2024 exceeded \$502,000.***

This report is a high-level breakdown of how these funds were spent.

* This amount represents a substantial increase from 2023 due in part to special offerings and donor-designated gifts through PET.

2024
Benevolences Exceeded
\$502,000



On behalf of the 2024 Missions Ministry, please accept our sincere gratitude for your generous support of First Presbyterian Church outreach programs and projects. Thank you for helping to express our faith in action – in our neighborhood, in our communities and in our world.

\$80,000

plus in-kind gifts towards Hurricane Helene Relief in Western North Carolina

While many areas in Western North Carolina were impacted by Hurricane Helene, we felt a special call to minister to the needs of Black Mountain Home for Children (BMH) and to others residing in the Montreat area. Our membership donated a warehouse load of critical needs supplies like water, food, fuel, diapers, etc.

Our Presbyterian Weekday School students donated supplies, books, and educational toys to a preschool in Western NC that was flooded and their materials lost. In the early aftermath of the storm, even before the roads reopened, our members were driving up the mountain on a weekly basis to deliver needed supplies.

A special offering benefited Black Mountain Home for Children. Meanwhile, the Presbyterian Endowment Trust (PET) made substantial grants to the Presbytery of Western North Carolina

and to BMH to provide disaster relief funding. Similar gifts were made by our Sunday School classes and other FPC groups.



\$79,000 to Benefit Children

Children are our future, and we owe it to them to support their growth and development so that they may succeed. That feeling is so ingrained among us that it is easy to overlook certain uncomfortable truths in the world at large. Realizing that there are hundreds of children in our community and across North Carolina who suffer from parental neglect and abuse, to say nothing of associated educational, developmental, medical, and psychiatric problems.

FPC provides financial support and volunteer services to several nonprofits that aid these children. Black Mountain Home for Children and Children Hope Alliance partners with social service agencies to support children who may have to be removed from their parent's homes due to abuse or neglect. They provide children with a safe place to call home, provide assistance and training to foster parents, and offer wrap-around services the child needs, whether an infant or a teenager. Least of These Carolinas supports children in foster care. The Lighthouse Children's Advocacy Center supports children and families affected by violence, sexual, and/or other forms of abuse.

\$87,000 for Human Needs

Our cash donations helped support basic human needs ranging from food to housing. Funds also supported individuals affected by domestic violence and those recovering from drug and alcohol abuse.

Additionally, FPC collected nonperishable food items during Lent and Advent for two local crisis agencies. Our cash donations included our sponsorship of Rise Against Hunger, packaging thousands of meals to be shipped to areas where the need for food is great, feeding children through the Backpack Weekend Food Program, and serving meals to the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Gaston County and Dream Center Academy. Other beneficiaries of our gifts included Crisis Assistance Ministry (CAM), Serving our Community with Kindness (SOCKS), Belmont Community Organization, The Cathy Mabry Cloninger Center, Gaston Skills, Potter's House, Displaced Roses, Gastonia Street Ministry, Off the Streets, and City on a Hill.



In addition to our 2024 Christmas in July offering, our church members and VBS participants donated hundreds of pairs of socks and underwear, as well as comfort items including plush throws and stuffed animals, to support foster children. Least of These, Carolinas was the beneficiary of the offering and these items. Due to the hurricane, Black Mountain Home for Children was unable to hold its traditional Fall Festival with a silent auction, so FPC held the fundraiser for them in Gastonia, raising over \$3,000. At Christmas, the FPC provided gifts for the residents at Black Mountain Home for Children. Our cash donations supported our local Boys and Girls Club, Boy Scouts, and Girl Scouts.

"Give, and it will be given to you."

— Luke 6:38

Each month, we collect the Daily Change Offering (formerly Nickel a Meal), which supports the Presbytery Hunger Program. In 2024, our local Crisis Assistance Ministry received a grant from the Presbytery of Western North Carolina in addition to direct assistance provided by FPC.



\$14,000 to Missions Locally and Abroad

Global missions are supported through special offerings for Church World Service (Blanket Sunday) and One Great Hour of Sharing. Other funds supported our missions in Malawi and in Guatemala, including the microloan program and scholarships.



\$87,000 for Education

FPC's support of Education took several forms, including scholarships for college students and support of The Dream Center Academy, Gaston Literacy's efforts with the Haitian population, the Gaston Education Foundation, and our own Presbyterian Weekday School. Both financial support and clothing and personal items were provided to our neighborhood schools, Sherwood Elementary and Grier Middle School.

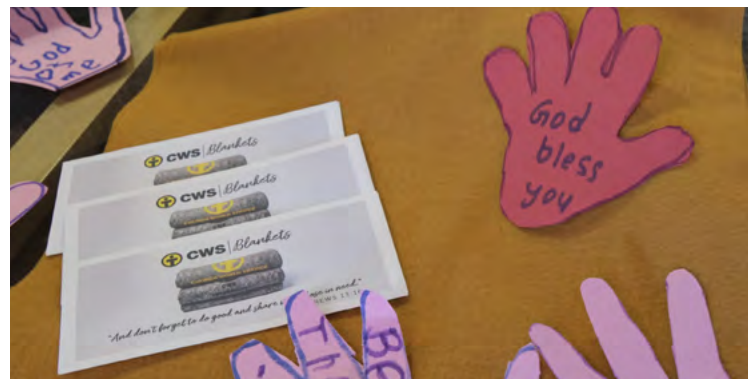


\$63,500 for Home Support

While many of us take our homes and furnishings for granted, others lack the basics of shelter. In 2024, we significantly funded and helped build a home for Habitat for Humanity. We teamed up with Sleep in Heavenly Peace and another church to fund, build, and deliver beds for needy children in our community.



\$92,000 to the Western NC Presbytery



Priceless Time and Talents

We cannot put a dollar value on many of our ministry efforts. Although some of our funded projects include a hands-on component, we have many members who provide services in the community. They provide countless volunteer hours by tutoring in local schools, tending the Rotary Garden, delivering Meals on Wheels, distributing food for the Crisis Assistance Ministry and the Backpack Weekend Food Program, ministering to our homebound members, and serving as nonprofit board members.

2024 PRESBYTERIAN ENDOWMENT TRUST ANNUAL REPORT

The Presbyterian Endowment Trust (PET) was established by our congregation in 1979 for the purpose of holding and managing the endowment funds of the church. According to our congregational resolution, these funds are to be used to expand our witness to Jesus Christ, to serve God and humanity through our denomination, to provide new and varied opportunities for religious fellowship, worship and education, and to support worthy community projects and programs designed to support the needs and wants of the elderly, sick, poor, young, bereaved and disabled. To those ends, the funds of PET award grants each year to a variety of worthy causes which are set out in this Annual Report.

FUNDS

The General Fund provides funding for broad benevolent purposes. The Heritage Fund provides funding to finance major capital improvements and repairs to FPC. The other named funds were established for specific purposes consistent with the mission of PET. In 2019, the Session approved the creation of four new funds to support the various ministries of our church: the Worship and Music Fund, the Christian Education Fund, the Missions and Benevolences Fund, and the Congregational Care Fund. The four new ministry funds have not yet received any gifts but we encourage you to consider them if you have a special passion for any of those ministries.

CONTRIBUTIONS

The portion of undesignated bequests and gifts to FPC that are directed to PET by the Session is generally allocated funds will be allocated by the new undesignated gift policy approved by Session, 50% to church operating reserves, 25% to PET General and 25% to PET Heritage.

HOW YOU CAN GIVE

You may give to PET by including the church in your will or trust, by naming the church as the beneficiary of a retirement plan or life insurance policy, by giving cash, securities or property to the church, or by establishing a charitable trust, to name just a few ways. If you wish to establish a new named fund, or for more information about Planned Giving in general, please contact the church's Business Administrator, David McFadden, at (704) 864-2651, ext. 117. Gifts to the church and to PET are tax deductible in accordance with IRS regulations.



The Presbyterian endowment trust committee is comprised of nine members who are approved by the Session for three-year terms. The committee regularly meets each quarter.

The members of the PET Committee are:

Class of 2025: Tyler Bullock, LeeAnn Harris, Spurgeon Mackie

Class of 2026: Lewis Efird, Donald Parrott, Craig Whitley

Class of 2027: Lee DuBois, Sally Kennington, Kevin Schultz

GENERAL FUND		\$3,697,741	
Black Mountain Academic Incentive Trip	\$16,000	Black Mountain Home (Heavy Equipment)	\$10,000
Sleep in Heavenly Peace	\$7,500	Ebenezer School Books	\$1,000
Church Wide Retreat Montreat	\$15,000	FPC Music Min Handbell Robes/Music Maint	\$9,200
Rise Against Hunger 2025	\$12,600	PWNC Malawi Seminary Tuition 12 Student	\$6,000
Primitive Church Guatemala (Annual Expense)	\$4,650	Gaston Literacy Council ESL Haitian Classes	\$5,000
Sleep in Heavenly Peace (Spring 2025 Build)	\$7,500	GAP Habitat for Humanity	\$33,274
PWNC Disaster Relief Fund	\$20,000		

HERITAGE FUND		\$314,652	
Buildings & Grounds PAD Handrail and Skylight			\$13,121

FRANK DAVIS CHILDREN'S FUND		\$255,955	
PASSPORT Kids Camp Montreat			\$2,342

DAVID GROVES FUND		\$109,619	
Crisis Assistance Ministry Gastonia			\$3,792

PWS ENDOWMENT FUND		\$143,675	
PWS Scholarships			\$5,185

TORRENCE FAMILY FUND-LIQUIDATED		\$ —	
Dream Center Academy			\$38,596
BackPack Weekend Food Program			\$38,596

PEARL WILSON MISSION FUND		\$179,058	
Various Grants			\$6,564

SALLY & RALPH ROBINSON FUND		\$1,263,264	
Women's Connection Conference Montreat			\$2,500
Crisis Assistance Ministries Pantry Restock			\$5,000
PWNC Disaster Relief Fund			\$20,000
Children's Hope Alliance			\$15,000
Thanksgiving Cornucopia			\$800

JACKSON YOUTH FUND		\$232,076	
No Requests			

MARKET VALUE AS OF 12/31/24

General Fund	\$3,697,741	Torrence Family Fund	Liquidated
Heritage Fund	\$314,652	Pearl Wilson Mission Fund	\$179,058
Frank Davis Children's Fund	\$255,955	Sally & Ralph Robinson Fund	\$1,263,264
David Groves Fund	\$109,619	Jackson Youth Fund	\$232,076
PWS Endowment Fund	\$143,675		