



# Press-byterian

## Banner Elk Presbyterian Church

*"To Know Christ and to Make Christ Known"  
Equipping Saints since 1893*

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# February, 2022

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To the Community in Christ at Banner Elk Presbyterian Church,

It is with incredibly humbled gratitude that I thank you all for the gracious love offering you gave our family for Christmas as well as those who sent cards, goodies, and donations on our behalf. It truly brought light and blessing to our home. Your generosity is so inspiring, and it truly sows seeds of blessing and abundance.

Any first holiday in a new place is full of adaptations. New traditions begin or are tried out. There is a mourning for traditions that cannot be replicated due to their specificity of place and environment. We found ourselves having to be flexible this Advent season and it was perfectly perfect that "flexibility" was my Star Word I received in my communion baggie on January 2nd.

Following Christ in the journey of faith is to be flexible. It is to often suspend your belief in reality to have active hope in a miracle. It is to go places where you never thought you would go. To follow Christ is to be stretched, molded, diverted, and surprised. I believe that is why a guiding star is such a central part of the telling of the story of Christ. That it is not Christ who ducks and dodges us, but we who have to reorient ourselves to active love, grace, forgiveness, and generosity. We must keep our eyes on the light, lest we fall into darkness and stumble hopelessly on our own sin. The light keeps our focus upward and forward.

There have been many days in adapting to the cold weather that I must awake myself to prevent freezing up like the icy ground. It can seem too cold to move, but it is in movement that the warmth comes.

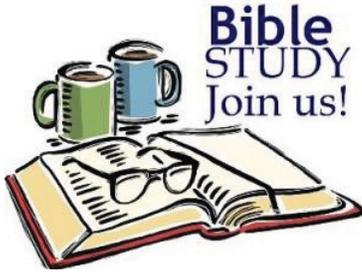
In 2022, we continue to learn to live into this new time that God has called us. Everything changed and now the change has become the new constant. We must have great care and patience with one another as we all walk the narrow road with Christ. May we be ready to steady one another when we stumble, bring delicious snacks to share on the road, and offer a hand to hold to remind one another that in Christ we are never alone. That in his endless love, Jesus gives us the gift of one another. I pray that in 2022 you see hope on the horizon, hiking buddies to sustain, and undeniable joy even when the road swerves and the stones pop up.

May the light of Christ shine bright on our path.

*Pastor Rachael*



# Opportunities to Learn and Grow



## Adult Bible Study

Beginning February 6th, at 9:30am, in the Margaret Tate Parlor, Rev. Rachael will begin an Adult Bible Study: "Learning the Liturgical Year". The class will be following the liturgical calendar and will be a deep dive into the Scriptures which will be used in that morning's sermon as well as other corresponding Scriptures. Everyone is welcome to join. The only book that will be used will be the Bible. Bring your Bible and an open, prayerful, and inquiring spirit. The scriptures for the first class are: Isaiah 6:1-8, (9-13), Psalm 138, 1 Corinthians 15:1-11, Luke 5:1-11.

## Lenten Study

We are discussing a study for Lent, probably following a similar format as the Advent one we just completed. We need to know if you would be interested in participating and if so, we'd like to know what would suit your schedule best. Please reply to these ideas, giving your preference:

Zoom meeting or a hybrid in-person/Zoom with some folks meeting in person at the church and others joining via Zoom; a completely in-person meeting is not being considered at this time for several reasons, mainly so that our out-of-area friends and members can participate, as well as for health/safety reasons.

Time of day: morning (11:00am) afternoon (2:00pm) or evening (7:00pm)

Would you be comfortable facilitating a lesson or two?

Other suggestions/comments/ideas?

Your quick response will be appreciated because we will need to order materials, get a schedule organized and be ready to by March 2, Ash Wednesday. Please plan to join us as we journey toward Easter, studying, praying and learning together.

For more information you may contact Donna Dicks [dbdicks@skybest.com](mailto:dbdicks@skybest.com)



## Souper Bowl of Caring 2022



MORE THAN 29 YEARS AGO, the Souper Bowl of Caring began with a simple prayer from a single youth group: "Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us to be mindful of those without a bowl of soup to eat."

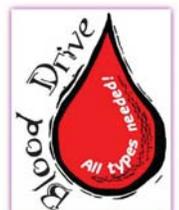
Since that day, more than \$143 million has been raised for local charities across the country through Souper Bowl of Caring. It has become a powerful movement that is transforming the time around the Big Game into the nation's largest celebration of giving and serving. Sunday, February 13 is the big game and a bigger mission for those in need in our county. The number of people in Avery County who are food insecure is staggering. As many as 1 out of every 8 and 1 out of 6 children in our county alone are food insecure. This year, we will be collecting funds and canned food for RAM (Reaching Avery Ministries) which provides emergency food for those in need. They are open five days a week, providing food, diapers, baby formula, etc. to those who have the greatest need. They work with Feeding Avery Families so that emergency food can be translated into access to regular food distributions. Please help us in our fight to defeat hunger in our county.

Since 2007, BEPC has collected \$3,789 and 490 items for the Souper Bowl of Caring. Our largest single collection day was \$1,200.00 and the largest single items collection day was 127 items. Based on an average Sunday attendance, if each family member contributed 2 food items, we could collect 178 items this Sunday and surpass our previous record items collection.

Be part of this movement that is sharing God's love with those in need. Please give generously on Super Bowl Sunday.

## American Red Cross Blood Drive February 3rd

The American Red Cross will be holding a blood drive on Thursday, February 3rd from 2:00-6:30pm in King Fellowship Hall. Banner Elk Presbyterian Church is happy to provide the space for blood drives. If you are able, please help the Red Cross reach their goal! You can make an appointment, by going to [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org) and put in sponsor code: "Lees-McRae" or call Nurse Carl at 898-8862. All blood donations are now tested for COVID-19 antibodies. The Red Cross is taking all pre-cautions as regards to COVID-19, including taking temperatures of all donors before entering.



### *Music Brought Them Together*

We know music brings people together. This is especially true for the Banner Elk Presbyterian Church in one small event in our early history.

Edgar Tufts first came to Banner Elk as a Presbyterian seminary student in 1895 and returned two years later as a fully ordained evangelist for the isolated, poverty-stricken, mountain area. He began a ministry then that grew over time to include churches, schools, hospitals, and an orphanage to meet the diverse needs of the people living in one of the poorest areas of our country.

Reverend Edgar Tufts served the spiritual needs of multiple communities in our area when traveling from one village to another typically involved riding horses on small dirt roads. In addition to Banner Elk, one of the communities he served was a community now known as Pineola. The Ritter Lumber Company operated a camp in the area, cutting old growth trees for lumber. They had many employees doing dangerous work and had hired a young camp doctor who had just completed his internship at the University of Tennessee.

Reverend Tufts had a small portable pump organ for church services that he carried with him to his different congregations in the mountain communities he served. One night, in the absence of his organist, the Ritter Lumber camp physician, Dr. W.C. Tate, volunteered to play the organ for the service. This started a productive and lifelong friendship between the two young men.

Reverend Tufts talked Dr. Tate into joining his ministry in Banner Elk to replace a doctor whose health was forcing him to leave the small practice he had started to meet the drastic health needs of the mountain community. Dr. Tate brought his bride to Banner Elk in 1910 to live in the home provided by the ministry and to serve the area's health needs. At first, his practice involved riding on horseback to the homes of his patients or caring for them in his home. Over time, his practice grew and expanded into a series of larger and larger hospitals built by the Tufts' ministry.

Following the death of his good friend and spiritual brother in ministry, Dr. Tate carried on and at one point in time served as the Director of Grace Hospital, President of Lees-McRae College, Director of Grandfather Home for Children and President of the Banner Elk Bank.

The Reverend Edgar Tufts' great grandson, Robert Tufts who lives in his great-grandfather's old home in Banner Elk, recently donated the antique pump organ that brought Reverend Tufts and Dr. Tate together more than 110 years ago. The music that brought them together in the worship of God has, over time, served the spiritual, health and educational needs of thousands and thousands of people throughout these mountains.

We honor all the good done by and through Reverend Tufts and Dr. Tate and gratefully accept the donation of this organ as a significant part of our heritage of service to the people of our area. Many thanks to Robert and Kimberly Tufts. May God's name be praised.



*David Tate*

### *Feeding Avery Families*

Despite the rather frigid temperatures, these are exciting times. The Feeding Avery Family Board has just decided to go ahead with our building project ASAP. Dean Hagie (Elk Park) will be the builder, and he thinks we can break ground in March, weather permitting. The building will be just under 10,000 square feet, of which 8,800 will be heated. We'll have an enclosed, unheated Drive-Thru and Loading Dock. The estimate for the building is \$600,000, and we anticipate spending an additional \$100,000 on new equipment.

Factoring in contingencies, we can hopefully get this done for \$750,000. The Board has decided to meet with several regional lenders to seek funding for \$600,000. Hopefully, we will be in a new building by Fall! There will be lots of activity this year, and lots of unknowns to deal with. What a blessing to have us all in this together. Godspeed, my friends.

*Dick Larson*



Delivering food for FAF in 11 degree temps. Larry, Dick, Ray and Jane. Laura coming in the pm.

# Comfort Makers

## February Dedication - Larry and Chris Zimmer



Larry and Chris have been faces you see around the BEPC church for the past eight years. They joined to be close to their son Brian who is a geology instructor at App State. Dick and Carol Larson encouraged them to jump in and this they did. They have been ushers, media helper, comfort maker, prayer shawl knitter, and office receptionist. Larry was also asked by Feild and Rob Clemmer to be the church COW (Clerk of the Works). When Larry asked what the title entailed, Rob's only response was: "whatever needs to be done, do it." One need only walk about the church to see Larry's handiwork from repairs to installments to media.

If you drop into the office you may see Chris, volunteering to assist in the

office or working on a project for someone in need. "I am honored and humbled by this recognition!" Larry says. "When God blessed us with the resources and opportunity to "stop working for pay" 8 years ago, we were able to shift our focus to service and fellowship. BEPC has certainly provided the people and environment to support those goals! We have many excellent role models here."

Eight years ago, was a good year since Banner Elk Presbyterian was blessed with the love and talents of Larry and Chris Zimmer. The blanket will be displayed in the hallway for the month of February then given to a worthy cause.



## Shepherds Needed for 2022



Calling All Shepherds! The Congregational Care Committee is asking for volunteers to help with our Shepherd program for 2022! Volunteers are asked to Shepherd with a partner for a one-month commitment. This is a very meaningful way to serve our congregation! For more information, please contact Deka Tate at 828-898-9203 or volunteers may sign up-in the church office. We appreciate all those of you who have served as shepherds during 2021 - you have made a difference.

## Stephen Ministry

Remember that there are Stephen Ministers in our church who can help you through a difficult time. This is how it works: Contact the church (or Janet Speer at [speerj@lmc.edu](mailto:speerj@lmc.edu)) if you would like to have a Stephen Minister. Janet will contact you to help you make connections to a minister who has been trained to help you through your difficulty. A minister will meet with you once a week (in person, via Zoom or phone) to talk for about an hour with you taking the lead on the discussion. Sessions continue until you decide you are ready to end them.



## Prayer Ministry



In the past year, the prayer team has sent letters to 288 families (members) twice. Please note that in addition to those families, private prayer requests are received and added to our weekly prayers. At any time, if you need prayer, please contact one of the members and you will be included in our prayers.

"Prayer is... the secret place where we find God waiting for us. The door we enter to discover God's heart of unending grace." Dr. Derwin L. Gray

Emily Garrett El Wilson Alice Johnson Chris Zimmer Donna Bender Katy Fletcher Judy King

# Thank You!

Dear BEPC family:

Amid Covid concerns and falling organ pipes, it was still a tremendous blessing to be part of the 2021 Advent and Christmas celebrations with you. Thank you for your expression of love through the generous bonus and the lovely amaryllis. Further, I'm grateful for the opportunity to serve as organist and so appreciate your continued support and encouragement as I've settled into this role. It is a joy to collaborate with our effervescent Nina and many other talented musicians and vocalists to create worship music. May we all keep a song of praise in our heart throughout 2022.

Peace and blessings!

*David Soyars*

To the Congregation:

Thank you for all your concern and prayers last summer when I had my back surgery. It was amazing how quickly I recovered from the procedure. I attribute the success to God and your prayerful support. In addition, I want to thank you for the Christmas Gift. Your encouragement on the music front is, as they say, "priceless." The handbell ensemble has made notable progress over the past several months and it has truly been a joy to work with this group. I am grateful for the opportunity. God Bless you all.

*Suzie Fisk*

## *This is NO Coincidence...*

Some of you are aware that my husband, Bill, has worked with 7<sup>th</sup> Group 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Special Forces for the past 15 years to create a memorial for soldiers killed in action in Afghanistan. The idea for the Rock Garden Memorial came at the request of the daughter of one of these men. Her father, Pedro Munoz, was killed on January 2, 2005, becoming the first combat loss in that unit since Vietnam. Unfortunately 21 other men from 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion have also been killed in Afghanistan over the past 16 years.

Last year, to preserve the history and the making of this Memorial, Bill decided to have a professional videographer record the story from his perspective. Both the Rock Garden Memorial and the finished video have been well-received by the soldiers stationed at Eglin Air Force Base, as well as Gold Star families of the fallen and other veterans.

Bill and I knew Pedro and his family because of our son's career in the Army when Dave and Pedro served together on the Golden Knights parachute team in the late 1990's. Dave retired from the military last year and is currently working as a pilot for FedEx, flying domestically and internationally. He often calls to let us know his itinerary for the coming week. Recently, he flew to Puerto Rico, landing at the airport nearest Pedro's hometown. Dave said he would be thinking of Pedro because it was so close to where he grew up.

We received a call this week saying that he had something important to tell us. It seems that when a FedEx plane lands, a member of the ground crew goes up the steps to greet the pilots as they leave the plane. With everyone in masks, Dave was astonished to look at the eyes of the man on the steps. He said, "It was like looking at Pedro's eyes...I asked the man what his name was." It turned out to be Munoz, and the eyes belonged to Carlos, who is Pedro's younger brother.

In the few minutes they had, they both realized they had met at Pedro's funeral at Ft. Bragg, seventeen years ago, almost to the day. Dave immediately sent Carlos the link to the video about the Rock Garden Memorial, which he shared with his family, who had lost contact with Pedro's wife and daughter.

Dave and Carlos had lunch the next day, sharing Pedro stories and much laughter. Dave also posted their remarkable meeting on social media and has received over 300,000 views from both friends and strangers in just four days. The Munoz family is amazed and grateful to know that Pedro and the other soldiers have not been forgotten, which was Carlos' biggest fear.

This meeting was no coincidence. This was God's hand in bringing some peace to a family in the loss of a son. It's come around full circle in our minds. We are grateful.

*Donna Dicks*

Link to video, if you are interested: <https://vimeo.com/532068201/ad60bec368>



# BEPC Preschool

The month of December was a special month for all our preschool children and staff. A month that brought excitement, games, smell of cookies, hunt for gingerbread men, and anticipation of snow fall! We loved learning more about different holiday traditions all over the world. We made a friendship wreath using black, red, and green colors of paper for Kwanzaa. We made hand print menorahs, discussing the meaning of oil for Hanukkah. We decorated images of candles talking about Advent. We looked at images of Lucia celebrations in Sweden as we learned about St. Lucy– the carrier of light. And of course, we made beautiful crafts of baby Jesus in the manger to bring home to our families for Christmas.

Mr. Sam Kohler came for a special visit to show us how to make traditional gingerbread cookies. He showed us what ingredients to use and how to knead the dough to a perfect consistency. Once the dough was complete, each child got to press out their own gingerbread shape to be baked and eventually be enjoyed after lunch. Delicious!

After the cookies were eaten, ornaments made, reindeer food packed, and the books read, Santa Claus finally came to visit our preschool. Santa takes time every year to come visit our precious preschool children. Everyone got a moment to tell Santa their Christmas wishes as they received their first present of the holiday season.

During the month of January, we look forward to lots of winter and snow activities such as learning more about hibernation, building snow people with marshmallows, going on a bear hunt, freezing liquids, playing mitten match, and decorating snowflakes. Our preschool children are always busy spreading love and cheer in each classroom and around our church.

*A.C. Marriott, Director*



## *Flowers for Worship Services*



Last year was our most successful one for congregational involvement in providing flowers for our Sunday morning worship services. I send a GREAT BIG THANK YOU from my heart to yours! May we continue to express love and praise to our Heavenly Father, Son and Holy Spirit in this beautiful way.

To provide flower arrangements for worship, you may sign up on the calendar in the church office or call Deka Tate at 828-387-5380. It's a wonderful way to celebrate special occasions in your life with your church family. You may send a check to the church to pay in advance for the two arrangements (\$75) or you may bring and arrange your own flowers. Thank you for helping to minister through the beauty of flowers.

*Deka Tate*

# Church Happenings

## Happy Birthday

### January Birthdays

- 1 John Brabson
- 1 Nitzy Waters
- 4 Lise Haizlip
- 4 Angela Todd
- 5 Beth Johnston
- 6 Paige Garris
- 8 Duane Addison
- 8 Lyndsay Ennis
- 9 Janet Speer
- 10 Marlyn Vergara
- 10 Ron Mason
- 10 Steve Samples
- 11 Erika Deal
- 13 Rachael McConnell
- 15 Sara Brewer
- 17 Lindsey Henley
- 17 Sherry McManus
- 17 Martha Williams
- 19 Jeremiah West
- 19 Campbell Moody
- 19 Mary Whiteacre Marine
- 20 Mark File
- 21 Lee Harris
- 23 Helen Castleman
- 24 Gail Miller
- 25 Amanda Winfrey
- 27 Tom Haizlip
- 27 Dorothy Pullease
- 28 Chuck Dickinson
- 28 William Garrett
- 29 Eugene Norris
- 30 Sharilynn Dolab
- 30 Rachel Moody

### February Birthdays

- 2 Phyllis Clemmer
- 2 Bill Ferguson
- 2 Teresa Latta
- 3 Sarah Goode
- 5 Maureen Walker
- 7 Martha Misenheimer
- 7 Ashley Smith
- 12 Kaelin Braverman
- 13 Cynthia Watson
- 15 Emily Garrett
- 17 Corinne Causby
- 17 Bill Seitz
- 18 Lisa Shook
- 22 Greg Ballard
- 22 Donna Bender
- 22 John Miles,II
- 23 Norm Reid
- 23 Carolyn West
- 23 Susan West
- 24 Barbara Sundstrom
- 25 Rick Garrett
- 25 Bruce Pendergast
- 26 Amanda Vergara
- 26 Feild Russell
- 27 Jason Miller
- 28 Jerry Shinn
- 28 Sherrell Fischer

### WINTER WEATHER ADVISORY



In the event that weather conditions prevent us from conducting our Sunday morning service of worship, we will do our best to pass this information on to you. As soon as a decision is made, we will update our web page ([www.bannerelkpresbyterian.org](http://www.bannerelkpresbyterian.org)), send out an e-mail, change the message on the church answering machine (go to option 3 "Cancellations") and possibly begin a phone tree. Please know that it is never our desire to cancel a service of worship, but there are times that conditions - such as ice or power loss - warrant that we take this step to help ensure the safety of our members. Please note, too, that if power is lost it could compromise our ability to follow through with the above plan. In that event, consider calling Pastor Rachael McConnell at 512-966-0384. for information.

*Always use your own judgment as to your safety in coming out!*

### Church Office

#### December Financials

December 6	\$ 7,751.00
December 13	\$ 7,163.00
December 20	\$ 5,855.00
December 27	<u>\$28,844.00</u>
TOTAL	\$49,613.00

### ROMEO's Men's Lunch Group Invites You!

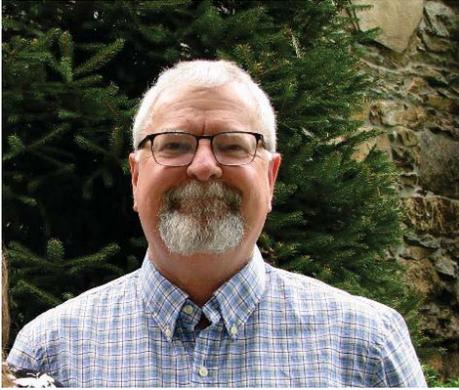
All men are invited to join friends at the Thursday men's lunch gatherings at 11:30 (or meet at the church at 11:15 to carpool).

#### February Schedule

- 2/3/22 - Cam Ranh Bay
- 2/10/22 - Puerto Nuevo
- 2/17/22 - Bodagus
- 2/24/22 - Highlander's Grill, Tyne Castle



**Our Shepherds for the month of February are Carolyn Jones and Debi Tornow.**

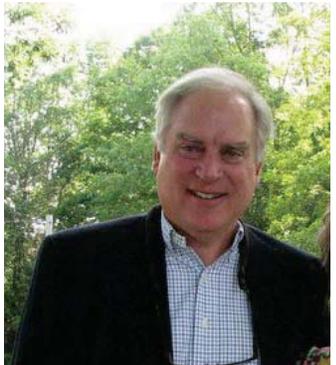


**William Dethlefs – Class of 2024**

William grew up in Miami, Florida, and joined the U.S. Coast Guard when he graduated from high school. In 1987, he moved to North Carolina and eventually migrated to the mountains with his wife, Trish. They built their dream home in 2010 after searching for two years for the perfect location. William recently retired as a Data Engineer and plans on enjoying the mountain lifestyle of hiking, fishing, hunting and relaxing by a crackling fire. William has been an elder in the Presbyterian church in the past and looks forward serving the congregation here.

**Chappie Petree – Class of 2024 – Stewardship & Finance**

Chappie is a native of Winston-Salem, North Carolina. He graduated from Guilford College in 1973 with a BS degree in Business Management. In 2012, he retired from a career in the banking industry. He was a 30-year member of Highland Presbyterian Church in Fayetteville, North Carolina, where he served three terms on the Session. He served 17 years on the finance committee at Highland Presbyterian, and he served nine years as chairman.



Chappie and his wife, Deb, have been married 51 years, and they have one son, John. They bought a weekend home on Beech Mountain in 1988. In 2015, they moved full-time to Beech Mountain. They transferred their membership to Banner Elk Presbyterian in August 2016. Chappie joined the Stewardship and Finance Committee in 2020, and he served as chairman in 2021. In his spare time, he enjoys playing golf and working in the yard in the summer and skiing in the winter.



**Jesse Pope – Class of 2024**

Jesse is a native of Mouth of Wilson, Virginia. He holds a bachelor’s degree in biology with a naturalist concentration from Lees-McRae College and a master’s degree in environmental education from Montreat College. He is the executive director of the Grandfather Mountain Stewardship Foundation, following a 13-year stint on the mountain as a naturalist. His interests, of course, include bird watching, hiking, camping, fishing, golf and traveling. Jesse is married to Michelle who came to LMC in the footsteps of her grandmother, who attended BEC in the ‘40s. She and Jesse met as students, married, and have now been in this area for over two decades. They have three children - Spencer, and twins Trevor and Lily. Jesse and Michelle joined the church in 2017 on reaffirmation of faith, with church backgrounds both Presbyterian and Baptist.

Michelle is full time at home with children but loves reading and camping.

She reports skill in writing and working with computers. Jesse notes he has a botany background, and experience in carpentry and landscaping.

**McNair Tornow – Class of 2024**

McNair Tornow grew up in Laurenburg, NC. He received both his B.A. and Law Degrees from Wake Forest University. After graduating from Law School, McNair served as a Captain in the U.S. Army, with a tour in Vietnam. Afterwards, he established a law practice in Winston-Salem and became a member at Highland Presbyterian Church, where he served as Deacon and Elder. At BEPC, McNair has served as an Elder and chaired the Pastor Nominating Committee. He and his wife, Debi, live in their “retirement” home on Beech Mountain.



# Guatemala

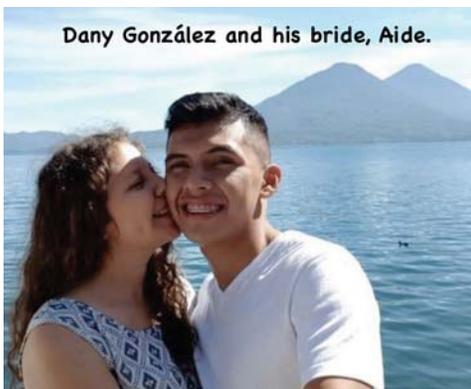
## *Banner Elk Presbyterian and Guatemala are Top-of-Mind at the Bottom of the World*

Blessed new year! May this be the year we find ourselves celebrating health and peace in the world.

My daughter and I ended last year on a forty-day cruise aboard the Viking Jupiter from Barcelona, Spain to Valparaiso, Chile. We spent ten days at sea without stopping because several of our ports-of-call were cancelled due to CoViD-19. We called at Praia, the capital of Cape Verde, off the coast of West Africa with our next port at Montevideo, Uruguay. During those ten days at sea, we had the opportunity to really bond with new friends and develop a community of like-minded travelers.

Daily trivia games fueled Deb's competitive nature and allowed me to recall many world facts that hadn't been brought to mind for a very long time. Our team became one to beat. One day, after trivia, conversation within our group evolved into a discussion about the migration of the poor and desperate of (mostly) Central America toward our southern border. The frustrations were apparent. "What can be done?" was the question that brought the efforts of BEPC to mind.

I was eager to share that my church has been actively and successfully working to help those in one community in Guatemala lift themselves up to create and build opportunity within their own country. None disputed that education is key. In some detail, I told the tale of our partnership with Arca de Noé. As I did, Deb hurried back to our stateroom to bring her iPad so that they could see the Guatemala Mission videos that are on YouTube (and the BEPC website). Everyone gathered around the screen and listened keenly to the evidence of our church's efforts. At their conclusion, my sea-buddies were lauding our efforts.



**Dany González and his bride, Aide.**

To highlight the mission's success, I told the stories of Dany Gonzalez (our master's degree student) and of Wendy Sanchez. The very first year that BEPC went to Guatemala in 1997, I and our then-pastor Tom Phillips, visited the Sanchez home. We were surprised but delighted to see the Periodic Table of Elements hanging on the wall of their little home. Macario Sanchez, the father, explained that he had always wanted to be a nurse but, of course, had not had the educational opportunity. These many years later, Wendy, his youngest daughter, is the recipient of scholarship dollars bestowed by Arca de Noé from your generous gifts and is now enrolled in a university program for General Medicine!



**The future Doctor Wendy Sánchez**

Our shipboard-friend Tom has already sent a generous check to the church for our work in Guatemala! While seeking contributions was not my objective, I was deeply touched that his heart was moved. We must never doubt the power of God's work through our hands. I am so immensely gratified by BEPC's accomplishments, those of Arca de Noé and our brothers and sisters in Morelia.

If you have the opportunity and the desire to see a remote part of the world, Deb and I can earnestly recommend a trip to Tierra del Fuego, around Cape Horn and through the Chilean Fjords. Ushuaia, Argentina on the Beagle Channel (named for Darwin's ship) is the southernmost city of the world and is the gateway for expeditions to Antarctica. Pastor Rachael can attest to the natural beauty of the region with its truly spectacular glaciers, wildlife (penguins, sea lions, seals, cormorants, condors, etc.) volcanoes and the snow-capped Andes plummeting into the sea. It was an amazing adventure — one for which we are so grateful.

*Barbara Hosbein*

## *The Presbyterian Seal*

Since 1985, the symbol of our denomination, Presbyterian Church (USA), has been this seal which we see prominently displayed at BEPC. The seal is important for several reasons: First, because it is made up of central components of our denominational beliefs; and second, because it identifies us as the PC(USA).

Over the years, many branches of Presbyterianism have arisen, merged or split often due to differences in theology or doctrinal standards, therefore evolving into numerous Presbyterian denominations. Some of these include Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), Associate Reformed PC, Evangelical PC, Orthodox PC, Cumberland PC, Calvinist PC, Covenanter PC, Bible PC, numbers of Community Presbyterian Churches, and others.



Our denomination, PC(USA), is the largest Presbyterian denomination in America with about 10,000 congregations and worshiping communities, membership over 1,200,000. We follow a representative form of government in which congregations are connected through membership in our General Assembly. Each local congregation is led and guided by Elders (the Session) elected by the Congregation; regional groups of Congregations form Presbyteries; groups of Presbyteries form Synods; Synods together compose General Assembly--the highest governing body of PC(USA). This form of government allows the church's authority to flow both from the congregation upward and from the General Assembly downward—thus making us a *connectional* denomination.

### **The Seal**

The seal both defines and unites us and is made up of many symbols. Taken as a whole, the seal forms a CROSS, the most universal symbol of the Christian Church, representing the love of God in Jesus Christ's death and resurrection.

The upper section of the cross is a descending DOVE which represents God's Spirit entering his Son Jesus at baptism. The dove has also come to mean Peace.

The top crossbar depicts an open book, the BIBLE--God's word. Beneath the Bible can be seen the BAPTISMAL FONT. Some also see a CHALIS used in the Lord's Supper.

The lower center line forms a PULPIT on which the Bible rests as God's word is preached.

At the base of the cross, FLAMES imply a triangle, symbol of the TRINITY---God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Flames are a reminder of God's speaking to Moses from a burning bush in the Old Testament and also remind us of Pentecost when Christ charged his apostles to be messengers of the good news of God's love.

Just as Paul described the Church as a body with many members, the PC(USA) seal is made of many individual parts, each with its own meaning. But when taken as a whole, the symbols of this seal denote unity while offering richness of possible interpretation.

*The PC(USA) website offers many references for more in-depth explanation and interpretation of denominational beliefs. A simple explanation of the Seal may be found on YouTube in a children's sermon (May 30, 2020) from Wallace Presbyterian Church, Wallace, NC.*

*--Researched and submitted by Claire Fortune*

## *Around the Church*



### *Community Carol Sing*

On December 4<sup>th</sup>, approximately 150 people filled our sanctuary for the first annual Community Carol Sing. We were especially excited to welcome to introduce our church to so many community residents – two-thirds of those in attendance were not church members. It was one of the many events of the Small Town Christmas weekend presented by the Banner Elk Chamber of Commerce this past year. We hope it will become an annual tradition!

### *Session Notes from December 2021*

- Received: Diaconate Consideration Report from Nominating Committee
- Approved: Elder Class of 2020
- Approved: 2022 Budget of \$386,789.00
- Approved: Mask Policy for December 12 for Children's Nativity
- Approved: Christmas Eve offering for Presbyterian Disaster Relief Fund designated for Western Kentucky
- Deliberating: Ways to meet media needs
- Approved: Face mask requirement until further notice.



### *Session Notes from January 2022*

- Participated in Saturday Elder Training provided by Barbara Ross, PWNC
- Energized in work and fellowship with new Elder Class of 2024
- Received new Book of Order and Book of Confessions
- Received 2022 Pastor Priorities
- Approved: Funds to secure exterior organ pipes
- Approved: Funds to improve quality of technology for audio/video broadcasts
- Learned of unexpected end-of-year \$10,000 gift from former member

### *Prayer Shawl Ministry*



The Prayer Shawl Ministry has met in various forms this past year with the knitters and crocheters meeting outside on the lawn, by Zoom, and socially distanced in the Margaret Tate Parlor and the Fellowship Hall. Approximately 40 knitted and crocheted shawls were completed this year with 25 shawls being shared with church members, families, and friends across the globe. The Prayer Shawl Ministry is budgeted as a sub-committee of the Missions Committee. Most of the yarn is donated leaving budget expenses to purchase some yarn, postage, card stock, envelopes, gift bags and tissue, and shawl labels. A special label is sewn into each shawl and prayer offered before each shawl is delivered. Each shawl is gratefully received as a symbol of being wrapped in God's love.

### *On-Line Worship*

We welcome you to our services with Christian Love. In an abundance of caution as COVID cases rise, we encourage you to wear a mask in the sanctuary. Another option is to view the 11 AM worship service on our YouTube channel each Sunday. Like our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/bannerelkpresbyterian> to enjoy videos of special music and get other updates from the church. These links are "live" on the website. Another option is to listen live to either worship service from the parking lot on FM 106.7. Thanks for your flexibility during challenging times.

### *From the Back Pew.....*

#### *and The Permanent Funds Ministry*



Thank-you notes from children and grandchildren and from charities that we supported at year's end are rolling into our mailbox (at the road, post office and email!) these days. As folks were able, a lot of generous checks undoubtedly were written during this special time of year. Unfortunately, Christmas has passed and that special spirit of giving has diminished.

Lest you forget that special spirit, however, remember Deuteronomy 15:11: "For the poor will never cease out of the land; therefore, I command you, You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in the land."

One last check, or one easy additional task completed now, can affect long years away.

The mission of the Permanent Funds Ministry is to provide for future financial giving, to and through our church. Future maintenance monies, program or project support can be provided when you are no longer able or available to write checks. Missions of the church can continue to receive support long into the future, if you remember today just how important those missions are to you. If your funds now are currently running low, consider a planned gift to the mission of the church. Simple language to include in your will: "I bequeath to the Permanent Funds Ministry of the Banner Elk Presbyterian Church (insert \$) to be used to (improve or expand church facilities) (feed the hungry/house the homeless) (meet needs of children/provide disaster assistance)." Put your money where you want your heart always to be.

**Banner Elk Presbyterian Church**  
**PO Box 158**  
**Banner Elk, NC 28604**

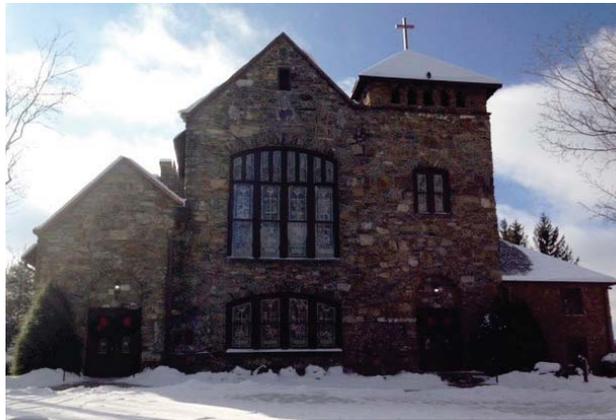
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PHONE: (828) 898-5406  
WEB PAGE: [www.bannerelkpresbyterian.org](http://www.bannerelkpresbyterian.org)

FAX: (828) 898-7615  
EMAIL: [office@bannerelkpresbyterian.org](mailto:office@bannerelkpresbyterian.org)

Office Hours: Monday - Thursday 8:30 am - 2:30 pm



### **CHURCH LEADERSHIP & STAFF**

**Moderator:** Rev. Rachael McConnell  
**Clerk of Session:** Susan Carter Preschool

#### **Class 2022**

Luana Anderson Fellowship  
Murry Haber Missions  
Don Hilsmier Membership  
Deka Tate Congregational Care

#### **Class of 2023**

Donna Dicks Christian Education  
Rick Garrett Buildings & Grounds  
Alice Johnson Preschool Liaison  
Janet Speer Worship

#### **Class 2024**

Williams Dethlefs Communications/Outreach  
Chappie Petree Stewardship & Finance  
Jesse Pope Permanent Funds  
McNair Tornow Personnel

**Clerk of the Works:** Larry Zimmer  
**Permanent Funds Ministry:** Jesse Pope  
**Treasurer:** Dorothy Pullease  
**Asst Treasurers:** Allen Clark,  
Donna Dicks, Ron McGowan, Debi Tornow

#### **Church Staff**

Rev. Rachael McConnell, Pastor  
[rachael@bannerelkpresbyterian.org](mailto:rachael@bannerelkpresbyterian.org)  
David Soyars, Organist  
Nina Allbert, Choir Director  
[ninaallbert@icloud.com](mailto:ninaallbert@icloud.com)  
Alisa Ballard, Office Administrator  
[alisa@bannerelkpresbyterian.org](mailto:alisa@bannerelkpresbyterian.org)  
Office Manager: Dedy Traver  
[dedy@bannerelkpresbyterian.org](mailto:dedy@bannerelkpresbyterian.org)  
Housekeeping: Margaret Trivette  
BEPC Preschool: A.C. Marriott, Director  
[acmarriott@bannerelkpresbyterian.org](mailto:acmarriott@bannerelkpresbyterian.org)

### **SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES**

**In-person or livestream**

**11:00 am Worship - traditional**