Pastoral Letter

June 2, 2026

> At some point, I suspect you have been asked the following… *Tell me about your church.*

It's a hard request to respond to, both because First Presbyterian is vibrant and expansive in how we gather and live out our faith – and because discussing Christianity in the 21st century is tricky. When I'm asked, I find myself quickly talking about our Walk-In Ministry. It's a great example of who we are – loving, devoted to social justice, urban – and what we do – listen to our neighbors, address physical needs, heed Christ's call. Maybe you've done the same.

But here's the kicker – I've never served with the Walk-In Ministry, at least not directly. Most FPCers haven't. But we can claim it as ours because we are a part of the congregation that supports this ministry, financially, spiritually, and faithfully. We are the church together, and this is a ministry of the church. As our confirmands wrote in their class confession of faith, "Church is a team sport, not a building." We're all on the same team as our walk-in ministers.

Sometimes, we take a moment to remember and enact this truth. This Sunday, June 7, is one of those days, as we will have our **Mission Commissioning** in worship. We will bless and lay hands on all of the youth and their adults serving this summer – high schoolers and adults in West Virginia with Appalachia Service Project, middlers and adults in Buncombe County with Asheville Youth Mission, high school leaders Izzy Allison-Pleasants and Leone Mbugua at the Massanetta Springs Middle School Conference, and adult small group leader Cris Rivera at the Montreat Youth Conference. All of these folks will be serving Christ in special ways, and thus we will be – financially, spiritually, and faithfully – too.

On the way out of worship, you can grab a slip of paper of one of these folks with their ministry. Please do so, and pray for our teammates on the dates listed.

Grace and Peace,

John