



## TRYON TRUMPET

Tryon Presbyterian Church

A Stephen Ministry Congregation

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# Church opens in the face of fire

For the third time in five months, our church opened its doors in difficult circumstances.

After Hurricane Helene hit on Friday, September 27, the church held Sunday worship service and opened the following week for people who needed a meal, work space, an internet connection, supplies and even child care.

A power outage Sunday morning, December 29, didn't stop worship, which was moved to the choir room where more natural light was available.

And the wildfire that broke out Saturday, March 1, forced nearby residents including members of our congregation to evacuate their homes. Several people gathered at our church for safety, fellowship and a meal. Two couples, with their cats, spent the night. Skip Taylor and MaryAnn Sloan slept in the Narthex, and Brian and Deanna Bancroft

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Flames were visible from church Saturday evening, March 1.

**(From FIRE on Page 1)**

bunked in the nursery, with temporary bedding and cat litter brought in by Amy McGrath. That night, flames on the mountainsides were dramatically visible from the church.

On Sunday morning, as smoke covered the mountains and crews were staging firefighting operations from Harmon Field, worship proceeded as usual. It was Transfiguration Sunday, and in the welcome Amy urged the congregation to “look for hope in that dark cloud.”

Later, winds died down and the fire crews began to gain ground. Flames approached within 50 yards of the Bancrofts’ home on U.S. 176 but no farther, thanks to a fire line crews forged up the mountainside above them. They did “an amazing job. I can’t say enough about how hard they worked,” Brian said.

We’re thankful that every home was saved, and that our church has opened in the face of flood, darkness and fire by the grace of God.

Here are some photos taken near the Bancrofts’ home:





# If we belong to God, Satan's ways are futile

It might be important as we enter the Lenten season to look at the temptation of Jesus.

First, the only way we know about this event in our Lord's life is that he told his followers. We also know this wasn't the only time Satan tempted him. Jesus once said to Simon Peter, "Get behind me, Satan. You are a stumbling block to me, for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things." Jesus also was aware of Judas' struggle with Satan, and there was Jesus' time in the Garden of Gethsemane. The point that needs to be obvious is that Satan knew who Jesus was and is!

The other point is, the unmitigated gall that Satan thought he would succeed in tempting Jesus, which I might say shows the depths to which Satan will go in any of our lives.

Apparently, Jesus' struggle was so intense that he neglected to remember nourishment. After hearing God say following his baptism, "This is my Son with whom I am well pleased," Jesus turned to prayer and pondered just how he was to do his Father's will in ministry.

In the first temptation, Satan told Jesus to turn these stones into bread. Satan saw how hungry Jesus was and tempted him to use the power he was given by God. Jesus knew the people had great needs, and he would not satisfy himself with his power to make bread. Jesus replied, "One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." With this temptation, Jesus would not forsake his relationship with God or use for himself powers given for use in love. Humanity does not live by bread alone.

In the second temptation, we hear some doubt in Satan's voice: "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down." Satan took Jesus to a pinnacle or perhaps a high tower in the city, suggesting that if Jesus is who he says he is, angels will take care of him. Satan wanted Jesus to do something sensational to prove his divine power. "If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead" (Luke 16:31).

Conviction must go deeper than eyesight. Our God is not proved by magic tricks. He comes to us on his own terms and meets us where we are. Ours is never to dictate our decisions to the Almighty and to be our own god, but to humble ourselves before him. Jesus must fulfill God's covenant and do this ministry in God's way. Jesus said, "You shall not tempt the Lord your God."

The third temptation was Satan's worst one. He took Jesus to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, saying, "All these I will give you, if you fall down and worship me." This was political in nature. Satan knew how the Romans were ruling the Jewish people, how heavy the taxes were and how ready the people were to revolt. Jesus hungered for the people's peace and their need for the glory of God. Jesus' understanding of the scriptures and his prayers gave him the strength to withstand such a temptation. Jesus said to Satan, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve."

I can attest to Satan's activities and to the length he goes in our lives. But I also know without a shadow of a doubt that once we belong to our Lord, as long as we call upon his name, nothing will ever separate us from him. We are his, and Satan's ways are futile. Praise be to God!

**By Rev. Mary A. Potter**

# Allan leads weekly Lenten studies

Dr. Allan Purtill will lead Lenten studies at 8:30 a.m. Wednesdays from March 12 to April 16 in the Jones Conference Room. The discussion will be based on the book “Lent in Plain Sight: A Devotion Through Ten Objects” by Rev. Jill Duffield.

A review of the book by Christianity Today said: “In this short but sweet book about the ordinary things that Jesus would have encountered on his way to Jerusalem, author Jill Duffield suggests that God delights to work through the ordinary objects we encounter throughout our lives. ... Each week, running from Ash Wednesday to Easter, Duffield shows us how God’s grace becomes tangible in the mundane things of our lives.”



Rev. Jill Duffield

[Rev. Duffield](#) is senior pastor at First Presbyterian Church in Greensboro. She is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, holds a Master of Divinity from Union Seminary in Richmond and earned a Doctorate of Ministry at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. She is a former editor and publisher of Presbyterian Outlook.

If there’s enough interest, Allan may offer the course at an additional time.

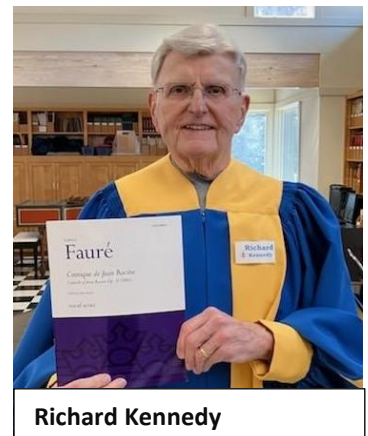
You can [order the book](#) online or call the church office.

## Church news in brief

The initial Last Light family worship service was held at 5 p.m. Sunday, March 2, in the Fellowship Hall. It will continue on the first Sunday of each month.

A search committee to find our next director of music and organist is taking shape. It will be headed by choir member Ken Shull and consist of five members. Pastor Allan Purtill will serve as an ex-officio member.

Brennan Szafron led a concert in memory of the late Scott Foppiano earlier this year, and now he has given our church one of Scott’s favorite compositions. It is “Cantique de Jean Racine” by Gabriel Fauré, edited by John Rutter. Richard Kennedy accepted the music from Brennan, who is organist and choir master at the Episcopal Church of the Holy Cross in Tryon. Scott was organist and music director at our church until his death in December. The piece will be a valued addition to our music library. Thank you, Brennan!



Richard Kennedy

The TPC Scholarship Committee’s annual Fish Fry fundraiser is Saturday, March 29, from 3-6 p.m. at church. It will be take-out only. Tickets are \$20 for fish and/or shrimp combo. Sign up in the Narthex.

Welcome spring 2025 by joining your church family for Sunday lunch March 23! There is no cost for this meal, which follows the worship service. However, please bring dishes according to your last name: A-H, dessert; I-Q, vegetable; R-Z, salad. The church will provide meat, macaroni pie and green beans.

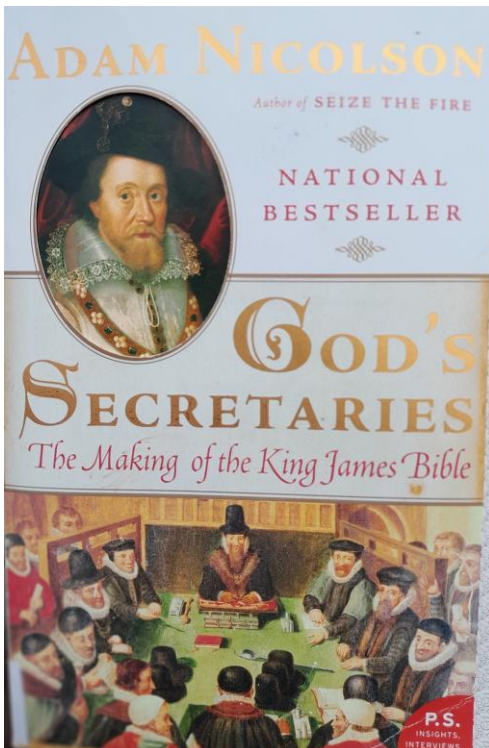
# Find all the answers in the TPC Library

Here are seven questions about the Bible. You can find the answers in the following books, all available in the TPC Library.

How did the Bible become a book bearing the name of an English king?

*("God's Secretaries" by Adam Nicolson.)*

Do we actually have any copies of ancient scriptures?



*("The Dead Sea Scrolls" by Florentino and Garcia; "The Lost Gospel Q" by Marcus J Borg; "Understanding the Dead Sea Scrolls" by Hershel Shanks; "The Nag Hammadi Scriptures" by Marvin Meyer.)*

Which New Testament books were the first and last written? Hint: not Matthew and Revelation.

*("Evolution of the Word" by Marcus J Borg.)*

Is it true that Thomas Jefferson wrote a Bible?

*("The Thomas Jefferson Bible" by Thomas Jefferson.)*

Are there any other Gospels that we don't have in the Bible but are in our library?

*("The Gnostic Gospels" by Elaine Pagels; "The Gospel of Thomas by the Apostle Thomas" translated by Marvin Meyer; and "The Gospel of Mary Magdalene" by Joseph Rowe.)*

What is the Apocrypha?

*("The Complete Apocrypha" by Covenant Christian Coalition.)*

Why doesn't the Bible read like we talk and say "Y'all just need to love each other, ya hear?"

*("Cotton Patch Gospel" by Clarence Jordan.)*

These books are on display on the library desk. Happy researching.

**By Carolyn Thompson, TPC Librarian**

# 'Tales of Tryon' comes to our church March 20

Tales of Tryon will return to our church Thursday, March 20, for a program that fits the setting.

The talk by Shields Flynn will look at the work of Ligon Flynn and Holland Brady Jr., "architectural visionaries."

Brady, with partner Shannon Meriwether, designed our sanctuary, which was completed in 1958.

Shields Flynn is a geologist and author best known for his mineral collections. But he's also an expert on the late Ligon Flynn – his brother – and the late Holland Brady Jr. – his brother-in-law. Both architects were Tryon natives, but Flynn was living in Wilmington at the time of his death in 2010, while Brady spent most of his life and career here. He died in 2014.

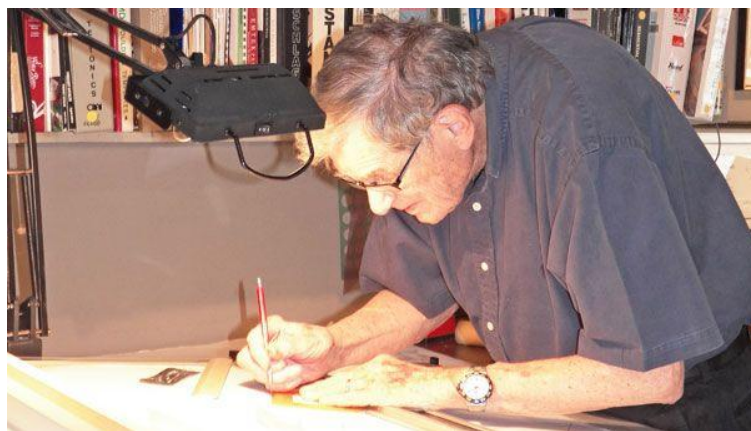
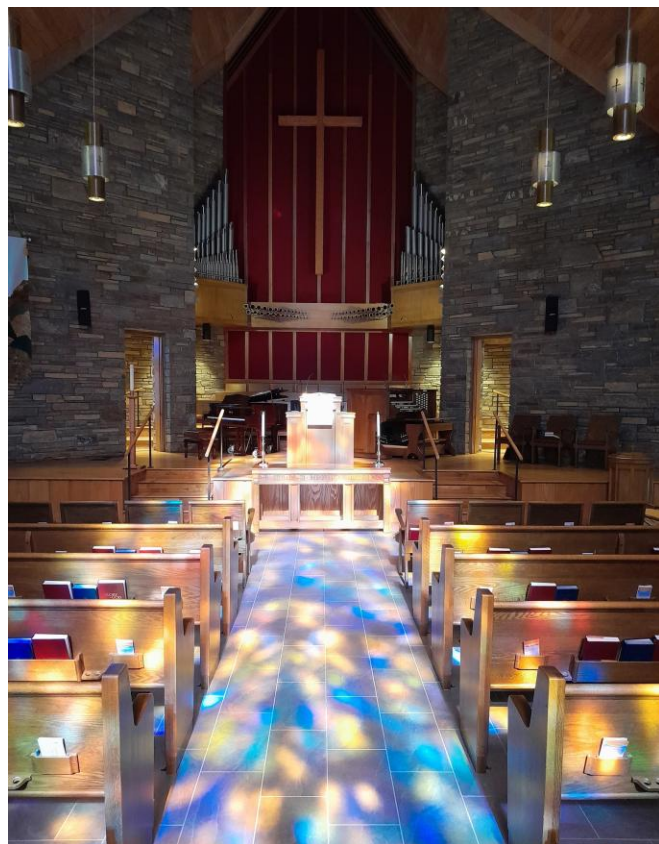
Our church history notes that, when our congregation was planning to relocate from Freeman Hill to Harmon Field Road, it received a stunning gift from part-time residents Frank and Elizabeth MacGregor. They offered to pay for construction of a new sanctuary if the church would add an education building. The sanctuary would be dedicated to God and to the memory of Frank MacGregor's sister, Ruth, whose ship had been lost at sea during the First World War.

The sanctuary was subsequently designed in the shape of a ship to memorialize the sacrifice of Ruth MacGregor, who was on her way to France to serve with the American Red Cross.

Robin Lattimore's centennial celebration history noted that, although Brady designed more than 300 buildings during his career, he "always told people that his shared role in designing Tryon Presbyterian Church with Shannon Meriwether was his favorite commission."

Shields Flynn will cover his brother's and Brady's early lives in Tryon, their education and their designs during the Mid-Century Modern Architectural period. He'll show pictures of a selection of their work.

Tales of Tryon is presented by the [Tryon History Museum](#). The program begins at 5 p.m.



**Photos: Our beautiful sanctuary and one of its designers, architect Holland Brady Jr.**



# St. Patrick's Day remembers a man of faith

As a child, I was conflicted about St. Patrick's Day. Maybe some adults get mixed signals today.

My maternal grandmother, to whom I was very close, was Irish. She came to this country in the early 1920s, married a fellow Irish immigrant, had a couple of kids, was widowed and later married another Irishman. There was a gaggle of Irish "cousins" in and out of my life. But, despite the popular parades and other celebrations of Ireland's patron saint, my Irish kin weren't much into Paddy's day. They considered it a



**My grandmother's childhood church: McKelvey's Grove Presbyterian in County Monaghan, Ireland.**

Catholic holiday, and they were Protestants. My grandmother was so Presbyterian, in fact, that she wasn't thrilled when my mother married an Episcopalian. She had little regard for the Catholic and Episcopal churches. "There's not a paper wall between them," she often said.

As I remember it, Irish Protestants were more apt to raise a flag on ["Orange Day,"](#) July 12, the anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne in 1690.

As I learned more about Ireland's troubled history, I questioned the religious animosity. It didn't make sense to an American kid living in the New Jersey suburbs with Catholic, Jewish and Protestant

friends.

In high school, I came across an ancient Irish prayer known as St. Patrick's Breastplate and fell in love with it. I've carried a copy in my wallet for decades. One part goes: "I arise today, through God's strength to pilot me, God's might to uphold me, God's wisdom to guide me, God's eye to look before me, God's ear to hear me, God's word to speak for me, God's hand to guard me, God's shield to protect me, God's host to save me from snares of devils, from temptations of vices, from everyone who shall wish me ill, afar and near, alone and in a multitude."

Lovely. And it's neither Catholic nor Protestant as far as I can tell.

Patrick's life is seen more through myth than known fact, but I think it's true that such a man preached the Gospel and helped spread Christianity in Ireland 1,500 years ago or so. He must have had great courage to face the dangers described in the prayer attributed to him. His faith was his breastplate.

Why do I think he was real? Because he, or someone, passed that faith down through the generations, eventually to my grandmother and to me. Whether the word was proclaimed in Catholic or Protestant churches was less important than the faith itself.

We might wear green, enjoy a parade and raise a toast or two every March 17, but the day carries deeper meaning. Patrick made disciples of Jesus Christ. He surely loved God and his neighbors – the people of Ireland. Let's remember him with reverence and then have fun.

**By Doug Clark**

# Forging friendships with Presbyterians in Taiwan

We are so lucky we could go back to Taiwan early this year, and with a new focus: to visit new friends we had made during the pastors' retreat in Black Mountain last year, to receive (in cash) a donation from all those pastors for the work of Helene relief at Black Mountain Church, and to explore how we (on behalf of the Tryon Presbyterian Missions Committee we have been delighted to join) could have a fruitful relationship with them. It is so exciting that we are describing it as a countdown to lift-off!

## Four!

Over a period of four weeks, we were able to visit three churches and two educational institutions, and to get closer to one missionary!



Pastor Mo, left, with church members and Chianghua and Mark Hereward at Jianhsin Presbyterian Church in Taoyuan, Taiwan.

## Three!

We enjoyed a wide variety of worship styles: the indigenous people are famous for singing (and dancing), and their worship style is very active and lively. The church we visited in the capital, Taipei, was calmer, more reflective perhaps. But consistently through all the churches we found joyful worship and well-informed preaching, and we learned of the heartfelt commitment to serving God by supporting local communities.

Jianhsin (Build Anew) Presbyterian Church is small (about 60 regulars) and meets for now in a rented house in the big city of Taoyuan near Taipei. The ground floor is for the church service, the middle floor for teaching rooms, and the top floor has the pastor's apartment. The church used to own a floor of an office building, but people on the neighboring floors complained bitterly about the noise and even called the police, so the congregation moved.

The focus of the church is to give spiritual support and training to young indigenous people who have migrated to Taoyuan for work, and helping them to become leaders.

After attending a service (and lunch with Pastor Mo and family), we visited the plot of land they have bought and are just about to start building on. As this requires much fund-raising, they visit another church monthly, where they sell home-made ornaments and food, and talk, sing and dance – all under the guidance of the Taiwan Presbyterian Church. They also have a prayer calendar, so someone is praying for the new church every day. They are excited about what they can do in their new location.

Hanxi Presbyterian Church is in a mountain village, a two-hour train ride plus 30-minute car ride from Taipei. Pastor Syat, who leads the church, has been called a “spiritual entrepreneur.” He has not only helped build the

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church from 20 members to 150, but he also set up social services in the village. This includes using church minivans to bring elderly villagers to church for health checks, activities and lunch, then returning them to their homes. The minivans proclaim the Fifth Commandment on the side (Honor your father and mother so that you may live long), connecting their work to scripture. They also run a motor-scooter “meals on wheels,” taking lunch and ministry to elderly shut-ins.

Later in the day, they pick up children from school, bringing them to church to help with homework and have fun and food before taking the kids home. The children either live with grandparents or their parents work long hours out of the village and come home late.

These and many other activities not only help the community but also provide jobs for young people so they don't need to migrate for work. The church building includes a dormitory so it can host retreats for other churches occasionally (as well as us, for one night!).

These community/outreach activities are funded partly from government grants, partly from gifts from individuals, partly from the church itself. They are fund-raising for a new minivan to expand the work.

We had a great time, even joining choir practice on the Saturday night, where the small but strong choir learned an anthem for the next day (with plenty of laughter and teasing at practice and a lovely sound in church – like a choir you know?). The lively worship service included one of the



elders blowing a long animal horn to underline the joy in praising God. It was quite something!

At the Sunday service, we were introduced to a (Tryon-aged!) couple. He is a doctor and she is a missionary/pastor who are members of a church in Taipei (described below) but have a supportive relationship with this church in the mountains dating to when she was a seminary intern there. The commitment of this couple is amazing.

Shipai Presbyterian Church is a big-city church that meets on one floor of an office building (with worship area surrounded by classrooms), has a wonderful choir and a great service with a systematic sermon. The ministry continues through the week with different fellowship and teaching groups. Chianghua really enjoyed joining a

**(See TAIWAN on Page 10)**

**Hanxi Presbyterian Church. Above: A church minivan proclaims the Fifth Commandment. Left: Breakfast with Pastor Syat.**

(From TAIWAN on Page 9)

women's Bible study – 130 women who met from 10 until 4, including a take-away lunch. She said the small group discussions were refreshingly honest and supportive, and she was warmly welcomed as a visitor.

## Two!

We visited the Presbyterian Bible College in Hsinchu (the “Silicon Valley of Taiwan”), and we had the great pleasure of spending time with the principal and the dean of students, both of whom we had met in Black



The church at Presbyterian Seminary.

Mountain. Like all universities and colleges in Taiwan, the Bible College faced a drop in student enrollment (as fewer people go to university in Taiwan nowadays) and decided to stop offering degree courses. It concentrates instead on short-course continuing education for pastors. This positions the college to identify support needs for leaders of many of the 1,200 Presbyterian churches in Taiwan. The biggest need is to support pastors who veer toward overwork and burnout, and who are often working away from a spouse, who also may be a pastor. So, the short courses are designed to address more than just head knowledge, following the tagline of “Rest, Relationship, Renewal and Re-creation” laid out by the principal.

The college charges only about one-third of the actual cost for these courses, allowing pastors from even the poorest areas to attend. This requires the college to raise money, mostly through renting out its facilities and with fees from the kindergarten it runs.



Chianghua and Mark at the Bible College. Chianghua's sister and brother-in-law are at the right.

The Bible College, with the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan, also operates a “Senior University” (Song Nian Academy), offering courses for retirees on practical and spiritual subjects. And it works with “I Love Taiwan,” a program that brings young people from around the world to help with Bible summer camps.

We also visited the venerable Presbyterian Seminary, which has wonderful buildings capturing Chinese and Western styles and is set in the foothills of Yangming Mountain on the outskirts of Taipei. We were there primarily to meet the missionary, John McCall, whom we all support.

## One

John has been missionary in Taiwan for 27 years. His primary mission is to support the spiritual formation of Presbyterian pastors across the country, offering counsel, direction and encouragement by traveling from church to church, except for Mondays when he teaches in the seminary. Even in the face of uncertainty about

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the future of his work due to changes in PC(USA) funding, he was serene and joyful, embracing each day the Lord gives and humbly offering support to local pastors wherever it is needed.

**Blast off!**

As we counted down, we came to realize that the main thing we could offer our friends in Taiwan was help with English. The two churches that support indigenous people and the Bible College were all excited about a possible collaboration in teaching English. Perhaps in the



**Missionary John McCall, left, with Mark and Chianghua on the seminary campus.**

context of a summer camp, this could draw people who would not otherwise go to a church. This could mean mobilizing some young people from Tryon to come to Taiwan or exercising our more seasoned talents from within TPC! Pastor Mo identified a desire by the young people in her church to improve their English. Pastor Syat suggested visiting church summer camps in the mountains. The Bible College could connect us with I Love Taiwan. Or we could explore doing something through the Senior University. So many possibilities!

We were amazed that these churches and institutions don't express "need" to us in the way churches and institutions in many African and some Latin American countries might. And that's wonderful news – they are largely able to find resources in Taiwan to carry out their ministries. Yet, the two churches outside Taipei and the Bible College are looking for financial support to sustain or expand their work. What we could contribute wouldn't fill a large part of their need, but the solidarity we could show with some monetary assistance would be wonderful.

And of course, we can express fellowship and love across the ocean through prayer. The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan is a growing spiritual force in a country where most people do not follow Jesus, so prayer is a vital element to all it is doing.

Overall, they would welcome our fellowship and friendship. It is wonderful to join expressions of joy and worship with brothers and sisters across the world, as a foretaste of heaven. And there are ways we can show that love in practice – with English teaching, with fund-raising, and through prayer. Let's see how we can commit to those.

**By Mark and Chianghua Hereward**



# Presbytery news

## Camp Grier scholarships available

The Presbytery of Western North Carolina has several \$600 scholarships available for any youth who wants to attend a session at Camp Grier this summer. Even if you have already signed up to attend, you can apply for this scholarship. The deadline is March 31. The application is [here](#).

Camp Grier is a Presbyterian property of 650 acres near Old Fort, an hour and 15 minutes' drive from Tryon Presbyterian Church. It offers a variety of outdoor activities for rising second graders through high school age. Our Jesse McGrath loved mountain biking so much at Camp Grier last summer that he plans to return this year.

Find more information about the camp [here](#).



Rock climbing is a popular activity at Camp Grier.

## Prayers for Malawi

Our Presbytery has supported mission work in Malawi for more than 20 years. Now it is asking for prayers as U.S. Agency for International Development cuts are affecting Nkhoma Hospital, rural health clinics and a mobile health unit where malaria, tuberculosis and AIDS are treated. The Presbytery is organizing a mission trip to the East African nation in May.

## Disaster recovery website

The Presbytery's disaster recovery website is [here](#). It offers opportunities to volunteer, donate and apply for grants.

## Montreat worship and music

This year's Montreat Worship and Music Conference will be June 15-20 and June 22-27. It is led by the Presbyterian Association of Musicians.

"Together, we will create music, learn and worship," organizers say. "Your participation is an investment in the dynamic growth of our denomination as we explore the promising future together."

All the information you need can be found [here](#).



# In and around Tryon Presbyterian



**Top: Girl Scouts Alma Willis, Shealyn Macaluso, Viola and Sylvia Meissner offer cookies. Below: Chili Cook-off winners (Hank) and Sandy Sibley, best chili; Jenny (and Allan) Purtill, best cornbread. Right: Chili judges Michael Meissner, Deanna Bancroft and Dennis Sakos.**







The Shrove Tuesday pancake supper was a success, thanks to Janet Gilchrist and Lynette Fisher (top), Ken Shull, Bobby Silvers (right) and others. An Ash Wednesday service was held the next evening. Below: Coloring by Emma Meyer.



### Tryon Trumpet

The Tryon Trumpet is published by Tryon Presbyterian Church and its Membership Committee, chaired by Rennie Habel. Editor is Doug Clark [dougclark55@gmail.com](mailto:dougclark55@gmail.com). Thanks for help with this edition goes to MaryAnn Sloan, Brian Bancroft, Mary Potter, Chianghua and Mark Hereward, Amy McGrath, Wes Elam, Susan Speight, Richard Kennedy, Carolyn Thompson, Margaret Clark, Allan Purtill, Kim McPherson and the Presbytery of Western North Carolina.





**The Souper Bowl February 9 raised more than \$1,000 for Black Mountain Home, thanks to the Missions Committee and our congregation. Clockwise from left: Patra Sullivan, MaryAnn Sloan, Stephanie Greene and Alan Zaeske; Pete Bellamy says Stephanie can make soup! Alan and DeAnne Zaeske check in Steve Habel and Joanie Hosick; Lynette Fisher and Bill Sullivan clean up.**

