



TRYON TRUMPET

Tryon Presbyterian Church

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Pretty Place draws group from TPC

The initial TPC Excursion May 1 was a great success. It was a success, to begin with, because we reached our destination – Pretty Place – the beautiful Fred W. Symmes Chapel at YMCA Camp Greenville.

We trusted Mike Carruth with the driving in his roomy van. Janet Gilchrist, Cindy Caldwell, Cinda Austin, Gretchen Morris, Margaret Burke, Jon Austin, Ellen Hendrickson and Margaret and Doug Clark all fit comfortably.

We *really trusted* Mike, because no one had ever taken the route he chose. Several miles of it followed a dirt road through the Green River Preserve, a 3,400-acre tract that includes a summer camp, deep forest, boulders, mountain laurel, creeks and abundant wildlife. We were all pleased to emerge at Cedar Mountain in

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Transylvania County, not far from our objective.

Pretty Place is popular with sightseers, for good reason. The open-air chapel, built in 1941, sits at 3,200 feet on Stone Mountain and offers majestic views across Greenville County to Hogback Mountain and beyond.



We were also hungry by this time. A 30-minute drive from Caesar’s Head on U.S. 276 brought us to downtown Brevard, the principal town in Transylvania County famous for white squirrels and proximity to Pisgah National Forest. We lunched at The Falls Landing, then – well satisfied – were ready to return to church.

Mike navigated a scenic route home but kept us on paved roads this time. He is an expert hand at the wheel.

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The next stop was the Caesar’s Head overlook on U.S. 276 a little farther into South Carolina. Here, at a similar elevation, we could take in amazing scenery in the other direction – toward the west. So much of God’s creation fell under our gaze!

The weather was magnificent as well – cool, breezy and clear. We were blessed.



Above left: Our leaders, Janet Gilchrist and Cindy Caldwell. Above: Gretchen Morris and Margaret Burke.

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Thanks also to excursion planners and leaders Janet and Cindy. This was an excellent opportunity for us to enjoy God’s handiwork and get to know each other better. The next destination will be the Billy Graham Library in Charlotte in June. Watch for details.

By Doug Clark



Clockwise from top left: Margaret Clark and Gretchen Morris look for familiar mountains seen from Pretty Place; Cinda Austin and brother Jon at Caesar’s Head; Ellen Hendrickson captures the scenery from Caesar’s Head; Margaret Burke, Gretchen Morris, Ellen Hendrickson, Margaret Clark, Cinda Austin, Janet Gilchrist, Jon Austin and Cindy Caldwell at Caesar’s Head; Doug and Margaret Clark grab a selfie.

'Blessed are the peacemakers'

The next Beatitude is, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." Jesus emphasizes peace and peacemaking throughout the Gospels. The night He was born, angels hailed Him as the Prince of Peace. The word peace is the cardinal or principal Christian word. Peace occurs throughout the New Testament and, according to biblical scholars, has the central meaning of being in reconciliation with God.

Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace: peace in the soul and peace among people! However, you and I hopefully have come to know this. But then there is the world!



People who have no God, who think they need no Savior and who think they have life and the world all figured out are content to live their own way.

Jesus continually says, "Do not be afraid" and "Peace be with you." All throughout the Gospels, He desires us to trust in Him and offers us peace. But exactly what does this peace involve? What must happen to find this peace?

Quite frankly, it entails reconciliation with God, between each other, and perhaps with ourselves. I think there is nothing harder in this world than to be reconciled to thinking one way about something for a long time and suddenly having a great awakening to see it another way. Reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ will lead to peace within our souls, until along comes Jesus saying something else like, "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace but a sword" (Matthew 10:34-39). What?

The disciples were listening to Jesus, and He begins His discussion on division. He talks about families being against each other. I had two brothers, and I have a sister. When one brother had a break from the university, my parents and I would drive over to Joliet to meet him at the train station. I, being 4 years old, would say to my parents, "Now, this time let's don't fight about Jesus." A professor at the university had a huge impact on my brother, convincing him that everything my parents had taught us about faith in Jesus was a myth and none of the scriptures was true. My brother became totally an unbeliever, moved to the West Coast, and we only saw him occasionally. My parents and all of us prayed for him for years, but what the professor instilled in my brother has spread now to the third and fourth generations.

We all need to realize when we follow Jesus, He has nothing whatsoever to do with the political parties of any given country. We belong to His Kingdom. I always like to put it this way: "I am just passing through."

Oh, don't get me wrong. I love America, but none of us who are believers should forget who is really in charge. Jesus says, "Whoever loves parents or children more than me, is not worthy of me." He says, "Whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Those who find their life will lose it and those who lose their life for my sake will find it." Of course this will bring division within families, friends, countries and the world. And your choice is?

By Rev. Mary Potter



Rev. Lynnette Sills, center, wants to hear from congregation members about faith formation programs and activities.

Faith formation, activities plans advance

Rev. Lynnette Sills began her Faith Formation discussions by reminding us of the Great Commission and our TPC Mission Statement.

Jesus' final instruction to His disciples told them to "go and make disciples of all nations." Our Mission Statement draws from that: "To be and make disciples of Jesus Christ, who love God and their neighbor."

Equipping ourselves to fulfill these assignments requires Christian education and faith formation.

Lynnette is our Parish Associate, but she's added the role of Interim Director of Children's Ministry since Amy McGrath left that post for other employment.

That title didn't really cover everything Amy did. She developed classes and activities for adults and whole families as well as children's programs.

Our church must have more than children's programs to meet our needs for Christian education and faith formation. So, Lynnette and Pastor Allan Purtil have been brainstorming together while Lynnette has engaged in conversations with the Session, Christian Growth Committee and members of the congregation.

Out of this, she will draft some plans, proposals and a calendar for the next few months. Some of what to expect includes:

- Special studies for adults and/or families, such as the study of the Old Testament book of Amos at 9:30 a.m. during each of the five Sundays of May. Allan and Lynnette are leading this.
- Summer activities, such as story time and play dates for children at Harmon Field (10 a.m. June 2, 16 and 30); a Twin Lakes outing for families (4-7:30 p.m. June 4); a middle school outing after church, 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. June 28); a field day and picnic on the church grounds (4:30-7:30 p.m. July 26); a

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back-to-school swim party in August, date to be determined; and a Forest City Owls baseball game, date to be determined.

- A one-day Vacation Bible School, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. June 22.
- A fall kick-off event in September.
- Significantly, a confirmation class for our older children starting in September. This could involve many adults as the participants learn about our church, our denomination and our faith. It could and should be a whole-church celebration as we welcome young people into full membership.
- Fall hikes and other outdoor activities for families while the weather is at its best.

Lynnette has posed several questions, developed by her and Allan, at the meetings she held with congregation members:

- What does Christian Education/Faith Formation look like now for you?
- How do you define Christian Education and Faith Formation?
- What do you want to learn about in your faith journey?
- What ethical and societal issues do you want to study and discuss related to faith and following Christ?
- Where is the potential at TPC for growth and development as disciples?
- What does TPC need going forward?
- What do you envision?
- What do you need personally?

You may not have attended her meetings, but it isn't too late to send your thoughts to Lynnette at lrj.sills52@gmail.com.

The Session will have decisions to make, not only about how it can support desired programs but what staffing and budget changes may be needed. Whatever staff we have, we will always rely on many volunteers to help guide children and lead other programs and activities. That is part of the work of the church as Jesus Himself instructed.



Pastor Allan Purtill began a study of the Old Testament book of Amos May 3. It will continue each Sunday in May at 9:30 a.m., with Rev. Lynnette Sills also leading. Please join!

Sabbatical committee welcomes questions

If you remember your college days or know anything about the academic life, then you may recall a certain professor's sabbatical – a time when he or she was not around campus for classes or conversation. It is traditionally a time for travel and research related to the professor's area of study. He may be working on a new publication, or she may be trying to unearth some bones in ancient Mesopotamia. It's a time away from



Gloria Underwood and Allan Purtil

meetings, from students, maybe from colleagues, from all those academic responsibilities that accumulate throughout an academic's career, some predictable, some not. We might say in today's lingo that it's a time for a "Reset."

Similarly, pastors may find themselves in need of just such a sabbatical, a break from writing sermons, from meetings, from the vicissitudes of congregational care. And at Tryon Presbyterian, one must include hurricanes, fires, pandemics and everything else that has already happened during Pastor Allan Purtil's six-and-a-half years of ministry here.

The Trumpet's February-March issue had an article on Presbytery's philosophy and policy about sabbaticals. This article is a little closer to home.

With his sabbatical scheduled for July through September, Allan was already looking forward to and eager to plan for the activities of the church during his absence. He approached me in January just as the dust was settling from the Advent-Christmas-Epiphany season and suggested that we form a Pastoral Sabbatical Committee for the purpose of guiding TPC through this period.

The committee is comprised of Susie Bellamy (Worship Committee), Jeff Carter (Personnel Committee), Kim McPherson (Church Administrator), Ed Harrelson (member-at-large), Jenny Purtil and me (Chair).

During the time we have worked with Allan and Jenny, we've seen their excitement grow as their ideas for his three months and her one-month sabbatical from her job as director of the Lanier Library solidify and take shape. The time off is well-deserved for both.

"Jenny and I believe that the sabbatical will give us needed space to reflect and enjoy some adventure," Allan says. "It's a generous gift that creates the space and time for quietude with God's love and each other. It's been a good and full six-and-a-half years of ministry, and we look forward to the years to come with renewed energy."

The committee has had three general goals.

The first has been to provide interim leadership from the pulpit and to manage pastoral care. Former Pastor Dave Hosick has graciously agreed to preach most Sundays and act as head of staff in Allan's absence. Parish Associate Lynnette Sills will step into the pulpit occasionally, work on congregational care and serve as acting

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church education leader.

Our second task was to organize and prepare for the ongoing activities within the church season to include an Elder Nominating Committee and someone in charge of Stewardship.

Our third challenge has been how best to inform the congregation and to educate them about the sabbatical process.

Our committee thought you may have questions. You can send those to me at gloria.u535@gmail.com, call or text me at 828-817-2623, or flag me down at church. You can always leave a note in the church office. Please submit your questions by May 24. Think of these questions as a way to help our church community understand the process and to make it easier for the transition for both Purtills.

By Gloria Underwood

Zeke Smith joins broadcast team

Zeke Smith, who is helping to broadcast and record our worship services, is no stranger to churches. His father, Lance, is a minister currently serving First Presbyterian in Forest City.

Rev. Smith was Christian Education and Youth Director and later Associate Pastor at Congregational United Church of Christ in Tryon before accepting a call in 2016 to serve as Pastor at Zwingli United Church of Christ in Monticello,

Wisconsin. He and his family returned to North Carolina in 2023.

UCC and Presbyterian ministers may serve in either denomination.

Zeke lives in Columbus and is about to earn an associate degree in broadcasting at Isothermal Community College – the same program completed by our Director of Digital Ministry Wes Elam. Zeke is working under Wes' supervision and allowing him to take some Sundays off.

“Wes is a really good teacher,” Zeke says. He also appreciates help provided by eighth-grader John McGrath. John has been learning from Wes for a couple of years now.

Zeke also records events at the Tryon International Equestrian Center and has worked with Tryon Little Theater. We're happy to have him with us on Sunday mornings.



Zeke Smith is completing coursework at Isothermal Community College.

Life takes Susan Speight to the mountaintop

She's run an ice cream store, directed a parade and been a single mother using food stamps to feed her daughter. Susan Speight's Life Story includes highs and lows, but it has brought her to happy places on White Oak Mountain and at Tryon Presbyterian Church.

Susan grew up in Knoxville, the great-granddaughter of prominent architect George Franklin Barber. She had a happy childhood, married her high school sweetheart and had a daughter, Julia. The family moved to Greenville, where Susan and a friend started a business giving birthday parties and putting on puppet shows and other entertainments. Then they opened an ice cream shop.

"It was a happy business, and we had the best of times," she told fellow TPC members for a Life Story presentation over lunch at Calvert's in Columbus April 22.

Things changed when her marriage broke up and she experienced a major bout of depression. She later discovered that mental health issues stemmed from a genetic predisposition that had been shared by other family members. She resolved to speak openly about her condition as an encouragement to others.

As TPC members know, Susan doesn't hide her light under bushels, so her talents were recognized in Greenville. She was asked to help run Christmas and Easter parades and to start a little festival called Fall for Greenville in 1982. It's a very big deal these days.

Although she was busy, something was missing, Susan said. She didn't go to church, but she called the priest at a friend's Episcopal church and asked if she could meet with him. It led to a commitment and enduring faith that carried her through some hard times to come.

Susan and Julia were living in Columbia when, at 14, Julia entered a drug rehabilitation program. Susan didn't have a job, and they relied on food stamps.

"I knew God could use all things for good," she said, but it took a while for her to find out how. Eventually, when she was nearly down to her last dollar, she was hired as a community coordinator for a school system and started a very successful mentoring program. God's plan became clear.

About then, "Charlie came into the picture." They met through the personal ads in the newspaper! Susan showed a whole page of ads claiming Charlie called all the women who advertised.

"I didn't," he said.

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Susan Speight shared her inspiring Life Story at Calvert's April 22.

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“You did,” she answered.

He had five children, and Susan said she didn’t want to get involved with him.

“Let’s go to lunch,” he suggested.

“I was not won over at all,” she said.

He took her to a movie, “Notting Hill,” which he thought was a great “chick flick,” Susan said.

“But the clincher was he took me dancing. I love to dance, and he was a great dancer.”

They were soon married and lived on Charlie’s farm near Columbia. When they looked for mountain property, they found Camp Skyuka with its cabin on a pond. It was a very happy gathering place for Charlie’s big family. A few years later, they sold the farm and settled full-time in the cabin, joining TPC in 2008.

Susan has become an expert on the history of Camp Skyuka and White Oak Mountain, writing two books: “As We Climb the Mountain Up the Winding Road” and “White Oak Mountain, North Carolina.”

Among the things she learned during her research was that her great-grandfather designed the Skyuka Hotel in the early 1900s. It’s gone, but Susan and Charlie live on the very same mountain more than a century later.

Next to tell his Life Story will be Art Brown on May 20. Contact Janet Gilchrist to reserve your place at Calvert’s (jsg138@hotmail.com).



Art Brown offered to send us his high school photo, but we insisted on using this one. We will enjoy his quick-witted sense of humor when we hear his Life Story May 20.

Women serve tea ‘steeped in hope’ June 7

The Presbyterian Women invite you to a delightful afternoon at “Steeped in Hope: High Tea” on Sunday, June 7, from 3 to 4:30 p.m. This special gathering offers a time of fellowship, refreshments and purpose as we come together in support of meaningful outreach.

Proceeds from the event will benefit the ongoing community ministries carried out by Presbyterian Women each year. These efforts support organizations such as Thermal Belt Outreach Ministry, Steps to HOPE, Black Mountain Home for Children, Youth and Families, Sunny View Elementary School, and the Guatemala Women’s Microloan Program.



The Presbyterian Women’s 2025 ‘high tea’ was a great success.

Space is limited to 60 guests. The cost is \$25 per person, and a table for six may be reserved for \$150. The event will be facilitated by the PW Co-Team with special adviser Cheryl Spencer.

Be sure to look for the sign-up and reserve your spot early. Join us as we share tea, strengthen community and make a difference – one cup of hope at a time.

Come for a sweet and smoky strawberry social and barbecue

A barbecue supper? A strawberry social?

You don’t have to choose one or the other. Strawberries and barbecue are both part of a sweet and smoky evening at Tryon Presbyterian Church Wednesday, May 13, starting at 5:30 p.m.

Your appetite and your sweet tooth will be more than satisfied.

The cost is \$10 for people older than 12 and free for kids 12 and younger. That’s a deal.

But there are no take-outs. This is a social event. Eat and hang out.

Sign up in the narthex Sunday. See you there!



Housing leader speaks at PW gathering

Tryon Presbyterian Women hosted a spring gathering on Saturday, May 2. They welcomed Meg Lebeck, CEO of the Housing Assistance Corporation, as featured speaker. The menu included a selection of sandwiches, a lovely punch, sweet breads and other delectable treats.



The [HAC](#), a nonprofit based in Hendersonville, focuses on critical home repair and the construction of new, affordable housing for underserved neighbors in Western North Carolina. It is now on the front lines of disaster recovery work. In January, it [hosted a visit to Polk County by Gov. Josh Stein](#), who toured a home reconstruction project managed by HAC. In her talk at TPC, Meg encouraged women to pass on information about people they know of who still have unattended home damage from Hurricane Helene. She said some people are reluctant to report their own needs, thinking others need help more urgently. But resources may be available for them, too, Meg said, including from Long-Term Recovery Groups (LTRG).

Tryon's PW pledged to give up to \$1,000 to the LTRG from tea fundraiser proceeds.

Meg began in her role on July 1, 2024, and Hurricane Helene struck less than three months later. During her tenure, the staff has grown from 12 to 30 employees, the budget has more than tripled and the organization's impact has greatly increased.

She has extensive experience in international nonprofit management, spanning more than 20 countries in 15 years. She holds a Master's degree in peace, conflict and development from the University of Bradford, England, is a Fulbright recipient and was a Rotary Peace Fellow.

She is a Rotarian, serves on the Brevard/Transylvania Chamber of Commerce Board, the Henderson County Chamber public policy committee, the WNC Advisory Board for Self-Help Credit Union, the editorial board of United Women in Faith, the Board of Ordained Ministry for The Western North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church, as board chair of Through the Trees, chair of the Henderson County Housing Coalition, vice chair of the Transylvania County LTRG and on the board of the Polk County LTRG. She lives in Transylvania County with her husband, two daughters and two dogs.

A Birthday Offering was collected and forwarded to the Creative Ministries Offering Committee, with funds distributed on behalf of the greater Presbyterian Women.

Housing Assistance Corporation CEO Meg Lebeck, above, and HAC staff, right.



Let's encourage our kids to share their voices

We know from hearing Jane Wilson's children's choir several times during worship that our kids have beautiful voices.



But their voices are worth listening to in other ways, as well. What do they think about their role in our church? What do they want to contribute? What do they want to learn?

And who are they? Where do they go to school? What activities do they enjoy? What pets do they care for? What do they see as their future?

As their older brothers and sisters in Christ, we should give them opportunities to express themselves and to participate more fully in the life of our church. We should get to know them better.

The Trumpet wants to do its part. So, we are proposing to share our pages with young people who are interested in producing their own content, or even a special edition, this summer – with our help. They could write stories, take

photos, draw pictures – whatever they'd like to share with their church family through this newsletter.

Parents who think their kids would like to give this a try can speak to me at church or send me an email (dougclark55@gmail.com) and we can begin planning.

Everyone, from our oldest to our youngest, has a voice. Let's encourage them to use it.

By Doug Clark, Trumpet editor

Our children's choir is taking a break for the summer, but some of the kids might be interested in working on their own special edition of the Tryon Trumpet.



What happens when Kim is out?

Church Administrator Kim McPherson is one of only two full-time employees of TPC. The other, of course, is Pastor Allan Purtill.

It only seems like Sam Gouge and Jane Wilson are here all the time. Well, maybe they are.

Anyway, what happens when Kim goes on vacation?

It takes several volunteers to keep the office running. We noted that, during the week of April 20-23, the following were answering phones and emails, greeting visitors and performing other tasks while Kim was away:

Karen McKinnon, MaryAnn Sloan, Gloria Underwood, Lynnette Sills, Jacque Headden, Lynette Fisher and Janet Gilchrist.



Lynette Fisher was one of the volunteers filling in for Kim McPherson.

Yes, the list included Lynnette Sills, our Parish Associate.

Thank you, all!

Some joked that a common answer to many requests and questions was, "Please wait until Kim gets back!"

Nevertheless, the church doors were open and everyone coming in was sure to be met by a friendly face.

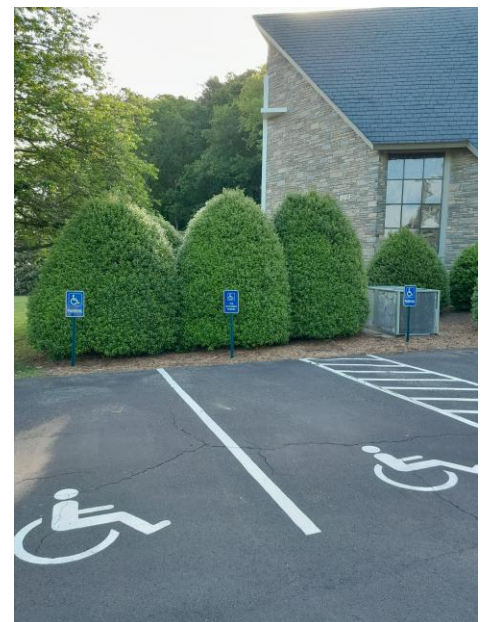
Please heed the parking signs

The Property Committee would like to remind all to park in designated (lined) areas only. This is to ensure the safety of other vehicles and to make allowance for emergency vehicles that may need to turn around in the east parking lot.

The van-accessible handicapped sign was changed to reflect the proper location for van parking.

For special events, when both the east and west parking areas are full, there is additional parking across Harmon Field Road in the gravel lot. Use caution and the crosswalk when using this lot.

Thank you!



TPC Library

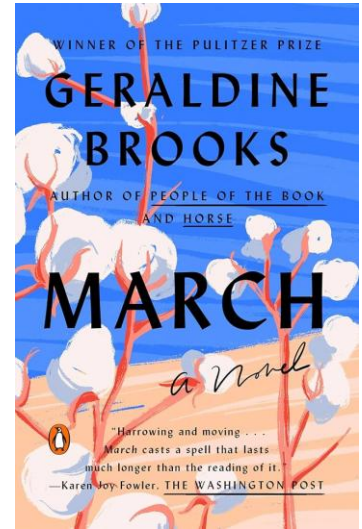
‘March’ fills in for the absence of the Little Women’s father

If you have read “Little Women” by Louisa May Alcott, did you ever wonder about Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy’s father? He is absent for most of the story.

Robert March was a chaplain in the Union army during the Civil War. He had been wealthy, but he gave so much money to friends that his family lived close to poverty and had to “make do” in mean times when he was away.

“March” is the name of the novel for which Geraldine Brooks received the Pulitzer Prize. It tells the story of Robert March’s experiences during the war that test his faith. The novel explains how he must reassemble his shattered mind and body and find a way to reconnect with his family.

This historical fiction portrays the complexity of war and a marriage strained by the demands of idealism and the temptations of forbidden attraction.



The book can be found in the TPC Library.

By Carolyn Thompson, TPC Library Director



Also displayed on TPC Library shelves are other Pulitzer Prize winners, left, and some of the books that have been reviewed in the Trumpet by church members, below. Everyone is welcome to borrow from the library’s wide selection of books.



Presbytery news

PWNC holds 146th stated meeting

A fare-thee-well, a welcome aboard and real-life tales of Good Samaritans made the trip in the rain to Montreat on April 28 well worth it for those attending.

Coordinating Ministry Chairman Ken Murchison shared the news that our long-time Associate for Youth Ministry Beth Gunn will leave the post this year. Ken thanked her for her service, and members of the Youth Ministry Team paid special tribute to Beth during its report.



Leading worship was the Rev. Amy Cantrell, the director of BeLoved Asheville. She shared her passion for aiding neighbors in need.

As a part of the Malawi Leadership Team report, the Presbytery gave the OK to add our name to the list of presbyteries concurring with three overtures to the General Assembly meeting this year. The overtures call for a review of the decision-making on restructuring of World Mission; a prohibition on non-disclosure covenants for PC(USA) employees; and a call for a new missiological statement for the denomination.

Following a sermon and examination, the Presbytery gave permission for the ordination of Sarah Dianne Jones. Certified as ready for a call by the Presbytery of Charlotte, Sarah has been called as pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Hendersonville.

We also welcomed into Presbytery membership the Rev. Craig M. Sumeay, who is part of a new program in Scotland training new church leaders; and the Rev. Anne Apple, from the Presbytery of Florida, joining as a member-at-large.

Follow our mission team in Malawi

The current trip to visit our partners in Malawi is coming to a close soon. Our team has been very busy while there. You can catch up with all the action by reading [Dispatches from Malawi](#), a collection of reports from members of the team along with a few photographs.



In and around Tryon Presbyterian



Clockwise from top left: Viola Meissner performed acolyte duties April 26; the Property Committee has installed changing tables in both the men's and women's restrooms off the narthex; Brian Bancroft works the serving table at the potluck lunch April 19; and, in the next two photos, diners enjoyed the food and fellowship at the potluck lunch.



Clockwise from top left:
Elizabeth Peek served as acolyte
May 3; Jane Grinde and Kim
McPherson following worship
May 3; Penny Padgett and
Bobby Silvers are ready to serve
the elements; Jane Wilson plays
the postlude following the
communion service May 3.



The Tryon Trumpet

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