

APRIL 2025

first press

A MOORESVILLE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN PUBLICATION



THIS MONTH: CELEBRATE EASTER WITH US AT FPC!

UPCOMING: GUEST SPEAKER, MISSION OPPORTUNITIES



PASTOR'S LETTER

Dear Church Family,

“...if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation is in vain and your faith is in vain.”

1 Corinthians 15:14

Dear Church Family,

As we rapidly approach Easter Sunday, please take note of the many different ministry opportunities and events available at the church. You can find many of them posted on our website as well as within this newsletter, including Maundy Thursday dinner/worship, Lenten service, prayer vigil, children's egg hunt, and of course Easter Sunday worship! Our desire is for you to have a meaningful experience as we celebrate the centerpiece of our Christian faith, the resurrection of Jesus!

Additionally, I would like for you to be aware of a unique experience that will be taking place at our church on Sunday, May 4th, at 5:30pm. We will have dinner followed by worship and a presentation by Emmanuel Abdullah Muhammed. Emmanuel was born into a royal family in Nigeria and grew up in a palace. He was a devout Muslim who was highly educated in Islam. He will share with us his conversion experience and how the Lord is presently using him to bring Jesus to some of the most dangerous areas in Northern Nigeria. The former president of Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, Dr. Dennis Hollinger, has graciously helped our church to make this connection and it will be a presentation that you will not want to miss.

It continues to be a blessing to serve alongside you in ministry!

Blessings in Christ,

Pastor Dave Rockness

Bio for Emmanuel Abdullah Muhammed



Emmanuel and Grace Muhammed

Executive Director of Hebron Home
<https://hebronhome.org/who-we-are/>

Emmanuel Muhammed was born into a royal Islamic family in Nigeria. He grew up in a palace with his father serving as Emir of an Emirate in Northern Nigerian. The family owned vast oil wells but also played influential leadership roles in the flourishing of Islam in their caliphate. Emmanuel himself had memorized the entire Koran by age 11.

As Crown Prince, Emmanuel was sent to the best universities in Cairo, Egypt earning two M.A.s in Islamic studies and eventually a Ph.D. in Islamic Law in Saudi Arabia. On the completion of his studies, Emmanuel was appointed to a professorship at the University of Medina in Saudi Arabia where many of his students were training to become Imams.

It was at this point that Emmanuel experienced several dreams with a “white figure” chiding him for “misleading my people,” and instructing him to purchase a Bible and read the Gospel of John. Through a series of miraculous events, Emmanuel decided to follow Jesus. This resulted in his torture and imprisonment, along with the loss of his academic position, extended family, personal wealth and future coronation.

Following Emmanuel’s escape from prison he met and married Grace, a Christian woman from Southern Nigeria. They fled to South Africa for a season where Muslims began coming to Emmanuel to hear his story. As an Islamic scholar, Emmanuel felt far less equipped to explain Christian Scripture and theology and eventually applied for a seminary scholarship to Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Boston, MA. Emmanuel studied for a Master of Divinity at GCTS while Grace earned a degree in Spiritual Formation.

Upon graduation, the Muhammed’s returned to Nigeria not knowing exactly how their future ministry might evolve. They have been overwhelmed by the response to their teaching ministry with study centers now established in Jos and in the capital city of Abuja. Most amazing has been the response to Emmanuel’s dangerous trips to Northern Nigeria where the Islamic terrorist group Boko Haram is active.

In just five years since their return, over 6,000 Muslims in Northern Nigeria have decided to follow Jesus with many having lost their homes, families, and employment as a result. Every year a heartbreaking number of new converts are also imprisoned and even martyred for their faith.

Emmanuel and Grace will be returning to the United States in Spring 2025 to visit friends and churches here. Emmanuel will be sharing his story and details about Hebron Home’s current ministry at FPC Mooresville on May 4th, 2025. This experience will include dinner at 5:30pm in the Fellowship Hall followed by a worship service in the sanctuary at 6:30pm.

STEWARDSHIP

Giving your time, your talents, and your tithes to God’s work...



PRAYER: *Lord, thank you for your perfect plan for the world and for me.*

It is Finished - Mark 15:33-39

And with Jesus’ last cry, redemptive history reached a watershed. Jesus said, “It is finished” (*John 19:20*). Jesus had fulfilled God’s plan that the Father had “purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment- to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ” (*Ephesians 1:9-10*). The essence and heart of

God’s purpose is revealed in the redemptive work of Christ. In his death Jesus became the great high priest, fulfilling all the requirements of the old law, interceding between God and humans “once and for all when he offered himself” (*Hebrews 7:27*).

Those who accept the gospel of forgiveness in faith receive the power to become not only God’s trustees but also his children. The motive for their action is grateful love; the more lovingly we know him who loved us and gave himself for us the more completely we give ourselves to him. And because genuine love is “not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth” (*1 John 3:18*), we shoulder the responsibilities of Christian stewardship.

CONGREGATIONAL CARE

Responding in Love: Caring Together

Is God placing someone on your heart who could use encouragement, a visit, or prayer? Sometimes needs arise within our church family that we might not know about unless someone speaks up. The Congregational Care Team is here to offer love and support.

If you have a need or someone you know does, please reach out. Drop a request in a prayer box (Main Sanctuary or coffee shop in 143). You can also contact Laura Wright at (714) 401-1076 or laurawright133311@gmail.com to share a need. We're here to care for one another, reflecting Christ's love.

Bringing Joy in Every Season: A Special Message from our Flower Team

April showers bring May flowers—but the FPC Congregational Care Flower Team shares love and encouragement through flowers all year long!

Do you have a heart for brightening someone's day? The Flower Team is looking for new members—and possibly a co-chair—to continue spreading kindness through God's handiwork (flowers)!

Since May 2022, our team has arranged and shared over 200 bouquets, bringing encouragement to those who received them. Now, we're looking for fresh hands and hearts to continue this uplifting work. If you enjoy arranging flowers or visiting those who could use a little extra kindness, this is a wonderful way to serve!

What's involved? Co-chairs spend about an hour a week creating small arrangements from the sanctuary flowers. Then, bouquets are delivered to those in need of cheer.

If you feel led to serve, we'd love to have you! Please reach out to June Robb at 704-526-6471 or junerobb2122@gmail.com.

Thank you for considering this special opportunity to share beauty, joy, and love throughout the year!

Easter Prayer Vigil

As we prepare to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we invite you to draw near to Him through an Easter Prayer Vigil. This 24-hour vigil begins at 8:00pm on Maundy Thursday (April 17th) and continues through noon on Good Friday (April 18th).

To participate, simply sign up for a one-hour prayer slot at a time that works best for you. You are welcome to pray from home or, if your chosen hour falls within church hours, feel free to pray at church if you prefer—whatever feels most comfortable.

Link to sign up for a prayer slot: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0A48A4A7292-55369677-easter>

This vigil provides a special opportunity to answer the relational call Jesus gave His disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane: to keep watch, to be present with Him in His suffering, and to align our hearts with God's will. It is a time to stand in expectant hope, trusting that even in the darkest moments, His redemptive plan is unfolding. May this vigil be a time of abiding in His love, remembering His sacrifice, and celebrating His victory.



MUSIC MINISTRY

TUESDAY, APRIL 15

Come enjoy a special Lenten recital with performances by David Hamilton, Greg Thompson, Robbie Pearson, and other special guests. The recital will begin at 1:30 in the sanctuary immediately following the Saints Alive luncheon. Please invite friends and family.

MAUNDY THURSDAY, APRIL 17

On Thursday, April 17 the chancel choir, orchestra, and Debra Hall Williams will present Michael John Trotta's *Seven Last Words* in the sanctuary at 7:00pm. This recent composition which premiered in 2016 has become a deeply powerful and meaningful work for Holy Week. Many of you will remember the meaningful performance last year on Maundy Thursday. Please plan to attend and invite friends. Below is a description of the work from the publisher...

Haunting and evocative, the work displays a superb sense of form and architecture, poignantly distilling the most intimate and universal moments of human emotion. From the tender mercy of "Father, Forgive Them" (1) to the hopefulness of the promise of "Today You Will Be With Me" (2), the work unfolds to reveal a complex tapestry of states of emotion. It builds from the compassion of "Behold, Your Son" (3) and the yearning of "I Thirst" (4), to the despair of "My God Why Have You Abandoned Me?" (5), the acceptance of "Into Your Hands I Surrender" (6), and finally the resignation of "It is Finished" (7). This setting uses various interpolations of biblical and liturgical texts (e.g. Kyrie, "Truly This Man Was the Son of God," "All of the Gates Were Opened Wide") as commentary on, and in dialogue with, the words of Christ, further expanding the story and the reaction of those witnesses to the Passion.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30

Our 4th-12th graders will be performing a musical, *Word Power* on Wednesday, April 30 at 6:30pm in the 143 worship space. This performance will mark our last Wednesday Night Together and will be preceded by our normal meal at 5:30 in the Fellowship Hall. Everyone is invited to this brief (40 minute) musical performance. The children have learned music, choreography, acting, and basic stage production, but most importantly according to the Bible how their words have power for good or evil.

It's Presentation Day at school, and Nellie is petrified to speak. The class has been studying what the Bible says about the power of our words. It's time for these classroom characters to share what they've learned. Each "Student Presentation" is based on their assigned scripture verse. How will Nellie navigate her fear, make decisions about confidentiality, and discover support from an unlikely ally?

MISSIONS

Chili Cook Off

The Annual FPC Chili Cookoff was held on February 23rd, 2025. We had an incredible turnout for the event with a record setting 25 chili entries. The total amount raised at the event was \$5,385.25. Proceeds will be distributed equally between the Mooresville Area Bible Teachers Association (local) and Filter of Hope (abroad). A special thanks to our esteemed judges Fred Coates, Dan Davidson, Trenton Newell and Ian Coates as well as the countless

volunteers who helped make the event a huge success. – The Missions Committee Congratulations to our Winners!

Judges Favorite Chili

1st Place - Justin Foulke's Tropical Chili

2nd Place – Ken & Cameron Stissel's Traditional Chili

3rd Place – Troop 1166's Camp Fire Chili

People's Choice

1st Place – Phoebe's Phantastic Chili by Phoebe Coates

2nd Place – Spicy Buck Venison Chili by John Robinson and Gavin Barber

3rd Place – Fire House Chili by Daniel Fitzpatrick

May 3, 2025 - Western North Carolina Mission Trip

Hello First Presbyterian family,

We are targeting May 3, for a mission trip to assist with the rebuilding of a house in the Old Fort area of North Carolina. As the date gets closer more details will be available, however at present it is anticipated we will possibly be painting or working on raising walls. SOS Group NC is who we will be working with. If you are interested in being part of the team, please let me know, Mark Ramsey, at ramseymt4@gmail.com. I look forward to working with everyone.

Best regards,
Mark Ramsey

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

April - This month we have so many wonderful things going on! We are in our last month of WNT with a drama performance by our 4th-12th graders on April 30th. We hope you will join us for dinner at 5:30pm followed by the worship night of the children's performance.

There are more things going on you won't want to miss so be sure to check out what's happening this month.

What's Happening This Month:

1. **April 7th - VBS sign up for campers opens.** All campers must be 4 years old on or before July 13th 2025. You can register your campers on our website <https://mooresvillefpc.org/>

2. **April 13th - Palm Sunday-** our Kingdom Kids will be joined by our preschoolers on Palm Sunday to sing at both the 10am and 11:15 service. We ask children to arrive by 9:45 so they have time to check in and get to their classes before we walk the children over to the contemporary service. The children will process in waving palm branches



and singing a beautiful song to begin both worship services. Teachers will take the children to the sanctuary to open the 11:15 service, then children will be brought to the parlor to be dismissed. If you have any questions please feel free to reach out melissaf@mooresvillefpc.org

3. April 17 - Maundy Thursday service- We will not have WNT on the 16th. Instead we are holding our Maundy Thursday service. Dinner will be at 5:30pm and the service will begin at 7pm. The service is about an hour long. Child care will be provided for children under 8 years old. Children 8 and older are invited to join the service with their parents. This service is a more somber, introspective and meaningful service than our regular WNT worship nights.

4. April 19 - Family Easter Celebration Join us from 9:30am - 11:00am for a family fun event! **Our 1 - 4 year olds** will be on the playground for an egg hunt, bubbles, face painting, and sidewalk chalk! Our **Kinder - 5th graders** will have games, jelly bean guess, face painting and more on the field behind the playground. *Please RSVP <https://mooresvillefpc.org/> before April 10th so that we can ensure we have enough eggs for everyone!*

5. April 20th - Easter Sunday- We will have Sunday School for all ages on Easter Sunday at our 10am Sunday School hour. Childcare will be available during the 11:15am service as well.

SUMMER HELP NEEDED:

We have over 40 faithful volunteers who serve from August - May. We are seeking volunteers to serve this summer in either June or July so that our regular Sunday school teachers can take a season to rest and come back in August recharged and excited to serve another year.

If you are willing to serve and would like more information on our current needs please reach out to Melissa Foulke melissaf@mooresvillefpc.org or to our nursery coordinator Jessica Stanley Jstanley1215@gmail.com.

Check in for Nursery - Highschool

Just a reminder, all children going to a Sunday School class, WNT or Youth group event should be checking in at our check in station.

This system offers another level of security to all of our events as well as allows us the opportunity to reach out to new families and students. We now have an easier way to reach out to those who haven't been attending for a few weeks, and we have the



ability to wish every child in our care a very happy and wonderful birthday too.

Once you have checked in your children please take them to their meeting area or classroom. The teachers are eager to get to know you as a family.

SUNDAY MORNINGS

Nursery - Preschool - 2nd floor

0 - 23 months - Nursery room

Toddlers (children who are two and will turn 3 by 8/31/25) Fish room

Preschool (children who are 3 or 4 and will turn 4 or 5 by 8/31/25) Duck Room

Kingdom Kids (Kinder - 5th grade)

Drop off - Fellowship Hall

Pick up - 3rd floor



Children's Sunday School Hour: 10am - 11am

Nursery - preschool

We are working on implementing more safety protocols for pick up. Please be sure to see your child's teacher when you drop off in the classroom for more information. Our goal is always to keep the children as safe as possible.

We love the playground! We have a great time getting outside, running, playing and building friendships. Please know that we aim to go outside weekly weather permitting. As it is getting colder out in the mornings, please bring a coat so the children can continue to go outside for a short while.

Toddlers and preschoolers will participate in a time of music/worship as well as in a bible lesson, activity and a visit to the playground if the weather is cooperative. We will provide a light snack.



Infants - young 2's will be in our infant room playing and being cared for by some wonderful volunteers. They will be provided a snack of cheerios and water or whatever you bring in their cup. *Please bring a cup for them if you are able, we have labels here for you to use to label your child's cup.*

Check in will begin at 9:45 after the Sunday School teachers have prayed together. Please wait for the check in time to begin so that our teachers can pray and get to their classes before you and your children do.

Elementary school classes will use the following schedule: 10:00 Kingdom Kids meet in Fellowship Hall for a time of worship, scripture memorization, games and more. After we conclude our large group time together, the teachers will guide their classes to the third floor for their age group bible lesson.

Any children who have not been picked up by 11:10 am will be brought to the second floor childcare room (Duck room) so that our teachers can get to church on time.

Classrooms and Teachers: Sunday Mornings

K-1 - Room 324

Sunday Teachers: Andrea Abele, Lucy Hastings, Rachel van Harn, Elizabeth Fitzpatrick

2-3 - Room 322

Sunday Teachers: Rick and Denise Tidball, Kathryn Coates, Bill Denis

4-5 - Room 309

Sunday Teachers: Jodi Rockness, Camryn Stissel, Kelly Coyle, Karli Rockness

WNT

WNT Schedule:

5pm - 5:30pm Music Ages 5 year old - 3rd grade will meet in the choir room. Ages 4th grade through High School will meet in 143.

5:30pm - 6:15pm we will have dinner in Fellowship Hall

6:20pm - 7:15pm Classes will be held for all ages.

More information on children's ministry classes and teachers is below.

Childcare for infants - 2 year olds will be in our fish room on the second floor. Childcare for our 3-5 year olds will be in our duck room on the second floor.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN:

Kinder-2nd grade will meet in room 324. Their teachers are Jackie Justice and Nancy Davidson

3rd grade-5th grade will meet in room 309. Their teachers are Katherine Potts and Nathan Glad.

WNT will begin a new curriculum called "The Biggest Story". You will be getting a weekly email with information on the weeks lesson including the video of the week that you can watch together as a family if you choose to. There are also bible memory cards to purchase if you would like - I will let you know what is the card of the week as well.

SAINTS ALIVE

On the following page is the schedule for our next several gatherings. We hope you will join us!

Lunch will be held in the Fellowship Hall starting at 12:30 pm. Cost is \$10 per person.

You can RSVP to the church office, on the church website or to Melissa Foulke

melissaf@mooresvillefpc.org





Saints Alive

Tuesday March 18 12:30 - 1:30
Meredith Whitlow (the mom from Amahl) will be joining us to share more about how she uses music as therapy.

Tuesday April 15 12:30 - 2:30
Lenten Service in Sanctuary following Lunch

Tuesday May 20
Bob Amon

PRESCHOOL

Spring Music is in the Air...

Your children are in full bloom during our Music classes. I am impressed with how well they have been learning all our songs. Our Spring Sing program is scheduled for April 3rd and 4th at 9:15am in the Fellowship Hall. Doors open at 8:40am. Mark your calendars now. You won't want to miss it!



Spring Pictures

Our Picture Days are April 10th and 11th. Your child's assigned day for his or her pictures to be taken will be sent home at the end of March. All children moving on to kindergarten next year will also have their pictures taken in their graduation cap and gown. Siblings will be photographed together and class pictures will be taken as well. Say cheese!



Easter Egg Hunts

Our Egg Hunts are scheduled for April 16th and 17th. Parents are welcome to join us for the Egg Hunts. Times will be announced closer to the date.



Mark Your Calendars:

April 3 & 4: Spring Sing 9:15
April 10 & 11: School Pictures
April 16 & 17: Easter Egg Hunts and Class Parties
April 18-21: Preschool Closed – Easter Break
April 29: Last Day for Tuesday Lunch Bunch
May 7: Make up Day and Last Day for Wednesday Lunch Bunch

APRIL 2025

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

		1 6:00pm Handbells Rehearsal 6:30pm Cub Scouts	2 Preschool Spring Sing 1:30pm Prayer Meeting 5:30pm WNT 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal
New Members Sunday 8:30am Contemporary Worship 10:00am Sunday School 10:00am Contemporary Worship 11:15am Traditional Worship 5:00pm MS Refresh Youth 7:00pm HS Refresh Youth	9:30am Preschool Chapel 7:00pm Scouts BSA Troop 1166-G 7:00pm Scouts BSA Troop 166-B	9:30am Preschool Chapel 10:00am Circle 4 Meeting 12:30pm Circle 5 Meeting 6:00pm Circle 3 Meeting 6:00pm Handbells Rehearsal 6:30pm Cub Scouts	1:30pm Prayer Meeting 5:30pm WNT 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal
Palm Sunday 8:30am Contemporary Worship 10:00am Sunday School 10:00am Contemporary Worship 11:15am Traditional Worship 2:00pm Prayer Shawl Team 3:30pm Confirmation 5:00pm MS Refresh Youth 6:00pm Music & Worship Committee 7:00pm Finance Committee 7:00pm HS Refresh Youth	2:00pm Circle 1 7:00pm Personnel Committee 7:00pm Scouts BSA Troop 1166-G 7:00pm Scouts BSA Troop 166-B	12:30pm Saints Alive Luncheon 1:30pm Lenten Service 6:00pm Handbells Rehearsal	Preschool Easter Egg hunts/Easter parties 1:30pm Prayer Meeting 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal
Easter Sunday 8:30am Contemporary Worship 10:00am Sunday School 10:00am Contemporary Worship 11:15am Traditional Worship	Easter Monday Office and Preschool Closed- Easter Break 7:00pm Scouts BSA Troop 1166-G 7:00pm Scouts BSA Troop 166-B	6:00pm Handbells Rehearsal	1:30pm Prayer Meeting 5:30pm WNT 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal
8:30am Contemporary Worship 10:00am Sunday School 10:00am Contemporary Worship 11:15am Traditional Worship 5:00pm MS Refresh Youth 6:30pm Session Meeting 7:00pm HS Refresh Youth	7:00pm Scouts BSA Troop 1166-G 7:00pm Scouts BSA Troop 166-B	6:00pm Handbells Rehearsal	1:30pm Prayer Meeting 5:30pm WNT 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal

CALENDAR

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

3	Preschool Spring Sing 7:00pm Praise Team Rehearsal	4	Preschool Spring Sing	5	7:15am Men's Bible Study 7:15am Women's Bible Study
10	Preschool Picture Day 7:00pm Praise Team Rehearsal	11	Preschool Picture Day 6:00pm Confirmation Retreat	12	7:15am Men's Bible Study
17	5:30pm Maundy Thursday Dinner 7:00pm Maundy Thursday Special Music Worship Service 7:00pm Praise Team Rehearsal	18	Good Friday Preschool Closed- Easter Break	19	Family Easter Celebration 7:15am Men's Bible Study
24	7:00pm Praise Team Rehearsal	25		26	7:15am Men's Bible Study 7:15am Women's Bible Study

BIRTHDAYS

4/1- Sadie Crymes, Daniel Newell, Andrew Washburn
4/2- Tenku Mandi
4/3- Carol McClure, Mark Ramsey
4/4- Campbell Schaen
4/5- Mackenzie Crawley
4/7- Jim Davidson, Lucy Hastings, Hallie Omohundro, Andy Poore, John Streb
4/8- Donna Brawley, Jill Holman, Anna Miller
4/10- Brandon Abernathy, Hannah Cole, Joseph Irwin, Jeffrey Padgett
4/11- Dawn Chappell
4/12- Bill Abele, Landon Mauney, Rick Omohundro, Karen Shore
4/14- Eva Brooks, Pete Lester, Cate Vaughan
4/16- Judy Daniel, Michael Hodge, Scott Mauney, Cassandra Rockness
4/17- Tway Barrett, Carson Lester
4/19- Grace Stanley
4/20- Will Barrett
4/21- Stephen Garvin
4/22- Jason Blair, Erik Micklow, Karli Rockness
4/23- Brent Curtis, Sr., John Daniel, Anna Rhyne
4/24- George Brawley, Teresa moore, Brett Myers
4/25- Samuel Creech
4/26- Suzanne Bailie
4/27- Kevin Cox
4/29- Bill Brawley
4/30- James Miller

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mooresvillefpc@groups.facebook.com

If you would like to be added to or deleted from
our mailing list, please send an email to
office@mooresvillefpc.org or call 704-664-5275

8:30 am Contemporary Worship
10:00 am Contemporary Worship
10:00 am Sunday School
11:15 am Traditional Worship

April 2025



ECO

A Covenant Order
of Evangelical
Presbyterians