



### *From the Pastor:*

Dear Church Family,

I hope this letter finds you well - happy, holy, and healthy! Many of you have been in pain, sick, injured or are recovering from surgery. This recent period of time has been difficult for many of you! May the Lord grant you patience, endurance, perseverance, health, restoration, peace and so much more. Don't lose heart and please, call on your church for prayer, meals or any need that you may have.

Let's be in prayer for our state and nation this week. This time of year brings the changing of the guard - a new governor for our state and a new president for our nation. We thank God that all those who govern are given to us by God. No ruler rules apart from the sovereign hand of King Jesus (Romans 13/1 Peter 2) and our confidence is ultimately in Him. Remember that we are to pray for our rulers and give them all honor that is due them. Let's be model Christians and good citizens!

How great a blessing it was this past Sunday to install Larry Isley as Deacon in our church. We have already put him to work with a Joint Officer Meeting last week and the Deacons met last night. Please pray for Glenn, Larry and Stephen as they serve our congregation. So much must fall into place to make the life of the church possible - give them your prayers and offer your assistance.

Our church was greatly blessed in 2016 with a healthy financial status. As a congregation, you gave \$ 244,972.30 in tithes and offerings. Our budget called for \$ 245,457.19 in expenses and our actual expenses were \$ 241,620.14. During the year we also drew down our reserves by \$ 11,335.42 to pay for two new HVAC systems which cost \$ 19,265.00.

Your officers are grateful to you for your engagement in the life of the church - your participation in morning and evening service, attendance at Sunday School and other group studies & gatherings, workday participation, service on ministry teams and your faithful financial stewardship. Ministry at First ARP Church would not be a success without your willingness to serve the Lord in these many ways. Thank you!

Since our cancellation of worship on January 8, we postponed our January 15 observance of Sanctity of Human Life Sunday until this week, January 22. Our denomination, as well as many other evangelical churches in our nation take a Sunday each year near the anniversary of Roe V. Wade, the Supreme Court decision to disallow many restrictions on abortion, to think on the issue of the Sanctity of Human life. We recognize that God creates life, sustains life, has a purpose for every life and he alone has the right to take life.

The issue of human life is much broader than the abortion issue. It can include war, murder, euthanasia (mercy killing/end of life), advanced directives, living wills - and on and on.

On Sunday, January 22, we will consider the matter of old age from the life of Abraham. God promised him life, offspring, an inheritance of land and also that he will live a full life, not dying until God had blessed him in every way he promised. I believe we will all find this subject helpful as we seek to gain perspective on the wonderful blessing of life - even life to old age.

In the next Sundays to follow, since we have completed our series in the Epistle to the Hebrews, we will take a up a study on the marching orders of the church as we consider our main ministry focus areas: worship, discipleship, community, mercy and stewardship. I pray that these will remind us of our Christian duties, inspire us to greater service and give our church a healthy perspective about why we exist and how we can carry on for the second 50 years of this church's history.

May the Lord bless you until we see one another again...on the Lord's Day!

## January/February ARP Magazine

You can find the latest ARP magazine here:  
<http://www.omagdigital.com/publication/?i=369130>

## 2017 OFFERING ENVELOPES

Please be sure to pick up your offering envelopes for 2017 from the piano entrance to the Sanctuary.

**First Presbytery** meets on Tuesday, January 24 at 10 AM at New Sterling Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church in Statesville, NC. Pray for Pastor Crofts and Jay Snow as they represent our congregation. If you are interested in attending as a guest, please come along! Our church will be hosting the Presbytery on April 11.

**Fifth Sunday Hymn Sing and Social** will be Sunday, January 29 at 6 PM. We're having supper together and a sign-up sheet is in the Fellowship Hall for crockpots of chili, tortilla chips, cornbread, cheddar cheese, sour cream/yogurt, guacamole, brownies with ice cream! Please make plans to come sing, eat and enjoy one another's company. Bring a friend or family member with you!

**Handbell Rehearsals** will resume on Wednesday, February 1.

**Men's Lunch** will next meet on Monday, February 6 at Noon at Southbound Sandwich Works and the next **Men's Evening Gathering** will be February 20 at 7 PM at Panera Bread.

**Ladies Tuesday Evening Book Study.** Our Ladies' book study of Melissa Krueger's *Envy of Eve* will begin with a study/discussion of Chapter 1 on Tuesday, February 7 at 7 PM in the Hospitality Room. This study is for ladies of all ages and will be taught by Pastor Crofts. Please let him know if you need a copy of the book.

**The Session** will next meet on Monday, February 13 at 7 PM.

**Congregational Luncheon** will be held on Sunday, February 19 after Worship. 19 Connie Bennett will be giving a report on her Mission Trip to Trinidad. The Church will provide the meal of spaghetti, meatballs, salad, and bread. The Congregation is requested to bring desserts.

## FEBRUARY

### BIRTHDAYS

Sarah Ickes	2/1
Don Childrey	2/2
Dylan Jones	2/2
Harold Boswell	2/4
Janice Richardson	2/4
John Robinson	2/7
Stephanie Dobbins	2/9
George McKinney	2/10
Margaret Owens	2/10
Abigail Newton	2/13
Jan Burwell	2/15
Karen Hoke	2/17
Lynn Limon	2/18
Al Wright	2/18
Alex Jones	2/22
John Greeson	2/23
Karen Jones	2/27
Jim Christopher	2/28

### ANNIVERSARIES

John & Cathy Young (38)	2/3
Stephen & Ann Dobbins (23)	2/12
Ossie & Jennifer Spaulding (21)	2/14
Michael & Mary Peppo (25)	2/21

## First ARP Calendar of Events

### January

22 Sanctity of Life Sunday  
\* Young at Heart Luncheon resumes in March  
24 First Presbytery Meeting  
25 Ladies Bible Study - 11 AM  
29 Fifth Sunday Hymn Sing and Social - 6 PM  
30 Burlington Woman's Club - Fellowship Hall

### February

1 Ladies Bible Study - 11 AM  
1 Handbell Rehearsal Resumes  
5 Lord's Supper  
6 Men's Lunch  
7 Women's Envy of Eve Book Study - 7 PM  
8 Ladies Bible Study - 11 AM  
13 Stated Session Meeting  
15 Ladies Bible Study - 11 AM  
19 Congregational Luncheon & Short-Term Missions Report  
20 Men's Gathering - 7 PM  
\* Young at Heart Luncheon resumes in March  
22 Ladies Bible Study - 11 AM

### Nursery:

Jan 22: Macon Baird and Laurene Howington  
Jan 29:

### Counter:

Jan 22: Ferald Mann  
Feb 5: Larry Isley

### Deacon Duty:

Jan 22: Larry Isley  
Jan 29: Stephen Robinson

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