

# THE EXTENDED FAMILY

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[www.warrenwilsonchurch.org](http://www.warrenwilsonchurch.org)

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January/February 2023

## *Steve's Slant*

With the calendar about to turn from January to February, it is once again time, per my long-time custom, to use this space to address the question: What is the State of our Union?

Church professionals use a variety of quantitative measures to assess the health and vitality of a given congregation. Church attendance and church finances are the two most common metrics. We'll get to those in a moment. (Generally speaking, the news is encouraging!)

But, first, my overall take of this past year is centered around several highlights. The ability to gather together in person again for worship and fellowship events was easily the overarching highlight of the year.

With that, we enjoyed several especially memorable events:

- Pentecost Sunday: led by the youth under Sarah Grace's direction, this was a truly energizing service, one in which it was easy to sense the presence of the Holy Spirit!
- Thanksgiving. The highlight here is two-fold:
  - The Farm Crew (with help and support from several other crews) once again blessed us with a beautiful Harvest display.
  - After a two year hiatus, our community-wide Thanksgiving feast was a rousing success, well attended by members of both the church and college communities
- Christmas. Again, two highlights:
  - Cookies and Carols was a wonderful event; like our Thanksgiving feast, it was well-attended by member of both communities: church and college.
  - Our Christmas Eve Candlelight Creche Service was new for us, but I thought it was sweet, and lovely, and especially touching, given that it was lead in large part by our children and youth.
- We have also been seeing more students attending our worship services and our fellowship events this year, which was and is a trend and a highlight I did not see coming at the start of the academic year.

Now, a word about those metrics: With regard to both our attendance on Sunday morning, and our overall financial picture, I think it's fair to say that our congregation is stable.

In-person church attendance is down nation-wide compared to pre-pandemic levels. This includes our congregation. Anecdotally, I would say that, on average, our attendance is down roughly ten percent compared to where it was at this time in 2020, before we suspended in-person worship.

But that's not the full story. It's also true that, every week, the livestream of our service is viewed anywhere between fifteen and fifty times, with an overall average somewhere around twenty times.

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**January/February Birthdays!**

Sarah Anne Eller	Jan. 5	Sandee Butterworth	Jan.7
Jamie Dale	Jan. 12	Carolynne Cowal	Jan. 15
Robyn Castellani	Jan. 15	Mary Kells	Jan. 16
Corise Gambrell	Jan. 24	Rachel Sparling	Jan. 25
Elijah Bradley	Jan. 26	Cadence Cowal	Jan. 30
Diana Sanderson	Feb. 1	Jack Ballard	Feb. 9
Clotilde Guisasola	Feb. 11	Karen Crusier	Feb. 12
Brownie Newman	Feb. 16	Edythe Wiener	Feb. 19
Milt Butterworth	Feb. 22	Burnace Roberts	Feb. 24



The Warren Wilson Book Group will meet at noon on Thursday, February 9. Bring your own lunch and enjoy some fellowship from 12-12:30. At 12:30 Kathryn will lead our discussion of Horse by Geraldine Brooks. New members are always welcome!

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**OUR HEALING PRAYERS GO OUT TO:**

Lee Dugger; Walt Roberts, Fran & Burnace’s son; Houston Huggins, Beth Meriwether’s brother; Bob & Janice Kesterson, Mark Meriwether’s aunt and uncle; Kip Smith, Tacci’s father; Pat Crumpler; Shane Reece, Nancy Garrison’s son; Pat Wilson’s son, Kell; Fred Porter & Fred Harvey, the Griswold’s brothers-in-law; Bartley and Phyllis Spencer, Sandy Brauer’s brother and sister in law; Erika Lytle; Jackie Ligon Cole; Rick Garrison; Fran Roberts’ sister-in-law, Linda Briggs; Flo Bishop; Jon Hettrick and his family; Marjorie Hettrick; Kim Reece, daughter of Nancy and Rick Garrison.



***A new look for the newsletter***

WWPC’s Communications Team is currently working on updating our newsletter format. Over the next few months, you will notice more colorful, vibrant additions, new articles, and member interviews.

Would you be interested in contributing an article? Interviewing a fellow member? If so, contact the church office at 298-9092 or [deagle@warren-wilson.edu](mailto:deagle@warren-wilson.edu)



Gratitude and Congratulations! The Stewardship Team began its planning back in the early fall and throughout the final months of 2022 our congregation responded.

We are grateful for that response! Our original challenge goal for pledges was \$216,295, and we came very close. The final number that made it into our budget for 2023 commitments was \$209,215.00.

Thank you, Thank you, Thank you! It's been a challenging few years, and the Warren Wilson congregation has come through again. This is particularly helpful for the Administration Team as they keep us within our targets throughout the year.

There are so many ways to participate in the life of our church - we appreciate all who tune in on-line Sunday mornings, those who sing - whether in the choir loft or pew, those who lead, those who offer a hug or smile, those who teach, those who feed, those who read liturgies. We give thanks for our congregation and all the ways that it lives our calling to be the hands and feet of Christ in the community.

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### *Steve's Slant continued...*

If you assume two viewers per viewing (or even, on average, 1.5), that total adds significantly to the number of people who are attending, or tuning into, our worship services every week.

So, overall, two points to make about our worship attendance:

One, our livestream equipment was an important and wise investment.

Two, taking in-person attendance and online viewing together, our attendance is actually surprisingly robust. I believe this is especially true compared to other churches of our size.

Two other brief points on the financial side of the ledger:

One, we finished the year in the black. This was partly due to a significant cost-savings from not hiring nursery workers in 2022. But, still, in a time when so many churches experienced substantial post-covid budget shortfalls, it's an encouraging achievement.

Two, our operating budget for 2023 includes a 3.5% raise for our staff, another encouraging achievement – and especially encouraging for our staff!

So, thanks to you, the congregation, for your ongoing generosity, and to our finance team for all their conscientious work in stewarding our church's resources. Responding to those losses has required a rather substantial outlay of my own time, energy and focus, which I was not expecting.

But as I have noted before, these vacancies also provide us with an opportunity to think creatively about how we wish to fill those positions, and what the best staffing configuration is for us, moving forward.

Finally, looking at the year ahead, and as I noted at our congregational meeting, I can see us becoming more of a campus church, attracting not just more students to our services and programs but perhaps some new young families, staff and faculty members who live on campus.

My hope is that we will think about this possibility as we conduct our searches to fill our staffing vacancies.

I don't know what that might mean, but it's a question I hope we'll ponder together as this still-relatively new year unfolds.

Fellow church members,

it's hard to believe it's been a year since Farkhunda and Elham arrived in Asheville. Since today, Feb. 1, marks the formal end of our Circle of Welcome for Farkhunda & Elham, I and Vicki thought we'd do a final update.

Farkhunda and Elham split up in November to live separately because Farkhunda was unable to take sole responsibility for Elham. So the Buncombe Co. Dept. of Social Services got a court order to put Elham in foster care.

After a long stay with Don and Vicki, I'm pleased to report that, today, Elham moves into his new, more permanent home, at the Black Mountain Home for Children. He'll have a sense of community there with the other children and will receive the support and services he will need to mature into a young man prepared to go out on his own, as a young adult.

In the meantime, he's in 6th grade at Owen Middle, and in the band. He's doing well in his classes, an impressive achievement, considering he had some catching up to do.

Farkhunda moved out of Hope for Tomorrow in mid-December to stay with church member Rachel Sparling and her husband Mark for about three weeks.

In early January she moved to Transformation Village, a transitional housing program of Asheville Buncombe County Christian Ministries (ABCCM). It's in south Asheville not far from I-26 & Brevard Road.

She restarted English classes at AB Tech and seems quite happy. She is also learning to drive. We heard from Rachel that she has found a job on the weekends (Friday-Sunday), but we haven't heard what it is. She's also still looking for a second job in the afternoons-evenings after classes at AB Tech.

She and Elham stay in regular touch, and both seem happier to be living apart.

It has been an eventful time. For two young people with a lot of growing to do, they have made remarkable strides toward transitioning to this new country. And their future is very bright. They are both quick to learn, and quite persistent in pursuing their goals.

Vicki & I cannot express enough our deep appreciation for all that a whole bunch of people did with and for them over their first year in Asheville. If our numbers are close, we think at least 23 individuals provided some level of help. That is a significant percentage of our membership. We are so grateful. Together we have done a good job with them.

Many thanks.

Vicki Collins & Jamie Dale



The Presbytery of Western NC is once again offering the yearly Lenten Spirituality Retreat This year it will be held at William Black Lodge in Montreat. For details about the cost, location, or schedule check the flyer below. It will be led by Donna Chase, Director of Spiritual Formation at 1st Presbyterian of Greensboro. Each day allows for learning, fellowship and prayer so that you return home relaxed and rejuvenated. Contact Sandy Brauer (828-803-4718) for questions or help getting registered.

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### **Welcome our new interim Music Director!**

Frank Woodhouse Boles has been an active church musician in Indianapolis for over 43 years. Mr. Boles has held positions at St. Paul's Episcopal Church where he established an intergenerational choral program for trained boys and girls with adult singers. St. Paul's Choir School was established for young singers including a Choral Scholar Program which provides scholarships for private instrumental lessons for the choristers. Frank completed his time in Indianapolis as Organist & Director of Music at All Saints Episcopal Church. As a composer, conductor, and organist, Frank enjoys all facets of the sacred music profession. Frank has been active as a guest conductor and clinician for various choir festivals including the American Guild of Organists, RSCM – America, and The Association of Anglican Musicians. A native of Jonesville, North Carolina, Mr. Boles earned a BA in Organ and Church Music at Pfeiffer College, *cum laude*, and a Masters of Music Degree *with High Distinction* in Organ and Church Music at Westminster Choir College.

In June 2022, Frank and his spouse, Harry Mamlin, relocated to Swannanoa, NC with their two dachshunds, Lily and Lester. While both are retired, they continue to be active in church music and public education.

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### **SVMLK Prayer Gathering for Feb. 4, 2023, 9 am, Black Mt. Presbyterian Church**

Plan to join the community to honor Dr. Martin Luther King's values at our Prayer Gathering on Feb. 4, 2023 at 9 a.m. The Prayer Gathering will take place at Black Mountain Presbyterian Church, 117 Montreat Road.

The speaker is Rev. Scott Burgess. Following the program is a continental breakfast and a participant involved activity.

Ticket sales, Patron donations and Ad sales fund the renewable scholarships awarded to Owen High Graduates and Community High School graduates. Visit our website, [svmlk.org](http://svmlk.org) to purchase a ticket, make a donation or purchase an ad or honor a loved one. Tickets can also be purchased at the door

The Red House has partnered with us with their art show, "Minds and Hearts". The show runs through March 13th. A percentage of the art sales will be donated to the SVMLK scholarship fund.

Contact Sheila Showers, SVMLK President [clay4me2@bellsouth.net](mailto:clay4me2@bellsouth.net) or Diane Hutchins, Secretary [dmh1211@aol.com](mailto:dmh1211@aol.com)



## The Super Bowl and the S O U P E R Bowl of Caring.

Two bowl games will occur on Sunday afternoon, **February 12<sup>th</sup>**. The National Football League's Super Bowl and the Souper Bowl of Caring.

In 1990 a youth group leader at a Presbyterian church on Columbia S. C. prayed this simple prayer. "Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those without a bowl of soup to eat." On this Sunday, the Souper Bowl of Caring had its beginning.

This subsequent one-day and normally youth-led effort to collect funds and food to address the issue of hunger in local communities has now spread nationwide and even internationally. Over 163 million dollars has been raised since 2020, one can at a time, one dollar at a time. The national goal is to raise funds enough to provide 14 billion meals. That's billion with a "B"!

If you have attended WWPC on any of the past thirteen Super Bowl Sundays, you could not miss our youth decked out in chef's hats and with soup pots collecting for this worthwhile effort.

Remember that all funds collected at the "Souper" game" on February 12<sup>th</sup> will be used locally, and we may choose the program to support. Please help in this worthwhile effort to assist our neighbors who are experiencing a food crisis.

(Submitted by John Laney)



### Music Director Search Team Listening Sessions

Following church on February 12, and February 19, we invite you to have pizza and salad in Fellowship Hall, followed by discussions on our music program. All are welcome and encouraged to join in the discussion. Please sign up in the Narthex, or online!



## CLERK'S REPORT

At its stated meeting on 30 December, 2022, the Session:

1. Was reminded our formal agreement of support for the Afghan sibling refugees we have been helping officially ends the first of January, 2023 but that in several ways our church will continue to assist them.
2. Heard that Milt Butterworth has been hospitalized with an infection.
3. Heard reports from Steve Runholt on plans for special Christmas services.
4. Heard a report on our stewardship campaign that as of this date has reached about 94% of our goal and that a few members who have not been heard from yet will be contacted by our receiving treasurer before the 2023 budget is finalized.
5. From the Congregational Care and Hospitality team the Session heard that the Wassail event went well, that Steve delivered Christmas gift bags to members who cannot attend services, and that the congregation birthday list continues to be updated.
6. Heard from the Church-College ministry team that the Cookies and Carols service went well with a number of College students attending this service as well as the following Sunday worship service, and that while College staff will return to work on 3 January, students return on 17 January.
7. Heard from the Community Engagement ministry team a recommendation in the form of a motion that the approximately \$211 in the Peacemaking offering be donated to the Mediation Center in Asheville, and, that a \$250 gift received designated generally for "social outreach" be added to the \$211 for the Mediation Center, and this motion was approved.
8. Heard that the cause of the problem with the audio system not working for the live stream option of our recent worship service was identified and our system operators will know now to check this setting which was apparently accidentally changed early on if there are future problems.
9. Heard a report that a problem with one of the heating system units in the Chapel has been repaired.
10. Heard a report on plans for spring adult education classes.
11. Heard a report that the craft event was a good event with several adults joining youth in craft activities including making gingerbread houses.
12. Heard a recommendation in the form of a motion from the Worship and Music ministry team regarding members to serve on the search committee for hiring a music director. A motion to approve Derron Daugherty (chair), Ann Dale, Beth Meriwether, Darcy Orr, and Kristen Williams to serve on the search committee was approved.
13. Heard a recommendation in the form of a motion that instead of continuing to use prepackaged communion elements for our communion services, we return to bread pieces and juice in individual cups prepared and served in a manner to reduce risk of Covid transmission starting with the scheduled December communion service. The motion passed.
14. Heard a recommendation in the form of a motion from Steve on plans for substitute music directors / organists / piano players for the Christmas services and into January, and this motion passed.

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15. Heard a recommendation in the form of a motion from the Worship and Music team that Session approve a baptism service for Charles Corbin, recently born child of Andrew and Rachael Corbin who have former connections to our church and are currently living in and still looking for a church home in Charlotte. The motion was approved.
16. Heard a report from the Administrative ministry team that the recently completed church audit found no problems and a motion to approve this report was approved by Session.
17. Because guest speakers are being invited to present several adult church school classes in the spring where we will want to give them an honorarium of \$200 for each presentation, a recommendation in the form of a motion was that \$600 come from earnings of the general endowment and an additional \$600 come from earnings of the spiritual nurture endowment, and this motion was approved.
18. Gifts-in-kind of a stole and two filing cabinets donated to the church from Joel Rogers were reported to Session and a motion receive these gifts from Joel with gratitude was approved.
19. It was reported from the Administrative ministry team that a written set of guidelines for church-college relations expenditures will come to Session next month for Session consideration.

Bob Gambrell, Clerk of Session

## **Finishing Strong: Preparing for Life's Final Stages**

Lenten Adult Education Series

***12:15 in Fellowship Hall***

***Lunch and childcare will be provided.***



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|---------|---|
| Feb. 26 | Legal: Living Wills and Advanced Directives<br><br>Mike Begley, founder, Begley Law Firm          |
| Mar. 5  | Medical: Caring for our bodies at the end of life.<br>Dr. Casey Sharpe, palliative care physician |
| Mar. 12 | Spiritual/Emotional/Familial Considerations<br>Rev. Susan Verbrugge, Solace Hospice Chaplain      |
| Mar. 19 | Internment Options<br>WWC Prof. Mallory McDuff, author of "Our Last Best Act"                     |
| Mar. 26 | Affording End of Life Care<br>John Snell, retired social worker, specializing in elder care.      |
| April 2 | Wrap up and review<br>Rev. Dr. Steve Runholt, Pastor, WWPC  |



## Noteworthy:

**SOUPER BOWL DRIVE THRU** On Sunday, February 12th, our kids will be collecting drive thru donations of canned goods before church, between 10:30 and 11:00. Just drive around the traffic circle in front of the Chapel and drop your donations off in the bins they'll have available. After church, the kids will be standing in the narthex with their customary chefs' hats, pots and spoons to collect your financial contributions! All cash contributions will be used to support local agencies working to address food insecurity here in this area.



**CHILDREN AND YOUTH LISTENING SESSION** As we begin the search for our next Director of Music, it will be important for us to hear from our children and youth. To that end, we will host a listening session for our kids, during the Sunday school hour, on Sunday, February 19. At 10:00 a.m. sharp, Pastor Steve will meet with the class to talk briefly about this process. And then we'll make space for the kids to talk about what their hopes might be for the person we hire.

**FAT TUESDAY IS BACK!** Please join us on Tuesday evening, Feb. 21<sup>st</sup>, at 6:00 in the Fellowship Hall for the return our Fat Tuesday Pancake Supper, one last festive hoorah before we begin our Lent Journey the next day. Look for the sign up sheet in the Narthex for what you can bring: an egg casserole, fruit salad, juice, a protein (meat or vegetarian) and for how you can help: set up and clean up. If you have them, don't forget to wear your Mardi Gras beads!



**ASH WEDNESDAY** Please join us on Wednesday evening, Feb. 22, at 6:00 in the sanctuary for a simple Ash Wednesday service, with imposition of ashes, to mark our entrance into the Lenten season. Choir rehearsal will follow at 7:00.





At Warren Wilson Presbyterian Church we are mothers and fathers, single and married, gay and straight, young and old, black and white, prosperous and poor, uncertain and sure, broken and whole - and everything in between. Together we are the many faces of humanity, yet as a joyful, caring and loving community of faith, we are committed in our diversity to be one in Christ!

## February

Warren Wilson Presbyterian Church  
101 Chapel Lane  
Swannanoa, NC 28778



# *The Extended Family*