

FIRST NEWS

MAY 2023

YOUTH MINISTRY YOUTH SUNDAY



"I am so proud of our youth." "The Church is in great hands with these youth as leaders." These are comments we heard following Youth Sunday service during which 45 youth helped lead our

worship service. The theme of "The Door is Always Open" and the messages that accompanied spoke to not only our youth but to folks of all ages. "I loved being able to talk about the theme, 'The Door is Always Open' because it is really applicable in my life growing up and in the future," says Caroline Ku, senior class of 2023. "For me personally, I enjoyed reflecting on how my faith community has opened up many doors – regardless of where I am in my life. It is also comforting to know that I will always have my faith community to support me, as I move into the next chapter my life." Our confirmation class of 2023 was also recognized during the service for the completion of their confirmation milestone. "I enjoyed connecting with my faith community peers during confirmation this year," says William Taylor, a 2023 confirmand. "Confirmation was a time where we could really think about what we believe and have thoughtful discussions." While this part of their journey is coming to a close, in so many ways, this marks a new point on their faith journey and God's call on their lives.

STEPHEN MINISTRY

Sharing the contents of your heart with another person and being met with acceptance and grace can be a profound and healing experience. The truth is that we all find ourselves in seasons of life that call for a little extra support from time to time. That's what Stephen Ministry is about.

Stephen Ministers are individuals who have been trained in the art of active listening, and who meet one-on-one with folks experiencing life's challenges. They listen without judgment and draw on scripture and prayer as they offer their spiritual companionship. They show up to walk alongside you when you need a confidential and compassionate ear to offer faith-based friendship and care.

Recently, a current Stephen Minister was asked what it means to her to be able to do this kind of ministry in our congregation. "Honor," she responded. "The word that comes into my heart when I think about what I get to do as a Stephen Minister, is honor. Listening to someone else's story and seeking God together in it is a privilege I did not anticipate when I signed up for this program, but my fellow Stephen Ministers and I agree. We get more out of it than we receive." I guess she might say, that working to really hear her care receiver's story is one way she chooses to live out Christ's love.

If you feel you could benefit from meeting with a Stephen Minister, or you'd like to explore participating in Stephen Ministry training, contact Anna Dickson at adickson@firstpres-charlotte.org.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT BELLXCEL PRE-K SUMMER PROGRAM

This summer, we will provide a Bellxcel Pre-K summer program, as well as supporting K-fifth grade students from Westerly Hills Academy in partnership with Above and Beyond Students' summer camp. To provide consistency and convenience to families, both programs will take place at Westerly Hills Academy Monday - Thursday, from 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. and Field Trip Fridays will take place at FPC.

By combining resources, we are able to offer a longer day of care for working parents, five days per week. Students will receive academic support each morning and quality enrichment activities in the afternoon, Monday through Thursday.

Camp runs from June 20 - July 28 and we need volunteers! You can sign up to tutor, provide staff appreciation, support enrichment, or chaperone a field trip.



**VOLUNTEER
SIGN UP**

OUTREACH FOCUS HUNGER



FPC supports our unsheltered neighbors all year long, not just during the cold months of winter! Roof Above's Day Services Center (formally known as Urban Ministry Center) has resumed serving lunch every day of the week to all individuals who visit the College Street campus. We, too, have resumed our ministry known as "Soup Kitchen." Every second Sunday of the month, FPC volunteers spend the morning making soup and handing out lunch bags to the visitors. The volunteers' words of encouragement and conversation are always answered with a smile.



**SOUP KITCHEN
SIGN UP**

Even the littlest hands can offer the love of Christ to our neighbors in need. Preschoolers and their parents made 300 hearty sandwiches for Operation Sandwich during a Sunday school hour in March. They were delivered to Roof Above's Day Center for lunch the very same day.

ADVOCACY MINISTRY GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION SUBCOMMITTEE

The Gun Violence Prevention subcommittee came together in 2022 to begin the process of discerning how FPC can and will respond to the topic within our congregation, locally in our community, and more broadly in the country. Please stay tuned for more updates and future programs. For more information please contact Sara Kidd at sara.k.kidd@gmail.com

LUNCH ON THE LAWN

All are invited to stay after worship for a boxed lunch fellowship event and Kona Ice on Sunday, May 21. You can register at: fpc.tiny.us/lunchonlawn.

ADVOCACY MINISTRY CLIMATE CHANGE SUBCOMMITTEE

The Climate Change subcommittee provides informational forums about climate change to help FPC members stay informed on the effects it creates for residents of Charlotte and worldwide, including affordable housing, stormwater drainage, and more. For more information please contact Randy Phillips at randyphillips@mvalaw.com.