

November 14, 2017



Dear First Presbyterian Family,

Thank you for your prayers and support of First Presbyterian Church student missions. As many of you know, this past summer the youth and our adult leaders had some amazing experiences serving our Lord right here in Burke County, NC, with our “Mission to Nowhere” July 30–August 3, 2017. That week we provided two meals at the BUCM Soup Kitchen, volunteered to help two teachers at a local elementary school who were recovering from surgery, sorted clothes at the “Saved for You” clothing store, and worked on a new community trail behind Patton High School. As we have grown up in our amazing youth program, we have come to realize that one of the most important mission projects we tackle on these trips is relationship building. Not only in the relationships formed with the people we encounter, but also in our relationships with each other and, most importantly, in our relationship with God. It is amazing the work that God can do when you have the opportunity to get away from all the distractions of student life and really focus on Christ and this important kingdom work. Here is what Meredith Antley, a 2015 Belize Mission Trip participant, wrote in her trip journal:

If I could tell the adults (in the pews) back at church about this mission trip, all I could say would be, “Thank you.” Thank you for help in sending all twenty-six of us to experience this beautiful country to help these amazing children... These children may be full of God’s love, but all I want to do is take them home and give them a home. This trip has inspired me to do more. I just feel like I need to do more, to grow more. To express God’s love to those who have lost their way. I have never felt more called (or connected) with Jesus than I have on this mission. I feel truly blessed to be able to have these experiences. Thank you.

As you can tell, these mission trip experiences are transformative for the youth and adult participants. However, we can’t get there without your support! Because we have faith in God and faith in your continued support, we have made some very big plans for 2018, despite being very low on youth mission funds. This year, we plan to focus much of our attention here in Morganton, NC—at places like Burke United Christian Ministries and the Soup Kitchen. As always, we attempt to reach out to those in need locally, regionally, and internationally.

Regionally, some of us plan to participate with other Presbyterian churches around Western North Carolina in Raleigh Youth Mission (RYM) from July 15-20, 2018. Participants will serve in two different inner-city missions sites each day to learn more about poverty and homelessness in Raleigh. Set in our state capital, RYM engages young people in issues of poverty, homelessness, and food insecurity. Many of their partner agencies are located in the downtown area among the halls of power of the state government.

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In addition, some of us plan to travel to Abaco, Bahamas, July 16-23, 2018, with Son Servants. There we will work alongside full-time missionaries and locals to serve families, children, and teenagers. Our host, the Bahamas Youth Network (BYN), has been serving the people of The Bahamas since 2000. BYN sponsors year-long, weekly ministry to teens and young adults on three islands (Nassau, Long Island, and Great Abaco). Our team members will assist in leading a summer day camp for local children and working on important construction projects to assist families, many who are Haitian refugees.

As we have done the past few years, we are simply asking for your support. Enclosed in this mailing, you will find more quotations from youth and photos from our past mission experiences. You will also find an order form to purchase YOUTH stock. We thank you in advance for your support. Many would say that by supporting the FPC Youth Mission fund, you are supporting the future of the church. We would disagree, and as our past youth group t-shirts said, "We are not the future, WE ARE THE CHURCH."

In Christ,

Carly Carpenter
Youth Elder, 2017-2018

Mason Streppa
Youth Deacon for Missions, 2017-2018