

MEET YOUR APNC SLATE



I am so excited to be nominated to serve on the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee! I have been going to First Presbyterian Church for as long as I can remember. I have been involved in the youth programs since before I could spell my name. I have taken part in the Sunday School classes, Youth, Preschool, Vacation Bible School, Wednesday night suppers, mission trips, and now our Quest program! My family has had a big role in my life and in growing in my faith. I am the daughter of Josh and Ashlee Barry and have a little brother Owen. I am so excited to help find a new youth leader and help our church community grow and flourish.



Carsyn Barry

My husband Chad and I first joined FPC shortly after we were married in 2000. My stepfather was a Methodist minister so I grew up being an active part of many church communities. Since my husband was from the area, he knew several friends who were active in the FPC youth group and returned to raise their families. This was the main reason we started attending FPC Hickory. However, after seeing how Wallace Johnson connected with his congregation and how similar his style was to how my stepfather led his churches, I knew this would become our church home. Like many others, Freida Caldwell “nonchalantly” asked me if I would consider helping to organize an Easter egg hunt for the kids. When Freida asks, you don’t say no, and this led to me not only serving on the Family Ministry Committee for several years but also to Chad and I teaching all ages of Sunday School from K–5th grades throughout the time our daughters (Olivia, 17 & Lucy Rose, 14) were growing up. My other FPC duties have included: FPC Preschool Board of Directors chair from 2011–2012, Children’s Church director, Quest partner for two years, 2023 youth Mission Fest committee member and currently serving as junior high youth advisor. Outside of FPC Hickory, I work for The Sock Factory in the product development and sales team. I volunteered as a board member and secretary for Catawba Science Center from 2013–2016, served as PTA president of Oakwood Elementary School from 2016–2017 and currently serve as PTA president of Grandview Middle School. I enjoy playing tennis, cooking, listening to music, and traveling with my family, particularly to Oak Island where my parents have a condo. I am honored to be a part of the APNC. FPC Hickory has had some truly special youth advisors over the years, and I am excited to be a part of this important decision to continue their legacy for the future of our youth program.



Jennifer East

For those that don't recognize this smiling face, my name is Addison Fox. I was raised in this church. I have had the opportunity to participate in every aspect of youth fellowship. From Campache, MX to Cranks KY and all other mission trips in between, I used these youth experiences to help build my faith in serving our Lord. I had the great honor of being nominated to represent our church at the Presbytery General Synod. Upon returning to Hickory in 2005 from 11 years living in Salisbury, NC, I quickly became involved with the church again. 2005 was the 1st year I taught Sunday school and have been doing it ever since. My wife and I stood in the same sanctuary where my son and I were both baptized, and we said our "I do's" to the lovely Rev. Deborah McEachran. Paige and I have been married for 13 years and have an AWESOME son Griffen. He loves Wednesday night suppers!!! To my fellow members of the church, thank you for this honor. This church has been the bedrock of my whole life. Growing up next door watching the complete evolution of the phenomenal church has been fantastic! From Bob Ratchford, Wallace, Whit, Heather, and now Richard, these are the leaders that we chose to lead us. To be selected to help secure one of our next leaders is truly an honor. In the Words of Freida Caldwell..... THANKS A LOT!!!!



Addison Fox



**Morganna
LeBoutillier**

My husband Ben and I are approaching our one-year anniversary as FPC members and two-year anniversary as Hickory residents. In that time, we have welcomed our son Walter who was baptized into the congregation in November. I have two full-time roles: mother and Lenoir-Rhyne graduate student pursuing a master's in counseling; additionally, I am a part-time yoga instructor at a local studio. Having a 7-month-old, the mission of this APNC is close to my heart. Steadily, Ben and I have been increasing our involvement with FPC and the greater Hickory community—thus my nomination struck me as both providential and flattering. Lending my voice—that of mother to an infant of busily working parents seeking to improve the world around them—to this APNC thrills me. I aim to help us form a realistic vision anchored in the needs of our congregation and community, doing my best to faithfully discharge this duty with the support of my family—both at home and at church—and the God whom we serve.



Samuel Pitts

As a third generation member of First Presbyterian Church, Hickory, my roots are firm in the ideas and practices of our church. Along with my parents, Andrew and Zabrina, my three older siblings, Will, Madeline, Lillian, my family and I have been active in the life of First Pres. As a baptized and confirmed member of First Pres., I have participated in VBS as a participant and a volunteer, in countless youth activities, and in previous and upcoming mission trips. Being a freshman at Hickory High School, I compete on both the soccer and golf teams. Outside of school, I am an active member of the City of Hickory Youth Council. As a participant on the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee (APNC), I plan to be an active voice for the senior highs of the congregation. I am excited to be a member that will embrace the process and provide my insight as one of the youth members on the APNC.

William and I joined First Presbyterian when we moved to Hickory in 2002. Our sons, Ben and Alex, were preschoolers then, and we are so grateful for this church family that helped raise them. Through those early years, I served in many kid-related ministries including directing Wednesday Alive, leading VBS, teaching Sunday School, and serving as a junior high youth advisor. Along the way I also served on the Session, the Missions Committee, and an Interim Pastor Nominating Committee. These days with both boys grown, I'm enjoying serving with adults. I co-lead the Monday Morning Women's Bible Study, and I serve on a Sabbath Soup Kitchen team, the Family Ministry committee, the Knitwits and Happy Hookers, and the altar flowers group. I also recently served on the Mission Study Task Force. With so many young families in our church, now is an exciting time to search for a Youth Minister/Director who will build on our legacy of strong youth ministry. I'm looking forward to seeing where God leads us!



Shannon Pleasant

I have been a member of First Presbyterian for 36 years. I was an active youth member and part of the first Mission trip to Merida, Mexico in 1989. I have served as an Elder, on the Youth Council, as a Jr. High and Sr. High Youth Advisor, on the Willard Chair Committee, on the Mission Committee, as an Usher, and as the Stewardship Chair. I have been married to Beth for 24 years, and we have 3 sons: Colby (Senior at NC State), Carson (Sophomore at UNC Chapel Hill) and Parker (Sophomore at HHS). I am looking forward to the growth of our youth and the continued growth of our union with Christ as a church.



Deke Shepler

Lynn and I have been members of FPC for some 30 years. It has been my pleasure to serve with the youth. Lynn and I were Junior High advisors for 5 years. The 3 year commitment we made to Frieda Caldwell somehow turned into 5. Such a thing was not uncommon with her, she made things such a pleasure for us. I've been working with the Senior Highs for 8 years running. Currently I'm active on the Session, volunteer for WNS each week, coordinate Sabbath Soup, am in the Chancel and hand bell choirs, and I am also a member of the Youth Council. I am excited to be with the APNC. Any anxiety about this venture is tempered by the fact that God always makes His work turn out well despite any of my shortcomings.



Bob Smith



Zack Taylor

I joined FPC in 1994, just before Beth and I were married there in January 1995. That said, I attended FPC regularly in our youth group while in high school from 1985 – 1988. At FPC, I have served on our session, co-directed numerous Congregational Retreats, and served as a Sunday School teacher with adults, Sr. Highs, Jr. Highs, and an elementary class or two. I have had multiple stints as both a Jr. High and Sr. High youth advisor which has allowed me to make more than 10 mission trips both local and abroad. Also, I have helped with worship design for both traditional and Kairos worship services. It is a little known secret, but I do all of Beth's work from behind the scenes. Ha ha. I think everyone knows my wife ... we raised two children at FPC – David (24) and Cate (22). Both are finishing college degrees in 2023. (fingers crossed!) Whether as a young participant myself, an advisor, a SS teacher or as a parent ... I have witnessed first-hand the positive, faith-building impact our youth programs have on those who commit their time and energy to it. Our church's reputation in this arena is a gold standard in our community. I am anxious to see that heritage continue. We owe as much to the many leaders, Freida Caldwell especially, that came before us.

