



May is for Mothers, Grads and Saying Farewell

Following Easter Sunday's worship service, I needed to say farewell to Mary Kathryn McGregor who will be finishing up her time with us and moving back to Columbia to finish her medical school rotations. While she won't graduate until December, she will be walking with her classmates at commencement. What an amazing accomplishment, and what a gift she has been to us at JCPC – singing in the choir, helping out with the children, participating in our activities and programs, and most amazingly, managing our social media accounts. All of these have been a gift to us. And she will be sorely missed.

You will all likely get a chance to see MK before she leaves, but given her schedule and mine, we had to say our goodbyes. I have every reason to believe that we will cross paths again, but it will be different. I will be her friend and no longer her pastor. This time that she spent with us in Florence will have passed.

But that's the way life works, right? People come into our midst and if their life circumstances don't change drastically, maybe they stay for decades, or when things change, perhaps they leave – moving on to a new city or a different community of faith that better suits their needs, or perhaps their evolving understanding of how they are called to follow Christ's path. It's sad because our relationships will change, but it's ok, because we trust that God's love goes both with those who leave and those who stay. And as we know, others will come – for a lifetime or a season, no one can know.

As you know, I will be leaving for my sabbatical starting on Sunday May 18th, and my last day in the office will be Thursday, May 15th. I am grateful for the ways that your Session and leaders are stepping up to work together to make sure that your needs are cared for during my absence. Every month in the newsletter you will see the

pictures and bios of the preachers who will be preaching for you while I am away. They are all wonderful preachers – some of whom have preached here before – a nice array of men and women, black and white, younger and older – and I know you will find their messages inspiring, and will warmly welcome them. That's what we do here.

I love you all and will look forward to being with you on Sunday, August 3rd with a video of many of the places where I saw God revealed on my travels. Thank you for taking care of each other in my absence. I'll be back before you know it!

Blessings and love,

Pastor Jen



FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) about Pastor Jen's Sabbatical

the
Pastor
will be



Wait, what? You're going to be gone how long???

Friends, as most of you know, I will be starting a sabbatical on Sunday May 18th and will be back in worship with you all on August 3rd. I am grateful to the Session for including this in my covenant. The timing couldn't be better as Gavin, and I are able to take our sabbaticals at the same time. This is a first for us.

Well, where are you going?

We will be traveling in Japan, China, Southeast Asia, Indonesia, Australia, French Polynesia and ending in Hawaii. We have a four-day tour of Tokyo before we leave on May 22nd for a 72-night cruise that will take us to all the above locales. We decided that this would be the way we would spend our sabbatical back in October of 2023. We will see a large part of the world, but as we will be staying aboard the ship, we will only have to unpack and repack once.

Have you ever been to that part of the world?

I have never been to Asia or Australia – everywhere we are going will be a new adventure. We are particularly interested in learning more about the religious traditions and culture that are native to this part of the world.

Are we going to get to see pictures?

My plan is to talk about our trip during worship on August 3rd, sharing a video of where I felt most attune to the presence of the Holy Spirit.

So what's going to happen while you are gone? Who's going to preach?

That's the exciting part! I have arranged for pastors from across the presbytery – men and women, ordained ministers and ruling elders and a seminarian, both black and white – to be with you to lead worship and preach. These folks are the best! Many of them have been here before, so they come as friends and not as strangers. These are all folks who I love and admire, and I know that you will as well.

But what happens if someone dies or there is an emergency?

Speaking of people I admire, I have asked Rev. Dr. Rodney Foster if he would be on call for pastoral emergencies. Folks who have been here longer than me know Rodney from his former ministry with this congregation, and I know Rodney from our work together at the Presbytery. I know he will be there for you and be of comfort should you need that. **However, if you have a need for pastoral care, please first call the Elder on Call.** If you are not sure who to call, call the church office and Susan will let you know who the Elder for that week is. The elder on call will reach out to Rodney for his assistance when necessary.

Can we do anything for you while you are gone?

I would only ask that you remember Gavin and I in your prayers while we are away. I will certainly be holding this community in my heart and prayers while I am gone.

Blessings and love to you all!

Pastor Jen

Welcome As Our Guest Preacher for Worship on Sunday, May 4th and 18th, 2025

Rev. Josie Holler



A South Carolina native, Josie grew up in Easley, studied art at the College of Charleston, and received a M. Div from Candler School of Theology at Emory University. She has been ordained in the Presbyterian Church USA for 29 years and served churches across this state. Most recently she served as Interim Pastor of Williamsburg Presbyterian Church in Kingstree. Josie is an avid runner for fun and prayer. She also loves to create through artwork and cooking. She designs and makes stoles, paraments and banners for worship spaces. She also teaches cooking lessons and does small catering jobs. When she has time, theater is one of her favorite activities. Josie lives in Wedgefield with her husband David. They have three children, Stewart, Grey, and Owings, three dogs, two cats, and a pig.



Pastor Jen will be on sabbatical from May 17th to Aug 2, 2025.

If you have a pastoral care concern, please contact the Elder on Call for that week, or call the church office to be put in touch with the Elder on Call.

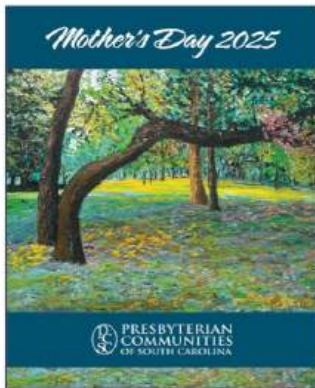
Pastor Jen will be back in the pulpit on August 3, 2025.

Welcome As Our Guest Preacher for Worship on Sunday, May 25, 2025

Holly Bannan



A native of Spartanburg, South Carolina and a graduate of Lander University (2008), Holly is the Director of Discipleship and Communications at Kingston Presbyterian Church in Conway, SC. She is a candidate in New Harmony Presbytery and is in her final year of seminary, pursuing her MDiv at Union Presbyterian Seminary-Charlotte. She taught Special Education for six years before serving full-time in church. Before coming to Kingston, she served in churches in Spartanburg, SC; Atlanta, GA; and Blowing Rock, NC. She is married to Robert, and they have three children: Jacob (15), Hattie (12), and Trace (9). In her spare time, you can find Holly with a paint brush or tool in hand, always creating a new DIY piece.



Mother's Day Offering for Presbyterian Communities of SC

As you likely know, every Mother's Day an offering is collected by churches in our presbytery and throughout the state to benefit the Presbyterian Communities of SC.

The money raised goes to fund their charitable care.

It is the goal of the communities to ensure that no resident has to leave because of lack of funds. Of course there will always be cases where residents will outlive their resources. **This offering goes specifically to ensure that no one will be turned out because of inability to pay.**

Please give as you are able to this effort.

Remember! Canned food drive for one of our local partners on each Communion Sunday
In May, June and July, Communion will be on the **SECOND** Sunday. Please make sure that you bring your food with you to worship. There will be baskets to collect the food in front of the communion table.
There are so many in need in our community!

- 🍝 Pasta (spaghetti, penne, elbow)
- 🍅 Canned tomatoes (diced, crushed, whole)
- 🍝 Plastic jars of pasta sauce
- 🍏 Canned fruit (in juice, please!)
- 🍲 Boxes of Stovetop Stuffing
- 🍚 1-2lb bags of rice
- 🍲 1-2lb bags of dried beans (black-eyed peas, kidney beans, pinto beans)
- 🌾 Boxes of cornbread mix

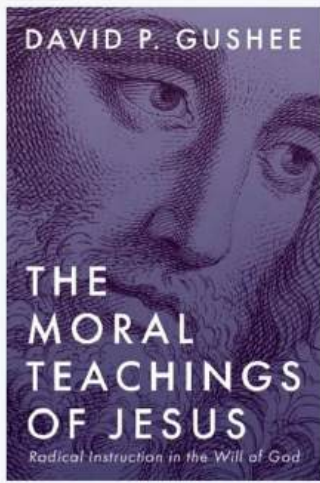


Jesus taught his followers the importance of prayer, and God longs to change our hearts and our minds through our prayer practice.

If you are not currently on the JCPC prayer email list, please send your email address to janeocoker111@gmail.com.

Pastor Jen or Jane Coker send out prayer emails once or twice a week or more frequently when there is an urgent need. Remember, that we pray not so that we can change God's heart, but that we can allow God to change our heart.

Emails come from jcpcprays@gmail.com.



The weekly bible study taught by Pastor Jen will not meet while she is on sabbatical.

The last meeting prior to her leave will be on **May 14th**, and the study will resume on **August 6th**.

If you haven't been participating but would like to, now is your chance to purchase the book and catch up on the first 16 chapters for the sessions that you have missed. (They are all short!) This is a great study that meets both in-person and on Zoom. **All are invited.**



V-BEE-S is Coming!



"V-BEE-S" is an intergenerational Bible study event that will be held nightly at JCPC Sunday, June 8th through Wednesday, June 11th from 5:30-7:45 pm. There will be food, fellowship, fun, games, music, and Bible study classes for all age groups. Supper will be served each night!

Nightly sessions will be:

June 8th--**Don't Worry! BEE Happy**—Luke 6:17-26

The Beatitudes sum up Jesus' teaching about what it means to live as a child of God's kingdom. They remind us that even though we face difficulties in this life, we have the ultimate blessing as members of God's kingdom.



June 9th--**Lessons from a BEE-hive**—Romans 12:3-8

All Christians together are meant to operate as a single human body-- Christ's body on earth. We are to use our "spiritual gifts" to serve different functions in service to all of God's people. These gifts are given to each believer through the Holy Spirit to fulfill a specific function that the church and the world truly need.

June 10th--**BEE Kind to Creation**—Genesis 1:26-28



All that we are and all that we have comes to us as a gift from God. God calls us to care for all of creation by caring for ourselves, for others, and for the natural world. By learning how to use our time, talent, and treasure to serve God, we fulfill our call to care for creation.

June 11th--**Let There be BEES on Earth**—Genesis 1:26-28

All life on Earth relies on a specialized group of creatures called pollinators that fertilize and propagate God's earthly garden. For many reasons, pollinators are in trouble. The food, shelter, and water they need to live, grow, and raise their young is disappearing. God's call to steward creation must involve protecting pollinators.



BEE There or BEE Square!



Treasurer's Report - March 31, 2025

Operating Budget

	Mar-25		2025 Year to Date (YTD)	
	Budgeted	Actual	Budgeted	Actual
Envelope Income	\$ 20,917	\$ 35,936	\$ 62,750	\$ 63,254
Total Income	\$ 21,358	\$ 36,495	\$ 64,075	\$ 64,933
Expenses	\$ 21,358	\$ 21,596	\$ 64,075	\$ 53,422

In March 2025, total revenues exceeded total expenses by \$14,899 with year to date total revenues exceeding year to date expenses by \$11,511.

In March 2025, envelope income was over budget by \$15,019 and over budget YTD by \$504.

Compared to March 2024, envelope income for the month is down 3% and YTD total envelope income is down 5%.

Compared to March 2024, total income for the month of is down 3% and YTD total income is down 5%.

Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. 1 Peter 4:10
For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Matthew 6:21

Session Summary

Highlights of the Session Meeting on April 15, 2025

At its Tuesday, April 15 meeting your session members continued to discuss being Spirit-led after reading chapter four of the book titled, *Sailboat Church: Helping Your Church Rethink Its Mission and Practice*. These quotes summarize the chapter: "The church is a divine, even supernatural, community gathered by God to do God's work," and "Now you ARE the body of Christ and individually members of it."

Pastor Jen informed the Session that because our insurance company now requires all outside groups to have liability insurance with the church as second insured that the AA/CA groups are no longer meeting at JCPC. She expressed her sorrow over this matter as did the Session members but a way out of it was not possible.

A motion from CE Committee to extend the hiatus on Sunday school to include August 3 and to have the Church Buddy Breakfast on August 10 to kick off Sunday school for 2025-26 was approved. Session having previously approved the request of the Interfaith Alliance of South Carolina's request to have JCPC host in the Fellowship Hall a viewing of Banned Together, it was announced that the movie will be shown on Monday, April 28, at 7:00 PM followed by a panel discussion.

Myra Horton reported on a meeting with Tom Shearin and Chris Webb, the landscape and playground designer who will be guiding the construction of the JCPC "backyard sanctuary." They now have a drawing of the plan and the next step is a solution to the water pooling on the property when it rains. Pastor Jen went over the detailed plans and Sessional duties during her Sabbatical. All dates have been filled with Presbytery pastors and contingency plans are in place.

Submitted by Betty Anne Smith

Serving in May

Date	Elder	Liturgist	Usher/Greeter	Nursery	Counters
May 4	Kris Andrews	Betty Anne Smith	Judy & Al Feimster	Jane Coker Karen Stroemer	Joe Bittle, Connie Reel-Shearin, Myra Horton
May 11	Gary Pierce	Erin Grinstead	Rita Myers	Myra Horton Tyler Gross	Margaret Collar, Tom Hawkins, Gary Pierce
Communion Prep: Gladys & Robert Davis			Communion Servers: Class of 2026		
May 18	Robin Permenter	Debbie Barrett	Emily & Chuck Stonerock	Susan Nexsen Jane Thrower	Ron Rogers, Susan Tedder, Tom Hoffmeyer
May 25	Joe Bittle	Greg Richardson	Shirley & Wilda Gray	Karen Pattillo Sheila Lenz	Kris Andrews, Robin Permenter, Tom Shearin



Stanton Stonerock and Meredith Stonerock confirmed their baptism vows and were received as members of JCPC on Palm Sunday, April 13, 2025.

CONGRATULATIONS!!

Easter Sunday 2025

Our thanks to Scott Rickert for sharing his gifts singing, "The Palms" on Palm Sunday.



MISSION OPPORTUNITIES



Blessing Bags for Neighbors in Need

The Mission committee is planning a trip to Parking Lot Ministry at the end of May. We are asking the congregation to supply Blessing Bags for Men and Women. There is a list but you can use your imagination as well. These are to be in gallon zip lock bags. We will have examples in the narthex. Presbyterian Women are helping with toilet paper and paper towels. If you have clean used T-shirts and shorts, they also would be helpful. All are invited to come and share in this mission. It is a blessing!

EOM Committee

Looking to contribute to our local mission work?
Lighthouse Ministries Strengthening Families program
is using our facility to work with families in our community on
Mondays and Thursdays.

This is a fantastic program that teaches parents and children good and healthy ways to be together as a family.

We need to provide **at least 2 volunteers** to be here at the church
from 5:30 to 7 to help serve the meal and clean up.

If you are interested please see Thelma Hawkins who recruiting volunteers.



- Rita Myers 5/1*
- Josh Holmes 5/8*
- Kris Andrews 5/13*
- Elizabeth Holmes 5/15*
- Lincoln Pattillo 5/16*
- Jacob Anderson 5/17*
- Chuck Stonerock 5/18*
- Sandy Lee 5/19*
- Debbie Barrett 5/24*
- Sherrelle Revell 5/31*



Happy Anniversary

- Chuck and Emily Stonerock*
5/1
- Bob and Sylvia Perkins*
5/2

Rev. Gavin Meek preached and led worship with Pastor Jen on April 27th. Gavin is our Executive Presbyter and Stated Clerk in New Harmony Presbytery.



Our Easter Breakfast and Egg Hunt was a wonderful celebration of the new life we share in Christ!

