

A Voice in the Pines



Presbyterian Kirk in the Pines Newsletter

Volume LII, April 2024

Kirk faces membership challenge, and opportunity

As a member of the Kirk, you're aware of our declining membership. Whether it's the lower attendance at our worship services or the reduced membership of various committees, you've seen and experienced it. When we pray for the sick or hear about the recent passing of long-time members, you realize we're shrinking.

When we look at our membership numbers from 2011 to 2023, the figures clarify our decline. From 2011 to 2023, Hot Springs Village experienced a population growth of about 25%. During the same period the Kirk declined in membership by a little more than 50%. Compared to 2011, our changes included 49% deceased, 31% removed from rolls, and a new member gain of 27%. While our new member gain roughly paralleled the Village population growth, we've lost half our total membership to death, physical moves, and lack of interest.

We don't have equivalent figures for other churches in the Village, but I would argue it doesn't matter. If they are experiencing similar declines, we need to be better. If they aren't experiencing declines, we need to understand what they've done to avoid them. We understand the national trend away from church attendance, but we also know in our hearts that churches with a congregation that's alive and vibrant can thrive. Even Presbyterians, sometimes jokingly called 'God's frozen people', can demonstrate the love of God in ways that attract others to join our kind and gentle congregation.

The Kirk has many strengths. The preaching has been outstanding. The music is superb and identified by members and visitors as special. Half of our existing members are here because another member invited them to



Celtic Cross, Memorial Garden, March 2024

Bob Morrow photo

church. We have an impressive internal communication process for describing social, outreach, and educational activities, and we have superb writers and educators in our midst. And we have a treasure of life experiences in our congregation that give us the ability to support ourselves and others during the tough times that life brings.

(continued on page 2)

When we meet

Sunday worship service
begins at 10 a.m.



Saturday informal service
5 p.m. In Hoffius Hall

Wednesday Bible Study
9-10:30 a.m. Hoffius Hall



For more meeting times see
www.kirkinthepines.org/calendar



(continued from page 1)

If we understand the problem facing us with respect to membership, we can change the membership decline and achieve a better outlook. We can focus our communication programs on our strengths. We can strengthen and ensure that our educational and outreach activities get sufficient publicity in external outlets. We can modernize our website and provide the opportunity to view our worship service over the web with high quality. We can adopt charities that focus on young people (e.g., the local Boys and Girls club, a high school chorus and/or band) and find ways to support and publicize their activities and achievements and our sponsorship of them. And, most of all, we can all become better ambassadors for the Kirk by being focused on our strengths and identifying our neighbors and friends who might be interested in attending worship with us.

We can do this if we decide it's important to do. It's up to us.

Contributed by Bruce Dale, Member Outreach Committee member



Bring a
Friend
to the

ANNUAL KIRK FISH FRY
May 1, 2024, at 5:30 p.m.
Hoffius Hall

Catered by Riverside, \$16 per person.

*All you can eat fish, chicken strips,
fries, slaw, baked beans, hush puppies,
lemonade, tea and dessert.*

*Sign up and pay at church starting April 7.
Call Pat Kuntz for questions. 501.204.4385.*

Congregational Care to offer "listening skills" course

Are you reluctant to visit people who are in nursing homes? How about those who are shut in their homes or in the hospital? What would we say? Would we say the wrong things? Would we be rejected?

The Congregational Care Committee is offering a four-week class to help us in this very important visiting ministry to our sisters and brothers who are ill. The class will deal with listening skills and explore different approaches for each venue. It will deal with the important role of caregivers and of ways to help people approaching the end of life.

Leading this interactive class will be Dotty Rector who had a career in practicing listening skills in Wisconsin. The class will be held in the Kirk conference room on four Thursday mornings from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. beginning April 18.

Register for the class by April 11 by phoning the office or Congregational Care Moderator Susan Pendergrass 1-407-595-2945.

Contributed by Dotty Rector, Communications Committee member

BILL BAILEY'S RETIREMENT CELEBRATION



APRIL 21st - 3 to 5 PM - Location TBA

The Kirk is hosting a fun couple of hours to celebrate Bill Bailey's ministry these many years in HSV. Join us for a casual party of stories, laughs, and refreshments. We are still in the planning stage and will have more information as soon as possible. We invite you to bring cards, letters, or photos to the party where we will have a retirement basket. If you are unable to attend, the basket will be available to fill during church office hours prior to the event. The important thing now is to let us know if you are planning to attend by sending an email to:

BBaileyKirk@gmail.com

including the following:

**YOUR NAME
YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS
NUMBER ATTENDING**

**We would appreciate your response by APRIL 7th.
It's going to be lots of fun!**

To infinity and beyond! PB&J Campaign is underway!

Our PB&J (peanut butter and jelly) campaign for 2024 is underway and we have our sights set on a target of 550 jars of PB and 550 jars of Jelly. We're going to prove that it can be done. The campaign ends on Mother's Day, May 12.

The proceeds will go to Jackson House, Potter's Clay, and the Cedar Mountain Boys and Girls club. These local charities play an important role in helping the homeless, victims of domestic violence, poverty level children, parents whose children require daily day care, and after school programs for kids who have no parents at home in the afternoon. The reaction last year from these charities to our record-breaking haul of 556 jars of PB and 433 jars of Jelly was one of enormous appreciation (and awe) at our deliveries.

We will accept any size jars and both glass and plastic containers. If you have a choice, get plastic because some of these clients are better able to use plastic than glass. Also, if you prefer to donate money to this campaign, we will purchase the food products

for you. Last year we were able to work with both Walmart and Brookshires to buy in bulk and get better deals than their normal prices. Make out your check to the Kirk and put it in an envelope with PB&J Campaign on the outside. Put it in the offering plate or deliver it to the Kirk office. The sooner you do that the easier it will be for us to make the purchase, since these will be special orders.

And, as a special incentive in 2024 (see below), an anonymous donor will provide a free embroidered Kirk Logo for each \$100 you spend on PB&J! See the article on Kirk Logos in this newsletter for more details on the Logo process. So, keep track of your receipts and get a free embroidered logo on one of your shirts and blouses. Provide a copy of your receipts for your purchases to the Kirk office. If you decide to pay by check we will have that receipt. ***Contributed by Bruce Dale, Missions Committee member***

Everyone needs a Kirk shirt!



Do you have a Kirk shirt? Would you prefer a different style shirt? You can buy a shirt or bring a shirt to Sharon Gardner to have the Kirk logo embroidered on your shirt. The cost of the Kirk logo is \$10.00. This is a great way to let people know about the Kirk! Yes, guys can bring a shirt too!

Also, for every \$100 in PB&J donations that you make (by check or purchase), a church member has agreed to pay for your purchase of embroidered Kirk Logo as described above. For \$100 you get one logo, for \$200 you get 2 logo's, etc.

Provide a copy of your purchase(s) to Sharon and the article(s) of clothing that you want to have embroidered. You make a difference for the hungry and homeless and advertise the Kirk in the process!

Cellist and pianist thrill Kirk audience

The March 17th HS/HSV Symphony Guild concert at the Kirk featuring Haeshin Shin (piano) and Jacob Wunsch (cello) was a stunning experience of virtuosity and musicality by two young and extremely talented musicians. The program offered work that spanned from the Baroque to the Romantic period, from J.S. Bach to Sergei Rachmaninoff. The couple, who are in fact husband and wife, played both solo and duet selections. Shin opened the program with a flawless offering of *Bach's Prelude and Fugue in F# Minor, BWV 833 from the Well-Tempered Clavier II*. Wunsch's took a novel

approach to Bach's suites for cello, playing one movement from each of the six rather than playing the six movements from one suite, which is customary. He entertained and charmed the audience with informative commentary about each movement.

The couple played duets which included the luscious romantic piece *Vocalise*, by Sergei Rachmaninoff. They closed the program and thrilled the audience with a compelling performance of the *Sonata for Piano and Cello in G Minor* by Frederick Chopin. The four movements of this technically demanding piece gave both artists the opportunity to demonstrate their immense talent and complete mastery of their instruments.

Submitted by Bob Morrow, Communications Committee Moderator



Donna Toney, Symphony Guild President and Kirk Organist/Pianist welcomed all to the well-attended program. *Jamie Federick photo*



Jacob Wunsch (left) and Haeshin Shin.
Jamie Federick photo

The concert was followed by a reception complete with a wide selection of sweets and savories. *Photo by Robert Sonnen.*

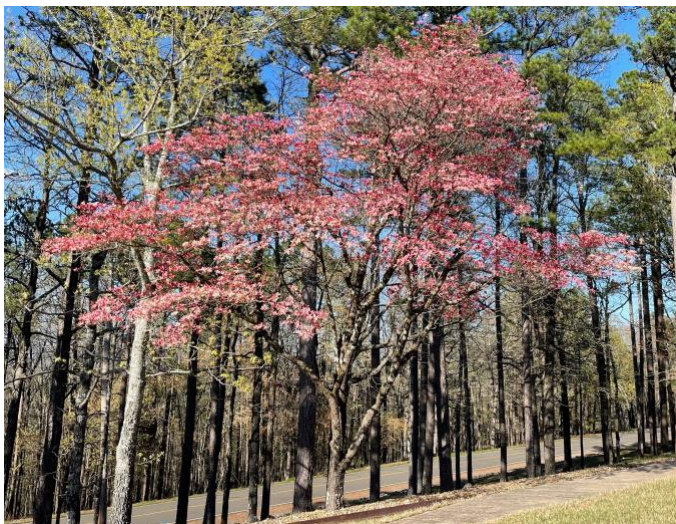




Redbud tree. *Priscilla Hayek photo*



Pink azaleas. *Bob Morrow photo*



Pink Dogwood. *Priscilla Hayek photo*

Spring comes to our Kirk gardens

Spring 2024 is a benchmark year for our Kirk gardens following several hard winters and brutal summers. In sequence we've witnessed exuberant blooming of our favorite bulbs, trees, and shrubs. Beginning with daffodils, flowering quince, forsythia, and redbud trees we've welcomed the best spring in years for our many azaleas. And finally, our cherished pink dogwood is in full bloom outside the front entrance to the sanctuary. Enjoy these photos but hurry to the gardens to see the spectacle for yourselves.



White azalea. *Bob Morrow photo*



White and red azaleas. *Bob Morrow photo*



Seven Stanzas at Easter

*Make no mistake: if He rose at all
it was as His body;
if the cells' dissolution did not reverse, the molecules
reknit, the amino acids rekindle,
the Church will fall.*

*It was not as the flowers,
each soft Spring recurrent;
it was not as His Spirit in the mouths and fuddled
eyes of the eleven apostles;
it was as His flesh: ours.*

*The same hinged thumbs and toes,
the same valved heart
that—pierced—died, withered, paused, and then
regathered out of enduring Might
new strength to enclose.*

Best of Show

In his poem, *Seven Stanzas at Easter*, well known American novelist John Updike proclaims his faith in the resurrection of Christ as a physical reality. In doing so he creates a contrast between the “real world” of biology, chemistry and physics and a purely spiritual understanding of the resurrection held by many of his and our contemporaries. The poem was written and submitted in 1960 in response to a call from his local Lutheran church for entries in a contest as part their religious arts festival. Of the 96 entries, Updike won \$100 for Best of Show. He returned the funds to his church. Read 1 Corinthians 15:14.

Contributed by Bob Morrow, Communications Committee Moderator

*Let us not mock God with metaphor,
analogy, sidestepping, transcendence;
making of the event a parable, a sign painted in the
faded credulity of earlier ages:
let us walk through the door.*

*The stone is rolled back, not papier-mâché,
not a stone in a story,
but the vast rock of materiality that in the slow
grinding of time will eclipse for each of us
the wide light of day.*

*And if we will have an angel at the tomb,
make it a real angel,
weighty with Max Planck's quanta, vivid with hair,
opaque in the dawn light, robed in real linen
spun on a definite loom.*

*Let us not seek to make it less monstrous,
for our own convenience, our own sense of beauty,
lest, awakened in one unthinkable hour, we are
embarrassed by the miracle,
and crushed by remonstrance.*

*John Updike, 1960
1932-2009*

Easter is a “season”

“Easter isn’t just a Sunday — it’s a season. One day out of 365 is hardly sufficient to celebrate the great mystery of our faith — that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead. Accordingly, the season of Easter lasts seven weeks (a “week of weeks”), spanning the 50 days from the Sunday of the Resurrection to Pentecost Sunday and encompassing the festival of the Ascension of the Lord. The season of Easter is intended to be a joyful time for celebrating the presence of the risen Christ in the church.”

“Of course, Easter really isn’t just a season either. In the fullest sense, Easter is a new way of life — in which we are “dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 6:11), called to “walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4). Every year, for fifty days, the church celebrates and rehearses this new way of life in the Season of Easter — as we await its completion in the fullness of Christ’s reign.” *(from presbyterianmission.org)*

The Pastor's Corner

All good things come to an end. And one of the best things, for Anne and me, has been serving the Kirk in the Pines. It has been my duty and delight to serve as your pastor these past seventeen and one-half years.

The end came a little quicker than I planned. I was hoping for a couple of more years, but the stroke changed things. My recovery seems to be progressing, but at a much slower rate than my doctors predicted. I continue to go to the fitness center, but I'm not ready to come back to work. I am not yet driving, and I still experience "brain fog" and some memory loss.

Needless to say, I heartily agree with the Session's decision to ask me to step down. The Kirk needs to be preparing for its future leadership and this takes time.

Some have told me that their retirement was the happiest day of their life. I'm not quite there. I am still grieving at the loss of my health and vocation. I have been in ministry of some sort for almost forty-nine years—I'm not sure what to do with myself now. Still, I am relieved-- the pressure to get well quickly has been lifted and I do think adjusting to retirement will come in due time.

I will continue to be your good friend, but my



Pastor Bill Bailey

pastoral duties at the Kirk have come to an end. This has to be so in order for your new pastor to have room to grow and be loved the same way I was. Transitions are difficult, but the Lord will be with us all through these changes.

I am grateful for all the ways you have cared for us these past years. We're grateful for all the cards, visits, phone calls and food! Most of all, I am thankful for the friendships and ministry we've shared. We have accomplished much these past years and it is with the deepest affection that I wish you well. Thank you.

In Christ's service, Bill

Maack-Ormsbee Scholarship applications accepted through June 30!

Scholarship applications for the 2024-2025 academic year are being received until June 30, 2024. Applicants must be members/employees or families of members/employees of Presbyterian Kirk in The Pines for a minimum of three years. The applicant must have proof of registration at an accredited State University/College, Presbyterian Church USA university or an accredited trade school before the fall academic semester.

The Maack-Ormsbee Scholarship Fund was initially established with a contribution of \$30,000 by

Kirk member Pat Ormsbee in honor of her late first husband Kenneth Maack. The fund is held at Texas Presbyterian Foundation. The scholarship is administered by a sub-committee of the Christian Education committee of the Kirk in The Pines. Applications and more information may be obtained from the church office or by contacting Susan Morrow 501-231-5541.

Contributed by Susan Morrow, Christian Education Committee member

In the Clerk's Corner I try to present not only important information about what's going on at the Kirk, but also a "feel" for how the Session meeting went. In that vein, let me tell you about the March meeting. It was a sad and heart wrenching one. Invoking the Holy Spirit and praying for discernment, we spent most of the meeting discussing what our best course of action might be for the future of the Kirk. In the previous month we had appointed a small subcommittee to call on Bill to hear his thoughts about the future. In his wonderfully honest, and straightforward way, he told us that every day he wrestles with the idea of retiring now or getting well enough to come back to the Kirk for a year or two before retiring. He just didn't know how long it would take him to be well enough to come back. After the subcommittee reported back to the Session, we finally came to a hard wrought but unanimous decision to ask Bill to step aside now rather than later. We would be facing the future without him one way or the other. For the good of the Kirk it was decided to begin now. It was the Session's prayer that this decision was in Bill's best interest too.

After the Session meeting the small subcommittee returned to talk to Bill about our motion and vote. He was accepting of it and settled on his final date—April 30th. The question was then how to communicate the decision to the congregation.

The Clerk's Corner

Ruth
Hamilton



He suggested a letter to the congregation as well as an e-mail, an announcement at both Saturday and Sunday worship services and an article in the newsletter. He chose to tell the staff and a few other people himself.

So, there you have a "feel" for the April Session meeting--not an easy one, but one done with trust in God's guiding hand on both the Kirk and on our beloved pastor, Bill Bailey.

Highlights from the March Session meeting are listed below:

Church Statistics: (as of March 8, 2024):

Members: 221 Family Units: 150

Communion was held at the worship services on March 2 and 3, 2024. Communion was taken to our Mt. Carmel residents on March 1, 2024, by Ruth Hamilton and Clark Mowry.

Deaths (since February 9, 2024): Robert Foster, March 17, 2024. No services are planned at the Kirk.

Are you ready for a "faith-lift"?

It's Arkansas Presbyterian Pilgrim time again! If you would like to experience a "faith-lift" in an informal setting of fun and fellowship, come join us at Ferncliff Camp on April 18-21. The cost is \$200 for food and lodging, but scholarships are available. For more information visit [www. Pilgrimage-arkansas.org](http://www.Pilgrimage-arkansas.org). You may also contact Patty Barnes (501-915-2074) or Martha Nielsen (501-922-0672), who will be on the staff for the weekend and would love to welcome you!



Celtic cross at Ferncliff camp.

Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed!



Easter service 2024 was a joyous celebration of Christ's resurrection. The worshipful service, led by Reverend Stewart Smith, was graced by beautiful music. The Kirk choir, led by Randy Toney and accompanied by a brass and percussion orchestra, Donna Toney, pianist, and Fran Stroud, organist offered the glorious anthem *Thine Be the Glory*, music by George Frederic Handel arranged by J. Marty Cope. Rev. Smith reminded the congregation of the significance of the announcement of the resurrection to the disciples by Mary Magdalene as recorded in the Gospel of John.

Robert Sonnen photo

Women's Sunday will be April 21st

Mark your calendars for PW Women's Sunday, April 21st! The service will be led by Reverend Jocelyn Wildwright. A special women's ensemble will be led by Susan Morrow, PW Moderator, with special music for reflection provided by Donna Toney, Kirk Organist/Pianist. Rev. Wildwright's biosketch is below. The service will be followed by cake and cookies at coffee hour.

"Jocelyn serves as Ferncliff's Chaplain and Program Director, overseeing summer and year-round camp programs. She also produces Ferncliff's "In-a-Box" materials, like Camp-in-a-Box and Advent-in-a-Box. A Vanderbilt alumna, Jocelyn graduated from Columbia Theological Seminary with a Master of Divinity (MDiv) and a Master of Arts in Practical Theology (MAPT) with a focus on Christian Education with Children and Youth." (from ferncliff.org)



Reverend Jocelyn Wildwright

In Memoriam

Robert Lincoln Foster



Robert Lincoln Foster, 99, of Hot Springs Village, Arkansas passed away March 17, 2024. He was born September 10, 1924, in Monmouth, Ill., to James and Hannah Foster.

Robert was preceded in death by his loving wife, Marjorie Foster; his parents; son, James Richard Foster; brother Richard H. Foster.

Survivors include his daughter and son-in-law Nancy and James M. Patton. A visitation will be held in Homewood, Ill., at Tews-Ryan Funeral Home with a private burial at Skyline Memorial Park in Monee, Ill.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Habitat for Humanity, Chicago South Region.

Online condolences may be offered at www.caruth-hale.com.

John 14:3 *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.*

Kirk in the Pines Financial Report Year to Date: February 29, 2024

	Month		Year to Date	
	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>
General Fund				
Receipts	\$38,992	\$27,995	\$77,984	\$79,381
Disbursements	\$38,992	<u>\$36,558</u>	\$77,784	<u>\$63,092</u>
Difference		\$(8,563)		\$16,289

Endowment and Program Funds

Checking Balance \$117,098

Special Funds (January 31, 2023)

Memorial Fund	\$91,680
Choir Fund	\$10,506
Luke 12:48 Fund	\$295,218
Programs Fund	\$12,845
Endowment Fund	\$748,524
Maack-Ormsbee Fund	\$56,280

Total Special Funds \$1,205,053

Total All Funds \$1,332,151

Mission Offering \$250



***Pantry boxes need to
be filled- - - by you!***

Financial Reports

Beginning with the May newsletter our financial reports will occur quarterly. Due to the normal delay in closing the books this means reports will occur in the May, August, October, and February newsletters. If questions occur in the interim direct them to Sharon Gardner, Finance Committee Moderator.



Happy dates



April Birthdays

4	Pat Kuntz	17	Lu Otto	25	Bill Bailey
8	Ron Lovett	18	Michael Erickson	26	Sheri Swan
	Tom Martick	22	Ruth Richards	28	Ken Poole
9	Judy Sonnenburg	23	Sandy Adams		
10	Stanley Luczkowski	23	Jean Fisher		
14	Blair Stroud		Doris Simmons		
16	Marty Volkema	24	Cheryle Dean		

April Anniversaries

3	Sandy and Jim Adams	31yrs	16	Beverly and Charles McFadden	32yrs
4	Cindy and Frank Morgan	51yrs			

Congregational Care Committee needs you, your caring heart, and your helping spirit!

The Kirk Congregational Care Committee welcomes anyone interested in joining! We offer help with rides, grocery shopping, home and facility visits, meal delivery, greeting cards, a prayer tree and so much more.

Please contact Susan Pendergrass (407-595-2945) or Carol Clark (501-915-8497) to learn more about this active and caring group that meets monthly. And if you've been involved previously, please consider helping again!

Matthew 25:35-36

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.



(Changes may occur – check with Kirk office)

Bible Study– Cancelled until further notice.

PW Women's Sunday- April 21st, 10:00 a.m., Sanctuary, Rev. Jocelyn Wildwright

Listening Skills Class, April 18, 25, May 2, 9.

HUG Share (Grief Support)
April 18, 2:00, Smallhorn Parlor

Ageless Grace/Tai Chi- April 2, 9, 16, 23, 30- 3:30 Hoffius Hall

Pilgrimage Renewal-April 13, 10:00, Smallhorn Parlor

Helping Hands-April 9-9:00

Choir Rehearsal- Wed. 3:00, April 3, 10, 17, 24

Committee Meetings

Session- April 5, 10:00

Administration- April 8, 10:00

Christian Ed. – April 18, 9:00

Communications- April 24, 1:45

Congregational Care- April 15, 10:00

Fellowship- April 9, 10:00

Mission Committee April 11, 3:00

Kirk Staff

William B. Bailey- Senior Pastor

Randy Toney- Music Director

Donna Toney- Organist/Pianist

Ruth Manweiler- Pianist (informal worship)

Carol Clark- Congregational Care Coordinator

Chris Taylor-Wilmoth- Secretary

Beverly Schaumburg- Business Administrator

Arthur “Chip” Johnson- Sexton

Session

Dave Hamilton- Administration

Bill Worthley- Building

Martha Nielsen- Christian Education

Bob Morrow- Communications (Trustee)

Susan Pendergrass- Congregational Care

Pat Kuntz- Fellowship (Trustee)

Sharon Gardner- Finance

Priscilla Hayek- Grounds/Memorial Garden

Ben Meek- Member Outreach

Judith Rosenthal- Missions

Gail Salmen- Worship (Trustee)

PW Moderator- Susan Morrow

A Voice in the Pines is a monthly publication of Presbyterian Kirk in the Pines. It is produced and edited by the Kirk's Communication Committee- Bob Morrow, Moderator.

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