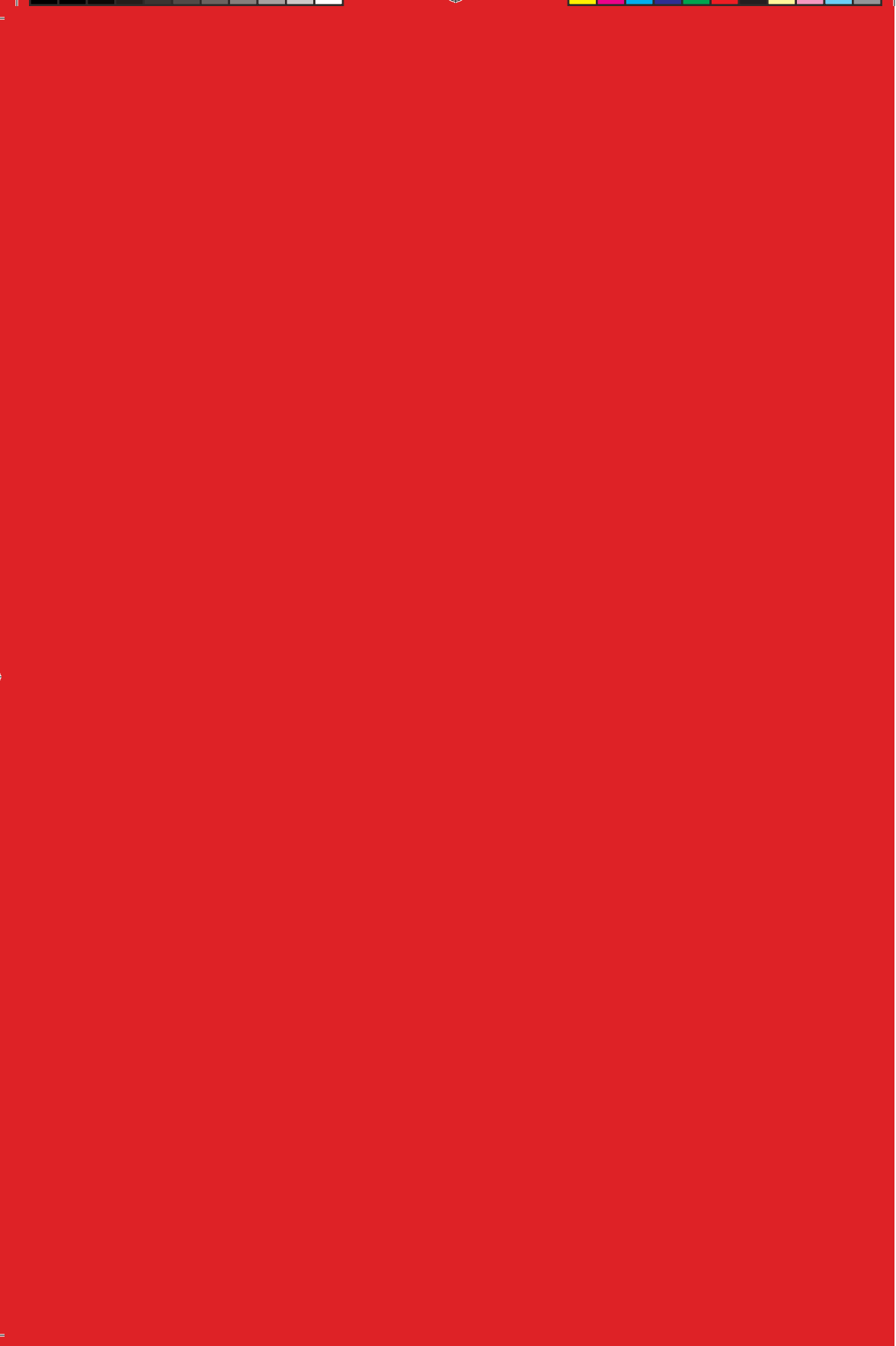




SERVE

MAKING AN IMPACT: FIRST CHURCH COMMUNITY OUTREACH







Welcome

At First Church, our mission is to serve others with love and compassion, reflecting the heart of Jesus. As Matthew 25:40 reminds us, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” We are also called to live out James 1:27 by caring for orphans and widows in their distress. Together, we strive to be the hands and feet of Christ, bringing hope and light to those in need.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Empowering and uplifting those in our community through consistent service and compassion, as we live out Jesus’ promise in John 10:10: ‘I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.’

Let's make a difference together!







Fighting Hunger in Our Community

BACKPACK BUDDIES

Many children in our community face the harsh realities of poverty and food insecurity. For these children, the meals they receive at school—breakfast and lunch provided Monday through Friday—are often their primary source of nutrition. But what happens on the weekends? That's where Backpack Buddies steps in. Through this program, First Church partners with other churches in our community to try and ensure that kids have access to nutritious, kid-friendly, pre-packed meals on Saturdays and Sundays. Each month, we provide over 3,800 meals* to children in need, standing in the gap and offering stability and sustenance to the most vulnerable in our community.

FIRST CHURCH FOOD PANTRY

At First Church, we operate a food pantry where individuals and families in need can come by to receive groceries to help sustain them. These groceries are generously provided by the members of our congregation, in efforts to share resources and support one another. Our food pantry aims to alleviate hunger and provide hope to those facing difficult times in our community.

FEEDING THE HOMELESS

Several times a month, dedicated teams from First Church come together to prepare and deliver meals to the homeless in our community. In addition to food, we supply essential hygiene products in efforts to care for both the obvious and often forgotten needs of the individual. It is our hope that our commitment to serving these often overlooked individuals in our community bolsters their feelings of self-worth and dignity, while also meeting their physical needs.

OPERATION IN-AS-MUCH

Every other month, an enthusiastic group of First Church volunteers serves breakfast at Operation In-As-Much, a local organization committed to serving the homeless in our community. This initiative not only provides a warm meal but also fosters a sense of connection and support for those in need. By volunteering our time, we strive to make a positive impact on the lives of individuals experiencing homelessness, demonstrating our commitment to compassionate service within our community. Together, we can help nourish both the body and spirit of those we serve.

**3,808 monthly meals for 544 students*

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Investing in the Next Generation

BACKPACKS FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

When a child is taken into foster care, they often arrive with little to nothing of their own. That's where First Church steps in. Through our Backpacks for Foster Care program through Cape Fear Valley Hospital, we provide children with age- and gender-specific backpacks filled with clothing, toys, and other essentials. These backpacks offer not only practical items, but also a sense of comfort and belonging, giving these children something special to call their own during a challenging and uncertain time.

BACK TO SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE

Each August, as our community prepares to return to school, in efforts to support those children who may go without, our church collects school supplies, such as: backpacks, notebooks and writing utensils. Our hope at First Church is that by providing these basic educational necessities we are able to be a part of removing barriers to education that some children face and by doing so empower them to feel ready and confident in the new school year. First Church aims to ensure that every child has the tools they need to learn and thrive at school. We do this knowing that an investment in the children in our community is an investment in our community's future.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BOOK VENDING MACHINE

We know that learning to read is not only a critical part of a child's educational development, but what opens the mind to not only new ideas, but God's Word. To foster that invaluable opportunity, First Church has partnered with Coca-Cola to place a book vending machine in an elementary school in our community. This vending machine provides free and easy access to a variety of books, encouraging a love for reading and fostering literacy skills among young learners.







Caring for Health & Well-Being

CARE CLINIC MEAL

The Care Clinic offers free health care services to anyone in our community who lives below the poverty level. In support of this vital initiative, First Church has partnered with the Care Clinic to provide meals for the dedicated volunteers and offer administrative assistance. By working together, First Church aims to support the Care Clinic, and the compassionate individuals that make it possible, in providing essential and accessible health services to those in need.

PEDIATRIC E.R. ACTIVITY BAGS

Each month, we provide Cape Fear Hospital with activity bags* that are given to every child who is admitted. These bags are thoughtfully designed to help ease the anxiety often experienced by hospitalized children. Inside, they will find engaging activities that can bring comfort and joy during their stay. Through this initiative, First Church strives to ensure that every child feels the love and support of Christ, even in challenging times. Our hope is that by providing these small comforts during their visit to our local hospital, we open a door to not only the children, but their family, and turn what might have been a negative experience into an opportunity to connect to God and the church.

HOSPITAL & CANCER CLINIC HOSPITALITY

We at First Church are not strangers to the emotionally trying time that occurs when an individual is admitted to the hospital. Be it the individual themselves or their family members, these times are stressful and challenging and it is hard to know what to do or how to prepare for a stay at the hospital. From our own experiences, First Church knows that even eliminating just one worry in this critical time is invaluable to the individuals involved. That is why First Church puts together and provides snack baskets to those we know are hospitalized. It is our belief, from experience, that these baskets make a significant difference by providing comfort and sustenance. While eliminating an extra decision to be made, and providing a reminder that those individuals are surrounded by people who care about them and have them in their minds and hearts.

HAND OF HOPE PREGNANCY CENTER

Hand of Hope Pregnancy Center offers free ultrasounds to pregnant mothers, aiming to provide them with the information and support they need to consider alternatives to abortion. Throughout the year, we collaborate with them on various projects that assist in maintaining their facility, including cleaning and organizing their children's boutique. The objective of this partnership is to support expectant mothers who are questioning how they may support their babies by providing them with the knowledge they need to make an informed decision while providing them with resources to begin their journey through motherhood.







Caring for Our Community & Environment

FIRST RESPONDERS APPRECIATION

First Church is immensely grateful for all of our First Responders. While we hope to never need their services, we know that when emergencies arise, they will be there for us in our time of need. To honor their dedication and sacrifice, each year, on 9/11, we take the time to say “Thank you!” by providing meals to our local heroes. This annual recognition is our way of expressing appreciation for their unwavering commitment to keeping our community safe and secure. Their courage and service inspire us, and we are proud to stand behind them.

ROADSIDE CLEANUP

First Church has been proudly located off Cumberland Drive for the last 50 years. In the last year, through the Adopt-A-Street initiative we adopted the portion of Cumberland Road our church overlooks, from the intersection at Owen Drive to the roundabout at Camden Road. This entails monthly clean-up efforts from our serve volunteers. Through this commitment we are able to beautify our community while instilling a sense of pride in and responsibility to our surroundings and our environment. We hope our efforts will inspire others to feel and do the same.







Seasons of Giving

CHRISTMAS BUILD-A-BEARS

Each Christmas, First Church brings joy to every child at Cape Fear Hospital by giving them a teddy bear. No child wants to spend Christmas at the hospital, and we hope that this small gift from our church stokes their Christmas spirit and reminds them and their family that God's love in sending his son Jesus is the true reason we celebrate. These cuddly companions offer comfort and companionship during a challenging time, reminding children that they are loved and cared for. Our mission is to spread warmth and cheer during the holiday season, one teddy bear at a time.

MOTHER'S & FATHER'S DAY GIFT BAGS

Every Mother's Day and Father's Day, First Church joyfully celebrates the new lives gifted to us by God. Recognizing that every child is a precious blessing, we take this opportunity to honor and support families welcoming newborns at Cape Fear Valley. To show our enthusiasm and offer reassurance, we deliver diaper bag care packages* to these families, filled with essential items such as pacifiers, burp cloths, diapers, and more. Our goal is to provide practical assistance and to celebrate the miracle of life, ensuring that new parents feel embraced and encouraged during this special time.

NURSING HOME CARE

On Valentine's Day, Independence Day, and other holidays, we take some time to visit and minister to residents of local nursing homes. We arrive with gifts in hand, offering companionship to those who may feel isolated. While many of these individuals have supportive families, some lack that connection, and that's where we attempt to stand in the gap. Our visits aim to brighten their days and honor the opportunity we have to spend time with them, fostering a sense of community and warmth during the holiday season.

**60 Mother's Day bags and 60 Father's Day bags*







Get Involved

HOW TO VOLUNTEER

Option One: *First Saturday Serve*

Join us for a First Saturday Serve event, which takes place on the first Saturday of each month at 8:00AM in our Multipurpose Room. This is a great opportunity to get involved and make a difference in our community!

Option Two: *Join a Serve Team*

Connect with our Serve leadership to become part of a Serve Team. This option allows you to engage more deeply in our service projects and initiatives, working alongside others who share your passion for helping those in need.



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SUPPORT SERVE

Your generosity makes a difference! Scan the QR code below to support our outreach efforts.













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