



# FirstNews

## JUNE 2024

### Nurturing Leadership in Youth THE WILL APPLEBY AWARD



*William Everett Appleby  
February 2, 1982 -  
September 2, 2001*

"To say that Will Appleby was an outstanding youth does not do justice to the influence he had during his life and the kind person he was," Jean Cochrane, an Appleby Award Committee member and close family friend, explained. "I chose to be a part of

this committee because I am one of the adults impacted by Will's life. He was always fun to be with, no matter your age, and even when he was the life of the party, he was always looking around to make sure that everyone was included.

"On the way to the hospital the day Will was born, his parents dropped his brother Mark at my house, making me one of the first to learn of Will's birth," Jean reminisced. "Throughout his life, it was a joy to watch Will grow and to experience his fun, funny, and serious sides."

Will's parents, Jim and Brenda Appleby, will tell you that, like many children, Will faced difficulties, but he loved life and First Presbyterian Church. In fact, one of Will's top priorities was attending youth group (called Presbyterian Youth Connection or PYC) and promoting the goals of its mission. He could always be counted on to call his friends to tell them what time he was picking them up for PYC. He emerged as a young leader and was relied upon by adult counselors. He helped organize PYC retreats, summer programs, and a mission trip to Mexico.

The Will Appleby Award – given annually in Will's honor – is awarded to youth who share Will's love and dedication to this community of faith. Each year, members of the congregation nominate outstanding youth to receive the award, which was established by Will's family

after his tragic death in an automobile accident in 2001.

The Appleby Award Committee comprises church members, past recipients of the award, former youth advisors, and a childhood friend of Will's. Jean said, "It is an honor to serve on this committee as we encourage all our youth to follow the model Will set for them."



*Gathering shoes for Westerly Hills Academy*



*Youth collect the offering on Youth Sunday*

In April, the committee announced the 2024 recipient of the Will Appleby Award: Kate Herring. Jean explained: "Kate stood out to us as a person who faithfully attends PYC on Sunday evenings, and she often brings friends. She participates in outreach ministries and attends youth conferences. Kate's enthusiasm, welcoming attitude, and love for the church reminded those of us who knew Will so much of him."

Kate further embodies the characteristics the committee seeks through her volunteer work with Bellxcel, Westerly Hills Academy, Core Church, and the church nursery. She has served on the


Youth Council and Youth Director Search Committee.

When asked about the award, Kate shared: "I feel so honored to be on a list of amazing people helping to keep Will's memory alive. I know how special he was, not only to the Appleby family but to our church as well, and I am overwhelmed with gratitude that the committee felt I was worthy of this award."

The award aims to recognize and encourage leadership, as today's youth will lead the future of our church in a changing world. Several recipients have gone on to serve at First Presbyterian, including one youth adviser, three deacons, two elders, and numerous teachers and committee members.

Kate will undoubtedly carry on Will's legacy and make First Presbyterian proud. Congratulations, Kate!

### Historic Heights HISTORY FAST FACTS



In 1857, the congregation wished to place a silver trumpet atop the steeple. When a steeplejack could not be found for the job, a deacon from the congregation climbed the 187-foot high steeple to place the trumpet. The facade, entrance, narthex, and bell tower foundation of our present church buildings were part of the 1857 structure.

In 1883, the church steeple was removed, having been damaged in a wind storm. The present steeple was installed in 1884.

On June 27, 1884, the Daily Charlotte Observer reported on the escapade of two small boys who shimmied up the 185-foot scaffolding.

There are no plans to make our current deacons (or children) climb the steeple!

## 2024 Honorary Life Memberships

Congratulations to Barbara Williamson and Marwen McDowell, who were recognized at the Presbyterian Women Birthday Dinner with Honorary Life Memberships. This award is conferred in recognition of faithful service in some areas of the church.



Barbara Williamson and Marwen McDowell

## Room In the Inn HOSPITALITY AND COMPASSION

Did you know that because of the hard work of over 170 volunteers, First Presbyterian was able to open our doors to 10 unsheltered neighbors every Monday night from December through March (including Christmas Day and New Year's Day!)? Many hands helped show hospitality by providing a warm meal, a nice place to sleep, and breakfast and lunch for the next day. Henry Allison, a new volunteer this year, said, "After volunteering the first time for Room In the Inn (RITI), I was hooked. My intention was to volunteer once, but that didn't happen. The folks we served were so appreciative that I was humbled and continued volunteering. Even though this season of RITI has ended, I'm excited to do my next volunteering service at Roof Above. Please come and join me! 1 Peter 4:8-9 says: 'Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaining.'"

First Presbyterian has many local outreach partners in need of volunteers. Consider using some of your free time this summer to volunteer! Opportunities for service are kept up to date on our website. Visit [firstpres-charlotte.org/local-outreach](http://firstpres-charlotte.org/local-outreach) or scan the QR code to view a list of current opportunities.



## Advocacy Focus: Civil Rights Trip

Have you ever walked across a bridge that played a major role in our history? Or witnessed the anguish still present today in a person who was brutally attacked by police and firemen when they were young? Have you ever thought about what those four young girls were thinking about, chatting about, and doing just before a bomb blew up outside their church basement window, killing them instantly?



Travelers visit Edmund Pettus Bridge, Selma, AL

For the travelers who went on the Civil Rights Trip from April 18-21, the answer to all of these questions is "yes." There were 27 on the bus to Alabama, led by the Revs. Lucy Crain of First Presbyterian and Delton Farmer of First United Presbyterian. Larry Bosc, an experienced tour guide, organized the trip, which led the group to different sites in Montgomery, Selma, and Birmingham, Alabama. Through shared experiences (such as a flat bus tire) and deep conversations, new friendships and alliances were formed among the pilgrims.



In Montgomery, the group visited three deeply moving sites established by the Equal Justice Initiative: the National Memorial for Peace and Justice (also known as the National Lynching Memorial); the Legacy Museum: From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration; and the Freedom Monument Sculpture Park. In Selma, the group walked across the Edmund Pettus Bridge, which still stands today as a solemn monument to the courage and sacrifice of those who marched across it in 1965, facing

down violence and injustice in their quest for equality. In Birmingham, travelers visited "Dynamite Hill" and Kelly Ingram Park, ground zero of Bull Connor's brutal attack on participants in the Children's March. In all three cities, masterful tour guides with first-hand experience brought sites of the Civil Rights Movement to life.

The culmination of this meaningful journey was Sunday worship at 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham. "The experience nearly brought me to tears," Janet Lyman, a member of the church's Anti-racism Subcommittee, said. "We felt so welcome, so warmly received, where we might have been greeted with skepticism or hostility." This beautiful church remains strong today, 60 years after the horrific bombing that took the lives of those four little girls.

*"We will remember. With hope, because hopelessness is the enemy of justice. With courage, because peace requires bravery. With persistence, because justice is a constant struggle. With faith, because we shall overcome."*

*The National Memorial for Peace and Justice  
Montgomery, Alabama*



The National Memorial for Peace and Justice, Montgomery, AL

"The trip brought to life for me the civil rights struggles of the 1940s, '50s, and '60s," Hal Clarke, First Presbyterian member, explained. "We learned of many individual acts of heroism as well as the sacrifices – intimidation, bodily harm, and death – of those who were fighting injustice to secure the civil rights of African Americans. We also saw the hate, brutality, and ugliness of those fighting to maintain white supremacy. The experience left me asking myself what role I should play in opposing today's injustices as I seek to follow Christ."