

# MINUTE FOR MISSION

CENTRAL REGION (AUBURN, ALABAMA)

## THE PENTECOST OFFERING — PRESENCE FOR PREGNANT PRISONERS

When did you first learn about God? Who pointed out the glimpses of God in everyday life? For many, it happened during the first years of life. It was the Sunday School teachers who taught us about God's love and Jesus' power. It was the summer camp counselors and leaders at youth conferences who opened our eyes to God's truth. And it was through fellowship and service opportunities in our early adult years that refined our expressions of faithfulness and thanks.

For First Presbyterian Church (FPC) in Auburn, Alabama, advocating for children at risk and their mothers is one way they encourage glimpses of God. At any one time, there are 9,000–10,000 pregnant women behind bars. FPC has contributed their retained portion of the Pentecost Offering to the Alabama Prison Birth Project, which works with incarcerated mothers and mothers-to-be providing weekly prenatal and postnatal training as well as nutritious meals. If participants so choose, they can also have a pregnancy companion that will accompany them throughout the birth, including at the hospital where only these companions are allowed to join the medical and law enforcement staff in the birthing room. You can imagine how scared and alone these mothers might feel without that support. The mothers only get 24 hours with their baby before separation and often leave the hospital well before any family member or social service picks up the newborn.

FPC's Pentecost Offering gifts have allowed pregnancy companions to capture the memories of these births through picture-taking during labor and delivery, and before mom and baby separate, printing these pictures for the mothers to take back to the

prison. They also provided funds for high-quality microphones to capture audio of mothers singing and talking to their newborns.

We often take contact with our loved ones for granted, but for these families, a simple picture or a short recording of a mother singing to her child can mean everything. For the child, it is one small way that the Church is trying to help families raise up children with opportunities to grow in faith.

Our gifts to this offering will provide opportunities for faith formation for young adults, through the Young Adult Volunteer Program; for youth, through Ministries with Youth, including Presbyterian Youth Triennium; and for children, through the Educate a Child, Transform the World national initiative. Additionally, 40 percent of the offering will remain with us locally for [Local designation]. As you join in this ministry, please give generously.

*Let us pray,*

*Protecting Spirit,*

*open our eyes to see your children in need,  
and embolden our hearts so we might act,  
so children, youth and young adults  
in our community and around the world  
might live and thrive,  
proclaiming your glory,  
and doing your good work.*

*May our gifts that we offer in your name  
shape the future of your Church.*

*Amen.*