

How Precious

to me are your thoughts, O God! ...
If I would count them,
they are more than the sand.

Psalm 139:17-18, ESV

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
100 W. Church Circle
Kingsport, TN 37660
(423) 245-0104



First Presbyterian Church

The First Press

Seeking to see the Face of Christ...Striving to be the Hands of Christ

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Mark Your Calendar

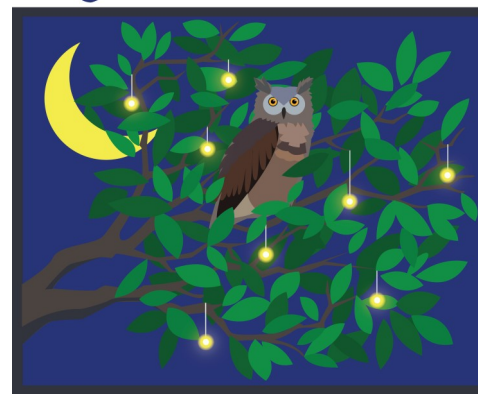
- 7-16 Ice Cream Social
- 7-20 Newsletter Deadline
- 8-13 Sunday School Kickoff & BLT Luncheon
- 9-24 All-Church Picnic

Weekly

Tuesdays
Knuckleheads Men's Bible Study
12:15-1:15 p.m.
History Room

Thursdays
Balance Class
1:15 p.m.
Fellowship Center

JULY



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Half Empty or Half Full

Life is, as one person described it, "10% what happens to us, and 90% how we choose to respond". Is life's cup half empty or half full? Don't answer quickly. You may've been labeled "half empty" by some obnoxious optimist and you now dislike hearing it. The only thing that sets us apart from the crowd is how we choose to react. Every morning when 10 people walk out their front door, five scan the skies for dark clouds, and the other five search for patches of blue. Give that group the same set of facts, some will focus on warning signs, or anything negative, while the others see opportunities, and accentuate the positive.

By now, you may place yourself, a spouse, or a friend in the half empty or half full group. Don't do it. That's not your job. Leave that person to God, and let's go back you. When you look in the mirror, do you have a hard time facing that face? Be honest! You have spent time in both camps, haven't you? You have hung out with the optimists and the pessimists. You may prefer one group. You may feel that one attitude suits your temperament. The truth is, we move back and forth between the groups with equal ease. Do we have any real control in choosing how we react? Does it depend on how stressful the situation is, how long we are tested, or how we feel at the time? Does it depend on how much time or energy that we bring to a challenge? Or does it simply or mainly depend upon...us!

I recall a man in my previous church who worked a one-liner into almost every conversation, "If it's meant to be, then it's up to me." I would nod at him but then say, "Yes, but always with God's abiding help." Are our reactions totally at the mercy of our moods, or based on how stressful a situation is? I say, "no." Paul, despite the obstacles he faced, did not live under circumstances but above them. To him, it was all about focus and attitude. Let me leave with you with one of his best lines:

"Whatever is true, right, honorable, or pure; if there be anything excellent, or anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things...and the peace of Christ will be with you."

Summer Sunday Worship

8:30 a.m.
Chapel

10:00 a.m.
Sanctuary

Session Highlights

* Interim Executive Presbyter, Rev. Karen Russell will be our guest minister Sunday, September 3.

* Allen Wright (Commissioner) and Tim Arrowsmith (Alternate) will attend the August 5 Presbytery meeting at FPC Morristown.

* Holston Habitat build will be July 20-22. Volunteers are needed for building and providing lunches.

* Outreach continues to REACH OUT for congregation contributions to help the Lypska family; goal of \$3,000.



Youth News

July youth events will be communicated to parents and youth. We will gather a few times for lunch and other special events.

Summer Fun!

July 16
Ice Cream Social



Please come and join us on **Sunday, July 16**, for an Ice Cream Social after the second service in the Fellowship Center. We will serve ice cream and a variety of toppings, so don't miss this special treat!

August 13
Sunday School Kickoff
& BLT Luncheon

September 24
All-Church Picnic

Montreat 2023

Montreat is always a special place for anyone who goes there. This past June we brought 16 youth to learn about how we are God's joy. Each day the youth participated in small groups made up from youth from all over the East coast to discuss, learn, and grow together. Each day they also have worship and keynote speakers to introduce the theme of the day. Many youth mark this as a big part of their faith journey. Montreat is a place where youth can be themselves in a safe environment to really think deeper about where God is and the impact they can have in the world. God met us there and continues to push these youth to be faithful disciples. We are so thankful for a church that supports our youth and we look forward to going back to Montreat again next summer. *(Please see photos in the center section.)*



1st: Phoebe Newell
2nd: Larry Long, Koleta Tilson, Jeff Quillen, Jane Richardson
3rd: Kim Alvis, MaryGail Py
4th: Kevin Heindselman
5th: Troy Aguilar
6th: Charles Beggerow, Kathy Ruffel
7th: Jane Scott
10th: Lew Huettel
11th: Sarah King
13th: Dorothy Lightfoot, Kay McBee
15th: Carolyn Doerfert
16th: Eva Pearson, London Williams
17th: Jordan Harker
18th: Pepper McCary, Lauren McInturff, Carson Bethany, Bill Fortenberry
19th: Emily Gaude
20th: Ashley Hobbs, Mason King
21st: Beckett Arrowsmith
22nd: Karen Thompson, Charlie Babb, Caroline Pearson
23rd: Katrinka Quillen
24th: Greg Francisco
25th: Steve Arthur, Jennie Benton, Diana Johnson-Martin
26th: William Thomidis
27th: Hannah Adams
28th: Elizabeth Wilkins
30th: Audra Moore

Pledge Update - Year to Date

(as of June 26, 2023)

Pledges Budgeted to Date: \$374,200.02
Pledges Received to Date: \$387,567.48
Difference: \$ 13,367.46

Loose Offerings
Budgeted to Date: \$ 14,749.98
Received to Date: \$ 22,684.19
Difference: \$ 7,934.21

Special Offerings -
5 Cents a Meal - May \$2,149.75
(a portion went to KCS Resources)
5 Cents a Meal - June \$817.75
(a portion went to Friends in Need)

From the Finance Office

ONLINE GIVING INSTRUCTIONS

Online giving is available on the church website: www.firstpreskingsport.org. Scroll down to the "Give Online" bubble. Follow the instructions on that page. If you have any questions, please contact the church office at 245-0104.

QR CODE GIVING INSTRUCTIONS



Before you begin you will need to have a QR app installed on your mobile device. For an Apple device go to the App Store and choose a QR scanning app. For an android device go to the Google Play store and choose a QR scanning app. For Apple, staff has tested QR Code Reader and for Android they have tested QR Scanner. If you have any questions, please contact the church office at 245-0104.

Make Your Offering Automatic!

An automatic payment of money from your credit union or bank account to First Presbyterian Church-Kingsport will be convenient for you, especially when traveling, and ensure your offering is received in a timely manner by FPC. Beverly Johnson at FPC would be happy to assist you in setting up automatic payment of your offering.



Next First Press Newsletter Deadline

July 20
August Newsletter

Striving to be the Hands of Christ...

Second Harvest Food Bank



Congratulations and thank you to all of the First Presbyterian Church members and friends, who have volunteered for Second Harvest Food Bank days of service! July completes one year that First Presbyterian volunteers have joined together on the third Wednesday of each month to sort food supplies and pack bags/boxes for distribution to the

approximately 45,000 people in Northeast Tennessee who are in need of food. In this day and time, that is an extraordinary number of people who depend upon Second Harvest and its partners for regular food delivery. Over these past 12 months, 35 individuals have represented FPC in this meaningful Outreach program. It is a great milestone of which we can all be proud.

We will meet once again at Second Harvest Food Bank on **July 19, 2023** to glorify God with our time and talents by continuing to serve him in this process of getting food to those in need. If you would like to join us in this effort, please call or text Bob Stoots at 423-782-6280.



Summer Breakfast Bag Help

Our volunteer sign ups for the summer Breakfast Ministry schedule are VERY low so far. We know that this is a busy time for families, but we will be without Beta Club student help over the summer, and we need our church to step up more than ever. If you are willing and able to donate an hour of your time on a Saturday or Sunday morning, please reach out to Sarah Good (sar4680@gmail.com) or Becca Wright (abwright@chartertn.net) to sign up. We have served 300+ bags per day for the past few weeks, so we need your help to keep this ministry going!

Waverly Road Food Pantry

Item of the Month: Peanut Butter

Please drop donations in the basket outside the chapel door or in front of the stained glass on Sunday mornings. Your donations mean so much to those who don't have enough to eat. Thank you!



“...and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday.”

~ Isaiah 58:10

Family Promise Update

First Presbyterian Church served as a Family Promise host church to families with minor children for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic. During the week of June 4 – 11 two families, each consisting of a mother and two children, spent time in our church (shelter, food, and personal interaction). Thank you for supporting this important ministry. Also, special thanks go to Gary and Mary Beth Hallen, Emily Pridemore, Betty Blass, Steve Miller, and Larry Maston for serving as Evening Hosts; to Bob Stoots, Gary Tucker, Jim Amstutz, and Allen Wright for serving as Overnight Hosts, and to DeeDee Dietrich, Catherine Tucker, Carol Dixon, and Jane Scott for providing meals. Our next Family Promise hosting will be at our partner church, St. Dominic Catholic Church, from **August 27 to September 3**. If you would like more information or to volunteer for hosting or providing meals, please contact Gray Stothart at 423-276-3828 or GSTOTHART@EMBARQMAIL.COM.

Update on Oksana, Maxim and Alisa

Since Monday, June 12, Oksana has been working a dayshift schedule at The Blake from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Friday. Her new job is in Housekeeping where her friend Yelena also works. This change came at Oksana's request, so she could have more time with Maxim and Alisa. It will also simplify her transportation needs considerably, because she and Yelena can now ride to work together. She has become acquainted with Marjorie Watford who lives at The Blake.

Oksana was quite relieved when she passed the written portion of Tennessee Driver's License exam a few weeks ago. She says she still needs more practice on the road test. She has anxiety about accelerating and confidently knowing the perimeter of the car. Yelena's husband has been tutoring her on road test skills, and she hopes he will be able to continue.

Interacting with co-workers at The Blake seems to have had a positive influence on her picking up more English words. But as you would expect, sentences are still a little beyond her reach. Conversations are a bit more comfortable for her, but Google Translator App is still essential to any dialog. Even with that tool, it often requires additional interpretation to be sure correct meaning is conveyed. She is still taking English lessons through the Kingsport Literacy Council and does not think her new work schedule will interfere with that.

Volunteer High School administrators replied saying Maxim could continue attending there, but their school bus could not continue picking him up and returning him home. Oksana is aware that if he switches to Sullivan County Schools, he would be assigned to West Ridge High School near Tri-Cities Airport. As an alternative, they are investigating the possibility that he might attend Cedar View Christian School which is located 3-4 blocks from where they live. They have a conference scheduled Friday, June 16, with representatives at Cedar View to discuss Maxim's attending there next year. Alisa has been accepted to begin pre-school at Cedar View Christian School in the fall. This summer, she is attending children's summer camp at the Kingsport YMCA.

Volunteers from First Presbyterian donated enough money to pay Oksana's rent for three months. She was quite surprised and grateful by this news. Through Google Translator she says "Me and my children are so thankful for everything that members of First Presbyterian Church are doing for us. God bless you all."

