

# 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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July 2024

## Mark Your Calendar

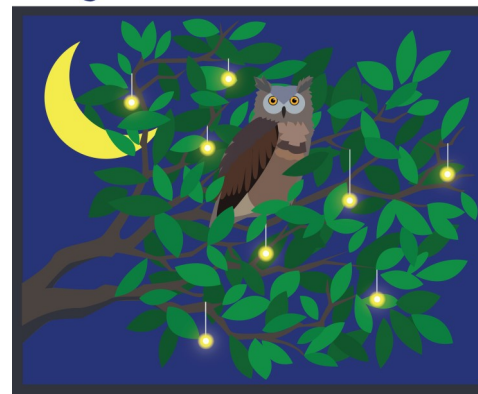
- 7-4 Church Office closed
- 7-14 Ice Cream Social
- 7-21 Space for Grace Worship
- 7-22 Newsletter Deadline
- 8-11 Sunday School Kickoff & BLT Luncheon
- 9-29 Church Picnic at Allandale

## 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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office@firstpreskingsport.org  
www.firstpreskingsport.org

## Getting Rid of the Middle Man

Many people find **ORGANIZED RELIGION** disappointing. It promises more than it delivers. How do we simplify Christianity and find the joy that first sparked **our interest in the faith**? My suggestion:

**GET RID OF THE MIDDLEMAN. SEEK GOD FOR YOURSELF, DISCOVER HIS TRUTH, DISCERN HIS WAYS FIRST-HAND.**

If I did my job well, I'd work myself **OUT OF A JOB** every few years. You have a **BIBLE**; you can study. You have a **HEART**; you can pray. You have a **MIND**; you can think. Speaking for all **MIDDLEMEN/WOMEN** out there, you must move **BEYOND US**. Don't grow dependent on us. No one can do your praying, your studying, or your serving for you. Nothing, not even a Cross, posed a greater risk to Jesus than preparing his Disciples for his leaving. They were dependent on him and unsure if they'd even survive without him. They resemble **CLOWNS** more than **HEROES**; they constantly trip over themselves. As his time ran out, Jesus withdrew from crowds, spent less time teaching in public and spent more time **TRAINING HIS DISCIPLES** in private. He mentored them. He wanted them to stand on their own two feet, and it's the same goal God has for us. Jesus knew **HOW VULNERABLE** they were but there are no spiritual short cuts. Imagine **their learning curve**:

**How do you watch a man heal diseases, love unlovable people, without asking "Are we supposed to do that?" Or, hear him spin stories as if he were born to tell them, without asking, "Is that now my job?"**

They learned how to read people/read scripture; how to handle success and failure; how to transition from being a follower to being a leader! We all have equal value in God's eyes, equal access in prayer, and equal responsibility for nurturing our faith. There is only **ONE TRUE RABBI**, Jesus once said, and only one worthy of our loyalty. In Christ, God cut the **middleman out of religion**. We are all precious to God, all equally important to God's good purposes for this world. Our spiritual **ROLE MODELS**, the **MIDDLEMEN/WOMEN** who shaped our lives, made their mark but there is **no substitute** for our own involvement. We grow only by direct encounter. We pray instead of just talking about prayer; we **read scripture** instead of waiting for someone to read it for us.

### PROVERB...

**WHEN THE STUDENT IS READY, THE TEACHER WILL APPEAR.**

Are you ready? Your true teacher- the Holy Spirit - is ready. Start by vowing to learn something new from Jesus every day and allow him room in your lives to challenge/improve you.



## Sunday Worship

8:45 a.m.  
Chapel

11:00 a.m.  
Sanctuary

## Readings for Acts Sermon Series

Below are the readings for July for Mike's summer sermon series so that you will have time to ponder them before coming to worship.

**July 7**

"Expanding the Family Room"  
Acts 8

**July 14**

"The God of Second Chances"  
Acts 9:1-9

**July 21**

"The Small Things Matter"  
Acts 9:36

**July 28**

"Christianity Goes Viral"  
Acts 11:19-26

## Reception for Mark Davis

Please join us as we bid farewell to our beloved music director, Mark Davis, who is retiring after more than 18 years at First Presbyterian. A reception honoring Mark will be held in the church foyer following the 11:00 a.m. worship service on July 28.



## Summer Fun!

**July 14**

Ice Cream Social

Please come and join us on **Sunday, July 14**, 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 11**

Sunday School Kickoff  
& BLT Luncheon

**September 29**

All-Church Picnic at Allandale



## Space for Grace Summer Schedule

9:45 a.m. in the Fellowship Center  
3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month

**July 21**  
**August 18**

*Be on the lookout for the Fall schedule later!  
Text @fpcs4g to 81010 to be on the text list for this  
worship service*



**1st:** Phoebe Newell

**2nd:** Larry Long, Koleta Tilson, Jeff Quillen,  
Jane Richardson

**3rd:** Kim Alvis, MaryGail Py

**4th:** Kevin Heindselman

**5th:** Troy Aguilar-Smith

**6th:** Charles Beggerow, Kathy Ruffel

**7th:** Jane Scott

**10th:** Lew Huettel

**11th:** Sarah King

**13th:** Dorothy Lightfoot

**14th:** Warren Sanders

**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

Happy  
Birthday!

## Session Highlights

♦ Morris Hadden/ Commissioner and Richard Meyer/  
Alternate were approved for the Saturday, August 3,  
2024 Presbytery Meeting at FPC.

## From the Finance Office

### ONLINE GIVING INSTRUCTIONS

Online giving is available on the church web-site: [www.firstpreskingsport.org](http://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.

## Niches Available in the Columbarium

There are niches available in the First Presbyterian columbarium located in the Memorial Garden at the rear of the church. They are designed to accommodate two urns and feature an engraved cover for both decedents. They are reasonably priced and represent a cost-effective ecological approach and appropriate alternative to a traditional cemetery. Details are available through the church office.



## Next First Press Newsletter Deadline

**July 22**  
August Newsletter



# Ways you can SERVE

## Clothes Closet Needs

The Clothes Closet has a need for:

- Men and women's t-shirts
- Shorts
- Athletic socks
- Athletic shoes

## 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.



## The History of Our Church



## Bible School in 1994

Bible School at First Pres in 1994 went on without any problems although major construction involved much of the church. The new fellowship center, the church offices, and the entire back entry way to the church was under construction. What did we do? We moved Bible School to Allandale.

You can see from these photos we "took over the barn area." Can any one identify any of our children? Mary Pierce is teaching basket making to our youth.



## Second Harvest in July

First Presbyterian Church volunteers will gather for a day of fun, fellowship and service at Second Harvest Food Bank on July 17, 2024. Everyone is welcome: members, visitors, family and friends! Summer months offer an opportunity for students (10 years and up) to join in the fun! Please contact Bob Stoots by email, cell or text (423-782-6280) to register for either or both morning session (10:00 a.m. - Noon) or afternoon session (1:00 - 3:00 p.m.). We would love to have you join in!



## Vacation Bible School 2024 "Camp Compassion"



Please see more from VBS in the insert included in this newsletter.



JUNE 2024  
MONTREAT

