

A Message from Amy

Hello, my brothers and sisters,

Have you ever wondered what the story is, behind your favorite hymns? Sit back, because each month I am going to dive deep behind some of what I like to call “church’s greatest hits,” otherwise known as “church bangers,” which means hymns that are well known and loved by many.

This month I want to start off this series with the hymn “It Is Well, With my Soul.” This is a popular hymn with a tragic story. Maybe many of you know the history but for those who don’t, here we go. Composer Horatio Spafford was a successful lawyer and devout Christian in Chicago. His life was defined by immense loss. He lost his son from scarlet fever, and in 1871 he lost his fortune in a fire. At that point, he wanted a change of scenery, so he decided a vacation would do his family some good. While he was taking care of business at home, he decided to send his wife and their four daughters by ship to England, planning to join them later.

While crossing the Atlantic ocean, the ship was involved in a collision and sunk, killing 200 people on board. All four daughters lost their lives, however Anna, his wife, survived the tragedy. Upon arriving in England, she wrote Horatio, saying “saved alone.” What should I do?”

At that point, Horatio immediately set sail for England. During his voyage, the captain summons Horatio to tell him they were passing over the spot where his family’s ship sank. When he passed over the spot, he thought of his daughters and these words of comfort came to his mind, and later he wrote them down:

*When peace like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll
Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to know,
It is well, it is well with my soul.*

I love these words and they bring me comfort when times seem challenging, I know many of you can say the same thing, and whatever we face in our lives, we have a loving God, showing us the way to navigate those trials, so that we can also say, “It is well, it is well with my soul.

-Amy Smith



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First Presbyterian Church

The First Press

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

Vol. 543, Issue 4

April 2026

Mark Your Calendar

- 3-29** Palm Sunday
Easter Egg Hunt
- 4-2** Maundy Thursday
- 4-5** Easter Sunday
- 4-19** Deacon Care Luncheon
- 4-20** Newsletter Deadline

Weekly

Tuesdays

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

Thursdays

Balance Class
1:15 p.m.
Fellowship Center



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A Message from Brad

It’s been called The Greatest Story Ever Told. The story of the Bible, that is. And the greatest story in the Bible is the one that we will remember and celebrate very soon. The story of Easter when we celebrate the empty tomb and the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Like any good story, however, the good news is only truly celebrated when the protagonist (the “good” character) triumphs over the antagonists (whatever “bad” or “evil” forces there are) who stand in opposition. When the protagonist is defeated and the antagonists are triumphant, the story is a tragedy. A story that captivates our attention will ramp up the conflict between these two groups to a point where triumph and tragedy hang in the balance.

To fully appreciate the Easter story for the good news that it is, we need to know the conflict that contributes to the tension in the story. Unfortunately, we usually go from waving palm branches and having warm feelings while watching a children’s parade on Palm Sunday straight on to the next Sunday when we celebrate Easter. That means we can easily miss the climatic scenes in the story that occur between Jesus being arrested in the garden and the discovery of the empty tomb. You see, the empty tomb and the resurrection succeed in being the greatest story ever told, because the cross renders this story a tragedy. Jesus, the protagonist, dies on the cross at the hands of religious and political leaders who have authority to convict and execute, and convince a complicit mass of people that such an act is perfectly acceptable. It is a tragedy in every sense.

Theologians have spoken of both a “theology of glory,” when we celebrate the good news of Jesus’ resurrection, and a “theology of the cross,” where we recognize the tragic nature of Jesus death while we also seek to understand what happened in those moments. What they tell us is that the theology of glory has no power nor meaning without the theology of the cross.

We need to understand these two parts in the greatest story ever told. We invite you to participate in both parts which will be shared between Palm Sunday and Easter. Palm Sunday and Easter will each celebrate different events in the triumphant story of Jesus. Those stories, and especially Easter, will take on additional grandeur as we walk through the somber and tragic events of the week at our Maundy Thursday service and the Stations of the Cross pilgrimage available to everyone on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of Holy Week.

We hope you will join us as we experience the Greatest Story Ever Told.

Blessings,

Brad

Sunday Worship

8:30 a.m.
Chapel

10:30 a.m.
Sanctuary

Easter Fellowship

What: a gathering of church family and friends for food and fellowship

When: from 9:15-10:15; between the worship services on Easter Sunday

Where: Fellowship Center

Why: Because! Because fellowship is important. It builds connections. This provides such an opportunity for us, our friends, our children. It will also be an opportunity for Don Thompson to get a new photo of you, your family, and others for updating our online directory. (There may be other occasions later in the spring.) The outside cross will be covered in flowers where people gather for additional picture taking.



One Great Hour of Sharing

Please prayerfully considering giving to the One Great Hour of Sharing offering during Lent. Envelopes and brochures are on the table in the foyer, by the Chapel Door, by the Sanctuary Door on the Ledge and on the Table in the Parlor with bulletins. The offering can be given anytime from now until **Easter Sunday**, and will be sent after Easter. 100% of this offering will go to the PCUSA and be used to support these causes: disaster, hunger, poverty, climate change, immigration, migration, and refugees.

Holy Week & Easter

March 29-April 5
Holy Week & Easter Schedule

Palm Sunday, March 29

Palm Sunday Services
8:30 a.m. ~ Chapel & 10:30 a.m. ~ Sanctuary

Easter Egg Hunt

March 29, 11:30 a.m.
Meet in the Fellowship Center



Stations of the Cross

The Stations of the Cross will be available on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, April 1-3. This individual meditation focuses on Jesus' passion, death and burial. Please start in the Foyer as you enter through the back of the church.

Maundy Thursday, April 2

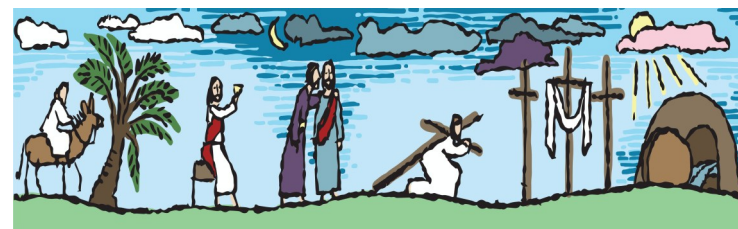
Maundy Thursday Dinner & Worship with Communion
6:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Center
(Fried fish, chicken tenders, potato wedges and dessert)
Administration Committee serving

Easter Sunday, April 5

8:30 a.m. ~ Chapel
9:15 a.m. ~ Easter Fellowship ~ Fellowship Center
10:30 a.m. ~ Sanctuary

Flowers for the Cross

This year we continue our tradition of placing flowers on the outside cross on Easter Sunday morning. Please help celebrate new life in Christ by bringing flowers, from your yards or local grocery, and placing them on the cross or at the base of it.



2nd: David Oaks
3rd: Barbara Necessary
4th: Jeanne McClure, Laura Quillen
5th: Chad Correll, Tengone Vengchiem
6th: Marjorie Watford, Sarah Good, Aleasha Stanley
8th: Stacey Doran
10th: Maranda Demuth, Will Lively
11th: Lainie Pearson
12th: Florence Godat, Jeremy Lively
17th: Ivey Redmon
18th: Ron Dixon, Cheryl Rice
19th: Leslie Heindselman, Lewis Stubblefield
20th: Mark Ward
21st: Ansel Scott, Baxter Scott
23rd: Sara Lou Ring, Cotton Fortner
24th: Shelby Demuth, Sandra Heard
25th: Hayden Correll, Cis Taylor
26th: Ethan Walker, Mac Hobbs
27th: Madelyn Baggett, Russ Pearson, Delaney Young, Michael Whitt
29th: Brandy King, Braden Pendleton
30th: Albert Tatchi

Happy
Birthday!

The church office will be
closed for our
Easter Holiday on
Monday, April 6.

Session Highlights

- ◆ Approved the Ministry Discernment Profile prepared by the PNC.
- ◆ Closing the Gap campaign has been reduced from \$20,442 to \$12,442 from new pledges and contributions.
- ◆ Outreach Committee allocated \$28,760 for the following: Clothes Closet, Roosevelt Elementary, Salvation Army, Oasis and Emergency Fund
- ◆ Approved Space for Grace service for Mother's Day/ Confirmation Sunday, May 10, 2026.

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

April 20
May Newsletter

Ways you can SERVE

Second Harvest Food Bank in April

First Presbyterian Church - Kingsport volunteers will be packing food at Second Harvest Food Bank on **April 15**. We would love to have you join us and bring a friend if you would like! We always have a fun time of fellowship and service. Contact Bob Stoots by email, cell or text (423-782-6280) to register for the session of your choice: morning (9-11am) or afternoon (1-3pm).



Serving the Salvation Army

First Presbyterian has a long history of serving a Sunday meal each month at the Salvation Army. We currently serve a meal on the second Sunday. Volunteers are needed from 11:30 a.m. - 1:15 p.m. Please contact Catherine Tucker if you'd like to help: 423-782-7782 or tuckersbigblue@gmail.com



Clothes Closet Matters

As director of your clothes closet, I think the congregation needed to see the needs we meet weekly. The photo with this article is not staged - this really happened on Tuesday, March 10.

This is an extreme case, but worthy of sharing. There were literally hundreds of clients who received coats, hoodies, and other warm-weather clothing in recent months. Thank you again for your continued support.

"Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God."

— Hebrews 13:16

Waverly Road Food Pantry

For April please bring a **can of fruit** for the Waverly Road Pantry. Thank you!



Breakfast Bag Needs

Prayerfully consider helping with our Breakfast Ministry this spring. First Broad Street staffs the kitchen both weekend mornings, and it is FPC's responsibility to staff the serving areas. The time commitment is minimal (6:45-8:15 a.m.) compared with the benefits to our neighbors. If you are able to volunteer for a date (or several) this Spring, please email Sarah Good at sar4680@gmail.com for the signup schedule. Also, donations of ponchos would be appreciated. Thank you in advance for your help in being the hands and feet of Christ to our neighbors in need.

CNS in April

Church Night Supper & Vespers

Come join us for delicious food and fellowship at our Church Night Suppers at 5:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Center, then please stay for our Vespers service.

April 8

Olive Garden: Pasta bar, salad and dessert
Christian Education Committee serving

April 15

Italiano's: Pizza, salad, and dessert
Outreach Committee serving

April 22

Braeden's Barbecue: Pork steak, macaroni and cheese, green beans and dessert
CF&N Committee serving

April 29

Braeden's Barbecue: barbecue sandwiches, beans, coleslaw and dessert
Property Committee serving

The cost for dinner is \$10.00 for adults, \$5.00 for children under 10, with a family maximum of \$25.00. Reservations must be received by **noon on Tuesday**. To make reservations, fill out the pew pad on Sunday mornings, call the church office at (423) 245-0104 or register online: [First Presbyterian Church-Kingsport \(www.firstpreskingsport.org\)](http://www.firstpreskingsport.org).

(When booking your reservations, please note that a family = parent(s) and dependent children 18 years of age and under.)

Combined Worship & Potluck

We will have a combined worship service at 10:30 a.m. followed by a potluck lunch on **Sunday, May 31!** The church will provide chicken tenders, and church members are asked to supply the sides and desserts. There is no charge for this meal. Please let us know if you plan to attend on the sign-up sheets in the foyer or by calling the church office so we will know how many people for which to prepare.



POTLUCK LUNCH

Care Ministry Luncheon

April 19

After 10:30 a.m. Worship Service
Fellowship Center

Please join us for lunch and fellowship at the Care Ministry luncheon on Sunday, April 19.

Your deacon will be contacting you for reservations. The deadline to sign up is **Monday, April 6**.

Menu

Crusted oven baked chicken
Roasted potatoes
Broccoli casserole
Mixed green salad
Rolls
Dessert
Drinks

Please remember that reservations are binding. Cost is \$15/ adults; \$5/children (ages 6-10); free for children under 6; and \$35 family max.

(When booking your reservations, please note that a family = parent(s) and dependent children 18 years of age and under.)



One of many

Sarah Barbour

In 2006 Sarah and Mark were considering a new church home. She played tennis with several FPC members who encouraged her to try FPC. Friendly members and staff; as well as a vibrant youth program for their son sealed the deal.

During the early years of their membership Sarah began serving in the Christian Education program. She was a part of the shepherd program on Wednesday afternoons, and on Sunday mornings.

During this period children were divided into groups and shepherded through a variety of stations as they learned. She recalls working with different age groups. She recalls working with Rebecca Combs during the pandemic and teaching their class online. Sarah also taught an adult class.

Another role Sarah has filled at FPC is that of Deacon. She served two terms as deacon; serving as Chair of the Diaconate during her second term.

Sarah recalls one highlight of her service to our church was attending the youth conference at Mon-treat with our youth – as cook for the group of 15+ for a week. Fun but a very taxing job! She must have done a wonderful job as the youth requested she return for a second year!

In more recent years Sarah has taken on the responsibility of planting and caring for many of the pots and plantings of annuals around the church. So, as the weather warms, look around several areas of the church for the bright flowers and thank Sarah for their beauty. Sarah and Mark have raised 3 sons in our church. Will, Owen, and Sam. Now that they have all left the nest – so to speak – Sarah has taken a part time position at Edward Jones and is enjoying the work. When asked why she stays committed to her service at FPC; Sarah says she feels it is important to continue serving as the hands of Christ. She hopes she can become more involved in hands-on work helping others in the future. We are very glad to have the Barbours as part of our church family.



Sarah celebrates with her first grandbaby!

The History of Our Church

Construction of Solomon's Temple

During the Massie years while Craig Bell was DCE we had Youth Club on Wednesday afternoons. There was time for Bible studies and many other activities. The photo below is of the boys building a model of Solomon's Temple. The activity took several weeks as Ben Harris guided them through the construction to exact scale from foam board. Ben says it was the first project he remembers researching on the internet. He recalls finding detail measurements and numerous details both in the Bible and online. No doubt researching would be much easier today; and the boys could probably do it themselves! The boys in the photo, left to right, are Marc Tucker, Tyler Cole, Phil Singleton, and Owen Caprell.



Your History Committee Needs Your Help!

One of our most popular displays included photographs of many WEDDINGS that were submitted by YOU the congregation. We would like to prepare a display later this year of photographs of BAPTISMS that have taken place in our sanctuary (or elsewhere if current members). Please email photo and details - names, date and location if not FPC) to archive@firstpresningsport.org. If you do not have a digital photograph, you can leave the hard copy photograph in the History Room mail basket near Vickie's desk or call Jane Harris at 423-239-9477 to discuss. Be sure to include name, details of baptism and your contact information. Your photograph will be returned to you.

