

“Close the Gap” Campaign

Earlier this year, Session approved a 2026 Operating Budget that was not fully funded. Projected expenses exceeded projected revenues by \$20,442. At the same time, Session authorized a “Close the Gap” congregational campaign to eliminate the deficit. As of April 29, the Gap has been reduced to \$11,542 thanks to your donations. A posterboard display has been placed in the foyer to show our progress the goal of deficit elimination. FPC’s Finance Committee and Session ask that you prayerfully consider making a donation to the campaign. Please indicate that your donation is for the “Close the Gap” campaign by making a note on your check and/or your offering envelope.

Thank you,
FPC Finance Committee

Session Highlights

- ◆ Approved a combined worship service for Mother’s Day, Sunday, May 10, 2026, in the Fellowship Center celebrating the Confirmation of our Youth and recognizing our 2026 Graduates.
- ◆ Approved Wes Combs as Commissioner to the May 9, 2026 Presbytery meeting in Blountville.
- ◆ Outreach will distribute remaining funds from the Hurricane Relief Fund to Holston Presbytery Camp and Retreat Center for the purpose of removal of downed trees on camp property.
- ◆ May 24 and June 21 Lemonade on the Lawn.

First Presbyterian Church

The First Press

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

Vol. 543, Issue 5

May 2026

Mark Your Calendar

- 5-10** Combined Worship in the Fellowship Center at 10:30
- 5-18** Newsletter Deadline
- 5-24** Lemonade on the Lawn
- 5-31** Combined Worship & Potluck Lunch
- 6-22** VBS Begins

Weekly

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

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

A Message from Brad

“He is risen!” “Jesus is alive!” “He’s alive.” These are some of the great confessions of those who witness to the empty tomb on Easter Sunday.

According to the record in the Gospels, the first reaction of those who arrived at the empty tomb of Jesus early that Sunday morning was to hear the declaration of the angels and then get out of there as quickly as they could with an abundance of mixed emotions: fear, terror, amazement, joy.

Something had happened that was different than what they had known before. Yes, yes it was. And it would take time to begin to unpack and understand all that the death and resurrection would mean for those who believed the testimonies about Jesus, and for that matter, the whole world.

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus first group of disciples would start grasping some of what God had done in raising Jesus from the dead. It would take decades and even centuries for the Church community to understand some things that this meant.

Because of the Spirit’s guidance, one of the most critical pieces of our Christian faith began to be seen in the Church’s early years by the apostle Paul as he wrote about reconciliation.

Paul quickly saw how the Jesus fulfilled God’s promises to send the Messiah who would restore humanity to a right relationship with God. “All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us” (II Cor 5:17-19).

But we aren’t just reconciled to God, but because we are reconciled to God, we are also reconciled to one another. Everyone who believes in Christ, is reconciled to God and one of God’s people. A member of God’s family. And Jesus commands those who follow him to love one another because they are reconciled to God.

This continues to be important within the life of congregations and denominations, and across denominational lines. Our own Confession of 1967 is formed around this ministry. Volume 4 of the Swiss theologian Karl Barth’s *Church Dogmatics* is about the doctrine of reconciliation (volume 4 is itself, four volumes; yikes!). And all of these seem to express what I remember hearing in an old song from my younger years whose lyrics went like this:

*We are the family of God / Yes, we are the family of God.
And he’s brought us together to be one in him / that we might bring light to the world.*

Each one of us has been born of the Spirit (I hope) and reconciled to God that we might reflect God’s love wherever we go and even more as we live and love together in God’s family of those reconciled to him.

We are the family of God. This is not a goal to which we aspire. It is who we are.

We will do well to figure out what that means. And the sooner, the better.

Blessings,
Brad



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



First Presbyterian Church
100 W. Church Circle
Kingsport, TN 37660
(423) 245-0104
office@firstpreskingsport.org
www.firstpreskingsport.org

Combined Worship May 10

We will have one combined worship service for Mother's Day, Sunday, May 10 at 10:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Center celebrating the Confirmation of our Youth and recognizing our 2026 Graduates.

May 17 & 24

8:30 a.m.

Chapel Worship

10:30 a.m.

Sanctuary Worship

May 31 Summer Worship Begins

A combined summer worship service at 10:30 a.m. will begin **Sunday, May 31** and conclude **Sunday, August 2**. Our regular schedule will resume on Sunday, August 9.



New Exhibit in History Room – Christian Education through the Years

Do you know how many people have filled Russ's job at FPC? Do you know how many lay people have served as leaders in Christian Education in our church? Have you attended Sunday School, Family Camp, Youth Trips, and other educational experiences? Some classes were held in areas of FPC that no longer exist – where were they? Come browse through the multitude of photos and see how far back your memory goes!

The History Committee

CNS for the Rest of May

Church Night Supper & Bible Study

Come join us for delicious food and fellowship at our final Church Night Supper of the season at 5:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Center, then please stay for our Wednesday Night Bible Study, **Deep and Wide: Faithful Questions**.

Remember if you have made a reservation and then realize you can not come, please cancel your reservation by noon on Tuesday. If not cancelled, our policy is that there will be a charge for the meal, since your meal would have been ordered. Thank you for understanding.

May 13:

Food City: Breakfast for dinner
(Finance 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](http://www.firstpreskingsport.org) (www.firstpreskingsport.org).

Church Pictorial Directory

It's time to update our online church pictorial directory. Our resident photographer, Don Thompson, has graciously said he will take photos of members for us. The opportunity will be available for you to have this done on the Sundays of **May 10 and 17**. You will need to go to the church library between 9:15 and 10:15 a.m. (the time between the two church services) for Don to take your picture. We hope everyone will participate in getting your photos updated. Thank you.

Yard Sale!

It's spring cleaning time! Put your unwanted items to use by donating them to an upcoming yard sale. The Juniors (fourth and fifth graders) from Girl Scout troop 157 are having a yard sale to raise funds for their Bronze Award project. The yard sale will be in the fellowship hall at First Presbyterian on **Saturday, June 13** beginning at 9:00am. You can drop off any items for donation in the fellowship hall classrooms May 31-June 12 except **June 6**. The fellowship hall will be in use on the 6th. No clothing donations please.

The Bronze Award is one of the highest awards Girl Scouts can achieve. It involves assessing needs in the community and finding ways to meet those needs in a sustainable way. These juniors are raising funds to put a sunshade structure on the playground at Jefferson Elementary, where their troop meets. First Pres member Autumn Hagan is one of the juniors and Anna Hagan is one of the adult leaders.

If you have questions, please contact Anna Hagan at Hagan30@gmail.com



Faith Build Update

First Presbyterian Church volunteers will serve June 10, 12 and 13 installing appliances, working on closets and helping with landscaping. Join us in service to Articia and her family. Pray for Articia and her family, Holston Habitat for Humanity, safety of workers and fellowship among volunteers. Contact Gary Tucker at 423-378-5419 for registration details or Mandy Penz at Holston Habitat, volunteer@holstonhabitat.org



FPC Habitat House volunteers: Visit www.holstonhabitat.org/articiasbuild. Log in to your Giveffect account (for returning volunteers) or create a new account. Complete the Volunteer Profile click the button to confirm you have read Released

and Waiver of Liability. Scroll to L. Week 12 (First Presbyterian) Fixtures; appliances; Landscaping. Password: firstpres. Note: *volunteer registration is closed one day in advance of work date.*

Issues with sign-up, contact Mandy Penz at 423-239-7689 ext 801, or volunteer@holstonhabitat.org. Thanks for making a positive difference in the lives of Articia, her two children and her daughter's two children.

Gary Tucker, FPC Habitat Volunteer Coordinator

Ways you can SERVE

Second Harvest Food Bank in May

First Presbyterian Church - King-sport volunteers will be packing food at Second Harvest Food Bank on **May 20, 2026**. 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 (9am-11am) or afternoon (1pm-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

Family Promise

First Presbyterian Church has a long history of involvement with the Family Promise Program (formerly Interfaith Hospitality Network) and I wanted to give you an update on its status. In years past, we hosted homeless families with minor children in our Sunday School classrooms with our members serving as hosts for as many as three families. A few years ago, the church rotation was replaced, and the client families now stay in buildings owned by Family Promise. Our church still participates in ministering to the families by providing evening meals for three or four nights each quarter. Our next scheduled dates will be each evening from June 21 through June 24. We need your help; many of our faithful volunteers are no longer able to participate. If you would be willing to prepare or purchase a dinner for one family, please contact Florence Godat at 423-341-2118 or fsgodat@gmail.com or Gray Stothart at 423-276-3828 or graystothart@gmail.com.

Waverly Road Food Pantry

Item of the Month:
Canned vegetables

Thanks for your donations!

Breakfast Bag Help!

It's time to sign up to volunteer this summer! Veteran volunteers--check your email for the sign up sheet. New volunteers--email Sarah Good (sar4680@gmail.com) to receive the schedule. Summer is busy--we will need all hands on deck to keep serving our neighbors!

Help Needed on Mondays at your FPC Clothes Closet

Come when you can to sort clothes beginning at 9:00 a.m. Monday mornings. Your volunteering will be greatly appreciated!

Summer Fun!

Lemonade on the Lawn

These fun and sweet events will be held on May 24 and June 21. We will have cookies and lemonade following worship services, one after each service on May 24, and one after the service on June 21. Come and enjoy some sweet treats and friendly fellowship.



Church Potluck: May 31

Congregational Fellowship & Nurture Committee members are excited to remind you that the next Church Potluck is May 31 after the one 10:30 am service. We will provide chicken tenders and church members are asked to supply the sides and desserts. There is no charge for this meal. Please indicate your intentions of attending this potluck on the sign-up sheet in the foyer, or call the church office by noon on May 26 so we will know how many people for which to prepare.

Fellowship Opportunities

- ◆ We have an opportunity to go see Bil Lepp at the Storytelling Center in Jonesborough, but we have to act fast. Tickets are \$10 for the 2:00 p.m. show on May 21. Please let Barbara Foust (423-306-6514) know as soon as possible if you want to go.
- ◆ We have reserved tickets for the following trips to Barter Theatre: June 20 at 2:00 p.m. for "Guys and Dolls" and July 7 at 2:00 p.m. for "Savannah Sipping Society". Please call Barbara Foust as soon as possible if you would like to go to either or both of these shows.

Caring Congregation

Thanks to each of you who have expressed your condolences upon the passing of my sister, Evelyn Henderson. Your many kind and loving words during interactions with me, cards and phone calls have lifted my spirits and helped heal my heart. Thank you to the "prayer chain ladies" for your love and care for the past two months by praying for Evelyn during her illness. The entire family felt your prayers and was comforted. Thank you to the "ladies knitting group" for the sweet and pretty prayer square that is a constant reminder of Evelyn and comfort to me. My church family's support means the world to me.

Catherine Tucker

Update from the Pastor Nominating Committee!

Our Pastor Nominating Committee is moving forward with a spirit of deep discernment, having successfully secured the "green light" from both the FPC Session and the Presbytery Committee on Ministry. With our Ministry Discernment Profile (MDP) now officially approved, we have uploaded it into the system and wait with expectant hearts to see who the Head of the Church is calling to labor alongside us. We trust that as we enter this matching phase, the Holy Spirit will guide us toward candidates whose gifts for ministry align perfectly with our congregation's unique vision and situation. We remain steadfast in prayer, asking for continued clarity and patience as we seek a new minister to lead us in this next season of faithful service.



What a wonderful time we had at the Care Ministry Luncheon on Sunday, April 19. Here are Owen Allgood and deacon Gary Tucker. Please check out the insert in this newsletter for more photos from the luncheon.

One of many

Jami Arrowsmith

When Jami and Tim married, they began looking for a church home in Kingsport. Like many others, they visited several churches to find the right “fit”. Tim had grown up Presbyterian, so they tried First Pres. Not knowing the “tradition” to enter our church through the foyer at the parking lot entrance – they parked on the street and entered through the front doors. She particularly remembers Sallie Oaks greeting them and encouraging them to join. Then Miranda Demuth worked to get them plugged in and welcome. They joined on March 25, 2007 and have since made First Pres an integral part of their family life.

She remembers Russ asking them to work with the middle school youth group which they enjoyed. Now, years later, some of their “youth” are coming into the church as young adults – like Carson Correll. Jamie says it gives you a quite different perspective and certainly makes you feel your age!

She also remembers Betty Dickson asked her to join the Outreach Committee. She loved finding out how our church helped others in our community and around the world. She has stuck with that group for several years and often worked with the foreign mission program. She has enjoyed keeping in touch with each of the missionaries that our church sponsored. This program is changing significantly for our denomination right now; and most of her work focuses on the Welches who still have contacts in Guatemala. We are able to fund scholarships for children to attend school there. Jami went on FPC mission trips to Guatemala twice and would love to go again.

Jami has also served as an Elder.

Asked what keeps her involved at First Pres, Jami says without hesitation THE PEOPLE! She likes having relationships with the variety of age groups in the congregation; working with older and younger members is a positive for her. She says she feels like her family is “taking” more from the church with four children taking part in activities; than they are “giving” right now. Helping their children develop a strong faith is very important to their family with three in youth groups and one in the younger church school group. FPC is very happy to have the Arrowsmith family in our church and lucky to have Jami filling her spots in our tapestry of members who keep our church running smoothly.



The History of Our Church

Color Wheel Quilt

Mary Pierce assembled a group of women – Jo Phlegar, Emily Childress, Mary Virginia Chalker (Florence Godat’s mother), and Marcille Hawk – who enjoyed stitchery. Marion McDonald, an artistic member, designed a color wheel quilt, something different from traditional quilt patterns. In the center Marion placed the new logo for Presbyterian Women, with the colors radiating from that center. The Fine Arts Center awarded the quilt the blue ribbon in its competition in 1989.



Others who joined Mary’s quilt committee with their needles and thimbles were Mel Barker, Alice Benedict, Lela Cole, Jane Cox, Peggy Groseclose, Mickie Grove, Carolyn Hauk, Mendy Helmick, Dorothy Lightfoot, Sue Newton, Marcia Opp, Patty Pendleton, Jane Scott, Peggy Smith, Cathy Tate, Jessie Whitaker, and Barbara Yancey. Look closely and maybe you’ll find the piece you submitted. The project truly involved the whole church.

The backing material and the navy binding were purchased from the estate of Mary Wootton.

Another gift from Marion McDonald is this picture of the tomb as she imagined for her painting. It now hangs in Russ’ office.

