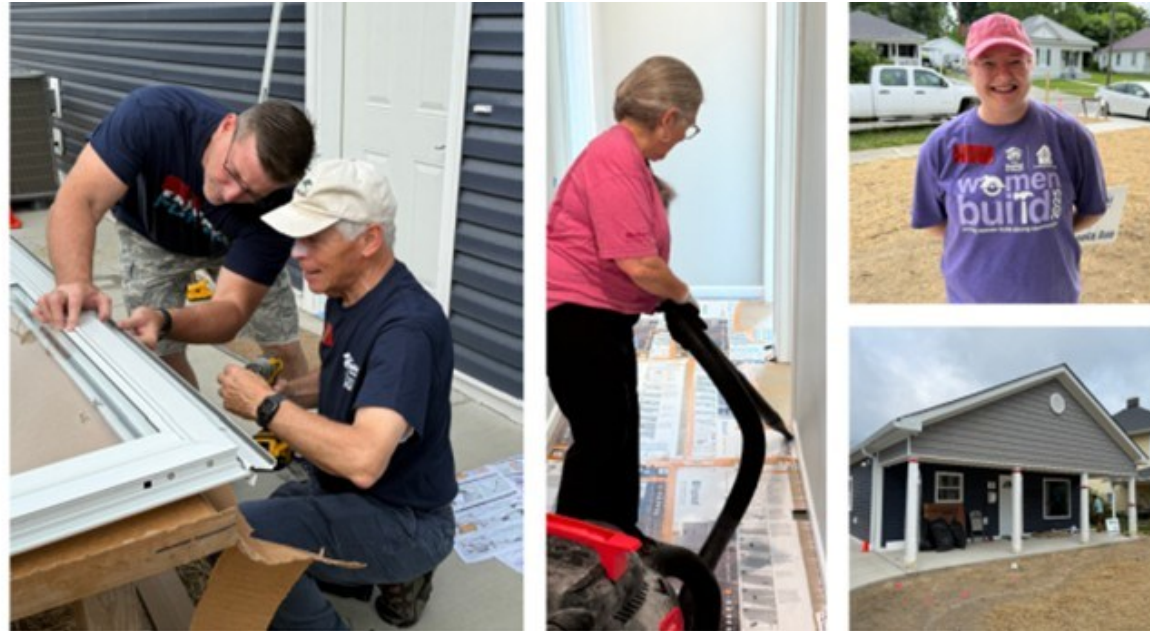


Successful Articia's Habitat Faith Build

Thank you to FPC members Jim Amstutz, Gary Hallen, Claudia Mihovk, Cindy Sharitt, Aleasha Stanley, Bob Stoots and others who helped build Articia's house. Thanks also to Jenny and Nic Clemmer, Allen and Becca Wright and Virginia Wooten for providing lunches for Habitat workers.

You have made a positive difference in the lives of others. Thank you!



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

Vol. 543, Issue 7

July 2026

A Message from Brad

July 2026 marks the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Our nation's birthday. There's lots to think about as we enter this month and celebrate this milestone not only in American history, but in world history as well.

The United States has been, and still is, a remarkable experiment in how a people can practice self-governance through a representative democracy. The Declaration of Independence "declared" that we were severing our ties with England as a confederation of colonies. The Constitution, ratified in 1788, established our form of government. One that would not be led by royalty like kings and queens, nor by an aristocracy of bloodlines and land, but by the people. Thomas Jefferson believed that the thing most necessary to maintaining this form of self-government was an educated public.

We would be fooling ourselves if we thought that our history, motives, and actions had always been pure and virtuous. That is not the case. Throughout our history wealthy and powerful people have tended to steer our history and events with or without the support of a majority of Americans. This practice repeats familiar patterns in world history. Even so, our motto E Pluribus Unum – "From the Many, One" – inspires us to be a nation that is better because of the diversity of our people.

The place of the Church in the nation's life, and Presbyterianism in particular, has also been influential. "When this (Revolutionary) war is over it will become apparent that Presbyterianism is really at the bottom of the whole conspiracy," an agent of the English Lord Dartmouth once declared. Whether that's true or not, we know that our Presbyterian form of government served as the model for the U.S. Constitution's separation of powers into three branches of government.

Several articles that I recently read have noted that America is a much more Christian nation than non-Christians and other critics assert that it is. At the same time, they state that we are not now, nor have we ever been, the Christian nation that many believe we are. Statistics still show that we are a nation of predominantly Christian people, but we are not an established Christian nation; a theocracy. For this I give thanks. Our Christian faith is not one that should ever be forced on other people; especially by legislative, judicial, or political actions. The journalist, George Will, said, "I am all for America becoming a Christian nation. Just leave the government out of it." Well put.

Jesus had the power to establish a religious kingdom on Earth, but he did not do that. Instead he taught an uneducated rag-tag group of followers a new way to live that sought to change hearts and minds through practicing compassion and mercy, speaking the truth with respect and humility, and sharing God's love.

Even as citizens of this grand historical experiment called the United States of America, let us not forget our essential call to be disciples of the Lord who seeks to influence our friends and neighbors, not by might or force, but through Christ's call to love.

Happy Birthday, America.

Brad

Mark Your Calendar

- 7-5 *Nation's 250th Celebration*
- 7-19 *Ice Cream Social*
- 7-20 *Newsletter Deadline*
- 8-9 *Potluck Lunch*
- 9-2 *CNS Resumes*
- 9-20 *Church Picnic at Allandale*

Weekly

Tuesdays

Knuckleheads Men's Bible Study

12:15-1:15 p.m.

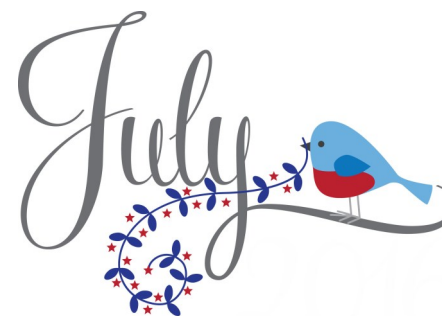
History Room

Thursdays

Balance Class

1:15 p.m.

Fellowship Center



First Presbyterian Church

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Summer Worship

10:30 a.m.
Sanctuary

Pastor Nominating Committee Update

The Pastor Nominating Committee is continuing its dedicated work to discern whom God is calling to lead First Presbyterian Church as our next pastor. Over the past several weeks, our committee has actively received and evaluated personal information forms and resumes from a wide array of call seekers. To date, we have prayerfully reviewed dozens of potential matches and applications.

The committee has recently extended and conducted several first-round interviews as we begin to narrow down the field of prospective candidates. Because protecting the identities and current ministries of these candidates is essential to the integrity of this process, we must keep specific details confidential. However, we look forward to sharing more formal updates with the congregation as we reach future milestones.

Please continue to keep the committee, our prospective candidates, and the future of First Presbyterian Church in your daily prayers.



Summer Fun!

Celebration of Our Nation's 250th Birthday

The CF&N Committee is excited to hold this event in our Fellowship Center after church on **Sunday, July 5**. Our picnic-themed lunch will be catered by Food City. The menu is hamburgers, hot dogs, baked beans, coleslaw, potato salad, chips and cookies. Please make your reservation on the sign-up sheet in the foyer, through our church Website or by calling the church office **by noon on June 30**. We need to know the number of hamburgers and hot dogs that you want. There is no charge for this meal due to a generous donation by a church member. We plan to join in singing some patriotic songs during lunch.

Ice Cream Social

The Ice Cream Social will be held in the Fellowship Center after church on **July 19**. This is a time to have a sweet treat on a hot, summer day and to share fellowship with other members.

Our Next Church Potluck

The next opportunity for members to share your special food dish with other members is at the potluck after church on **August 9**. Let's join together with other members for this wonderful time of food and fellowship! The church will provide chicken fingers and drinks. Please register your attendance beginning July 12 on the sign-up sheets in the foyer, on the church Website or call Vickie in the church office. **Please register by August 4** so we'll know the number for which to prepare.

Church Picnic

Our annual Church Picnic will be held at the Allandale Picnic Pavilion on **Sunday, September 20**. Social time will begin at 5:00 p.m. with fun games of bingo (prizes awarded to winners). Dinner from Braeden's Barbecue is at 6:00 p.m., with the menu including: barbecue sandwiches, cowboy beans, coleslaw, potato salad, cookies and iced tea, lemonade and water.

Reservations can be made on the sign-up sheet in the church foyer or through the church office beginning August 30 and ending September 15. The cost is \$15.00 for adults, \$5.00 for children under 10, with a maximum family of \$35.

Thank You!

Thanks to Catherine Tucker, Jeanne McClure, Carol Dixon and Claudia Mihovk for making cookies for *Lemonade on the Lawn*.



1st: Phoebe Newell
2nd: Jeff Quillen
3rd: Kim Alvis, MaryGail Py
4th: Kevin Heindselman
5th: Troy Aguilar-Smith
6th: Charles Beggerow, Kathy Ruffel
7th: Jane Scott, Patrick Stanley
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, Lyndsey Correll
30th: Audra Moore

Happy
Birthday!



June Session Highlights

◆ A recommendation from the Outreach Committee to disburse from the Outreach Allocation of the 2026 Endowment Funds in the amount of \$5,000 for Habitat for Humanity for Articia's build was approved.

◆ FPC via Outreach will support the Rise Against Hunger, a food packing project, with the required \$5,000 being designated from the Foreign Mission Fund.

Directory Update

The 2026 Pictorial Directory is available online under the Members Only section of the website. If you would like a printed copy you may stop by the office during office hours to pick one up or call the office and one can be left for you on the credenza in the breezeway (in a manila envelope) to pick up at your convenience. For privacy and security reasons we will no longer email out copies of the directory. Also, if you notice that some members' information is incomplete/missing, that is because every member that has requested a Realm login has control over their personal information and they may have restricted access to their personal information. We hope you enjoy the updated directory.

Waverly Road Food Pantry

Item of the Month: Peanut Butter

Please drop donations in the basket 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!



Newsletter Deadline

July 20
August Newsletter

Ways you can SERVE

Second Harvest Food Bank in July

First Presbyterian Church - Kingsport volunteers will be packing food at Second Harvest Food Bank on **July 15**. Please join us and bring a friend along with you! 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 (9:00-11:00 a.m.) or afternoon (1:00-3:00 p.m.).



Grace House Day & Night Center Update

Grace House provides case management, day and night center services, access to dental and vision services for our homeless neighbors.

You can help with the ongoing needs of this ministry with your donation: online at kpthm.org or send a check made out to Kingsport Homeless Ministry, P.O.Box 1125, Kingsport, TN 37662. Other needs: bottled water, sunscreen, 13 gallon trash bags. Items may be dropped off at 700 East Sullivan Street, Kingsport 37660. If you would like a tour of the facility, contact Mark Haga at 423-732-0522.

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 Clothes Closet

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

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

"The Star-Spangled Banner"

(A history of our national anthem by Amy Smith, Director of Music Ministries)

Our country is about to celebrate 250 years, so there was no doubt that this month's featured hymn should be the Star-Spangled Banner. Those famous lyrics that we know so well, composed by American lawyer and amateur poet Francis Scott Key, came from the poem, "Defense of Fort M'Henry," written on September 14, 1814. His words recount the bombardment of Fort McHenry by the British Royal Navy during the Battle of Baltimore in the war of 1812. His inspiration came from the U.S. flag, with 15 stars and 15 stripes, known as the Star-Spangled Banner, flying triumphantly above the fort after the battle. This flag, measuring 30 feet by 42 feet is now on display at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History.

The music for the anthem was originally composed by John Stafford Smith for the Anacreontic Society, a gentlemen's club in London. The "Anacreontic Song," with various lyrics, was already popular in the U.S., and when the lyrics (all three verses) were set to this tune, the piece became popular as a patriotic song. Its popularity became so widespread that it was officially recognized for military use by the U.S. Navy in 1889 and President Woodrow Wilson in 1916. On March 3, 1931, President Herbert Hoover signed a congressional act officially designating "The Star-Spangled Banner" as the national anthem of the United States, and the text, along with the music, still remain as effective today as it did when it was written.

*O say can you see, by the dawn's early light
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming
Whose broad stripes and bright stars through the perilous fight
O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming?
And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there;
O say does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?*

*On the shore dimly seen through the mists of the deep
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam
In full glory reflected now shines in the stream:
'Tis the star-spangled banner, O long may it wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!*

*When our land is illumined with Liberty's smile
If a foe from within strike a blow at her glory
Down, down with the traitor that dares to defile
The flag of her stars and the page of her story!
By the millions unchained, who our birthright have gained
We will keep her bright blazon forever unstained!
And the Star-Spangled Banner in triumph shall wave
While the land of the free is the home of the brave!*



One of many

Lleyton Good

It takes many individuals working in a variety of positions to keep our church going. This has been true in the past – is true today – and will be true in the future. One strength of our church is emphasis on inspiring and involving youth members. Lleyton Good is one of those active youth members.

Lleyton does not remember when she came to First Pres – she was born into the church along with her mother Sarah Good, and grandmother Becca Wright. Since Becca's parents were also members of First Pres you could easily say Lleyton is a fourth generation First Presser!

Lleyton says her first memories of church involved Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and youth activities with Russ. As she has moved into her high school years, she enjoys working with the Breakfast Program on weekends, taking part in youth activities, helping with Vacation Bible School, assisting in the clothes closet and is looking forward to serving as a youth representative on the Session this next year.

One of her favorite youth group experiences is going to the Youth Conference at Montreat. She loves meeting new friends from far and near; keeping up with them during the year; and then seeing them again the next summer. She also enjoys the worship experiences at Montreat; hearing the variety of preaching styles has been of interest to her. Eating great food and staying with the other members of our youth group in a cabin is great. She thanks Candi Harker and Becca Wright for the great food this year.

One of Lleyton's volunteer jobs during this past year has been helping our new Director of Music, Amy Smith, with her son Aaron during Choir Practices. She says it has been great working with him because he is so much fun; and she has enjoyed watching him grow and change over the months. Lleyton is planning to major in Special Education so her interaction with Aaron has been extra special for her to learn more about her chosen profession. She is involved in workplace learning at DB and spends two blocks of time each week at the K-3rd Grade Special Education Class at Johnson School – and guess who is a student in the class? Aaron. A treat for both of them!

When I asked Lleyton what keeps her involved at First Pres – she quickly says her faith and that she wants to give back to the church and her community. She also adds “and I have such role models and incentives – my mother and my grandmother.” Sounds like the future of First Pres may be in **Good** hands!



The History of Our Church

Helping Feed the Community

As you all know First Pres is today helping, along with First Broad Street United Methodist, to provide food for people in need of a breakfast on the weekends. Did you know we have helped provide food in other ways in the past? In the 1980's Kingsport needed a central location for a Farmer's Market and First Pres offered our parking lot as shown in the photo below. The Farmer's Market grew and is now located in a city owned building giving a way for the community to buy farm fresh food. In 2008 the Food Security Task Force of the United Way wanted to start a Community Garden. Again, First Pres was a part of this community project that continues today on our property across Charlemont Avenue. It is managed by dedicated gardeners and has 90 raised beds providing gardening space for fifty individual gardeners. Any excess food grown is shared with non-profits. These projects illustrate our outreach into the community helping with hunger issues over the years.

