

“To God Be the Glory”

(A timeless anthem by Fanny Crosby)

Few names in Christian hymnals pop up as much as Fanny Crosby (1820-1915). She was blind from a childhood illness, but that did not stop her from writing over 8,000 hymns that have shaped generations of worship. Among her thousands of compositions, the hymn “To God Be the Glory” stands out, reminding worshippers that all praise belongs to God for His great works.

Written around 1872 and first published in 1875, “To God Be the Glory” is a heartfelt expression of gratitude. Unlike many hymns that arose from personal tragedy, this song was born from Fanny’s sheer adoration of God’s love and grace. The lyrics, often paired with the music of composer William Howard Doane, focus on the redemption found in Jesus. Verse 1 focuses on salvation: “To God, be the glory, great things he hath done; so loved He the world that He gave us His son.” Verse 2 emphasizes the accessibility of this grace to everyone, declaring this is possible through Jesus. The chorus acts as an urgent call to worship: “Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord, let the earth hear His voice!”

Despite its immediate success in England during the 1870’s the hymn was not widely recognized in the United States during Crosby’s lifetime. It’s journey to becoming an American staple took almost 80 years. In 1952, popular evangelist Billy Graham brought it to the forefront during a London crusade, and song leader Cliff Barrows popularized it further in the United States. It quickly became a signature song in modern worship, solidifying its place in American hymnals.

Fanny Crosby never considered her blindness a hindrance. Instead, she believed it was a gift that enabled her to focus entirely on her faith. Her incredible ability to articulate spiritual truths, despite her inability to see the world, left a lasting legacy. This beloved hymn remains a powerful testament to her unwavering faith, a song that, as she intended, shifts the focus from human effort to the “Great things He hath done.”

Amy

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

- 6-7 Youth Montreat Begins
- 6-17 Second Harvest Work Day
- 6-18 Newsletter Deadline
- 6-21 Lemonade on the Lawn
- 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



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A Message from Brad

Normally, I would not share a lengthy quote from someone else in this article. However, during one of my recent devotionals I encountered a particular selection that I believe is worth sharing with you. It seems fitting as we experience the new “spirit-empowered” life in Christ that we celebrate at Pentecost, rejoice in the accomplishments of our graduates and confirmands, and as we (well, at least me) wrestle with what it means to be a Christian in these days which defy description.

“In the New Testament, we glimpse how those early Christians were “trying on” their new life in Christ. For most of them, the changes were radical departures from their former patterns of life. Moreover, the early Christians daily faced the subtle and insidious pressures of the pagan world as well as threats of oppression and death, so living the new life was a struggle for them. . . .

Temptations, frustrations, and pressures beset believers today, and our new life in Christ can be easily compromised and betrayed. In fact, it may be as difficult – if not more so – to live out a new life in our day than it was in the first century. This, paradoxically, because the pressures are more subtle, the temptations are cloaked with respectability, and the gray areas of compromise are almost the norm. It is neither easy nor simple to translate our commitment to Christ into the living of our days. It does not happen instantaneously or automatically, but it is instead a process of growth and development, including reversals, retreats, detours, beginning over, and moving ahead. We need such an understanding of our journey at the very outset because there are those who claim otherwise, who promote the new life in Christ as a kind of idyllic state of spiritual perfection in which there are no doubts, uncertainties, stumblings, or times of falling away. Such claims are simply not true, are very misleading, and result in unnecessary anguish and discouragement.”

From *Forever Beginning* by Donald Shelby

I find Shelby’s honesty about Christian living to be refreshing. He correctly states that the difficulties of living the Christian life really do need to be known from the beginning of this walk in the Spirit; a time when we might be most intoxicated by the joy of knowing God. The challenges don’t make our joy and faith any less real. They merely temper it. It helps to know this sooner rather than later so that we won’t be sad or irritated when things don’t work out perfectly, or more likely, the way we want or expect them to work out.

As our young people transition into these new phases of their life, I hope they will remember that our life as a Christian has its ups and downs, but that they will remember that God is with them always. For those of us who may not be facing the transitions that our young people are, I hope that we will remember that our life as Christians has its ups and downs, but that God has promised to be with us, too.

Looking back at my years in ministry and in my life as a Christian, I know just how important it has been to me to remember this. To know that even if I am not going through the major transition that our young people are, I am still going through some kind of transition all the time. I need to remember that Shelby is right. As long as I draw breath, I will always be *forever beginning*, and that I can lean on the God who is with me - *always*.

Brad

Summer Worship

10:30 a.m.
Sanctuary

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**.

Congrats, Russ!

Congratulations to Russ Pearson on his 20th anniversary with First Presbyterian Church! We appreciate your unwavering service to both the youth and adults of this community in the various roles in which you have served during your tenure. You have made and continue to make a positive difference in the lives of our church family!

Administration Committee

PNC Update

We are excited to share that we are reviewing a wide range of matches and we are now taking a closer look at several promising candidates. Soon we will invite them to formal applications. Our goal is to move into this next phase of the process by mid-summer as we seek the right leader for our congregation. This journey requires us to move slowly and deliberately, so we truly appreciate your continued patience—we are having to practice that same patience right alongside you!

Close the Gap Campaign

Earlier this year, Session approved a 2026 Operating Budget that was not fully funded. Projected expenses exceeded anticipated revenues by \$20,442. Session also authorized a "Close the Gap" congregational campaign to eliminate the deficit. Thanks to your donations of \$10,050 (as of May 18, 2026), the deficit has been reduced from \$20,442 to \$10,392. If you haven't donated to the campaign yet, prayerfully consider doing so. Please note on your donation that it is for the "Close the Gap" campaign. Your Finance Committee wants to close this GAP by the end of June.

*Thank you,
FPC Finance Committee*

Summer Fun!



Lemonade on the Lawn

This fun and sweet event will be held on **June 21**. We will have cookies and lemonade following the combined worship service on June 21. Come and enjoy some sweet treats and friendly fellowship.



High School Montreat

Montreat is coming up **June 7-13**. This year we have 8 youth going up the mountain to explore their faith through amazing worship, outstanding speakers, and a chance to join others in small groups!

Please keep our group in your prayers and we look forward to sharing our experience with 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



Habitat Build

FPC volunteers are needed for Articia's Habitat build, 129 W Wanola Ave., Kingsport.

Installing fixtures, appliances, landscaping will take place **June 10, 12, 13**, from 9:00 am-3:00 pm. Registration closes one day in advance.

Visit:
www.holstonhabitat.org/articiasbuild
Password: firstpres

If you have any Issues with sign-up, contact Mandy Penz at 423-239-7689, ext. 801 or volunteer@holstonhabitat.org

This is a wonderful opportunity for service and fellowship, across Charlemont from our church.

Gary Tucker, FPC Habitat Volunteer Coordinator.m, 423-378-5419.

Ways you can SERVE

Second Harvest Food Bank in May

First Presbyterian Church - Kingsport volunteers will be packing food at Second Harvest Food Bank on **June 17**. 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.).



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 in June

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 tuna

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!



Vacation Bible School 2026

Monday June 22-Wednesday June 24
9am-12pm

Theme: **"Rainforest Falls"**
by Group Publishing

Our annual VBS is set and we are gearing up for another fun week of worship, crafts, singing, and games. Adults and youth are needed to help shepherd our kids between classes. If you are interested in coming, even for a limited time, please let Russ know and we will plug you in! This is one of the best ways to support our kids and to get to know them better.



Confirmation Sunday

On Sunday, May 10, 2026, the session welcomed into the fellowship of our church **Oliver Arrowsmith, Eleanor Combs, Rowan Good, Anson Hagan and McClure Mink** by Profession of Faith.

"I can do all this through him who gives me strength."

~ Philippians 4:13



One of many



Jenny Clemmer

While many of our members join First Pres when they move to Kingsport; some of our members are born into the church. This is true for Jenny Harris Clemmer. She was one of 13 babies baptized at First Presbyterian on Mother's Day in 1947! Not many of us can top that for how we became to be a part of our church!

Jenny grew up in First Pres attending Sunday School, she was active in youth groups and part of one of the first mission trips our youth took – a trip to an Indian Reservation in the 1960's. She married another church member Nic Clemmer at First Pres

and they raised two sons in our church.

Jenny has been active in many different positions in our church, Women of the Church, Sunday School Teaching, Wednesday Wonderful, Deacon, Elder, and Receptions among them. One position she shared with Jeanne McClure for a number of years was serving as a Wedding Director. She thinks this was one of the most intensive jobs she ever held. Currently she is the coordinator for the nonagenarian group. (If you do not know what this group is - ask Jenny)

This is Jenny's seventh year serving as the Clerk of the Session. Many of us don't know what is involved; but it is a vital job for smooth functioning of the Session. The job description is spelled out in the Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church. She takes part in the training for new Session members, helping them understand their role. She prepares a draft agenda each month for the Moderator (usually senior pastor) to approve or adjust. Then she distributes the agenda with minutes, financial statements, and other accompanying documents to the Session members each month. She serves as the parliamentarian and keeps the minutes of all meetings. The clerk does not vote or speak in the meeting unless asked specifically by a member. She takes minutes at all meetings of the Session and Congregation. At the end of the year, the clerk prepares the minutes for that calendar year for the Presbytery to review and approve using the Review Checklist that meets the requirements of the Book of Church Order. As you see it is no small job!

Why does she stay so involved in First Pres? Jenny says there is always something that needs to be done and the variety of opportunities to serve is diverse. Since the church is an important part of her life, she is glad to share her talents here. Aren't we glad to have her as a lifelong member of our church.



The History of Our Church

The McNeer Building

There is a long history for the land approximately where our Children's Center playground and the Columbarium are found today. The building, originally built in 1927, was one of the early hospitals in Kingsport. It later became an apartment building and was owned by several individuals. It became known as the McNeer Building. Mr. McNeer was well known as an early professional photographer in Kingsport. In 1985 the building was given to FPC by long-time members Charlotte and Bob Neely. One of our refugee families lived in the basement apartment at one time. You can still see the alleyway entrance on Holston Street, which was the primary entrance to our parking lot at that time. The McNeer building was directly to the north of the alley.



Above:
Ad in Times News for Opening of the Marsh Clinic & Hospital in 1927



Above:
McNeer Building in the early 1990's

A fire in 1986 caused damage to all but the first floor and basement. Later that year the building was torn down for safety concerns and to allow for the expansion of our church facilities. In 1992 FPC purchased the alleyway from the city, making way for building our current Fellowship Center and the Child Care Center.



Right:
McNeer Building Demolished in 1996