

The History of “Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing”

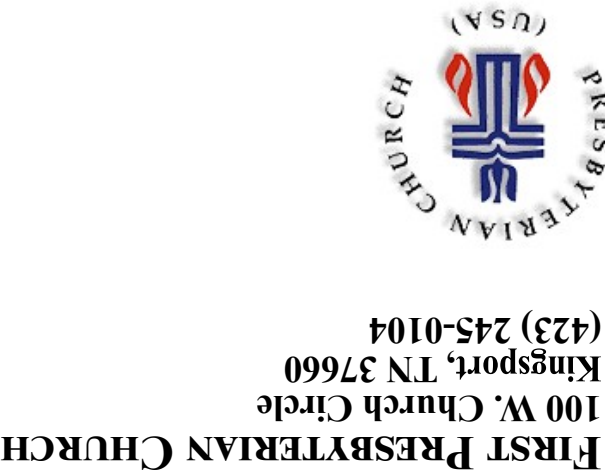
by Amy Smith

The history of this beloved hymn, like many others, was inspired by the lyricist’s spiritual experiences. Some hymn texts are more obvious, which was the case of this masterpiece, written by hymn writer Robert Robertson (1735-1790) in 1758.

Mr. Robertson’s story is both touching and compelling - he is an example of a self-made man. Historically he was a difficult, headstrong child, who had to deal with the death of his father, and challenging times with his mother. Things did not get easier for him, growing up. When he turned 14, his mother sent him to London for an apprenticeship. Perhaps this was done out of love, but this transition to London changed the trajectory that led to change. Those first couple of years in London were life-changing for him, as he gained some friends and followers as a leader. When he was 17, he took his followers to hear a well-known preacher by the name of George Whitfield. It is said that Whitfield’s sermon changed Robertson’s life. He was so deeply touched by the sermon that night- it made him rethink his life and how he was living it.

About three years after he heard the sermon, Robertson joined the Methodist church. According to an article on enhymn.com, he “found full and free forgiveness through the precious blood of Jesus Christ.” He eventually felt called to preach and later was appointed by John Wesley to the Calvinist Methodist Chapel in Norfolk, England. There, in 1758, on the third anniversary of his conversion, Robertson penned the words to “Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing,” for Pentecost. The words of the first verse are about praise and adoration, and the second and third verses are more of an autobiography of his experiences. Next time we sing it in church, take a moment to think on the text, that praises God for the things He has done.

*Come, Thou Fount of every blessing.
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace.
Streams of mercy, never ceasing.
Call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet.
Sung by flaming tongues above;
Praise the mount-I’m fixed upon it-
Mount of Thy redeeming love.
~ Glory to God hymnal, 2003*



First Presbyterian Church

The First Press

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

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August 2026

Mark Your Calendar

- 8-9** Potluck Lunch
- 8-19** Second Harvest Work Day
- 8-20** Newsletter Deadline
- 8-23** BLTs after church
- 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



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A Message from Brad

Welcome to August, the time of year not only when students and teachers return to classrooms, but for all intents and purposes the time when congregations gear up again for the start of a new year.

Now, we all know that the calendar year begins with January. And hopefully, all of you know that the church begins the new Christian liturgical year on the first Sunday in Advent (November 29 this year).

Despite these “official” New Years beginnings, it’s really this time of year when the church calendar kicks off its new beginnings. Our calendar of activities is a close reflection of the annual school calendar.

This will mean that we will return to some more structured schedules after taking a break this summer. The choir will be back with us full time during our 10:30 a.m. worship service on Sunday mornings. Some people will gather early on Sunday mornings to worship at 8:30 a.m. in the Chapel. Church school classes will resume as an additional Sunday morning program. Youth fellowship and children’s activities will find their way to regular spots on the calendar each week. Wednesday Night Suppers will allow us an opportunity to gather during the week for food and fellowship in early September. And who knows, there may be some new opportunities for you to take advantage of in THIS New Year.

Some things have continued throughout the summer since God is always calling us together for Worship and then sending us out to care for the constant needs of others through our mission and outreach activities. The services rendered by those who help at the Clothes Closet, in our Breakfast To Go, and our monthly Second Harvest volunteer ministries did not take a break while our other programs did. These are meaningful ministries, not only for those who receive our care, but also for those who provide these services. If you would like to discover the joy and blessings of serving through these, please let myself, Russ, Becca, our staff, or officers know and we can point you in the right direction.

At the same time, I join those who are concerned about the hostilities and divisions that are expanding in our world that are leading to immense levels of tension and stress in homes, neighborhoods, cities, and nations. The tensions have even enveloped churches as we struggle to define what attitudes and behaviors constitute faithfulness in the Christian Church. I believe most of these issues are more preventable than some might think. I also believe that we might be being called to stand up and speak out with a new level of moral courage grounded in a long history of placing the needs of the many above the needs of the few.

One of the best things that we can do at such a time is to come together to glorify God in worship and gather in the various opportunities available to us and continue growing to greater maturity in Christ to remember who we are, whose we are, how we are called to live.

Grace and peace,
Brad

Summer Worship

10:30 a.m.
Sanctuary
through August 9

Beginning August 16

8:30 a.m.
Chapel

10:30 a.m.
Sanctuary

*Nursery available. Children 4th grade and under will stay through the children's message and be dismissed to Children's Church upstairs. Parents pick up kids at the end of worship.



Close the Gap Campaign

Congratulations! YOU DID IT! You closed the GAP! Thanks to your donations, you have contributed \$20,500 which exceeds the gap (deficit) of \$20,442 in our 2026 Operating Budget.

THANK YOU!
FPC Finance Committee

Summer Fun!

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 on the sign-up sheets in the foyer, on the church Website or call Vickie in the church office. **Registration ends on August 4.**

BLTs are Back!

BLTs are returning again this year on **August 23** in the Fellowship Center after the 10:30 a.m. service. Only white bread will be offered to make the sandwiches. If you want any other kind of bread, please bring it with you. Claudia Byrd is graciously preparing these for us. The meal will include chips and ice cream sandwiches.

Church Night Suppers

Our first Church Night Supper after the summer break will be on **September 2**. We will have an Olive Garden Italian meal of pastas with sauces, salad and dessert.

Church Picnic

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

As was done last year, our committee would love to take White Elephant Donations for prizes for bingo winners. Please place any items you no longer want in the large box located in the coat closet of the church foyer. We will be happy to take them off your hands. Thank you.

Reservations can be made on the sign-up sheet in the church foyer or through the church office beginning August 30 and the deadline is Sunday, September 13. The cost is \$15.00 for adults, \$5.00 for children under 10, with a maximum family of \$35.

Fellowship Dinner Groups

As we endeavor to come together as a congregation this is a request for determining which members would be interested in being part of a Fellowship Dinner Group. Interested members are assigned to be part of a Fellowship Dinner Group for a period of six months. Every six months there is a new group. The groups meet monthly for fellowship and dinner. In the past there has been a group that chose to go out to eat. It is a great way to visit with and get to know each other in a relaxed setting. Please contact Claudia Byrd at (423) 963-4754 or claudia@BristolMotorSpeedway.com with questions or to indicate your interest.



2nd: Bill McClure
4th: Jenella Oliver
5th: Sue Redmon
7th: John Good
10th: Sarah Jane Adams
11th: Inez McBee
12th: Tony Cole
13th: Joyce Brown, Cathy Mooney
14th: Mary Beth Hallen
15th: Nancy Bovender, Laura Addleburg
16th: Peter Gale, Gemma Robinette, Paul Smith, Lee Walker
17th: Bob Stoots
18th: Lindsey McInturff
19th: Karen Reed-Wright
21st: Alan Ruffel
22nd: Agnese Goin, Sarah Barbour, Arielle Sprinkle
23rd: Jane Boyd, Beth Williams
24th: Lillie Ward
25th: Brad Pendleton
26th: Langley Brents
28th: Grant Wilkins, Sam Booher
29th: Ella Miller, Cindy Sharitt, Chris Haynes, Nolan King
30th: Joy McConnell
31st: Bill Bovender

Happy
Birthday!

Congratulations!

Congratulations to **Tammie Davis** who was recently inducted into the Kingsport City School Hall of Fame.

Congratulations to **Sam Barbour** who was recently awarded the Goldwater Scholarship for the 2026-2027 academic year. Sam was one of only two students from the University of Tennessee selected this year. He is the first civil engineering student from UT to ever be awarded this scholarship.

Nice work. We are proud of both of you, Tammie and Sam!



Waverly Road Food Pantry Item of the Month

(Back to School)

Healthy
Cereals



Newsletter Deadline

August 20
September Newsletter





Second Harvest Food Bank in August

First Presbyterian Church - Kingsport volunteers will be packing food at Second Harvest Food Bank on **August 19**. 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 (9am-11am) or afternoon (1pm-3pm).



Breakfast Bags — Please Help!

In order for our Breakfast Ministry to continue, we really need more of our members to step up. We have many open shifts left in July and August, and will be starting to fill our Fall schedule soon. Most of our volunteers are regulars, often filling 3-4 slots a month—we would love to involve more of our members in this ministry. If you have not volunteered before, it truly is a very small commitment--6:45-8:15am on Saturday or Sunday mornings. We know that life is busy, but our neighbors' needs are still there, and we are called to be the hands and feet of Christ to them. If you would like information or to sign up for a shift, please email Sarah Good at sar4680@gmail.com or text 423-967-3148.

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

Grace House Day & Night Center

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.

A Message from Your Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC)

Verse 3 ~ Cure Thy children's warring madness, bend our pride to Thy control; shame our wanton, selfish gladness, rich in things and poor in soul. Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, lest we miss Thy kingdom's goal, lest we miss Thy kingdom's goal.

Recently in worship, as the opening chords of *CWM RHONDDA* filled the sanctuary, voices were raised to sing these timeless words. In that moment, the weight of the hymn truly took hold. If we are honest, there is a constant, quiet unrest in our souls. We live in a world dictated by man's time constraints, where speed is valued over substance, and our patience levels are constantly put to the test. Singing this hymn brought that internal tension to a pitch.

We feel the deep desire for our next chapter to begin, yet we are reminded that "warring madness" and human pride often demand our own timing, while God demands our trust. The unrest we feel is real, but so is the call to bend our impatience to God's perfect control.

As your Pastor Nominating Committee, we feel God's call on this church and on this process. We are actively and patiently working through each step. To ensure we find the leader God has already chosen for us, we are diligently following all the required constraints and procedures laid out in the **Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Book of Order** and the regulations of the **Holston Presbytery**. These guidelines are not just administrative hurdles; they are a connectional safety net designed to protect and guide both our congregation and our future pastor.

This thoroughness takes time. We ask for your continued prayers, your grace, and your patience. **Please trust us, and trust the process.** We are listening closely to the Holy Spirit, and we are moving forward with confidence.

Verse 5 ~ Save us from weak resignation to the evils we deplore; let the search for Thy salvation be our glory evermore. Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, serving Thee whom we adore, serving Thee whom we adore.

Elizabeth, Allen, Jeanne, Tammie, & Carson

Looking Forward to Fall

This Fall on Wednesdays all are invited to Church Night Supper and Bible study in the Fellowship Center! The suppers begin at 5:30pm and we do need reservations. Bible study will begin at 6:20pm. Our first supper will be on **Wednesday, September 2**.



You can bring your own Bible, or just come as you are. Most Wednesdays we will offer a time of study and discussion after we eat, and occasionally we will have a brief Vespers worship service with music and prayer. A couple of times this next season we will have a game night. The schedule of supper and events will be publicized closer to time, and we will remind you weekly of what is happening. Church night suppers are a great time to get to know your church family better. Families are always welcome and there is plenty of space for kids to be present and belong (Russ always can use kids and youth to read!). All of us are looking forward to another great Fall of Wednesday fellowship!

One of many

Gary Tucker

It was 1994 and Gary and Catherine Tucker were arriving in Kingsport from Wise Virginia. They had been on a journey from the Eastern Kentucky coal fields which took them to Cincinnati, Lexington, and other areas and luckily ended in Kingsport. Sam Anderson and Andy Taylor recruited Gary from the Ford Dealership in Wise to come to Kingsport and Anderson Ford. They wanted to help the Tuckers acclimate to Kingsport so gave them hints for banking, shopping, and a church home. First Pres was one of the suggestions and they joined under the pastorate of Danny Massie. Both Gary and Catherine have been very involved in the work of our church during the last 30 years. This article will focus on Gary. Gary has served in a wide variety of positions over the years. He has been a deacon, an elder and is currently serving a second term as a deacon. He has chaired the endowment committee, served on the finance committee, worship committee, and outreach committee.

Currently he volunteers at Second Harvest Food Bank, Grab and Go Ministry, and has worked on numerous Habitat Homes. The current one just completed this week. Gary is particularly drawn to working on Outreach projects. He says he has had many wonderful role models in our church – he has particularly enjoyed following the work of Elizabeth Ann Hay, Hunter and Sylvia Wright and Jane Scott over the past years. He has particularly enjoyed his work on Outreach projects with Bob Stoots and Allen Wright. He admires these two gentlemen very much and is grateful their paths have crossed at FPC. First Pres has many dedicated members and projects that extend our mission into the community.



Gary has also been on several mission trips. One with Sharon Amstutz to Guatemala and a couple youth trips with Russ to Alabama and Oklahoma. Gary loves taking photos and shares those he takes at First Pres with Kim for the Newsletter and with our History Room. These photos are much appreciated.

When asked what keeps him involved at First Pres – Gary quickly answers “My commitment to God and I enjoy being in fellowship with other believers”. We are certainly glad to have Gary as a part of our church.

Thank you from the History Committee!

Thanks to **Sylvia Wright** for the great photos taken during the Living Waters of the World Mission Trip she and Hunter participated in several years ago. They will be saved in our History Room to illustrate the great work done on that mission trip.

Thanks so much to **Catherine Tucker**. She found a new member packet from the Massie pastorate when they joined the church. In perfect condition and we did not have one in our archives. When you come across things like this or photographs from past FPC activities don't just toss them away. Leave them in the History Room mail basket near Vickie's desk or leave by the computer in the History Room. Don't forget each of you are a part of our history.

And thanks also to **Catherine Tucker** for the great photos of the 250th USA Celebration Luncheon; a Church Potluck Luncheon, and the 2025 Halloween Parade. She continues to help us preserve our current history in the FPC Archives.

The History of Our Church

FPC Children's Center

This is a very exciting time in the life of our church's Children's Center! The Children's Center opened its doors on August 20, 1996. This is its 30th anniversary! Its creation was in response to a community need, identified by United Way, for full time, licensed daycare for preschoolers. Kathleen Barr was the first Director, and within six months of operation, FPC Children's Center was at 89% capacity. It now serves 48-50 children yearly.

The CC focuses on developmentally appropriate child care in a Christian setting. FPC furnishes the space rent free and provides utilities. Rev. Russ Pearson and Amy Smith, Director of Music, lead chapel weekly with the students. They sing songs, pray and learn Bible Stories and verses. The children also attend Vacation Bible School in the summer.

The current Director is Tammy Hodge. She taught at the CC from 1999, until becoming Director in 2016; Teacher Julie Leslie (Older Toddlers) has been a teacher since 1997; Ruth Baldwin (Infant Room) has taught since 2000. The longevity of these ladies service speaks volumes to their dedication and to the success of the Center.

God is still mightily at work in the FPC Children's Center!



Photos

Top:
Children in one of the
“carts” - with Jane Scott
and Paula Scott

Above:
Kathleen Barr, the first
director

Left:
Danny Massie and
James Holmes open the
center.

