

The Story Behind “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”

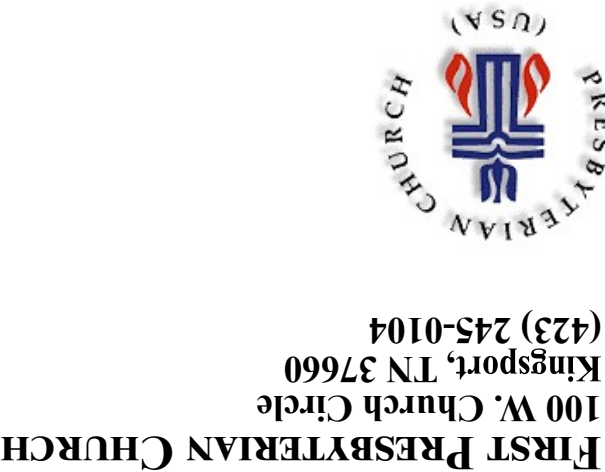
by Amy Smith

“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God” is a cornerstone of modern Christian hymnody. Its origins are every bit as grand as its legacy, being written by one of the most famous and beloved Christians in history, and being used as a battle cry during times of persecution. Martin Luther, the Great Reformer who sparked the Protestant Reformation, hardly needs an introduction. On October 31, 1517, in Wittenberg, Germany, where Luther lived and taught theology, he nailed his 95 Theses to the door of the Castle Church to challenge the Catholic Church’s sale of indulgences. His ideas, derived from scripture, advocated for a personal relationship with God over reliance on priests, shifting power from the Catholic Church to the common man. This bold act ignited the decades-long Protestant Reformation.

Luther is well known for beginning the Reformation but is less known for his ongoing fight during it. His Passion for each believer to experience a personal relationship with God never budged, and one of his key proposals for such a relationship involved the grand purpose of music. On music, Luther proclaimed “If any man despises music, as all fanatics do, for him I have no liking for music is a gift and grace of God, not an invention of men. Thus, it drives out the devil and makes people cheerful,” and “The devil, the originator of sorrowful anxieties and restless troubles, flees before the Word of God.”

Luther understood that actions speak louder than words. It is how he began the Reformation, and it is how he emphasized the importance of music. Luther took to writing his own hymns, hymns that congregations took joy in singing, and then this great hymn was written. He wrote “A Mighty Fortress” during the darkest time of the Reformation, a time of widespread persecution from the Catholic Church. For the persecuted, no greater words were there to sing than:

*A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing.
Our helper He, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing;
For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and power are great, and, armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.*



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



Mark Your Calendar

- 10-11** Congregational Meeting, Combined Worship & Potluck Lunch
- 10-17** Chamber Players Concert
- 10-25** Pumpkin Carving & Pizza
- 10-28** Trick or Treat and Halloween Hits Concert
- 11-1** Rise Against Hunger
- 11-8** Amy’s Triple Three Concert

Weekly

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

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

TAKE NOTE

- ♦ Sunday marks the beginning of **Stewardship Season**. Please see the insert included in this newsletter for more information.
- ♦ **World Communion Sunday** is October 4. Look for more information and giving envelopes in your Sunday bulletin.

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Kingsport, TN 37660
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The Church Where Things Never Change

More than once, I have heard that in a world where changes occur so quickly, and often so chaotically, people are attracted to churches in the hopes of finding stability. They want to know that there is someplace in their life where they can go trusting that it will remain the same. As I scanned the calendar of events for October, it dawned on me that First Presbyterian is that kind of church.

Like we have done for years, we will always be inviting new friends, Christ seekers from the community, and our less active members, to join us when we gather for times of fellowship. Fortunately, this almost always includes food whether it’s our Wednesday Night Supper (10/7, 14, 21, and 28) or a potluck lunch following a combined worship service (10/11). Then, just like before, will always be adding and deleting activities to keep the ministries for our children and teens fresh and alive. We will always wrestle with practicing the gift of hospitality when we open our doors to welcome other groups with whom we can share this wonderful facility even when we know that their presence will probably create some kind of inconvenience for us. We will once again hear a report from the congregational nominating committee about the updates that they are proposing to rotate the leadership of the Session and Diaconate. As the Holy Catholic Church has done for two millennia now, we continue to seek out new formats and methods for educating and training followers of Jesus to grow in grace as they mature in their discipleship to Jesus Christ. We will again use contemporary wording to perform rituals (10/4) and recognize historical events (10/25) that have been conducted by people all over the world for hundreds of years. Just like before, an annual stewardship campaign will emphasize the importance of members supporting the ministries and missions of this congregation by contributing their gifts, time, and financial resources in the approaching year which almost certainly promises new pastoral leadership. As in ages past, and we expect for years to come, we will continue gathering together as flawed, sinful, and somewhat selfish souls to worship the Lord our God, who is holy, righteous, merciful, and forgiving in all the ways that we are not. Yet, out of his own faithfulness and love, God continually seems to welcome us, even when we grumble in our struggles to find the best form for worshiping this holy God in a way that feeds the souls of the many people who come together for this purpose.

Even as this congregation finds itself in a time of transition between your previous pastor and your next one, we will still gather to receive the teaching of the apostles, to enjoy times of fellowship, to break bread together (both in worship and mealtimes), and to pray, just as the Church has done since the day of Pentecost. In fact, for all the talk about being in transition and looking forward to what’s next, we will revisit the familiar story of Exodus as we think about what it means to be God’s people who encounter life one day at a time with all its routines even while adapting to chaotic changes that we cannot control.

Blessedly, despite the transitions that we face and the adaptations required of us, we can continue to faithfully offer our witness to the good news of Jesus Christ. That’s because we know that, in this place, we trust this sovereign God to watch over us and to always be in control. Around here, some things never change.

Blessings,

Brad

Sunday Worship

8:30 a.m.
Chapel

10:30 a.m.
Sanctuary

Congregational Meeting

The Session has called for a Congregational Meeting to be held at the close of worship on **Sunday, October 11** for the purpose of electing elders and deacons, and voting on issues related to the electing of church officers.

Looking Ahead!

November 1

Rise Against Hunger

November 22

Community Thanksgiving
Service at FBSUMC

November 29

Advent Coffee

December 13

Care Ministry Luncheon

December 20

Caroling and Chili

Wednesdays at FPC

Dinner at 5:30 p.m. ~ Program at 6:20 p.m.

October 7

Food City: Breakfast for Dinner
(Worship Committee serving)

Bible Study: *Living Hope - A Study of 1 Peter*

October 14

Food City: Potato and salad bars and dessert.
(Finance Committee serving)

**A Fall Festival program will be held after CNS
to include games and prizes.**

October 21

Braeden's: Pork loin, green beans, pasta salad, rolls,
and dessert.

(Administration Committee serving)

Bible Study: *Living Hope - A Study of 1 Peter*

October 28

Food City: Chicken tenders, macaroni and cheese,
salad, rolls and dessert.

(Christian Education Committee serving)

**The program after the CNS meal will be "Trick or
Treat."** If you choose, children and adults may dress in
costumes. Adults who wish to decorate a table and dis-
tribute candy should let Russ Pearson know in advance
so enough tables will be set up. We hope you'll come
and enjoy the fun! You may participate in "Trick or
Treat" if you don't attend Church Night Supper. But,
please remember that reservations for adults and chil-
dren are needed by Tuesday at noon on the 27th if you
want dinner.

*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 re-
ceived 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: www.firstpreskickingsport.org*



October 3: Allen Wright

October 4: John Newell, Pat Bryan,
Rebecca Quillen

October 5: Don Osborne, Tal Francisco

October 6: Leola Campbell, Matt King

October 7: Ellen Sims, Taylor Bunch

October 9: Ian Ward

October 10: Morris Hadden

October 11: Marthe Kincaid

October 12: Neely Mink

October 13: Beth Amstutz

October 14: Arlee Mott

October 15: David McBee, Pamela Babb,
Steve Miller, Alex King

October 16: Don Good

October 17: Jim Amstutz

October 18: Duncan Harker, Owen Heindselman,
Jack Addleburg

October 19: Cheryl Ann Hess

October 21: Bo Grover

October 22: Michael Holt, Alyson Argabrite,
Anna Hagan

October 26: John Alan Smith, Jacqueline Buckles,
Leslie Light

October 31: Betsy Boyd, Tonya McInturff,
Wes Argabrite, Sharon Amstutz

Session Highlights

- ♦ The Session and Diaconate met jointly in August with Diaconate Chair, Claudia Byrd, reporting on the work and ministry provided by the Deacons.
- ♦ The Independent Accountant's Report by Gary Fuller, CPA, was received without exceptions.
- ♦ The Stewardship Campaign will be based on Exodus 16 emphasizing God's provision during a transitory period of His people.
- ♦ Pop up Activities are being planned for Sunday afternoons with Focus on Families.

Men's Bible Study, Optional Lunch

Pray about joining the "Knuckleheads" Men's Bible Study on Tuesdays at 12:15 in the history room. We pray, study scripture, go to lunch and enjoy fellowship. This is a good opportunity for you to grow in faith along with other men of the church.

Waverly Road Food Pantry Item of the Month

**Pasta & canned sauce
or**

A box of macaroni & cheese

Newsletter Deadline

October 19
November Newsletter

Potluck: October 11

The next opportunity for members to share your special food dish with other members is at the potluck after church on **October 11th**. 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 September 20th on the sign-up sheets in the foyer, on the church Website or call Vickie in the church office. Please register by **October 6th** so we'll know the number for which to prepare.

Intergenerational Event

Sunday, October 25: Pumpkin Carving and Pizza

4 pm, Fellowship Center

A sign-up sheet will be placed in the church foyer on October 11th, where you can register your attendance. You may also register through the church office by calling 245-0104. Please register by Thursday, October 22nd. This is a free event that is made possible thanks to a very generous donation to the CF&N Committee by an anonymous church member.



Second Harvest Food Bank in October

First Presbyterian Church - Kingsport volunteers will be packing food at Second Harvest Food Bank on **October 21**. 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.).



Workday at FPC ~ October 10

The Property Committee would like to invite you to a workday for the church to get some much needed work done by members and friends of the church. The date is **Saturday, October 10** beginning at 9:00 a.m. We are really in need of helpers for any amount of time, and we have a variety of inside and outside jobs for all levels of ability. Please join us - we need you!



Mystery Quilt

Alan found this lovely quilt/wall hanging depicting numerous Bible verses folded in a cupboard in the old fellowship hall and it ended up in the History Room. An individual or a group have spent significant time creating this quilt. To keep it in our History Room we need to know a little about it. Who worked on it? Was it a group or class project? When was it created? Someone please help us out! We would love to maintain it but need a little background to make it a part of FPC Church History. Give Jane Harris a call at 423-239-9477 or email her at jane.harris.423@gmail.com.



Emily's Cards

The History Room had a request from a member to collect any of the beautiful cards that have been received from Emily Gaude over the past years. If you have received one, kept it, and would consider parting with it - the History Room will maintain the *Emily Gaude Collection* and share it from time to time as a reminder of the wonderful card ministry that Emily conducted over the past several years. Leave cards in the History Room mail box near Vickie's desk.

The J. Fred Johnson Bethel Presbyterian Bible Presentation

On **Sunday October 11** a delegation from Bethel Presbyterian Church will be at the 10:30 a.m. Sanctuary worship service to present a 87-year-old pulpit Bible. This Bible was given to Bethel Presbyterian in 1939 by the late elder J. Fred Johnson of First Presbyterian Church.

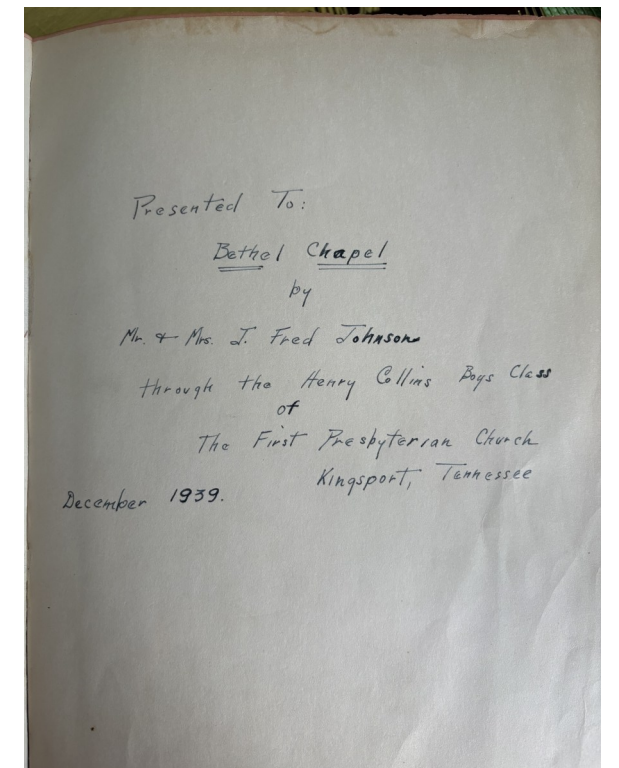
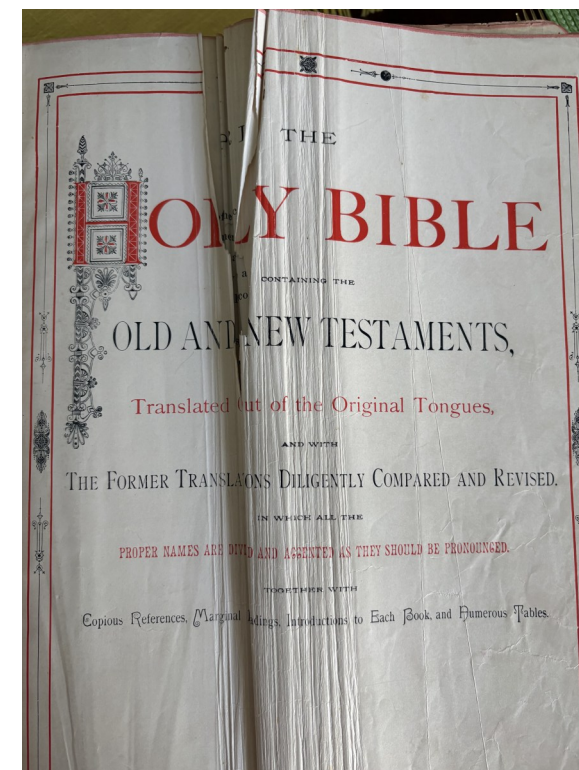
In the years surrounding World War II, Kingsport was rapidly growing in size and population. Visionary ministers of Holston presbytery led by the late Rev. Marvin Compher, proposed starting new church developments in each direction coming into Kingsport, sponsored by Presbyterian and other existing churches.

In conjunction with this effort, Elder J. Fred Johnson purchased and presented each new congregation with a beautiful pulpit Bible to be used in worship. Bethel Presbyterian Church was among the first to receive this gift at their founding in 1939. Upon closure of Bethel Presbyterian in 2024, it was thought that First Presbyterian Church was the proper location for the stewardship of this sacred book in their history room where it could be preserved and could be seen and lovingly cared for into the future.



We hope you will attend this special worship service in October!

Sincerely,
Rev. Mark Knisley



One of many

Sue Redmon

After moving in and out of Kingsport for Eastman several times since the 1960's and belonging to several other churches; Sue and Ivey Redmon visited and joined First Pres in 1996 when Danny Massie was pastor. They have both been active members of FPC for the past 30 years. This article highlights Sue's participation in our church. (We will highlight Ivey another time). Sue says the friendly congregation and the size of the church are what drew her to FPC. She enjoys the size because it allowed her to know most people instead of a larger church with numerous splinter groups.

Organizing and leading a group of Young Moms was the first activity for Sue in 1996. She recalls Beth Correll, Carolyn Baker and Jennifer Walker as members of the group among many others.

Other activities over the 30 years have included:

- ◆ Two terms as Deacon and serving twice as moderator
- ◆ Serving as Elder on Session
- ◆ Chairing Worship Committee
- ◆ Chairing Fellowship Committee
- ◆ Leading Church Decorations for at least 12 years – Christmas Decorations, Easter Decorations, Flowers
- ◆ Youth group leaders – mission trips to Arizona and Jacksonville, FL
- ◆ Women of Church Bible Study leader
- ◆ Bible School leader
- ◆ Interim Pastor Nominating Committee – Kemper Huber
- ◆ Adult Sunday School Teacher
- ◆ Choir Member – many years

While Sue has enjoyed each and every position she has filled in our church; one of her favorites has been facilitating her current adult Sunday School Class. She says it started with about 15 members who were looking for a place to participate in an actual study of the Bible. The group has bonded; and members feel a real commitment to the group and their study. While the group adjusts around members' health and travel; the group seems to truly support and encourage each other.

When asked what has kept her involved for 30 years; Sue responded she would not know any other way to live her life. She began her service to the Lord and his church when she was a teenager singing in the choir and teaching a 1st grade Sunday School Class. Service to the Lord is simply a part of her life and her faith. Sue feels one evidence of success in her Christian life is having passed her beliefs along to her family. She has 5 grandchildren, all young adults, who are involved in Church activities in some way in their various home communities. Aren't we lucky to have Sue as an active member of our congregation for 30 years! We know she will be an involved member for many more!



The History of Our Church

Hufford House

A STORIED HISTORY OF SERVING GOD'S PEOPLE



Hufford House, now situated on the corner of Charlemont and Holston, has an illustrious history. In the living room of the Hufford home, the leading Presbyterian men of Kingsport met in 1917 to request Holston Presbytery form a Southern Presbyterian church. Thus the structure is important to us at First Presbyterian for our beginning.

Located on our wedge of Church Circle, Hufford House became Safe House, a temporary, secure residence for women and children in abusive relationships. During the Massie pastorate when membership reached 1000, the con-

gregation expanded the physical plant– more space for offices, music, and a child center for day care and education. The expansion necessitated moving Hufford House from its original location to its present site across from the Columbarium where the structure continues to serve as an administrative office for Family Promise of Greater Kingsport. The move was a spectacular event which made the front page of our Kingsport newspaper.

Hufford House has provided space for two local agencies assisting people: Family Promise and Kingsport Community Ministry Center. KCMC, funded by area churches, was a central location to assist with basic living needs in an emergency – utilities and rent

When Family Promise first began serving homeless families in Kingsport, churches participated in church rotation. The families were served meals in the fellowship hall and slept on cots in classrooms. Hufford House became a day center for the families while they searched for employment and housing.

Family Promise purchased a house and an apartment for temporary housing for homeless families. They are able to stay in one place rather than move to a different hosting church. This arrangement strengthened the family connections and provided stability and independence. During this phase Florence Godat and Gray Stothart led our congregation in providing for the homeless families in the apartments. The most recent information indicates that FPC Outreach Committee deems the families in Family Promise no longer need food or meals sent from the sponsoring churches.

We continue to serve God's children through the use of Hufford House, chiefly as an administrative office. Betty Blass is on the Board of Family Promise.

