Caroling and Chili

An intergenerational Caroling and Chili event will be held on **December 20.** Please come to the Fellowship Center at 4:00 p.m. where the caroling will be coordinated. Return after caroling to the Fellowship Center for a chili dinner. There is no cost for this meal because funds from an anonymous church member will be used to pay for the chili. We will ask for your reservations closer to the date.





Next First Press
Newsletter Deadline
December 14
January Newsletter

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 12 *December 2026*

Mark Your Calendar

12-13 *Combined Worship, Cantata & Care Ministry Luncheon*

12-14 *Newsletter deadline*

12-20 *Combined Worship, Shadow Nativity, Caroling & Chili*

12-24 *Christmas Eve Service at 5pm*

12-27 *Combined Worship at 10:30*

Weekly

Tuesday
Knuckleheads Men's Bible Study
12:15-1:15 p.m.
History Room

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



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office@firstpreskingsport.org
www.firstpreskingsport.org



Salvation Army Bell Ringers

First Presbyterian Church Members will ring bells to support programs of the Kingsport Salvation Army this Christmas Season. We will be at the Food City on Clinchfield Street on **Saturday, December 12.** Please call Catherine Tucker to schedule a shift to volunteer (423-782-7782). Thank you for serving our neighbors in this way.

Deacon Care Ministry Luncheon

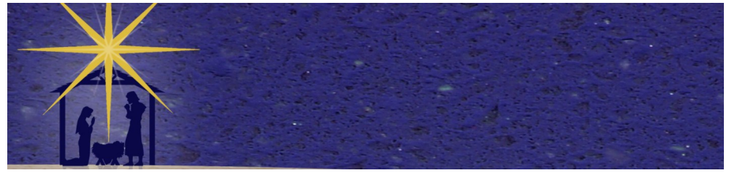
Sunday, December 13 ~ 11:45 a.m.

Menu

Spiral Sliced Ham
Roasted Potatoes
Broccoli Casserole
Corn, Rolls
Dessert, Drinks

Cost: $15/adults - $5/children (age 6-10), $35 max per family
Free for children under 6

Your deacon will contact you for your reservations.



Roosevelt Elementary Chorus to Perform December 9

Please join us on Wednesday, December 9, at 5:00 p.m. in the sanctuary for a special musical performance by the Roosevelt Elementary Chorus! As one of our church's community outreach partners, Roosevelt Elementary holds a special place in our hearts. The students are excited to share their musical presentation, "December 'Round the World," as a thank-you for our congregation's continued support. We hope you'll join us for this wonderful opportunity to celebrate our partnership and enjoy the talents of these young singers! Our regular Wednesday night fellowship dinner will follow at 5:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Center.



Wednesdays in December!

Please join us for Church Night Supper in December on Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m., program at 6:20 p.m.

December 2
Worship Committee serving
Food City: Breakfast for Dinner.

December 9
Finance Committee serving
Panda Express: Various entrees, sides and dessert.
(The reservation deadline is Monday, December 7, at noon for this meal)

December 16
Administration Committee serving
Braeden's: BBQ sandwiches, baked beans, coleslaw, sauces, and dessert.

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 through the church Website First Presbyterian Church-Kingsport (www.firstpreskingsport.org) or through your REALM account. Remember if you have made a reservation and then realize you can not come, please cancel your reservation by noon on Tuesday. If not canceled, our policy is that there will be a charge for the meal, since your meal would have been ordered. Thank you for understanding.

Advent & Christmas at First Presbyterian

Sunday, November 29 - Advent Breakfast in the Fellowship Center

Sunday, December 6 - 8:30 a.m. Chapel worship and 10:30 a.m. Sanctuary worship

Wednesday, December 9 - Roosevelt Elementary Chorus at 5:00 p.m. in the sanctuary

Sunday, December 13 - 10:30am Combined Worship, Cantata, Deacon Care Lunch to follow

Wednesday, December 16 - *Easy's Gettin' Harder* program after Church Night Supper

Sunday, December 20 - 10:30am Combined Worship, Children's Nativity during worship.
4:00pm Christmas Caroling and Chili

Thursday, December 24 - 5:00pm Christmas Eve Service in the Sanctuary

Sunday, December 27 - 10:30am Combined Worship



1st: Linda Buckles, Mike Babb, John Kunysz
2nd: Frank Gibson, McClure Mink
4th: Gary Hallen, Margaret Callcott, Jasmine Pendley
5th: Gillian Brents, Camden Argabrite
6th: Aidan Smith, Cliff Marchion
8th: Chris Raines, Elizabeth Booher
9th: Orris Harker
10th: Rebecca Combs
11th: Karen Bunch, Ella Deakins
13th: Marcia Porter, Sam Barbour, Sue Wells
14th: Dottye Gray, Braylee Williams, Nafisa Banda
15th: Wes Combs, Lee McConnell, Mack Gale
17th: Liz Stothart
19th: Barbara Maston, Mike Bunch
23rd: Ruth Adams
27th: Carolyn Collins, Johnnie Stubblefield
28th: Judy Cox
29th: Mary Easley, Grace Plemmons
30th: Natalie Robertson
31st: Kim Plemmons, Anson Hagan, Charlie Lively

Happy Birthday!

Flowers Needed for Church in 2027

January 24	June 6
January 31	June 20
February 28	August 1
March 7	September 5
March 14	September 12
April 11	September 19
April 25	October 3
May 16	October 31
May 23	November 14
May 30	

Please call Vickie in the church office (423-245-0104) to sign up for a date.



Stock Contributions

The end of 2026 is rapidly approaching. If you are planning to give stock to the church, please notify the church in writing prior to your donation. Thanking you in advance.

Reminder for Pledges

The new year is just around the corner. Here are just a few reminders as you consider your year-end contributions to the church.

- If possible, please consider fulfilling your **'2026' Pledge.**
- To those of you who have made your **2026 Pledge, thank you for supporting the church and its mission.**
- If you are planning on making an **online donation** that you want posted in 2026 you need to make that donation **no later than Saturday, December 26, 2026.** If you will be making any other type of donation please make them by **Sunday, December 27** to receive a charitable tax donation for '2026'. Checks that are placed in the church offering plates during the first worship service in 2027 **will not qualify** for a charitable tax contribution in 2026. However, checks that are written, mailed and **postmarked in 2026** will be deductible in 2026 even if not received by the church until 2027.

Thank you for your generous gifts to this church.



White Gift Grocery Bag Offering

The White Gift offering is a Christian tradition offering gifts of substance, service and self to Christ and sharing them with our neighbors in need. (Gifts originally were anonymous, wrapped in white paper.)

Brown paper grocery bags with a white list of grocery items to be purchased will be available to you in the church foyer. On December 22nd, your grocery gift bags will be delivered to Waverly Road Presbyterian Church food pantry c/o Pete Lodal. You may also write a check to Waverly Road Presbyterian Church, 1415 Waverly Road, Kingsport, TN 37664, Memo: Food Pantry. This church was "planted"/started by FPC members providing leadership, resources, prayer and financial support to offer Christ to people in other parts of Kingsport.

Breakfast Ministry Needs

The weather is getting colder, and our Breakfast Ministry is in need of the following items to help our neighbors stay warm:

- hats/toboggans
- men's and women's gloves
- men's and women's socks
- hand warmers

Items can be new or gently used and can be dropped off in the foyer. Thank you for thinking of our neighbors as the temperatures drop!

Second Harvest Food Bank

First Presbyterian Church - Kingsport volunteers will be packing food at Second Harvest Food Bank on December 16. Please join in to help lift our Christmas spirit through service to others, showing gratitude for our blessings and sharing the Joy of Jesus Christ. Everyone is welcome! 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.).



Silent Night

Silent Night is one of the most beloved Christmas carols in the world. It was first performed on Christmas Eve, December 24th,1818 in the small village of Oberndorf, Austria. The words were written in 1816 by Joseph Mohr, a young Austrian Catholic priest. At the time, Europe was recovering from the turmoil of the Napoleonic Wars, and Mohr wrote a poem expressing peace, hope, and the birth of Christ. Two years later, while serving at St. Nicholas Church in Oberndorf, Mohr asked Franz Xaver Gruber, a local schoolmaster and church organist, to compose music for the poem. Gruber quickly created a simple melody, and the song was arranged for two voices and guitar.

According to tradition, the church organ was not functioning properly on Christmas Eve in 1818, so the new carol was accompanied by guitar rather than organ. That evening, Mohr and Gruber sang *Silent Night* for the first time during the Christmas Mass at St. Nicholas Church. The carol soon spread beyond Oberndorf. Traveling folk singers from the Austrian Tyrol region included it in their performances, introducing it to audiences throughout Austria and Germany. By the 1830s and 1840s, it was being sung across Europe. In 1839, *Silent Night* was reportedly performed in the United States for the first time at Trinity Church in New York City.

The song has since been translated into more than 300 languages and dialects, making it one of the most translated songs in the world. Its simple melody and message of peace have helped it become a Christmas tradition across cultures and Christian denominations. More than two centuries after its first performance, *Silent Night* remains one of the most cherished Christmas hymns ever written. Its gentle melody and timeless message of peace, love, and hope continue to inspire people around the world each Christmas season.

Amy

An Invitation from Amy

Hello, friends!
Please mark your calendars for some exciting events coming up. First, our amazing Chancel choir will be participating in Music Club's "100 Voices Celebrate Christmas" concert, on December 4th at 7:00 PM. This concert is free to the public and will be held at First Broad St United Methodist Church. This concert is one of several concerts being held this year, to celebrate Kingsport Music Club's 100 year anniversary. On December 13th, the choir will present the cantata, "Ballad of Bethlehem," by Pepper Choplin. This fun work tells the story of Advent through Christmas, and features excerpts from familiar tunes. On December 20th we have our Christmas Eve family service, including the Shadow Nativity. This presentation of the Nativity is performed by our youth and children behind a screen, set to music. Finally, make sure to attend our Christmas Eve service on December 24th at 5:00 PM. We are so blessed to have a brass quintet, bells and choir all participating for this service. Pre-service music will begin at 4:40, so please arrive early and enjoy "Sounds of the Season."

Thanks, everyone!

Blessings,

Amy

One of many



Claudia Mihovk

It is easy for Claudia to remember when she came to First Pres. It was right before COVID! Claudia, a teacher by profession, came to our area from Georgia in 2019 when she was looking for a change in her life situation. She had been studying East Tennessee and Southwest Virginia for several years. A Physical Education and Health/Wellness assistant professor, she liked our area due to the large number of colleges where she might teach. She settled on a farm in Southwest Virginia and obviously loves her location! Her love for gardening and trees led her to continue living on a small farm, as she had in Georgia. She researched PCUSA churches before arriving and selected ours. She met with our pastor, Mike Shelton, after attending the Christmas service with her sister Barbara. She entered, as many visitors do, through the front doors and immediately thought, "WOW, this is a BIG church." But the friendly people of our church must have sold her, as she says she was here to stay!

Claudia is a very outgoing person and jumped into activities at First Pres as soon as possible. COVID caused a delay in many activities, however. She joined the CF&N committee and helped plan many activities. She encouraged the group to begin two events she brought from her church in Georgia – Lemonade on the Lawn and Advent Coffee. She managed those for a couple of years as a CF&N member and enjoyed them so much that she still leads efforts, though she has moved on to another committee. Claudia was elected an elder and has chaired the Property Committee. Claudia is also an active member of the Bell Choir and serves as a liturgist and usher for worship services. So, as the holidays come, look for Claudia and the good cheer of the Advent Coffee.

Claudia says what keeps her involved here at First Pres is her love for all the people of our church. She feels she is here among us because God wants her to be. She has numerous stories of how God has led her through her life, She is most pleased to be at First Pres and plans to be here for the remainder of her life. We are indeed lucky to have an individual of such faith and caring among us. Claudia says one thing she wishes we had at First Pres is a way to let each other know how they might help each other. In addition to her teaching skills, Claudia is a very accomplished "handywoman." She says most of her skills are self-taught, but she is willing to share them with members who need help. She mentioned one church member who was not able to climb to change light bulbs or reach shelves in high cabinets. We all have skills/abilities we could share if we knew of the needs. Claudia says she is willing to help with chores and other projects at no charge for labor – just pay for the supplies needed. So, give her a call if you have a project in need of her help.

Thank you, Claudia, for bringing your "can-do" spirit and God-given love and cheer to First Presbyterian.

The History of Our Church

Chrismon Trees



After winning a blue ribbon for their color wheel quilt, the women's craft group begun by Mary Pierce was eager for a new project. Eleanor deNobriga of Holy Trinity Lutheran related the history of a tree for Advent and Christmas decorated with monograms of Christ, Chrismons. Only two colors, white for purity and gold for majesty, are used in Chrismons. Cross stitched ornaments in gold and white and framed in gold involved numerous embroiderers. Other designs were delicate pearls strung into intricate designs. Traditional Chrismons are cross, star, trefoil, shepherd's crook, chi and rho for the first two letters of Christ, crown, shell for baptism, and chalice.

For Christmas 1990, a beautiful Chrismon tree became a part of Advent decorations. The manger Chrismon is always placed low on the tree to encourage young children to see and to be included in understanding the symbols.

Numerous women worked on the project including
Dorothy Lightfoot, Mary Pierce, Brenda Eilers, Ruth Ann Wiseman, Carolyn McConnell, and Juanita Church.

Be sure to look on both sides at the front of the sanctuary for the two Chrismon trees throughout the Advent and Christmas season.

New Display in the History Room – Living Waters for the World

Visit the History Room to explore information and photos about our church's involvement with the Shalom Foundation and Living Waters for the World. Several church members traveled to Guatemala between 2009 and 2013 to participate in this outreach, while another group worked on a Living Waters project closer to home in Rose Hill, Tennessee, in 2013. The display includes trip information and photos, along with a progress update for 2026. If you participated in these projects, come reminisce and learn more about the impact of your work. Others can discover how a small group from First Pres made a meaningful difference in both Guatemala and Rose Hill. Special thanks to Nic Clemmer, Bill McClure, and John Porter for their help with this project!

Congratulations, Sarah!

CONGRATULATIONS to Sarah Good, ESL (English as a second language) teacher at Dobyns-Bennett High School, who was recently named the district Teacher of the Year for Grades 9-12 for 2027! Great work Sarah!