

First Presbyterian News

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C. Russell Lee, Jr., Pastor, D. Min. **September 2015**

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Dear First Folks,

Summer has been full of ministry, travel, vacation, mission, and worship. As September welcomes us, let us all pledge to be a regular part of ministry, education, and mission as First Presbyterian continues to be a light to the community. God calls us from the minimum to the maximum, from where we are to where we need to be. Your presence blesses us, and God's Spirit in you inspires us. Let us give thanks for one another, for God's great plans for the salvation of the world, and for the wonderful things which happen when God's people are the church together!

In Him,

Russell



Sermon Topics for September

September 6 Sermon: Astounded!
Scripture: Isaiah 35:4-7a Mark 7:24-37
September 13 Rally Day
Sermon: Divine Things
Scripture: Psalm 116:1-9 Mark 8:27-38
September 20 Good Neighbor Sunday
Sermon: The Greatest
Scripture: Psalm 1 Mark 9:30-37
September 27 Sermon: Restoration
Scripture: Psalm 19:7-14 James 5:13-20
October 4 World Communion Sunday
Sermon: Angel Altitude
Scripture: Psalm 8 Hebrews 1:1-4, 2:5-12

Five Cents a Meal Sunday is September 27

Officers' Meetings - Monday, September 21

7:00 pm - Diaconate; 7:30 pm - Session

The Ladies' Circle will meet on Wednesday, September 9, at 10:30 am in the Philathea Room. (Please note the change from Tuesday to Wednesday.) Eloise Wilder will present the program. We will have new program books to introduce at this meeting to be used in our new year. We look forward to seeing all the First Presbyterian ladies present.

Upper Room Devotionals for September/October are available in the Sunday School foyer and each vestibule. As activities gear up for the fall, remember to spend some time each day with the Lord!

Playground Mission Project

Soon you will get to participate in another local mission effort and see great results almost immediately! In September and October, our Mission Team, Men's Handymen, and all First Presbyterians will get to help with a playground project which will be built on the grounds here, then partially disassembled and moved to its new home at Mt. Cana United Methodist Church where it will be dedicated to the glory of God. Reverend Randy Holmes and members of that church will also work in the building of the playset, and they will share in the cost of materials. Plan to participate in prayer, assembly, construction, dedication, and support of this mission effort. It will be a gathering spot both here and there, an inspiration to God's people, and a witness to the community.



We will build something like this, with First Presbyterian Improvements, of course!



Good Neighbor Sunday

Good Neighbor Sunday September 20

What is a good neighbor? The Good Samaritan stopped and bound up the wounds of a traveler in need. We are called to be good neighbors by Jesus himself.

September is a natural time to invite neighbors and friends to church. On any given Sunday in our country, there are more people not in church than are. We plan to do our part to switch that around to where it should be.

So, talk to your neighbors, next door or fifteen miles away or more, and invite them to church. Do your part to share the gospel on that day.

Take the next step and plan to drop by and pick them up in your car to bring them. We will welcome them, give them a gift, and pray that God might lead them to be a part of the First Pres. family on a regular basis.

Jesus said that He will be with us always as we go out to share the gospel. So step out, be brave, and change someone's life for the better by being a good neighbor.

First Presbyterian Church will have its annual retreat at Camp Hat Creek in Brookneal from Friday, October 23, to Sunday, October 25. This annual retreat is a great time of learning and fellowship, and it has been a blessing to our congregation for many years. During our time at Camp Hat Creek, we will have devotions, worship and plenty of outdoor activities, such as hiking and canoeing. If you would like to lead a devotional or help in the preparations for our retreat, please contact Winston Harrell



Hat Creek
Retreat



STEPHEN
MINISTRY

Stephen Ministry

*SERVE WHOLEHEARTEDLY, AS IF YOU WERE SERVING
THE LORD, NOT MEN. ~ Ephesians 6:7*

Servitude is not a glamorous concept. Who in their right mind would want to sign up for a life of servitude? And yet, that is what God has in mind for His people. God knows how service to others will bless us, as well as those around us.

Serving others not only reveals the bonds between us; it reflects the love of God. It points people to Christ. Jesus modeled grace that goes way beyond our understanding. He emptied Himself for us, though we deserved nothing. His example calls us to "submit to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Ephesians 5:21). In our me-first culture, God calls us to put others first.

This is exactly what our Stephen Ministry program is all about. If you would like to be a part of this ministry, please call the church office or Karen Henderson at 476-7838. We will be starting a new Stephen ministry training session the first of Jan. 2016, so please be in prayer that God may use you in this ministry.

Vacations ending, camps closing, summer slipping past and, then, September! Schools opening, renewal of schedules, many changes. However, amid the excitement of these changes, let us not forget to schedule time with our Heavenly Father. He loves us and desires to be a partner in all our activities.

Just as Jesus set aside a time to pray to His Father, so we set aside a time also, to pray to our Holy Father. We invite you to join us in the church library for prayer each Monday, 9:30-10:30 am, beginning September 14.





Sunday, September 13th

Breakfast begins at 9:45 am

breakfast casseroles, donuts, milk, juice and coffee

Sunday School program at 10:15 am

**Come meet your new
Sunday School teachers
and see what's new this year!**

Adult Sunday School

This fall, the Fellowship Adult Sunday School class will continue using the International Sunday School Lessons from Standard Publishing. This is the same material that the adults used in Summer Sunday School.

The fall quarter will focus on Acts 4-15 with the theme of "The Christian Community Comes Alive." Included are sessions that study some of the ways people in the early church community lived out and shared their faith in Jesus, the witness of Saul and Peter as the good news is shared with the believers and even among the Gentiles, and the further growth of the community as Peter, Paul, Barnabas, Timothy, and Silas bravely proclaim the gospel in Jerusalem and in faraway places.

Leon Plaster and Art Carter have already volunteered to teach this class, but they are looking for a couple more folks to step up and share in the rotation. Contact James Edmunds or Russell Lee for more information or to volunteer.

And make it a point to be in Sunday School each week!

Children's music for Grades K-5 will begin on Sunday morning, September 20. The children meet at 9:45 am each Sunday for 15 minutes before Sunday School to learn scripture and praise God through singing and ringing. We look forward to seeing our children in the choir room on September 20!



Youth Plans for Fall



This fall we kick off a new era of Youth Ministry. Building upon the groundwork laid by Jacquelyn McAbee, we are planning exciting and spiritually beneficial times for our youth.

There will be two times of fellowship planned for September, times TBA. One will be with the youth of First Baptist Church. The second will be a combined event for all ages.

Teresa McCollum has agreed to help coordinate our youth ministry this year as a volunteer, along with Linda Lumsden, interested parents and several others.

She, and we, agree that the most important thing for this ministry is that when the kids look back at youth ministry here, they will have had the opportunity to know Jesus and make him known. A combination of gatherings for learning, fellowship, and outreach are on the agenda for the coming year. Let us be in prayer that God works great things in a world that needs him so much!

All children, youth and parents are invited to a fall event to be held on Sunday, September 20, at 4 pm at the Edmunds' farm. This will be a time of fellowship around the campfire, with archery and fire-building skills as a part of the event. The chance to split wood, lay the fire, and learn other outdoor skills will be offered as well. We will share faith events and look forward to plans for the fall and winter. There will be activities for all ages, including a hay ride.



5:2 Ministry

A new numbers ministry based on my recent sermon about the 5 loaves and 2 fishes miracle Jesus performed to feed the 5000 is on the way. Look for ways for God to multiply the words, actions, and thoughts of First Folks in ways we could never imagine. Use the numbers in everyday conversation, and explain the miracle when the question comes up. The five fingers of each hand, with the two totaling ten, are a way to think of ourselves as vessels of multiplication in ministry today. How much is a penny doubled every day for 30 days? Over five million dollars! Look it up, and let us plan for five loaves and two fishes turning into 5000 meals again and again.



Farris & Thelma Goodrum
PC(USA) Missionaries to Brazil
 July 2015

.....Recently we were saddened to learn that because of the sizable shortfall in contributions for the support of Presbyterian mission workers, our ministry in Brazil will have to come to an end at the end of this year. Doors are closing again, but this time because of the financial situation of our own denomination. There are many others in the same situation, and if this distressing financial reality does not improve dramatically, many more will have to end their mission work with Presbyterian World Mission by next year. We would appreciate your prayers for us, and for all of the mission co-workers around the world who are in the same situation, or who may be concerned about the future of their own ministries. We know that God will open doors, but uncertain times are always stressful. Though our assignment here in Vitoria will come to an end at the end of December, we will continue on the PC(USA) payroll until the end of June 2016. This time of transition will help us to become established as we wait for God to open doors to us, and we ask you to continue your financial support through June of 2016 just as we ask for your continued support in prayer.

As I played the piano at the informal *sarau* recently, I could look back and feel tremendous gratefulness for the many opportunities in our lives and for the many doors that God has opened to us for rewarding ministry over the years. As we end our term here Thelma and Joel will have the most adjusting to do because Thelma is from Brazil and Joel would like to attend the university here in Vitoria after he graduates from high school in November. Please pray that God will give us patience and faith as we wait for God's guidance in decisions we must make. Upon arrival in the States we will live at Mission Haven, in Decatur, Georgia, and will be glad to be close to our son Michael, who is in school in the Atlanta area. We would enjoy visiting the churches that have faithfully supported our ministry for many years, so that we can thank you again, in person, for the wonderful experiences in ministry that your support has made possible for us over the years.

We look forward to the remaining months with our friends and co-workers of the United Presbyterian Church of Brazil here in Vitoria, and we will continue to keep in touch with you about our activities. Thelma joins me in sending special greetings.

Sincerely, in Christ's service,
 Farris Goodrum

Check out the missionary bulletin board in the Sunday School foyer for recent news from our missionaries around the world.

SEPTEMBER 2015

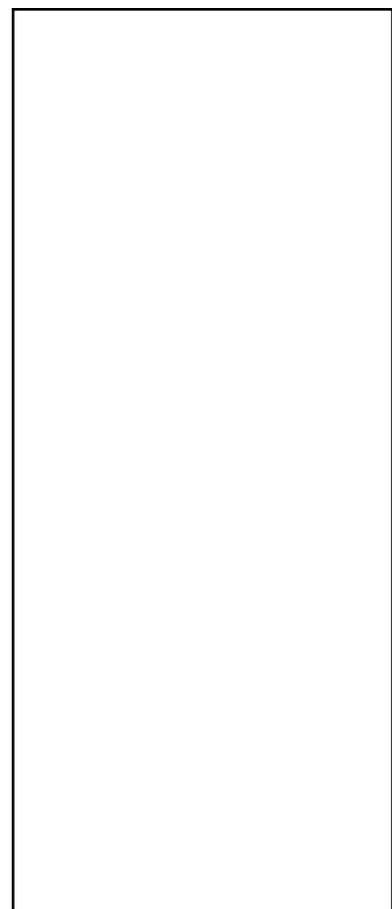


Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 12 AA 7:15 pm Choir	3 12 noon NA 7 pm Men of the Church 8 pm AA	4 9 am Bulletins 12 noon AA	5
6 9 am Worship 10 am Sunday School 11 am Worship	7  Office Closed	8 12 noon NA 6:30 pm Praise Team 6:45 Stephen Ministry	9 10:30 am Ladies' Circle 12 AA 7:15 pm Choir	10 12 noon NA 7 pm Men of the Church 8 pm AA	11 9 am Bulletins 12 noon AA 7 pm Girl Scouts	12
13 <i>Rally Day</i> 9 am Worship 9:45 Breakfast 10:15 am Sunday School 11 am Worship	14 9:30 am Prayer Group 6 Girl Scouts	15 12 noon NA	16 12 AA 7:15 pm Choir	17 12 noon NA 7 pm Men of the Church 8 pm AA	18 9 am Bulletins 12 noon AA	19
20 <i>Good Neighbor Sunday</i> 9 am Worship 10 am Sunday School 11 am Worship 4 pm Campfire Event	21 9:30 am Prayer Group 7 Diaconate 7:30 Session	22 12 noon NA 6:30 pm Praise Team	23 12 AA  7:15 pm Choir	24 12 noon NA 7 pm Men of the Church 8 pm AA	25 9 am Bulletins 12 noon AA 7 pm Girl Scouts	26
27 9 am Worship 10 am Sunday School 11 am Worship	28 9:30 am Prayer Group 6 Girl Scouts	29 12 noon NA	30 9:15 newsletters 12 AA			



The Elders meet each month to assess and empower the work of God in this congregation and beyond. At their August 17 meeting, they:

- Shared prayer requests and needs of members
- Looked forward to plans for fall
- Received report from July 25 Presbytery Meeting
- Approved July balance sheet
- Made plans for finding new secretary and doing youth work this year
- Learned Teresa McCollum has agreed to help coordinate youth work this fall
- Received report of Mission Trip to Floyd County
- Updated plans for local mission playground project
- Heard update on Sunday School teachers and plans for fall
- Rally Day set for September 13
- Noted upcoming re-paving of church parking lot
- Next project on North Property may be recreation area as planned
- Received correspondence from missionaries
- Hat Creek Retreat will be October 23-25



Beth Moore - Living Proof Live

Simulcast - Saturday, September 12 - Dan River Baptist Church will host this event for women in our community. It will be a day filled with fellowship, Christian music and worship, and excellent teaching by Beth Moore. Admission is \$15 in advance, and registration forms are available in the church office. For more information, contact Merle Hundley or Debbie Hackney

Men of the Church Changes - Each

Thursday, our men meet at a local restaurant at 5:50 pm for a meal together, and then at the church at 7 pm for study and prayer. All men are invited to join us for one or both times. Since Smokin' Jakes recently closed, we have moved back to Roma's Restaurant. The men have also begun a new video study called "Man in The Mirror," experiencing three powerful video presentations already. This series began as an outgrowth of Promise Keepers and is a powerful witness each week. (can also view the videos and other series online.) The video presentations are 35 to 40 minutes in length, which leaves time for discussion and prayer afterwards. If you are interesting in finding out about this vital and fruitful ministry, contact Don Cherry or Art Carter.

Worship Leaders - If you are interested in leading worship from time to time, there is room for several First Folks to join this ministry. Men, women, and older youth are welcome. Lay ministry has always been important to Presbyterians. Each participant would lead worship once every three to four months and handle the first part of the worship liturgy. Leaders serve the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month. Take a look at what happens as they lead the next time, and see if God may be leading you toward this vital ministry. Contact the church office or Russell Lee to volunteer.

Medical Fund - You will see a feature on the Anne Cranford Irby Medical Fund in the local newspaper soon. The fund to help pay hospital expenses for Anne has been established and is growing. Thanks to those who have already given, and an open invitation to those who have not yet contributed. The fund will disburse by the church only for hospital debts, which are in more than \$50,000 over the insurance which Laura Edwards carries for her. Anne's illness, described in detail in the last newsletter, is very rare, and they have to go to certain hospitals for treatment. Also, much of the specialized treatment is not covered by insurance. If you would like to contribute, please mark your contribution *Anne Cranford Irby Fund*.

Handyman Ministry - Our men have a ministry of small repairs and household assistance which has helped many over the years. From removal of small trees, to handicap ramps, from changing a light bulb to small electrical issues, we have done a variety of things. If you are unable to do a task or repair around the house and need help, please call the church office or contact Sam Lewis or Mike Koch.

Stay up to date! Check out the church's Facebook page and website - 1stpres.cc - to stay up to date on things going on at First Pres!

September Highlights

- Sept. 8 & 22 - Praise Team
- Sept. 8 - Stephen Ministry
- Sept. 9 - Ladies' Circle
- Sept. 13 - Rally Day
- Sept. 14 - Prayer Group resumes
- Sept. 20 - Good Neighbor Sunday
- Sept. 20 - Campfire event –kids/youth
- Sept. 21 - Officers' Meeting

Weekly Happenings

- Prayer Group - Mondays at 9:30 am
- Choir - Wednesdays at 7:15 pm
- Men of the Church - Thursdays at 7 pm

First Presbyterian Church
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Here is your September newsletter...