

First Presbyterian News

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Rev. John McCarthy - Pastor
Sherolyn Barnett, Office Manager
secretary@1stpres.cc
Sue Wilkins - Treasurer
Jim Luedtke - Choir Director



Face book:
www.facebook.com/firstpressobo
Website: 1stpres.cc

Office Hours
M-Th 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 pm
Closed on Friday
434-572-3581



Theology Matters

Over the past couple months, I have been preaching of God's grace and how our mission as a church is to spread the Gospel message and love others because God first loved us. We are now transitioning in the Church calendar from celebrating the festivals (Christmas, Easter, Pentecost) and praising God for what he has done, to focusing on our walk as disciples of Christ. Now, a lot of times this topic goes in the direction of, "Am I following the rules? I have to look and act a certain way." As Jesus walked with his disciples for three years, he was not making them memorize a list of rules to follow, he taught them about the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. He taught them what the Kingdom of God was like. He revealed the character and will of God, and our broken relationship that needed to be repaired (i.e. theology). Of course, these lessons came with practical application pieces, but the focus was on God, not behavior modification. So, with that thought in mind, our discipleship goal is going to be Theology.

Everybody has a theology they ascribe to, even if they have never studied the topic. Your theology, in simplest terms, is what you think and believe about God. In your daily walk, your theology will determine your actions. Example; if you believe God is the distant watchmaker that wound the universe and is just sitting back watching, then you will not seek his counsel. You will live by your own strength. If you believe God is the intimate Good Shepherd, then your prayer life will reflect that as you rely on God for wisdom and guidance.

Answer this question. Who is God? Your answer is the lens by which you interpret everything you learn about God and your Christian walk. But is your answer Biblically accurate? This is very important, because how can you faithfully witness about God's grace and plan of salvation if what you think and believe don't match the Word of God?

If asked, by a non-believer or even a brother or sister in Christ, could you give a well-reasoned scriptural defense of any of the essentials or non-essentials? Who is God? Why did Jesus have to die? What is the Trinity? Is there a difference between the Bible containing the word of God and being the Word of God? Why do you pray? What is sin, and why is it such a big problem? You just have to be a good and moral person to go to heaven, right? Where do you go in the Bible to find these answers?

Jesus taught his disciples about the Kingdom and gave them the Gospel message. Jesus is sending us out to teach others that same message. So, this is where our focus will be for the next several months. Here are some words of Paul on the issue of sound doctrine.

1 Timothy 4:16 – "Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers."

2 Timothy 4:3 – "For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine.

Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear."

Titus 1:9 – "He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it."

Titus 2:1 – "You, however, must teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine."

You will see in the Sermon Schedule, we will be going through the Book of Romans. On this journey, I will focus on core theological teachings that will help you engage in theological

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conversations and "...in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander." (1 Peter 3:15-16, NIV)

Theology matters, so I encourage you to join me on this journey of discipleship so that we may boldly proclaim "the Kingdom of God is near!"

In Christ,

Pastor John



June 7 - 2nd Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Title: Justified by Faith

Scriptures: Genesis 12:1-9; Romans 4:13-25

June 14 - 3rd Sunday of Pentecost

Sermon Title: Peace With God

Scriptures: Genesis 18:1-15; Romans 5:1-8

June 21 - 4th Sunday of Pentecost

Sermon Title: Alive in Christ

Scriptures: Genesis 21:8-21; Romans 6:1b-11

June 28 - 5th Sunday of Pentecost

Sermon Title: Guest Speaker - Maggie Anderson

Scriptures:

July 5 - 6th Sunday of Pentecost

Sermon Title: Jesus Delivers Me

Scriptures: Zechariah 9:9-12; Romans 7:15-25a

Prayer List - family and friends of two of our long time members: Leon Plaster and Dr. Wayne Adams after their passing; family of Christie Smart after her passing; as well as the Chatham family, after the passing of Lily Ruth Chatham (Bob Hughes' cousin). Joanna Hughes. Kim Wickemeyer's friend, Lindsey Slagle's infant son passed. Randy Holmes' wife, Diane, in rehab after a fall. Jim Luedtke's neighbor, Charlie Morris (63) - pancreatic cancer. Sami a friend of Jennifer McCarthy - pregnancy issues. Joanie Cranford - cancer treatment. Alice Waskey—breathing issues. Jennifer McCarthy fell. Diane Newberry was in the hospital late May, now home - but still in some pain. Loretta Brown – past member of 1st Pres. fell a couple weeks ago, breaking her pelvis, and has been in rehab for therapy. Melissa, Maddie, and Matthew Fraser Freshour as they travel. Emma (Candice Powell's daughter)'s band teacher is in the hospital.



Operation Christmas Child Through the Year

During **June** - Monetary donations - increments of \$10 for shipping.

Upcoming collections:

July - We are asking for clothing/personal items (ie: t-shirts, underwear, socks, flip-flops, hat, scarf, mittens, sunglasses, purse, hair accessories, jewelry kit). Remember that items should be new, not used.

August - School supplies



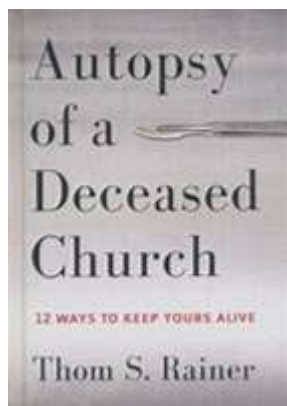


Church Vision for the Future - - On April 24-25 the Officers engaged in a Leader's Retreat to discuss and discern the future of First Presbyterian Church.

Many ideas were discussed. Some of the major things that came from this meeting are listed below:

1. Become a church that prays. Prayer is vital to the health of the Church, so we are going to be introducing ways to engage in intentional prayer.
2. Be outwardly focused toward the local community. Some current thoughts on how to
 - a. Provide a presence at the Farmer's Market on Saturdays
 - b. Have a public hotdog cookout in September
 - c. Other local events
3. Develop relevant Bible Study
 - a. Prayer (Either how to pray as an individual or as a church)
 - b. Spiritual Formation (How to grow deeper in your faith)
 - c. Jesus' Teachings (Lessons from the four Gospels)
 - d. Additional topics?

One of the main driving forces behind these actions comes from the book *Autopsy of a Deceased Church*



Autopsy of a Deceased Church – Books now available to pick up at church. To view the presentation given by Colter and Bob - click the following link: <https://youtu.be/9YXOydF5AFU>

From the book's back cover: "No one wants to see a church die. And yet, far too many churches are dying. For more than twenty-five years, Dr. Thom Rainer has helped churches grow, reverse the trends of decline, and has autopsied those that have died. Yet, it's not gloom and doom because, from those themes, lessons on how to keep your church alive have emerged."

If anyone has ideas or contacts that may help with any of these initiatives, please contact one of the Elders, Pastor John, or the Church Office to share the information. We greatly desire everyone's input and participation as we start this new chapter in the life of First Presbyterian Church!

We have already made a big step toward community outreach by partnering with several churches and ministry organizations to create the Stand Firm Youth Revival. See below for more information:

Stand Firm Youth Revival - Wednesday, June 17 at Constitution Square. *Theme– You Were Not Meant to Stand Alone.*

Needed from the Congregation -

- Spread the Word
- Prayer Walkers
- Set up a table at the event



Food Trucks - open at 6pm

Event starts at 7pm

Live Music

Speakers: John McCarthy, Matthew Rich, and Zak Ford

For more information:

go to www.tinyurl.com/standfirmyouthrevival

Also, check out our Facebook event page



In Sunday School this year we are studying the Old Testament. As we recently discussed Exodus, Deuteronomy, Joshua, and looking at Judges; I cannot help but notice how loving and kind Jehova is to His people the Israelites. How often did He save them (ie: from Egypt, from starving in the wilderness, and from the Canaanites to name just a few)?

So many times, He showed His love for them, showed them His power to protect them, and they would bow down and agree to obey His laws and commandments, then in a very short time turn against the very teachings they knew.

Are we similar? I know I am! I may have a spiritual event, and feel ever so close to the Lord, and then in no time, I'll be caught up in doing something that I know is not according to His will. I can learn a lot about Jehovah/Christ, as I see the teachings in the Old Testament.

Joshua helped the people to the promised land, and they had evidence of His love and support as they stayed faithful, but it wasn't long before the people turned from the teachings and incorporated more of the Canaanite ways into their own.

We read Christ saying, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matthew 23:37? Are we not frequently like the children of Israel? Christ is calling to us to come. Sometimes we come but then turn away because times are easy and we think we don't "need" Him, or we get "busy" and don't think about Him.

And yet, He is always there. He will never turn away from us! It is us who turn away. May we do better in the coming days, months, and years to remember Him, and come to Him in all we do. He will greatly reward us for our efforts. We see this many times throughout scripture as well.

~ Sherolyn



*** FYI*** No Newsletter in July***

We will take a brief summer break from the newsletter and be back to normal monthly publishing for August.



Card Ministry - The next Card Ministry class will be Tuesday, June 9th at 10:30 am. Come join the class and enjoy the time with friends and create special cards.



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
31 May 10:00 am Processional 11:00 am Worship	June 1	June 2	3 12:00 pm - AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	4 7:00 pm - Al-Anon	5 - Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	6
7 - Communion 9:45 am - Sun Sch 10:30 am - Fellowship 11:00 am -Worship	8	9	10 12:00 pm - AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	11 7:00 pm - Al-Anon	12 - Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	13
14 9:45 am - Sun School 10:30 am - Fellowship 11:00 am Worship 12:30 pm - Session	15	16	17 12:00 pm - AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	18 7:00 pm - Al-Anon	19 - Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	20
21 - 5 Cents a Meal collection Father's Day 9:45 am - Sun Sch 10:30 am - Fellowship 11:00 am -Worship	22	23	24 12:00 pm - AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	25 7:00 pm - Al-Anon 	26 - Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	27
28 9:45 am - Sun Sch 10:30 am - Fellowship 11:00 am Worship	29	30	July 1 12:00 pm - AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	July 2 - Office Closed for July 4 7:00 pm - Al-Anon	July 3 - Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	



We want to recognize everyone. If we don't have your birthday listed, please call the office and let us know.

- 1 Laylo Ridgeway
- 1 Lorene Gilliam*
- 4 Corinne Williams*
- 6 Carol Foster
- 6 Janet Adams*
- 7 Katye Temple Nelson
- 9 Paul Edmunds
- 12 Ken Cochran
- 12 Lauren Henderson
- 12 Jennifer Lee Miller
- 13 Robert Guthrie
- 16 Veronica Raney
- 20 Carol-Ann Lawson
- 20 Scott Carter
- 26 Jack Morgan
- 29 Grace T. Seat

- 1 Ted VanBenschoten
- 3 Buck Watkins
- 8 Beth Roller
- 12 Donna Garrett
- 13 Kit Hooper
- 15 Ginny Troy*
- 16 Ashton Cranford
- 18 Steven Crutchfield
- 21 Marilyn Lee
- 21 James Edmunds
- 26 Bob Nelson*
- 26 Jo Dixon
- 27 Mac Lacy*
- 27 Michael Thackston
- 28 Joanna Hughes
- 29 Kathryn McAbee
- 30 Jessica Nelson

* In Memory



Session Notes: Since our last Newsletter, our Session discussed:

The Session met on Sunday, May 17, 2026.

1. Rev. John McCarthy opened the meeting with prayer.
2. News of the congregation was shared by Pastor John.
3. Leaders Retreat – Discussion on next steps.
4. The minutes of the April 19th Stated Session Meeting were approved.
5. Next Presbytery Meeting – Thursday, May 21, 2026, at Blacksburg Presbyterian Church.
6. Membership Roll – Constance (Connie) Troy passed away on April 22nd, and Robert Leon Plaster went to be with the Lord on May 15th.
7. Local Missions – Operation Christmas Child 2026 – May collection: small toys for both boys and girls. Good Samaritan – May collection: canned meats, tuna, chicken, peanut butter, etc.
8. Stand Firm Youth Revival – Wednesday, June 17 at Constitution Square. More details to come.
9. Worship – Next Communion, Sunday, June 7, 2026.
10. Baptism – May 24th – Jacqueline Powell
11. Congregational meal – June 7th Covered dish
12. Budget & Finance – Financial reports for April 2026 were reviewed.
13. Discussed church maintenance and lawncare issues.
14. Pastor John closed the meeting with prayer.
15. Next meeting will be on Sunday, June 14, 2026, at 12:30 pm.



- **Choir** - Wednesday's at 6:00 pm
- **Communion** - Sunday, June 7
- **Congregational Meal** - after worship, Sunday, June 7
- **Card Ministry** - Tuesday, June 9 at 10:30 am
- **Diaconate** - No meetings in June and/or July.
- **Session** - Sunday, June 14th at 12:30 pm.
- **5 Cents-a-meal** - Sunday, June 21st

First Presbyterian Church
 800 North Main Street
 South Boston, VA 24592