

Focus on First

PASTOR ANDY

Maybe you have heard the expression that the Church is not an organization but an organism. Such an expression is highlighting how the Church is a living thing, dynamic and growing, like an organism. The problem is that any healthy organization shares similar aspects. Indeed, the church is an organization and an organism. She is the living family of God. In fact, the New Testament uses many such word pictures to describe the dynamic growing and living aspects of the Church. She is a body, and she is a bride as well as a family.

All that is to say that a Church must experience the dynamics of a living organism in order to be healthy. As the Church, we need plans, dreams, and hopes. Having set our eyes on Christ in faith, we have received from Him commands and a commission (Matthew 22:34-40; 28:16-20). We live to see them actualized.

In obedience to these commands and this commission, our church is experiencing unprecedented blessing and growth. 2025 has been a tremendous year; all praise to God. But, just to rehearse, we are about to surpass the 150 mark in membership, the largest membership in our history. We have experienced an equal growth financially, which allowed us to complete the renovations to our Christian Education Center debt free. Brothers and Sisters, we still have much to do in front of us, and I wish to use the remainder of this article to ask you to pray about three mission critical matters.

The first is mission focus. Pray and ask God to give the grace of perseverance to our Elders, Deacons, Committees, Teachers and all members to remain focused on our call to glorify God in all things, trust Him for all things, proclaim Him as King over all things, and love Him and others through all things. We do this in the mission

(Continued on page 2)



WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Sunday

9:30 am Morning Bible Study

10:45 am Morning Worship

Live Streaming also available

Monday

Women's Study Systematic Theology—

ON BREAK

Thursday

9:00 am Men's Bible Study

6-7pm Women's Bible Study

UPCOMING EVENTS

Deacons' Meeting

Thursday, 7/17 10:30 am

Session Meeting

Tuesday, 7/15 8:00 am

ON Group (Monthly Octogenarian/
Nonagenarian-see Bobby Duck)

HEART
S
MIND
YOU MUST LOVE THE
LORD YOUR GOD WITH
ALL YOUR HEART,
ALL YOUR SOUL, AND
ALL YOUR MIND.

MATTHEW 22:37

NEWSLETTER PURPOSE:

- Communicate church events and activities
- Communicate community events of interest to our members
- Communicate life events of our members
- Provide discipleship and teaching
- Communicate regarding missions and ministries

SESSION NOTES

Session held its regular monthly session meeting on Tuesday morning, May 20, at the church.

Pastor Andy led a devotional on Psalm 135:1-12. God is often pleased to recount the history of Israel, His covenant people, and her redemption. The Bible's great theme is "deliverance," accomplished by God in both physical and spiritual realities.

The following agenda items may be of interest:

- a. Session continued to discuss the search for Teaching Elder candidates to assist in FPC's ministry.
- b. Session discussed the idea of returning to evening worship and will readress this in June.
- c. Session has named commissioners to interview prospective new members.
- d. Children's classes continue, including use of the First Catechism and hymns of the month.
- e. Session discussed a new ministry proposal for an "FPC School of Music." This was "a first hearing."
- f. Strategic Plan Executive Summary review: Session continued to discuss the idea of a counseling center.

PASTOR ANDY

(Continued from page 1)

critical activities of Worship (Up-reach) Discipleship (In-reach) and Evangelism (Out-reach).

The second is a practical concern. Our Session is preparing to hire an assistant pastor to aid us as a congregation in ministering to young families, youth and children. This man will be a second teaching elder to come alongside pastor Andy, Matt, and our Elders and Deacons to lead our congregation in continuing to be faithful to our vision and mission. Please pray for wisdom for our leaders and for the right man to come and help us.

The third is a bit more long-term. We are entering phase 2 of our building program. There are three main goals in the expansion of our main building. Increased seating capacity in the Sanctuary, a larger fellowship hall, and adequate restroom facilities for our growing church. In the days ahead, the Session will be working with the Deacons to identify a committee that can help us determine the right floor plan that has the potential to be cost effective. Then we will work with an Architect to give us a design that does this. We will then be entering a season of gathering the money needed to meet these important needs of our Church. If you want to give to the building fund at any time, you may.

I am so thankful for you. God has shown himself faithful through your faithfulness. Keep loving each other. Be consistent in worship. Sit under God's Word and learn how to walk with Him. Keep reaching out to your neighbors. The gospel is powerful, and our witness to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ has the power to transform our community. God is doing it. Let's keep going. Amen.

WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

"you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you" —Jeremiah 29:12

Starting July 17th, the women in the church are invited to meet for prayer and fellowship every 3rd Thursday of the month at 10:00 am in Pastor Andy's former office in the church building.

We will pray in a three-phase format according to First Presbyterian Church's mission statement:

- "reaching up to Him in worship"- prayer of praise, thanksgiving, and repentance;
- "reach in to one another with biblical teaching and shepherding care"- prayer for the ministries in our church and individual members' needs; and,
- "reach out to the world with Christ"- prayer for our missionaries, lost loves ones, and neighbors.

Please join the group even if you are uncomfortable praying in front of others. There will be cards available with Scripture verses of prayer that can be read aloud or you can silently pray in spirit. After prayer we will decide on a place to meet for lunch and arrive there by 11:30 to eat and fellowship for as long as desired.

If you have any questions text, call, or email April Marion at 931-255-8969 or april.m.marion@gmail.com

MISSIONS UPDATE

—LEE LEADBETTER, RUF-I



On April 10th, for the first time in 17+ years, we asked a local church to host our **International Dinner & Discovery event**. With our normal on-campus venue booked we didn't have another good option...but **Redeemer Church turned out to be a great option!** RUF-I was birthed out of Redeemer in early 2008 and Redeemer has been a faithful partner since then, supporting our ministry to UT international students in countless ways.

Not only did Redeemer share their newly opened "Commons" space that night, but a Redeemer community group provided and served the delicious meal for students & leaders. **This hospitality set the stage for a deeply engaging post-dinner discussion** about one of Jesus' parables among our guests that night, which included 5 Muslims & 7 Hindus. Most of those students would likely not have set foot inside a church on a Sunday morning. But because the Church, through a full-time & ordained RUF-I minister and local volunteers, has a stable presence on the UT campus, churches like Redeemer play a significant role in fulfilling Jesus call to "make disciples of all nations."

A new RUF-I leader (Annie Bolton, pictured above on the right), shared this reflection after her first Dinner & Discovery: "I was happily surprised by the friendliness of many of the students and how it was much easier to connect with some of them than expected...I loved how you (all) honored our

Nigerian friends, and how much we enjoyed sitting around the table together...I was very impressed by how well [the] discussion questions...really pointed to the heart of the matter...in leading to meaningful, Gospel-centered truth!



A Community Effort

Our friends from S. Asia just became first-time parents! Last year this sweet Muslim couple was very involved with RUF-I, attending our social activities and also events where they got to explore Christianity in a loving, respectful "space." Well, they just celebrated the birth of their first child, which is why we saw our friends less and less over the past 9 months. But 3 international student ministries at UT saw a need and responded. Mary Kay Horton with I-Navs hosted a beautiful baby shower for our friends at her home and, thankfully, both Bridges and RUF-I got to play a role in the celebration. Our girls, Neissa & Annie (pictured above) served by babysitting the S. Asian children who tagged along for the shower.

The beaming S. Asian mother wrote the host afterwards: *"What a lovely time we had yesterday! We truly enjoyed spending the afternoon with you and our wonderful friends. Thank you so much for hosting such a beautiful gathering. I especially appreciated how you brought together people from UT I-Navs, RUF-I, and Bridges—it was such a meaningful and generous effort...Being far from family and immersed in university life can sometimes feel overwhelming, but yesterday was a beautiful reminder of the kindness and love that surrounds us here."*

(Continued on page 4)

SESSION NOTES CONTINUED

- g. Pastor Andy and Robert Berman represented us at General Assembly earlier in June.

Upon completion of the agenda, the elders spent a season of prayer for the Shepherding and other needs of the congregation.

Next Stated Session Meeting:
Tuesday, June 17, 8am.

WINGS LUNCH CUMBERLAND STATE PARK MAY 17



First Presbyterian Church

Identity and Mission

We belong to the family of the Redeemed. Transformed by the grace of Jesus' death and resurrection, we are delighting in the supremacy of God in all things as we reach up to Him in worship, reach in to one another with biblical teaching and shepherding care, and reach out to the world with Christ.

So that in everything Christ might be preeminent. —Colossians 1:18

Session:

Andy Aikens, Senior Pastor
Robert Berman, Bobby Duck
Forrest Marion, Clerk
Richard Parks, Jim Sparks

Deacons:

Dave Miser-Chair,
John Reed Secretary, Mike Tuuk

Staff:

Music Director: Matt Bundy
Finance / Admin: Holly Kisly

Ministry Support:

Treasurer: Bill Allbright
Technology Specialists: Matt Bundy
Accompanists: Matt Bundy
Library: Kathy Pipkin
Newsletter: Darlene Gendjar
Sanctuary Flowers: Sherry Hewitt

Our Missions Family— International

Julian and Rachel Bacon, MTW
Brussels, Belgium.
Lydia Goegelein, MTW
Sophia, Bulgaria.
Brian & Becky Schrader,
Pioneers in Africa.
Lee Leadbetter,
RUF-International at UT.

Our Missions Family—

North America

Christ Church Pres in Powell
Plateau Pregnancy Services
Good Samaritans
RUF Tennessee Tech, Ryan Angel
Rural Church Dev., Corey Pelton
Myers Park Initiative, Greg Salazar
Occom Ministries, Native American Initiative

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MISSIONS UPDATE

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(Continued from page 3)



Thank You for Praying & Giving!!!

Here's how you can PRAY...

- **PRAISE** for the opportunity to partner with Cedar Springs Pres for our annual Easter event at the Yates' home
- **PRAISE** for Christ Covenant Pres serving RUF-I by providing our last D&D meal of the semester
- **PRAY** for our final Leadership Team dinner on 5/4 at our home
- **PRAY** for a fantastic year-end party on 5/9 at my parents' home
- **PRAY** for the many non-Christian students we've cultivated relationships with & shared Christ's love and truth with this year
- **PRAISE** for our group of 10 heading to RUF's Summer Conference (SuCo) in Laguna Beach, Florida from May 18-23

Here's how you can GIVE...

There are **2 needs** you might consider helping us with (one or both). Click [HERE to give](#) and/or [email Lee](#) to let him know how what you'd like to give to:

- 1) **Summer Conference** - Providing a **\$460 scholarship** for 1 student to attend RUF's Summer Conference. There are 10 in our group from UT.
- 2) **New Campus Budget Needs** - this year we are **working to raise \$2,750 / month in new funding** to cover increased 2025 operating costs.

- To **Give ONLINE** click the "Give to RUF International at UT" button below.
- To **Give by CHECK** make it payable to "RUF" and designate the memo line as "RUF-I @ UTK / #241010510", and **mail to:** Reformed University Fellowship / P.O. Box 890004 / Charlotte, NC 28289-0004
- To **Give a gift of stock or real estate** please email RUF at donorservices@ruf.org or call 678-825-1070.

Thank you so much! We are humbled by your desire & willingness to partner in this ministry to UT international students with us through praying & giving!

We're looking for volunteers to work in the **tech booth for Sunday morning**. The work requires a minimum of two people. As we only have three volunteers currently, we would like to be able to give them more time in worship.

If you are willing to serve in this capacity, please reach out to Matt Bundy at matt@firstprescrossville.org or (918) 207-9986.