



Focus on First

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

Weekly Schedule

Sunday

9:30 am Morning Bible Study
10:45 am Morning Worship
Live Streaming also available

Monday

2:00 pm Women's Study
Systematic Theology

Tuesday

9:30 am Women's Bible Study
Starting 9/16

Thursday

9:00 am Men's Bible Study

Upcoming Events

Deacons' Meeting

Thursday, 8/21 10:30 am

Session Meeting

Tuesday, 8/19 8:00 am

ON Group

(Monthly Octogenarian /
Nonagenarian-see Bobby Duck)

Newsletter Purpose

to communicate:

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

Remembering Nicea

Pastor Andy

In 325 AD, one of the more important councils of the church met to bring unity to the church regarding what Christians professed to believe about Christ. What did it mean for him to be human and divine? And, what did this mean for the truth about God? How were Christians to think and talk about God as a trinity?

There are a few important lessons to observe about this controversy. The first is that this was not the first time church leaders tried to gather in one room to settle a disagreement about doctrine. It was the custom of the church to meet in councils or synods prior to this. While it is true that these meetings were generally more regional, this was not a new idea to gather the pastors of the churches in order to pray, debate, and resolve a doctrinal matter.

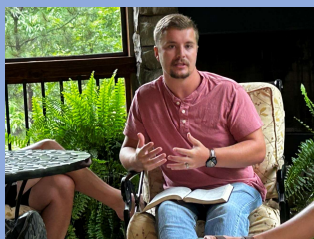
The second is that the orthodox (right teaching) position had been widely published. There was a consensus among many about what was the more biblical way to understand the doctrine of trinity and incarnation. We do, however, observe in this phenomenon that words are important and translation is hard. We also observe that people who are right about a matter are not always in the majority. The Arian Christians outnumbered the Orthodox and Catholic (as they were known then). However, men like Athanasius labored long and hard to help the churches and his fellow pastors understand what was at stake and reach a settled position.

Third and final for this essay, words point to realities. No words are absolutely perfect, especially across languages. Nevertheless, words are what we have to speak about realities. Therefore we have to define them and work hard to understand one another.

2025 is basically the year to mark the 1,700th anniversary of this great council. Please remember, these matters were not settled for another almost 60 years in 381 at a second council. But, Nicea in 325 was really important. At Nicea the true Church in all places and at all times learned how to understand the Bible with regard to how to talk about God as one essence and three persons. This is the council that began to ground the best way to speak of Jesus as truly God and truly Man. Philippians 2:5-11 (especially v. 6) became critical in the writings of the early church leaders. Take time to meditate on it and what it teaches us about Jesus.

In order to trust him for the forgiveness of sin and obtain hope of eternity, it is critical to know who he is. (John 17:3). May the Lord Jesus reign supreme.

Amen



Much has happened, and is happening, with Rural Church Development since my last update for First Presbyterian. **Summer interns** We are hosting two male interns for the summer months. Both are senior Biblical Study majors; one at Covenant College, and the other at Wheaton. They are required to work part-time jobs so that they can work side-by-side with locals in these small towns. Each week we meet for Bible study and to challenge each other in learning how to meet people, ask good questions in order to know the community, and deepen those relationships. They have been a tremendous help to spread the word about Rural Church Development in the communities we serve. Please pray for Tanner and Aidan to grow in their love for Jesus and their ability to engage people in relationship and with the gospel.

Camp Meeting Another responsibility of the interns is helping put up posters for an upcoming Camp Meeting, or, as some may call it . . . “Revival.” We are using the local mountain Baptist methodology in order to teach good theology. We have rented a pavilion along the banks of the Toccoa River to host the event. On the evenings of July 14 and 15 we will have free food, good music, a children’s learning tent, and two preachers (one each evening.) Our hope is to gather names and contact information and follow up with attendees to share the gospel and connect them to a Bible study. Rural Church Development, First Baptist of Blue Ridge, Epworth First Baptist, and Loving Road Stop & Go (a gas station where I offer a 5-minute prayer every Monday morning) are all community partners helping us announce the event. Providence Presbyterian Church in Murphy, NC will provide the children’s teaching and help with music. Please be in prayer for this event. Will

Missions’ Update

Rural Church Development

Corey Pelton, director

Davis, a young Baptist Pastor (now Presbyterian by conviction) will preach the first evening, and McKay Caston, a seminary professor at Metro Atlanta Presbytery and PCA church planter will preach the second evening.

Mission team Also helping with the Camp Meeting is a mission team from South Baton Rouge Presbyterian Church. They are bringing their Cajun flair and a jambalaya pot to cook for the event. While here, they will also help build a fire ring on a property owned by a PCA deacon from Chattanooga who is using a property here for ministry purposes. Please pray that this team will gain insight into how they can take back ministry ideas for their own context as well as in serving these small towns with the gospel.

TVP Small Town Pastor’s Retreat July 21-24 will be our second annual TVP Small Town Pastor’s Retreat. I gather any small-town pastors or potential pastors for four days and three nights of great food, fun activities, sharing their highlights and woes, daily devotionals, and prayer. It is a fantastic way for these guys not to feel alone in ministry and have a much needed break from the daily ministry to recharge. Often, small town pastors do not get to leave their communities for a retreat. We make it affordable and helpful. Please pray for these men as they take a breath, re-charge, and go back into their churches rejuvenated and encouraged.

As you can see, there is much the Lord is doing in and through Rural Church Development and through YOUR generous support of this work. Thank you for your prayers, your partnership, and interest in the ministry!

Sessions Notes



Session held its regular monthly session meeting on Tuesday morning, June 17, at the church. Pastor Andy led a devotional on Christ's role as Redeemer-Mediator & His offices of Prophet-Priest-King.

The following agenda items may be of interest:

- a. Session continued to discuss Teaching Elder (TE) candidates to assist in FPC's ministry.
- b. Session decided to continue "On Break" regarding evening worship until further notice.
- c. Several existing/potential ministries discussed were:
 1. Counseling Center (potential)
 2. Calvin Fellowship (CF) (existing)
 3. School of Music (starting up)
- d. Session received a presentation from Hope Aikens and April Stewart regarding FPC School of Music proposal. The goal is to cultivate godly, Bible-saturated musicians for

FPC and beyond. This will be a music education ministry for our church involving students of all ages. Session approved the starting of the FPC School of Music this September.

- e. Adult Sunday School: Robert Berman is continuing the study of Revelation. Next study will be on The Beatitudes, using materials by Sinclair Ferguson.
- f. Children's classes continue, including use of the First Catechism and hymns of the month.

Upon completion of the agenda, the elders spent time praying for the Shepherding and other needs of the congregation.

Next Stated Session Meeting:

Tuesday, August 19, 8am.

Warmly in Christ,
Forrest Marion, clerk

Women in the Church

Prayer & Fellowship

The women in the church are invited to meet for **prayer and fellowship** on Thursday, **August 21 at 10:00 am** in Classroom 1 in the church building.

Contact April Marion for additional information.

Library Card Pickup

Hello, Church Family,

Many of you have not picked up your library cards. They are available for pickup in the FPC Library located in the new CEC building. These cards make checking out materials so much easier; you can even do it yourself! Why not take just a few moments between Sunday School and church services to pick up your card and look over the new library?

Kathy Pipkin

First Presbyterian Church

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 Goeglein, 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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The Women's Fall Bible study will begin on Tuesday, **September 16** at 9:30 am. We will be studying Philippians—the epistle of joy. More details to follow.

Please plan to join us!



Where to Find Newsletters on the Church Website

You can find several of our back newsletters as well as the current one on the church website by clicking below and on the website scrolling down to "NEWSLETTERS"

[Media | First Presbyterian Crossville](#)

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.