



December
2025

Advent: Renewing Our Passion for Christ's Mission

Pastor Andy

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

Thursday

9:00 am Men's Bible Study

Upcoming Events

FPC Annual Meeting

Sunday, 12/7 12:30 pm

Deacons' Meeting

Thursday, 12/18 10:30 am

Session Meeting

Tuesday, 12/16 8:00 am

Christmas Eve Service

Wednesday, 12/24 6:00 pm

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

The days on the calendar between Thanksgiving and Christmas have historically been a season of preparation and repentance for the church known as advent. This season invites us to experience the emotion of anticipation born out of expectation by retracing the history of Israel as she waited for the arrival of Messiah and paralleling that story with our own waiting for Christ's second appearing. The word Advent itself means arrival or appearance. Defined in a single sentence, Advent is a four-week period in which the church remembers the promises of Jesus' first coming and looks forward to his promise to come again.

Preparation in these weeks is evidenced in two ways, both leading to greater joy in celebrating Jesus' entry to history and the plight of his people. First is the tracing of the many scripture passages that promise his coming. One example out of the many is Isaiah 9:2, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone." The great light is the child of Isaiah 7:14, "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Once we see this trajectory in God's Word, we are led to the second aspect of preparation, which is repentance. We must ask God to help us grasp with a vitality the life transforming importance of Christ's first advent. If we are not living out of the new identity his arrival, life, and work bring, then we must seek forgiveness and renewal. Also, we must ask God to help us apprehend with vitality the hope in living with an expectation of Christ's return. If we are not living out of the perspective-transforming hope this truth gives, then we must seek forgiveness. We must ask God for a future-focused and hope-infused outlook rooted in the promises of Christ's return when he will complete all that he has begun.

Many of the church's advent songs help us express these truths. *O Come, O Come Emmanuel* with its minor key captures the longing we feel as we, like Israel, wait for Messiah. Wesley's tune *Come Thou Long Expected Jesus* does this as well. Both songs sing from the perspective of Israel looking forward to the coming of Messiah. We put ourselves in Israel's position as we work our way toward December 25, the day we celebrate Jesus' entrance to history.

What we must not miss, however, is the manner in which living between Christ's first and second advent shapes our identity and mission. In his first advent he captures our hearts and makes us sons and daughters of the great King. In his second advent he comes to reward his children and finish his work of establishing and manifesting his rule over creation.

May your observance of advent and celebration of Christ's arrival in history renew your faith and stimulate your passion for his mission in the world. A mission you share by *knowing Him and making Him known*.

Isabelle Aikens'
Bridal Shower 11/8/25



Missions' Update

First Presbyterian Church friends,

It has been six months since I initially left my position at Redeemer Church of Knoxville, where I served for two years as the Assistant Pastor. During the past six months, I have begun the work of planting a new PCA church here in Knoxville, Mercy Presbyterian Church. Mercy is being planted in the Fountain City neighborhood of Knoxville, which is the northernmost neighborhood in the city limits. This area is home to 70,000 people, and by survey data, more than 40 percent of the population would consider themselves non-Christian or “nones” (having no religious affiliation or preference). There is also very little Reformed presence in the region, and we will be the first PCA church in the neighborhood.

As a result, the work of planting involves a great deal of outreach. I have spent much of my time building relationships within the community, developing friendships with other churches and Christians, as well as developing friendships with non-Christians and those who have left the church at some point in the past. Alongside my own work of evangelism and outreach, my time is dedicated to

Mercy Presbyterian Church Plant – Rob and Mary Lee Herron

training our “Launch Team,” a group of about fifteen adults (as well as their children), to join me in the work of reaching people in Fountain City with the gospel.

Our Launch Team is meeting on Sunday nights for Bible study, prayer, and vision casting, learning together how the Lord calls his church to himself, to be his chosen witness for his kingdom in the world. We will continue these meetings in the Spring. We will also continue gathering people in Fountain City by being out in the community and bringing people into our homes and lives. As we grow in depth and number, our plan is to begin Sunday worship in the Fall of 2026.

Please be praying for our dependence upon God’s Word and Spirit and our boldness in sharing the gospel and our lives with non-Christians here in Fountain City. Also, please be praying with us in advance that we might find a suitable venue for Lord’s Day worship later next year. Thank you for your partnership, prayer, encouragement, and love for the work of church planting here in Knoxville!

In Christ,
Rob and Mary Lee Herron



Our family: Rob, Fay (4), Robert (7), Mary Lee



Mercy Launch Team

Session Notes

The session held its regular monthly meeting on Tuesday morning, October 21, at the church.

Pastor Andy led a devotional on Ephesians 3:14-19, following which he opened the session meeting in prayer. The following agenda items may be of interest:

1. **Shepherding Groups Update:**
Session made several adjustments to the groups based mainly on our new members. (If you have any question about which group you are in based on the new church directory, please contact your previous shepherding elder or the clerk, Forrest).
2. **Staff Christmas Gift:** Session approved a letter to our church family explaining the opportunity to give a

cash Christmas gift to our staff per the instructions detailed in the letter (to go out on November 18).

NOTE: Gifts must be received by December 7.

3. **Biblical Counseling Presentation:**
Dr. (Pastor) Randall Davenport, First Baptist Church, Lenoir City, Tenn., is scheduled to visit FPC on November 13 to give FPC's session elders a presentation on biblical counseling and ministry. Lunch at the church will be included, following his presentation.

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, Nov. 18, 8am.

Warmly in Christ, Forrest Marion, clerk

Lydia Goeglein Visit on 11/16

On Sunday, November 16, Lydia Goeglein visited FPC during her home visit from the mission field in Sofia, Bulgaria BG where she has been serving. Pastor Andy interviewed her in the adult Sunday School and prayed for her in the worship service. As a teenager, Lydia and her family were members of the Aikens' church plant in St. Cloud, Florida. 😊

Lydia had a table set up that allowed her to share more about Bulgaria and the ministries she is involved in. She is the head mistress and a teacher at the Sofia Christian Academy. Lydia serves at New Life Church in various capacities. She also volunteers with Spring of Hope which is an outreach ministry to the Roma (gypsies) people group preventing and rescuing people from human trafficking. They have had two summer camps reaching the teens/ tweens to hopefully guide and educate them about their vulnerabilities and prevent them from being exposed.

Lydia and her parents, from Mississippi, were able to stay and enjoy our quarterly fellowship meal. We hope you had a chance to visit with Lydia.

She asked us to first pray for the success of the school, the ESL (English as a second language) program, and their new teacher, Esther Moffit. Second, to pray for New Life church to find a bigger facility to buy and to be able to pay for the pastor's salary. Third, to pray for more volunteers for Spring of Hope as they work on strategies of outreach to prevent and rescue those vulnerable to human trafficking. 🙏

May God continue to be glorified in these ministries and through our sister, Lydia.



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/Sound Director: Matt Bundy
Finance / Admin: Holly Kisly
School of Music Dir.: April Stewart

Ministry Support:

Treasurer: Bill Allbright
Newsletter: Darlene Gendjar
Library: Kathy Pipkin
Children's Ministry: Hope Aikens

Missions -- International

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

Missions -- North America

Plateau Pregnancy Services
Good Samaritans
RUF Tennessee Tech, Ryan Angel
Rural Church Dev., Corey Pelton
Myers Park Initiative, Greg Salazar
Mercy Presbyterian, Rob Herron
Occom Ministries, Native American Initiative

First Presbyterian Church

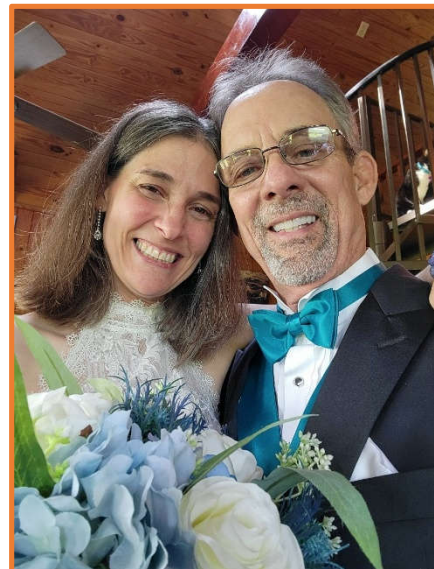
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New Member Spotlight

Bob & Sasha Graham

Bob and I joined Celebrate Recovery in 2012 at Calvary Chapel Fort Lauderdale. The Lord used its biblical 12-step program to deliver us from addictive behaviors and heal us from past abusive situations. We matured as we served in this ministry and became closer friends in 2017. We were married on August 25th, 2018, at New Hope Community Church. This church family took me on two short-term mission trips to Haiti.

We had lived in South Florida for some time and considered moving away to the country. When Bob needed three stents in his heart in 2020, we realized that those dreams would become reality. The Lord confirmed a cabin in Pall Mall with photos online. We moved in March of 2022 and became good friends with Sergeant York's family at the country store. However, we needed central air and a concrete driveway to stay in Tennessee long-term. The Lord met our needs again with a lovely Fairfield Glade home in July of 2024. We visited a handful of local churches, but the genuine, mutual love shown among the members of First Presbyterian is what knit our hearts together.



Bob worked 30 years for the City of Oakland Park as equipment operator and then streets foreman. He also spent three years inspecting maintenance and inventory on the Florida Turnpike for Jacobs Engineering. I worked in education for 16 years, eight as a professional tutor followed by eight subbing and coaching at Calvary Christian Academy.

Bob enjoys playing drums and painting nature. I like playing bass guitar and keyboard, along with making bracelets and journals. We have a seven-year-old Shiba Inu and two 14-year-old cats. Bob's family lives in New Jersey and Florida while mine is scattered around the West. We pray that God would continue granting salvation to our family.

Memorial Garden Update

A big "thank you" goes out to Cole Mayhugh for power washing the walkway and fixing the fence. You can even see the brick border now. We also added a sign identifying the Memorial Garden entrance. Go for a short peaceful walk and check out the improvements!

Reminder – the cost to purchase a plot will be increasing at the end of the year. If you are considering purchasing, please see Darlene Gendjar for more info.

