



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

Monday

2:00 pm Pilgrim's Progress
Starts 9/21

Tuesday

9:30 am Women's Bible Study
Colossians starts 9/15

Thursday

9:00 am Men's Bible Study
6:00 pm Women's Bible Study
Colossians at Marion's

Upcoming Events

9/13 5 pm Dietsch's Installation
YAH Group – see Pat Duck
80+ Women, 1st Thursday
ON Group – see Bob Duck
80+ Men's Group

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

Back to Basics

by Pastor Andy

With great joy we welcome Peter and Stacie Dietsch to First Presbyterian Church. Please join me in rejoicing and praying for the closing on a new house here in Crossville. We celebrate that their transition continues. As Pastor Dietsch takes up his responsibilities this September we pray for the blessing of gospel fruitfulness over his shepherding, teaching, and preaching. He has already attended his first session meeting. God is good!

Please remember that we will have his installation service on September 13 in the evening. Members of our presbytery will be joining us. The service begins at 5:00 pm to accommodate those joining us from the eastern time zone. A reception will follow the service.

This is also a good time to remind us of the biblical principles so important to us in this ministry. Our church continues to experience the blessings of the Great Commission. New families continue to visit and some of them are joining our fellowship. Praise God. This dynamic has pushed us to consider the ways we need to improve our facilities, and I would like to share a few thoughts about what it means to *Prepare a People and a Place for the Praising of God*.

Preparing a People

First Presbyterian Church is a local and visible expression of the people of God, a true church in every sense of that word. A church is not a building; it is the people. In Matthew 16:18 Jesus promises that "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Revelation 7:9-10 tells us what that church looks like, "behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands,¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!'" The more we experience God's blessings, the more we reflect that beautiful gospel vision.

Preparing a Place

Yes, the church is a people, not a building. But churches meet in buildings, and the places in which the church meets often get called churches. A sign and a thing signified. These buildings need to reflect the purposes for which they are designed. In our buildings we experience the ministry prescribed in the Bible. We worship; we fellowship through conversation and sharing meals; we have classes for discipleship, and we are prepared to go out to the mission field as witnesses of Christ's resurrection and redeeming power. Our building needs some deep maintenance, updates, and strategic expansion to offer the gospel welcome we desire. Please be praying for God's provision as we prepare to hear about all that God has in store for us as his people.

For Praising God

Our catechism reminds us that the chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever. 1 Corinthians 10:31 exhorts us, "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." Whether we are fulfilling our vocations in the world or fulfilling our calling as the church, our heart's desire is to do it all for the praise and glory of God. May it be so!

Missions Update

Greetings in the name of our Great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. The Lord is sustaining us as we seek to advance His kingdom throughout Native America. We are thankful He allows us to participate in the Great Commission in this field of fields. Just like last year, this year is full of travel. Most of our miles take us to supporting churches, conferences, including the PCA denomination's General Assembly in Louisville, KY. Along the way, we make other stops visiting ministry partners.

Big Update

This year we plan to officially open the virtual doors to Occom Institute – a distance education certificate program. Our core curriculum will be from Thirdmill.org. We plan to build on that core with other classes. We have a number of instructors ready to work with students. There are three notable men I would like to highlight. First is a good friend, **Robert Rothwell**. Robert is the academic dean of Occom Institute. He is now serving full-time as an assistant pastor of New Hope Presbyterian Church, in Eustis, FL. Currently he is helping us get all our internal policies, procedures, etc, in order to put wheels on this project.

Second, our dean of students will be **Pastor Billy Tallas**. Billy is a board member of Occom Ministries. He serves among his people on the Navajo Reservation in Many Farms, AZ at Many Farms Bible Church. And thirdly, on our advisory board is Pastor Elijah Walls serving at Hilltop Baptist Church among the Lakota in Lower Brule, SD. Elijah is Chickasaw from Oklahoma. Elijah has also taught at Indigenous Bible College in Flagstaff, AZ. Once we get all these final things in place, we can start recruiting. Please pray for Occom Institute.

Reports from the Field

We continually communicate with our ministry partners on the ground. One recent call was both encouraging and heartbreaking.

Patrick & Regina Lennox

The encouraging part was that our friend from Blackfeet has been experiencing great blessing from the Lord where he's ministering. The heartbreaking part was that he reiterated what we already knew: there simply are not only not enough pastors in Native America to shepherd the churches that already exist, not only are most not Reformed, but there are also not enough qualified Christian Native men to become pastors who meet the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Any church-planting efforts need to contend with this reality if we are going to see more Native churches planted throughout Native America.

Another conversation was with a Cherokee/Seminole pastor serving among the Lakota. I (Patrick) called Pastor Chris to get a report from the field and to encourage him. During our conversation, I was reiterating our ministry's goal of encouraging and equipping Native pastors serving in these really difficult places. Chris said, "That's it. You get it." He told us how he appreciates our calls, regular weekly texts with Bible verses. Pastors like Chris, Elijah, Billy, and so many others need regular encouragement to keep going and serving where the Lord has placed them.

Our visit with them in summer 2024 was eye-opening. One of the highlights of the trip was meeting Elijah. We already knew Chris from our Native Pastors Gatherings. Trips like this allow us to expand our reach and meet other pastors and ministry partners like Elijah.

Pray without Ceasing

1. Pray for our full support before 2027 (or anytime earlier).
2. Traveling mercies on the road. We see serious accidents every trip.
3. Grand opening of Occom Institute by Fall 2026.
4. More laborers to help scale up Occom Ministries.
5. Completion of RV projects by September.
6. Pray for a good report from Patrick's cardiologist in August.
7. Pray for our ministry partners on the ground mentioned above.



Pastor Billy Tallas, his wife, Brianna, and the boys

Pastor Billy Tallas, his wife, Brianna, and the boys



Pastor Chris Little, Patrick, and Pastor Elijah Walls

Pastor Chris Little, Patrick, and Pastor Elijah Walls

Session Notes

The session held its regular monthly meeting on Friday morning, July 17, at the church.

Pastor Andy led a devotional from Proverbs 15:33 & 18:12, following which he opened the session meeting in prayer.

The following agenda items may be of interest:

1. **Shepherding:** The church's Shepherding List is being revised to include our new Associate Pastor, Peter Dietsch. Some of you will now be in his shepherding group. The revised groups should be completed for the next directory.
2. **Tennessee Valley Presbytery Summer Meeting:** Ruling Elders Rich Parks & Jim Sparks represented our church at the TVP Summer Stated Meeting at Covenant College, Chattanooga, on 7/25/26.
3. **2026 Budget Update:** The Session approved the updated 2026 Budget from Diaconate to incorporate the

costs associated with calling our Associate Pastor.

4. **Building Program Update:** The Session discussed the "trigger" for moving toward a second morning worship service. For now, we will have families who are willing volunteer to sit in an overflow area (as needed). We will delay going to a second service as long as possible.
 - a. We also discussed our architectural drawings with an eye on when and how to communicate with the congregation.

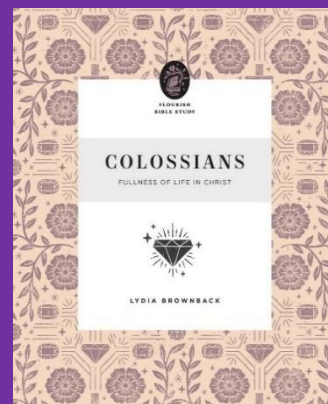
Order of the Day: Session spent time in prayer for the Shepherding and other needs of the congregation. Pastor Andy closed the meeting in prayer at 12:00pm.

Next Stated Session Meeting:
Friday, August 21, 2026, 8am.

Warmly in Christ,
Forrest

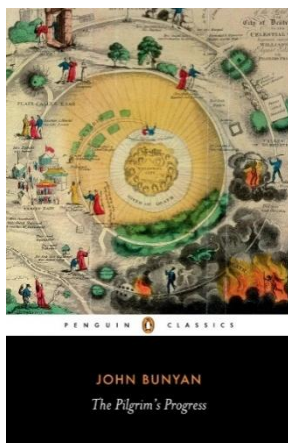
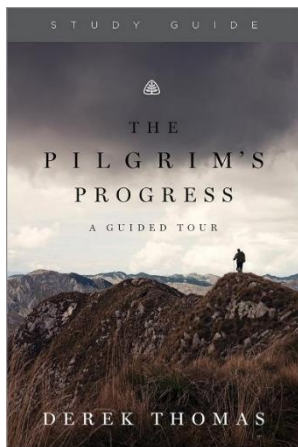


WinGs (Women in God's Service) met at Robinhood Park on Friday, August 14 for fun (checkers), fellowship, food and a devotion given by Holly. Their next outing is Saturday, September 12. Please see Bonnie Stanley for more information.



Women's Book Study – The Pilgrim's Progress

With the completion of Systematic Theology, the Monday afternoon study will continue with both parts of John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*. The study will be **September 21** through December 14 at 2:00 in the fellowship hall. We will be using the Penguin Classics version and Derek Thomas' study guide. Please sign up and contact Lory Wood with any questions.



Women's Fall Bible Study is using Lydia Brownback's *Colossians: Fullness of Life in Christ* book. It will be an 11-week study beginning on Tuesday, **September 15** at 9:30 and ending the week before Thanksgiving. Our first meeting will be an introduction and a buffet breakfast. Also, an evening option is available at April Marion's home Thursdays at 6 pm. Please sign up in the hallway.

First Presbyterian Church

Session:

Andy Aikens, Senior Pastor
Peter Dietsch, Associate Pastor
Robert Berman
Eric Larson
Forrest Marion, Clerk
Richard Parks
Jim Sparks

Deacons:

Dave Miser-Chair,
John Reed-Secretary,
Mike Tuuk
Greg Wood

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 Gogelein, MTW
Sofia, Bulgaria.
Brian & Becky Schrader,
Pioneers in Africa.
Koos & Bhless Hagg, MTW,
Southeast Asia.
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

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First Presbyterian
Church of Crossville

Fine Arts School of Music

Matthew James Bundy

Trumpet, Piano, Theory



Matt Bundy is an accomplished musician, music director, and educator with a lifelong dedication to faith and music. Born in Tulsa and raised in Locust Grove, Oklahoma, Matt grew up in a household centered around church ministry and musical expression. Inspired by his family and his cousin John, he picked up the trumpet and began performing regularly in church during middle school, laying the foundation for his future career. He went on to earn a Bachelor's degree in music, with the trumpet serving as his primary focus during his college years. As a student, Matt recorded a jazz album alongside renowned trumpeter Scott Wendholt titled *The Hour of the Pearl*, which features his own original composition, "Old Souls" available on Spotify. Over the course of his career, he has shared his musical expertise by teaching trumpet and piano to private students in both studio and community settings. Currently, Matt serves as the music director and pianist at First Presbyterian Church in Crossville, Tennessee, where he plans worship services and creates custom musical arrangements for a team of musicians. Grateful for his Christian faith, Matt views music as a divine gift meant for God's glory. In his teaching, he treats every student with deep respect, aiming to inspire them toward artistic excellence balanced with heartfelt humility. Outside of his ministry and teaching work, Matt enjoys cooking, watching movies, listening to music, and engaging in theological and philosophical discussions.

"I will sing of steadfast love and justice; to you, O LORD, I will make music."

Psalm 101:1