



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
6:00 pm Evening Worship
Philippians—starts 10/18

Monday

2:00 pm Women's Study of
Pilgrim's Progress

Tuesday

9:30 am Women's Bible Study
Colossians

Thursday

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

Upcoming Events

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

Listening to Sermons

by Pastor Andy

If you have been in the Church for any length of time, you have invariably been exposed to listening to sermons. Modern critics of the Church have often pointed out that such oral communication is outdated for modern learners. With our exposure to television, movies, TikTok, YouTube, and other social media platforms, no one is confused that our attention spans have shrunk. In addition, modern educational theory has pointed out how we all have different learning styles. Such an observation can call into question whether oral proclamation is the best way to train God's people. If all of this is true, why is the Church so committed to preaching?

The first reason I will note is that the Bible commands preaching. In 2 Timothy 4:2 we read, “preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.” Furthermore, it is the pattern of the Apostles. The Book of Acts is filled with preaching. The Apostles and their disciples go around preaching. A second reason for the priority in preaching is that Scripture reveals to us that God is a speaking God. He speaks in Creation; He speaks through prophets; and He has spoken by His Son (Hebrews 1:1-2 and John 1:1-2, 14). Preaching reflects God's priority for speaking to His people. This second reason is really the foundation for the first.

Furthermore, our confessional standards accentuate these biblical priorities. The Westminster Larger Catechism asks and answers this most important question:

Q. 155. How is the word made effectual to salvation?

A. The Spirit of God makes the reading, but especially the preaching of the word, an effectual means of enlightening, convincing, and humbling sinners; of driving them out of themselves, and drawing them unto Christ; of conforming them to his image, and subduing them to his will; of strengthening them against temptations and corruptions; of building them up in grace, and establishing their hearts in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation.

This raises the question about how we are to hear the word preached. How are we to listen to sermons? The first observation in this series is that we are to prepare. We are to prepare our hearts and our minds to attend to God's word, read and preached. Again, the WLC is of some help:

Q. 160. What is required of those that hear the word preached?

A. It is required of those that hear the word preached, that they attend upon it with diligence, preparation, and prayer; examine what they hear by the Scriptures; receive the truth with faith, love, meekness, and readiness of mind, as the Word of God; meditate and confer of it; hide it in their hearts and bring forth the fruit of it in their lives.

If we are to take seriously the Scriptural priority of preaching, and the Confession's admonition to prepare, then we ought to do several things on Saturday evening and Sunday morning before arriving to worship. I will offer this counsel in the form of several questions: Do you make every effort to get a good night's sleep the evening prior to the Lord's day? There is no substitute for being your best than good rest. Do you come to church anticipating hearing from the Lord through His word read and proclaimed? Do you pray for God's help to understand what you will hear? Do you pray for your pastor, that he will be well studied and prepared to be clear and biblical?

In the months ahead we will explore more ways we can attend with diligence, preparation, and prayer to the preached word. For now, try these suggestions and see if rest and anticipation more effectively prepare you to receive the word with faith.

Praying for You, Pastor Andy

Pilgrim's Progress Study Begins

The Fall women's study of Pilgrim's Progress began September 21st. Some women were out of town, and some were sick. We had three women join us via our Zoom meeting space and those not present are able to watch the recording through a password protected link. There are a total of 15 women signed up for this journey with Christian from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City including Christiana's and the children's journey. We are singing a different version of the hymn, *He Who Would Valiant Be (aka The Christian Life)*, also known as the Pilgrim's hymn. We are using the Penguin Classic version of John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress and the Ligonier study series, *Pilgrim's Progress - A Guided Tour* by Dr. Derek Thomas. Our introduction class included a John Bunyan segment narrated by Derek Thomas from the Reformation Heritage Books' documentary: *Puritan – All of Life to the Glory of God* by Joel Beeke and Michael Reeves. Extra books were ordered and will be available in the FPC library in the CEC building. *Bon Voyage!*

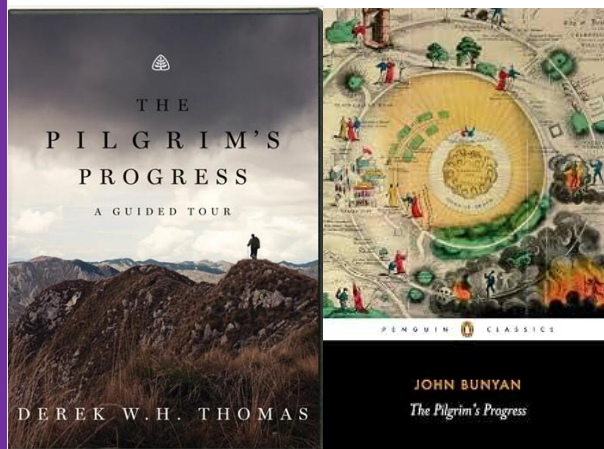
Women's Inaugural Book Club Meeting

The inaugural meeting of our women's community book club met at Pam Lauver's beautiful home. We had a "finger food" potluck and there were eleven in attendance. We read and discussed *Theo of Golden* by Allen Levi. There were four women from the community who joined us. We had two women sick and unable to attend.

A secondary January meeting for the same book is planned, but not on the calendar yet. Any lady interested in participating in the January meeting can read *Theo of Golden* now. Let Lory Wood know about your interest and she will get you the author's questions to think about. Also, think about a friend or neighbor that you would like to join you and ask them to read the book too.

No spoilers here, but if you have read the book, then you know what the women are holding in the picture. 😊 Greg and Lory Wood made them.

This is a new ministry as we "reach out to the world with Christ." One of the community women that attended will be joining us for our Pilgrim's Progress study on Mondays. Soli Deo gloria!



The women's Bible study breakfast buffet was shared by 26 women. Both the evening and morning studies met together to share a fellowship while hearing an introduction to Colossians, epistles, and the apostle Paul. There is a total of 34 women doing the *Colossians Flourish* Bible study by Lydia Brownback.

Our study will focus on the supremacy and sufficiency of Christ and how we can grow and live our lives in Christ. We closed our study singing praise and doxology to our Lord with *Lift Up, Lift Up Your Voices Now* hymn from the Trinity hymnal.

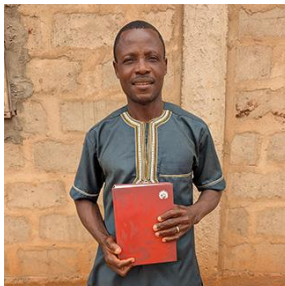


Missions Committee Announcement

For many years Operation Christmas Child has been a seasonal ministry here at First Presbyterian. This year we are beginning a transition. Your missions committee is introducing a new seasonal opportunity to bring the gospel and gospel resources to international communities. The global church is growing at an unprecedented rate. Yet 95% of the pastors lack formal training, and most of these church leaders lack Bible study resources to help them proclaim the truth and protect God's people from error. Ligonier Ministries has been distributing Reformation Study Bibles to pastors during the Christmas season. The *Reformation Study Bible* is a great help to pastors in the global south, which includes South America, Africa, and Asia. Providing the Scriptures in the languages of these regions is a great support to the churches and ministers.

For every \$25 given, a study Bible can be provided to a pastor in a part of the world where it is needed most. If this sounds like a missionary project you would like to support as a part of your Christmas witness, checks can be made

out to **First Presbyterian Church**. In the memo line please designate the gift as *Missions Bible Project*.



If you have already gathered supplies for an OCC box, we do have remaining boxes we would like to use. We will be partnering with a local church in Crossville as a drop off point. Please turn in your boxes no later than November 8. Thank you for your missionary hearts and concern for the nations, particularly in this season of the year.



Thank you for your support,
FPC Missions Committee

Session Notes

The session held its regular monthly meeting on Friday morning, Aug. 21, at the church.

Pastor Andy led a devotional from Matthew 28:16-20, following which he opened the session meeting in prayer.

The following agenda items may be of interest:

1. The **Installation Service for TE Peter Dietsch as Associate Pastor** was held September 13. It was a sweet evening shared with others from our presbytery.
2. **Bible Study (Lord's Day):** Our Adult class continues studying discipleship topics from Presbyterian & Reformed (P&R) publisher's discipleship series.

3. Your session, in teamwork with our deacons, is in the process of completing a proposed **2027 Budget**.
4. **Shepherding Groups:** Session reviewed its revised list which incorporates Pastor Peter as one of our shepherds.

Session spent time praying for the Shepherding and other needs of the congregation. Pastor Andy closed the meeting in prayer at about 11:00am.

Next Stated Session Meeting: Friday, September 18, 2026, 8am.

Warmly in Christ,
Forrest

Remember to set your clocks back one hour on **November 1st**.



Please welcome new members, Ezekiel and Rachel Willier.

We rejoice with them in the baptism of their children – Adelaide, Theodore and Jeremiah.

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 Goeglein, 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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Congregational Letter from Pastor Peter

September 15, 2026

To all the saints in Christ Jesus at First Presbyterian Church in Crossville, TN. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thank you for your trust and confidence in calling me to be the Associate Pastor at First Presbyterian Church. And, thank you for your kindness, hospitality, and loving welcome that we have already received in a variety of ways. I am grateful for the Lord's providential hand in the circumstances in bringing me and my family here. During each phase of the process, my confidence that the Lord was indeed calling me to be at First Presbyterian Church continued to grow.

One of the key elements in discerning the call was the faithfulness of First Presbyterian Church's identity and mission: "We belong to the family of the Redeemed. Transformed by the grace of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, we are delighting in the supremacy of God in all things as we reach out 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 He might be preeminent (Colossians 1:18)." I count it a privilege to join together with this local body of Christ in worship, discipleship, and evangelism.

For my part, I promise to seek to guard both myself and my teaching, to persevere in the public reading of Scripture, exhortation, and teaching, and in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, to show myself to be an example of those who believe (1 Timothy 4:11-16). I will endeavor to labor among you in gentleness, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children; I will endeavor to labor among you devoutly, uprightly, and blamelessly, exhorting, encouraging, and imploring just as a father would his own children (1 Thessalonians 2:7-12). As I seek to be an under-shepherd of the Good Shepherd, working together with Pastor Andy and the Session, I commit to praying for each one of you and your families. Please pray for me and my family.

Stacie and I are in the process of purchasing a home in Crossville and hope to close by the end of September. We are extremely grateful for the use of the provision of the Geneva House as a temporary place of residence as we transition. Please pray for a smooth and timely conclusion to the purchase of a house and the move-in to our new home.

Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen. (Ephesians 3:20-21)

In Christ,
– Pastor Peter Dietsch