

The Newsletter

*First Presbyterian Church
Tullahoma, Tennessee*

November 2025
Volume 54, Issue 9

November Happenings at First Presbyterian Church

Remembering the Saints on All Saints Day, November 1

When Paul wrote to the church in Rome, he addressed his letter “To all God’s beloved ... who are called to be saints” (Romans 1:7, NRSV). Paul regarded his fellow believers as people who have responded to the good news of Christ by choosing to follow and serve God.

The New Testament emphasizes that Christians are God’s beloved — special people set apart to receive his grace and to be his witnesses. All people whose minds and hearts are devoted to God are “called to be saints.”

About 700 years after the church began, leaders designated November 1 as All Saints’ Day to honor people whose lives reflect Christ dwelling within them. Because of what God has done for us, all Christians can wear the label of saint.

The Salon: A Rave for the Soul! on Wednesday, November 5, at 6:00 p.m.

It is our intention to resume the Salon: A Rave for the Soul service on November 5 with Bonnie Watts speaking. We decided to postpone October’s service due to technical issues with our music.

If you haven’t attended, this service, which is much less formal, but still Presbyterian in style, is a thirty-minute worshipping experience held in the Fellowship Hall. The service is geared towards youth; however, it is very helpful if non-youth attend this service, as it is a way to connect our congregation with our youth. In addition, the “sermon” is presented by an adult in a discussion format. If you are interested in helping us out with the service or knowing more about Salon: A Rave for the Soul, please reach out to Bethany Sterling. We’d love to see you on November 5 at 6:00 p.m.

Hanging of the Greens will occur during the worship service on **November 30, the First Sunday of Advent.**

Advent Study begins on November 30, the first Sunday of Advent

The Adult Discussion Class that meets at 9:00 on Sunday mornings will be doing a four-week Advent study *on Christmas in the four Gospel Homes* by Cynthia Campbell. How might a house look for Christmas based on what each Gospel says about it? *In Christmas in the Four Gospel Homes*, beautiful illustrations from architect Kevin Burns reimagine each of the four Gospels as a house, which the church visits at Christmas. In each section, Cynthia M. Campbell reflects on the distinctive perspective of the birth of Jesus or the incarnation offered by each Gospel. *Christmas in the Four Gospel Homes* creatively reimagines the season and inspires new and exciting reflection for Advent.

The class will begin our study on November 30, the first Sunday of Advent. We’d love to have you join the class.

In this issue: Group Happenings, Joys/Concerns, November birthdays, p. 2; Pastor’s Column, p. 3; Minute with Mike, p. 4; Offering from the Office, p. 5; Around and About FPC, p. 6; Session Committee Reports, pp. 7, 8; Thoughts about Thankfulness p. 8; Candles That Tell a Story p. 9; Back page, p. 10

Here's what's happening!

Presbyterian Women

Women's Circle will meet in the Fellowship Hall, Wednesday, November 12, at 10:00 a.m. Our Horizon Bible study *Finding Resilience, Joy and Our Identity in Jesus Christ* by Rhashell D. Hunter, will focus on how 'Jesus is Tested' by the devil in the desert. Scripture: Luke 4:1-13. Main Idea: Christ's wilderness experience shows us that when our lives are dangerous and frightening, we are not alone.

All women of the church are invited to PW's annual **Christmas Luncheon** on December 1, at 12:00, in the Fellowship Hall. This is a special time of sharing and fellowship for our women. If you enjoyed our crazy program last year, just wait to see what will happen this year! Cost of lunch will be \$10.00, please make your reservations with Karla Haws 931.580.1511, no later than Wednesday, November 26.

Men's Breakfast

The next Men's Breakfast will be November 9. Gathering time is 8:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. Breakfast is provided. All men are welcome.

DEADLINE FOR NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

The deadline for the **December/January** issue of *The Newsletter* is noon on **Tuesday, November 18.**



If you have a birthday in November and your name is not on the list, please call the church office and let us know. We would like to add your name to the birthday calendar.

- 2 – Dot Gilfillan
- 3 – Sally Hoehl
- 5 – Taylor Smith
- 10 – Patra Escue
- 14 – Grant Christopher
- 15 – Ethan Sherrer
- 17 – Beverly Elsasser
- 20 – Elizabeth Lawson
- 21 - Kay Crosswy
- 25 – Christy Sherrer
- 28 – Cindy Kinney
- 30 – Sue Harvey



Parish Joys/Concerns

Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus. Philippians 2:4-5

Please keep the following in your prayers:

- Elmo Birkhead
- Ted and Beverly Elsasser
- Patra Escue
- Robin Gorman
- Mary Harmon

Amy Hinds
Elaine Huffines
Sandy McKinney
Vanessa McKinney
Avery Scheider, a former Learning Place student
Drew Sterling
Don Stuck, Greg Sterling's father

Please remember in your prayers the following people who are unable to attend worship regularly:

- Jean Carter (home)
- Patra Escue (home)
- Connie Flath (NHC)
- Dot Gilfillan (home)
- Sue Harvey (home)
- Hilde Joellenbeck (home)

Good Samaritan Ministry

Ministry Office was open 21 days in September and assisted 181 families.

Requests for November

Regular food request: canned fruits, canned vegetables, dry spaghetti, pasta sauce, soup, soda crackers, cereal, peanut butter, canned tuna, and canned chicken.

Special food needs: chili, baked beans or pork and beans

Dignity request: shampoo

Thank You –

Dear Friends at First Presbyterian Church,

Our thanks to you go on and on – just like your support of Good Samaritan Ministry.

Your faithful and generous donations allow us to continue our mission – to give a hand-up to our neighbors in need! We appreciate you.

Blessings,
Cindy and Team Good Sam

First Presbyterian Church (PCUSA)
P. O. Box 847
Tullahoma, TN 37388

Vision statement: Worshipping God,
growing together, serving others,
welcoming all

Sunday school – 9:00 a.m.

Worship at 10:30 a.m.

Church Office: 204 E. Grundy
Phone: 931 455-9328
FAX: 931 455-9306

E-mail addresses

Jim: pastorjim Moran@gmail.com
Martha: m2bradley@lighttube.net
Katie: katherineprasser@gmail.com
Bethany: bethanybsterling@gmail.com
Robert: robertwright621@gmail.com
Mike: michaelrbradley@lighttube.net

Church Web site:

www.fpctullahoma.org

Youth Website:

www.pyc-tullahoma.com

Preschool Office: 931 455-1515

Preschool Email:

learningplace@lighttube.net

Preschool Website:

www.learningplacetullahoma.org

Church Staff

Interim Pastor: Jim Moran
Minister to Children: Katie Prasser
Minister to Youth: Bethany Sterling
Secretary: Martha Bradley
Choir Director: Robert Wright
Parish Associate for Pastoral Care:
Michael Bradley
Learning Place Preschool Director:
Bethany Sterling

Members of Session

Murray Brown
Charlotte Broyles
Alan Harris
Charles Harvey
Karla Haws
Bob Huffines
J. Ray Joellenbeck
Karla Keough
Shirley Levine
Helen McClure
Bethany Sterling, Clerk
Brad Sturgill



Pastor's Message

My friends,

The traditional thanksgiving meal is hard to beat. A turkey cooked to perfection, usually baked in the oven, along with the necessary dressing and gravy. A variety of vegetables and fruits, from freshly made mashed potatoes, sweet potato casserole, green beans, cream corn, cranberry sauce, etc. Then, dessert! Pumpkin pie, chocolate meringue pie, chess pie, apple pie, pecan pie, etc. Yum! Yum! I am so thankful for the thanksgiving feast!

Maybe even more so, I am thankful for family and friends that gather. When I was growing up, my family gathered from near and far to celebrate Thanksgiving in Roberta, Georgia. All the Wilson clan congregated at Pap and Grandmom's house on US 80. These days my Moran side of the family is so spread out from Corpus Christi, Texas, to Milledgeville, Georgia, to Norfolk, Virginia, to New York and Arizona and Alabama that it is difficult for us all to get together, all the nieces and nephews and cousins and aunts and uncles, brothers and sisters and spouses. But the Tennessee/Massachusetts Langley side of our family will thankfully gather this year at one of our homes for a feast of Thanksgiving foods. Your family may be spread far and wide, too, but there is nothing better than being together as a family and sharing table fellowship, telling family stories, and eating good food. Thanksgiving is a time for family to gather, be thankful for so many blessings, and remember what God has so richly provided another year.

There are numbers of stories of thanksgiving meals in the New Testament. Jesus and his disciples hosted thousands of people with a small, blessed picnic meal. Jesus took a boy's picnic meal of five barley loaves and two fish, blessed (gave thanks), and gave it to the disciples to distribute to the people. There was plenty; all ate until they were satisfied; and twelve baskets of the leftovers of the loaves of bread were gathered. (John 6:1-14) The Apostle Paul wrote letters to the early churches around the Mediterranean Sea. The letter form of the time always had a thanksgiving section toward its beginning, which set the tone and theme of the letter. For example, in Romans 1:8-9, Paul writes, using a form of the same Greek root word for thanksgiving as John 6 used at the beginning of his thanksgiving: "First, I *thank* my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed throughout the world. For God, whom I serve with my spirit by announcing the gospel of his Son, is my witness that without ceasing I remember you always in my prayers...." Being thankful was a way of life for Jesus and for Paul. I encourage you to make being thankful a way of life for your family and our church.

I am thankful for our church family. In this past year, Denise and I have been blessed to have shared our lives and faith with two wonderful churches, grieving a goodbye with one and celebrating a new beginning with another. We are so thankful for all the churches we have served over these forty years. I encourage you to remember and thank God for the blessings you have received this past year. God has richly blessed the Morans once again with a loving, gifted, and generous congregation at First Prez, Tullahoma.

May the grace of God fill your home and family this Thanksgiving,

Jim

Minute with Mike by Michael Bradley, Parish Associate for Pastoral Care

Thanksgiving, Back Then

Thanksgiving Day started early at my house when I was a boy.

Rosie O'Day, our Jersey cow, did not know it was a holiday, and she let it be known it was milking time just like any other morning. Jucie, our mule (so named because he drooled) had to be fed and watered. The hogs had to be slopped, the chickens fed and any eggs gathered, and then we ate. Soon after seven o'clock we would walk west up the hill a few hundred yards to my maternal grandparents, John and Ida Sanderson. Poppa Johnny and Miss Iva, my great-grandparents, lived in a little house in Pa Sanderson's yard, so they would be in the big house when we arrived.

Over the next hour or so my paternal grandparents, Andrew Lee and Flora Bradley, would come in, having walked from their house, which was just to the east of ours. My uncles and aunts from both sides of the family came along as did a variety of half-great uncles and aunts, cousins, vaguely related individuals whose connection was not clear but was quite firm, and a good host of hound dogs.

The men were banished to the front porch, unless it was truly cold, or they were dispatched to the barn and the smoke house to fetch various things which were needed by the women in the kitchen.

Before ten in the morning wonderful aromas were wafting out of that kitchen!

But no male over nine years old hung around the place long after ten. Thanksgiving was the day of the big rabbit hunt. A dozen or more males, aged nine to ninety (I was the young one; Poppa Johnny was the oldest), accompanied by a multitude of hounds of various breeds and sizes, straggled out of the yard and started down the hill through a field of cotton which had already been picked clean. Soon a long, irregular line of people was preceded by three or four packs of dogs, and within minutes one of the packs would strike the trail of a rabbit and the crisp air would resound with the baying of dogs following the scent of game. Sometimes two or three packs would be trailing different rabbits all at the same time, and the dog music was wonderful to hear.

Eventually someone in the line of men would bring their gun to their shoulder and a shot would ring out. One shot generally meant one rabbit to be tucked away in the pocket of a hunting coat. Shotgun shells cost almost a dime each, and money was not to be wasted or shots to be missed. By three in the afternoon people and dogs were worn out, and it was back to the house. The game was dressed and put in a cool place - food was not wasted either; and then it was "to the table."

To say the table was loaded is to understate the case. A roast

turkey from the Bradley flock, fried chicken from the Sanderson flock, baked ham from another family member, roast duck (if Uncle Graydon had had any luck hunting that week), all the vegetables that grow in a big garden, chocolate pie, lemon icebox pie, pecan pie, and fresh coconut cake. Poppa Johnny said the longest blessing you can imagine while everybody fidgeted and hoped the food wouldn't get cold. The meal lasted until the last one slid out of their chair and went under the table!

Drowsy conversation filled the air as the fire in the pot-bellied stove in the front room warmed the place, no football, no politics, just family stories and good-natured jokes. About six or so everyone went back to their home. The tasks which had begun the day had to be repeated at the end of the day, but we did not mind. We were truly thankful for the day and for the One who gave it to us.

Enter
his gates
with
thanksgiving...

Psalms 100:4



Offering from the Office by Martha Bradley, Church Secretary

Count Your Blessings

Thanksgiving stirs memories like stirring gravy on the stove. I remember sitting at an auxiliary table in my Grandmother Dobbins' kitchen with Becky and Jinny, my favorite aunts, while the adults assembled around the extended dining room table.

The "old folks" would talk and talk. Platters were passed around and the aroma was intoxicating. Finally, the platters arrive in the kitchen for us grandkids and youngest aunts. We kids wanted to get on with the meal, but we seemed to be the only ones in a hurry.

We knew that after the feast Becky and Jinny were going to take us kids to Great-Aunt Marie's farm so that we could romp around in the fall leaves, leap back and forth across the small creek that ran through the pasture, capture minnows in old tin cans, shake the vines to knock down ripe muscadines, and pick up buckets of pecans – all much more inviting than listening to "old folks" natter on.

Now, at at my ripe old age, beside all the wonderful memories I have of Thanksgiving as a child, I also remember an old hymn that was sung during this season – *Count Your Blessings*.

*When upon life's billows you are
tempest tossed,*

*When you are discouraged,
thinking all is lost,*

*Count your many blessing, name
the one by one,*

*And it will surprise you what the
Lord hath done.*

What better time to count our blessings than during the season of Thanksgiving? Here are some of my blessings.

There is my forbearing husband Mike who puts up with my obsessive-compulsive tendencies, including my many to-do lists and early rising!

There are our children: Daughter **Nancy Todd**, who has always been driven to excel in whatever she undertakes, be it academics, music, writing, etc.; Son **Michael**, who is fairly easy-going and who sees nature unlike anyone I've ever known, and uses his talents to capture it in unique ways in photography, woodworking, and cooking.

There are the grandchildren: **Drew**, the first born, who is now an adult immersed in a career as an automotive technician and who is engaged to Andrea, whom we already love; **Michael**, who is a senior in high school, is an outstanding lacrosse player, and is contemplating the next step in life's journey; **Gracie**, who is high school age and has inherited many artistic tendencies, which she is fully exploring – sculpture, acting, drawing, painting, and sewing to create costumes for theater groups.

I am thankful for **loyal friends**, who are there to encourage, listen, advise, and are available for friendly conversation and occasional lunch outings.

There are my **mentors**, alive and dead, who encouraged me and provided me with many opportunities – my mother, grandmothers, pastors, teachers, professors.

I am thankful for farmers and environmentalists. For older folks who set good examples of a life well-lived. For ministers with whom I have worked. For those who have served and are serving in the military, including my dad, a World War II Army veteran. For small churches with whom Mike

has ministered over the years. For mountain streams and mountain trails – both long and short (thankful now when they are relatively short!)

When son Michael was a young tyke, he insisted that for Thanksgiving dinner there **must** be a whole roasted turkey on the table! Now I am thankful that we can cook just a turkey breast. I am thankful for sweet potato casserole without marshmallows - a staple for our family Thanksgiving feast, and for Michael's friend Scott who always came by for a serving or two of the sweet potato casserole after his family's Thanksgiving dinner.

Another important dish for our Thanksgiving dinner has been homemade cranberry relish (not NPR's Susan Stamberg's recipe with horseradish!) but one that required the children to grind the cranberries with an old-fashioned meat grinder (long before I had a food processor.) True to the nature of our children, we had to divide the cranberries equally between them before grinding! Precious memories.

Real thanksgiving happens because we realize that all we have is a gift, a blessing. The call to stop all other activity and for one day bask in the warmth of family and friends, with good food, lots of talk and laughter, is blessing itself.

May your Thanksgiving abound in food, family, friends, and an opportunity to say a long prayer of thanksgiving for God's many graces in your life.



Session Committee Reports

Mission Committee – J. Ray Joellenbeck and Brad Sturgill

Thank you! - Thank you FPC for supporting local missions and making donations to One Day of Hope Coffee County, which was held on October 18. We collected approximately 30 coats and about \$300 in monetary donations. This \$300 was combined with the balance in the SERRV

International Proceeds account to make a total donation of approximately \$1,440 to One Day of Hope in support of a five thousand bottle shampoo order.

Holiday Tasting - The Mission Committee and Family Activities Committee are teaming up to host the annual **Holiday Tasting on December 14**. Join your church family immediately after church in the Williams Family Center for

lunch and fellowship. Everyone is invited to prepare and share a favorite holiday dish. Both sweet and savory are welcome, so plan on bringing your favorite casserole, Christmas cookie, special family dessert, wintertime soup, etc. Please bring food items cooked and plated. Festive holiday drinks will be provided. The Mission Committee invites you to browse and support the alternative giving opportunities that will be displayed. Alternative giving certificates will be provided.

Tullahoma Winter Shelter Project - The mission of the Tullahoma Winter Shelter Project is to provide safe, overnight shelter for community members who are experiencing homelessness during

the low temp winter nights. In addition to the physical space provided for shelter, the participating churches and civic organizations also provide resources, food, hygiene items, clothing and more. First Presbyterian will once again participate by opening up the Williams Family Center and serving as a host site during the week of **January 25 - January 31**. Volunteers are crucial for this endeavor, and there are a variety of ways that you can help. An organizational/informational meeting will be held in late November or early December for those interested in participating.

Finance and Personnel Committee – Alan Harris

Our Finance and Personnel Committee met on October 18 to discuss, among other items, our need to maintain a contingency fund to handle un-forecasted expenses such as HVAC repair, appliance replacement, and repairs to our entry doors. Our discussion was inconclusive, but everyone agreed that a set amount should be on hand to respond.

As I mentioned last month in our newsletter, the Session discussed the possibility of hiring a financial secretary to manage payroll and assist with other bookkeeping/accounting tasks. At one point, our visiting member from Middle Tennessee Presbytery (he was there to facilitate our progress on forming a Pastor Nominating Committee) was asked how other churches in our Presbytery managed payroll and

finances. He offered a company called Ministry Works who manages many churches.

With that in mind, I asked Ken Patterson to conduct a little research into the company. Now known as Brotherhood Works, Ken advised the company has been in business for many years and offers a wide range of services in addition to payroll management. This includes providing the necessary property and liability insurance we currently have with Lester, Greene, McCord, and Thoma. Ken came back with some interesting information on both payroll management and insurance. We won't bore you with details, but we are continuing to pursue various options offered by Brotherhood Works.

In other matters in our committee, Clark indicated that he

could provide a monthly summary of all account activity to the committee. Normally, he provides a quarterly update to the Session. Our committee requested he provide this information so we can make an informed decision about a contingency account and provide better strategic planning.

We have, for many months, asked for a couple of folks in our congregation who have good bookkeeping skills (QuickBooks gurus) who can learn the ropes from Clark and Don. Please consider serving in this capacity, using your time and special talent as Don and Clark have, and other members have before them.

Get well, Ted Elsasser. We miss you on the committee.

Alan Harris

Property Committee – Bob Huffines, chair

We continue to make progress regarding Property issues. The HVAC unit for the Annex was installed. New windows for the Annex are scheduled for installation.

There was an issue with a dead limb on the front tree. After investigation, the decision was made to cut entire tree down. Tree was cut down on October 2; tree cut up by the Committee on October 3 with the assistance of Clay Bearden. Thank you, Clay!

Ron and Jon Gault removed wiring and satellite dishes at the Phoenix Apartments. As we are aware, we were in the need of a Custodian. Patrick Watts graciously volunteered to fill in, desiring to be our Janitor. In order to complete all tasks as listed on the Janitors Job Description, an additional Custodian was interviewed and hired. Each Janitor will work 15 hours each maximum.

At this time, we are investigating security for our church. More details forthcoming in the near future.

Thank you, Clay, for constructing the manger scene. Spotlighting will be installed soon for the illumination of the manger. Please report issues and concerns when discovered to a member of the Committee.

Respectfully,
Bob Huffines, Chairman
931 581-4959

Family Activities and Outreach Committee – Shirley Levine and Helen McClure

Thanks to those who have signed up to host **Fellowship Time** after worship service. Sign-up sheet is on the podium in the narthex.

Family Activity Committee will not meet in November.
Next **Men's Breakfast** is November 9 at 8:00 a.m. in

Fellowship Hall. All men of the church are invited.

There will be **no Fellowship Dinner** out in November.

Thoughts about Thankfulness

"If the only prayer you said in your entire life was 'thank you,' that would suffice."
—Meister Eckhardt

"O Lord, that lends me life, Lend me a heart replete with thankfulness!"
—William Shakespeare

You'll become closer to God not by presenting God with your troubles, but by thanking God for your blessings.

Thou hast given so much to me. Give me one thing more — a grateful heart."
—George Herbert

Thanksgiving, to be truly Thanksgiving, is first "Thanks" and then "Giving."

Abundant Blessings

There is plenitude in God. That great fact must never be lost or obscured. We must not exchange this immense graciousness for a few scraps of human morality or a few shopworn proverbs. God is a vast reservoir of blessing who supplies us abundantly.

—Eugene H. Peterson, *Traveling Light*

Gratitude Shift

When we look at what we want, and then compare that with what we have, we shall be unhappy. When we think about what we really deserve, and then compare that with what we actually have, we shall thank God.

An Advent Tradition

Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas. This year the first Sunday of Advent is November 30. Along with the Hanging of the Greens First Presbyterian Church will continue the tradition of lighting a candle on the Advent wreath every Sunday before Christmas and on Christmas Eve. The information below explains the meaning of the wreath and candles.

Candles That Tell a Story



Lighting a candle on the Advent wreath each Sunday is a treasured tradition during the four weeks of Advent.

Depending on denomination, churches use different color combinations for the candles. Some place four blue candles around the wreath with a white one in the center, while others use all white. Many light purple candles on the first two Sundays, pink on the third, purple again on the fourth, and then a large white candle on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. This last color combination is the one we use.

Each part of the wreath carries symbolic meaning:

- **The wreath:** Its circular shape represents the everlasting love of God, having no beginning or end. The green symbolizes eternal life.
- **The four candles:** Mark the four weeks of Advent.
- **Purple candles:** In ancient times, purple was expensive and was considered the color of royalty and kings. On Christmas, Christ is proclaimed King of Kings. Purple also symbolizes humility and penitence. The first purple candle represents Hope; the second, Peace; and the final purple candle, Love.
- **The pink candle:** Lit on the third Sunday, it represents Joy and marks the halfway point of Advent.
- **The white candle:** The large white candle in the center is the Christ candle. Its light symbolizes Christ the Savior — “the light of the world.”

The beauty and brightness from the glow of all five candles is a reminder that Christ’s life was the light for all earth’s people — “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it” (John 1:5, NRSV).

The Advent wreath is more than just greenery and candles—it’s a symbol of watchfulness and growing joy as Christmas draws near.

A Thanksgiving Prayer

Gracious God,
 thank you for every good gift—
 for the food before us,
 the people around us,
 and the love that surrounds us.
 Help us to pause, reflect, and rejoice
 in Your constant goodness and grace.
 May our hearts overflow with gratitude,
 not just today, but every day. Amen.

Gratitude, all year long

In her book *Grateful*, theologian Diana Butler Bass writes: “As human beings, we possess an intuitive awareness that we depend on others to survive. We are safer and happier when we care for each other in community, when we do things for each other. ...How we live together in and with gratitude makes all the difference in the world. Indeed, living gratefully makes the world different.”



Vision Statement:
 Worshipping God, growing together,
 serving others, and welcoming all

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

First Presbyterian Church
 Corner of Washington & Grundy
 P. O. Box 847
 Tullahoma, TN 37388

Non-Profit Org.
 U.S. Postage
 PAID
 Permit No. 33
 Tullahoma, TN
 37388