

March 2025



First Impressions

Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church
Staunton, Virginia



March 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 1:30pm WSO Rehearsal
2 11am Worship Sanctuary FB Live Admin. Committee Mtg.-after worship (L)	3 10:30 Cong. Life Committee Meeting (L)	10am Bible Study (L) 2pm Mission & Outreach Committee Mtg. (P)	5 5:15pm Worship Committee Meeting (L) 6pm Ash Wednesday Worship— Chapel	6 5pm WSO Dress Rehearsal (S)	7 5pm WSO Dress Rehearsal (S)	8 7:30pm WSO Chamber Music Spring Concert (S)
9 11am Worship Sanctuary FB Live Spring Forward	10 5:15pm Session Meeting (L)	11 10am Bible Study (L) Jeff—out	12 6pm Handbells 7pm Choir Heidi-off Jeff-out	13 11:30am Trinity Lunch Heidi-off Jeff-out	14 Jeff- out	15
16 11am Worship Sanctuary FB Live Lunch-after worship	17	18 10am Bible Study (L) 12:30 PW Circle (L)	19 10am Home Goods Pantry 6pm Handbells 7pm Choir	20 Newsletter Deadline- April	21	22
23 11am Worship Sanctuary FB Live	24	25 10am Bible Study (L)	26 6pm Handbells 7pm Choir	27	28	29
30 11am Worship Sanctuary FB Live	31 4:30pm MBU Choir Rehearsal (S)					

S=sanctuary; L= library; P=parlor; FH=Fellowship Hall

Letter from the Pastor

Interim Evaluation: Twenty Month
Observations/Discernment for
First Presbyterian, Staunton
Rev. Dr. Jeff Binder, Covenant Pastor
March 1, 2025



First Presbyterian now finds itself in a “new chapter” of ministry since my arrival in July of 2023. The previous year and a half has been spent reconstructing a congregation that had experienced much trauma, conflict, and uncertainty regarding its future moving forward. For all intents and purposes, First Presbyterian was living in a “survival mode” of day-to-day operations in order to keep the doors open each week.

Over the previous 19+ months, this church has much to celebrate. To name a few:

- Worship has regained a consistent and celebrative form and function.
- Committees and Session have been repopulated, and now fully operational.
- The administrative responsibilities are systematically being addressed.

(cont. on p. 2)

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Rev. Dr. Jeff Binder, Interim Minister

Letter from the Pastor

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Interim Evaluation

- The maintenance and repair needs of the property are being completed.
- Mission programs are active and engaging volunteers and the community.
- The staff and members enjoy one another.

The time has come to move from “survival” to “renewal and redevelopment.”

This next chapter is being enacted on two fronts, which personally, I find invigorating.

- The ***Building for Hope*** program is a two-year facilitated discernment on how best to possibly repurpose the church property to benefit both the community and the congregation. Work has already begun, and the first in-person gathering was in February. More details on the progress of this initiative will be shared with Session and the congregation throughout the year.
- The ***Pastor Task Force*** was developed at the end of 2024 with the task of identifying future pastoral needs moving forward. Currently, the task force and Session have agreed that a contracted long-term (3-5 years) Covenant Pastor will be sought out moving forward as the congregation continues to refine its mission and vision moving forward, while discerning how future partnerships with nearby congregations can be utilized.

How does the story of First Presbyterian continue moving forward?

What new chapters are yet to be written?

I'm excited to see how things continue to develop in the coming months and years. This congregation has experienced quite a bit, and even with some bumps and bruises along the way, has proven to be quite resilient and hopeful.

(cont. on p. 3)

Church Info

First Presbyterian Church, Staunton, VA

Mission & Vision Statement

Adopted on September 10, 2024

We open our hearts and our doors to worshipping Christ in downtown Staunton as a visible witness to the Gospel.

We are called to be a congregation that...

1. Invites all people to faith in Christ.
2. Worships God in a vibrant community through discipleship, music, and fellowship.
3. Uses our resources, time, and talents in the service of the least of these.
4. Nurtures and strengthens those within and outside of our community.
5. Makes the best use of our historic downtown property to benefit others.

Church News

Waynesboro Symphony Orchestra Concert Saturday, March 8, 7:30pm



Please join us for a chamber music spring concert performed by the Waynesboro Symphony Orchestra on Saturday, March 8 at 7:30pm in the sanctuary. All are welcome!



Time to Spring Forward!

Daylight Savings Time begins Sunday, March 9 at 2:00am. Don't forget to set your clocks forward one hour!

Heidi—Upcoming Schedule

Heidi will be off Wednesday, March 12 and Thursday, March 13. Fay Knicley will kindly be filling in. Thank you!

March Birthdays

7	Cord Lowman
8	Sharon Driscoll Daniel Garrison
9	Dick Cox
14	Paige Kullman
16	Steve Hollar
23	Lucinda Cooke
24	Will Dod III Caroline Lowman
28	Molly Cox
29	Maggie Lowman

Letter from the Pastor

(cont. fr. p. 2)

Interim Evaluation

The really interesting thing about writing such a story is that there are a multitude of options moving forward. Will the congregation simply continue to operate the way it has over the last fifty years, or will it change course? Who will the heroes be that step up in leadership to navigate these turbulent and uncharted waters? What new relationships might bring about new perspectives and imagination?

Rest assured, the ending of the story is always the same. Jesus will continue to call people to follow him. God's kingdom will be realized. Love wins.

Ultimately, I think the overarching question for this church to ask is, "What does a healthy First Presbyterian Church of Staunton look like moving forward?" This is a question that will continue to reveal itself in the coming days, months, and years.

As always, I'm available for follow-up questions/comments at any time!

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jeff'.

Pastor Jeff

Church News

Session Meeting Monday, March 10

There will be a Session meeting on Monday, March 10, at 5:15pm in the library.

Highlights of February 10, 2025 Session Meeting

- The Administration Committee provided a document compiled by Dick Cox, detailing the agreements that we have with all of the organizations and individuals who rent or use our spaces.
- The Congregational Care Committee reported on plans for the upcoming brunch and for taking Valentine flowers to our VIP members. They had set up a preliminary calendar of events for the year with a fellowship event every month.
- The Mission and Outreach Committee provided updates on preparations for this month's Home Goods Pantry, which will be held on February 19.
- The Property Committee reported that the ceiling has been replaced in the hallway that connects the Potter building to the sanctuary building. Session approved use of the same contractor to replace the ceiling in the former Men's Bible Class room below the sanctuary. These ceilings were removed several years ago during asbestos abatement.
- The Worship Committee detailed their plans for Lent, including special services for Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday.
- Jeff provided several updates. The Pastor Task Force is working on completing the Ministry Discernment Profile that will provide information about our church to potential candidates for a Covenant Pastor position. The Building for Hope group will travel to Alexandria next week to meet in person with our professional consultant who is provided by the Building for Hope grant.

Church News

Annual Congregational Meeting Sunday, February 16



Decorations for Annual Congregational Meeting Provided by Eddie Homes

Trinity Lunch Teamwork!



Pictured: Robin Knott, Susie Baker, and Amanda Avery

Church News

Installation of Eddie Homes Sunday, February 9, 2025



Pictured: Cindy Cooke, Pastor Jeff, and Eddie Homes



Pictured: Pastor Jeff, Cindy Cooke, Eddie Homes, and Lisa Caywood

Church News

Administration Committee Meeting

There will be an Administration Committee meeting on Sunday, March 2, immediately after worship in the library.

Congregational Life Committee Meeting

There will be a Congregational Life Committee meeting on Monday, March 3 at 10:30am in the library.

Mission & Outreach Committee Meeting

There will be a Mission & Outreach Committee meeting on Tuesday, March 4 at 2:00pm in the parlor.

Worship Committee Meeting

There will be a Worship Committee meeting on Wednesday, March 5 at 5:15pm in the library.

Church Attendance for January–February 2025

(in person and online)

January 26	In person: 25	Online: 18
February 2	In person: 35	Online: 11
February 9	In person: 21	Online: 9
February 16	In person: 29	Online: 8

Average Worship Attendance for Past Month: 39

Church News

Ash Wednesday Worship Service March 5 in the Chapel

We will have our Ash Wednesday service on March 5 at 6:00pm in the chapel. We hope you can join us!

Church Lunch Sunday, March 16

There will be a church lunch following worship on Sunday, March 16. More details will be available soon!

Newsletter Deadline for April 2025

The deadline for submissions for the April issue of First Impressions is Thursday, March 20. Please submit any info you would like to include by then. Thank you!

Church News



Home Goods Community Pantry Wednesday, March 19

Our Home Goods Community Pantry will be open on Wednesday, March 19. Financial and product donations are always welcomed.

If you wish to donate items, there is a donation basket outside of the sanctuary for your convenience. For items needed, please visit our website at:

<https://1stpres-staunton.org/news-events/announcements>

Presbyterian Women

PW Circle will meet Tuesday, March 18 at 12:30pm in the Library. We would appreciate a head count, so please respond to Alice Herbst if you can make it. And feel free to bring guests—all are welcome!



Bible Study Every Tuesday at 10:00am!

Please join us for Bible Study every Tuesday at 10:00am in the library. Discussions are lively and refreshments are provided. All are welcome. Please join us!