

# April 2025



# First Impressions

Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church  
Staunton, Virginia



April 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 10am Bible Study (L) 2pm Mission & Outreach Committee Mtg. (P)	2 5:15pm Worship Committee Meeting (L) 7pm MBU Choir Concert (S)	3	4	5
6 11am Worship Sanctuary FB Live	7 10:30am Cong. Life Comm. Mtg. (L)	8 10am Bible Study (L) 12:45 PW Circle (L)	9 6pm Handbells 7pm Choir	10 11:30am Trinity Lunch	11	12
13 11am Worship Sanctuary FB Live Palm Sunday Processional	14 5:15pm Session Meeting (L)	15 10am Bible Study (L)	16 10am Home Goods Pantry 6pm Handbells 7pm Choir	17 Maundy Thursday 6pm Agape Feast (L) 6:30pm Worship (Ch) Newsletter Deadline-May	18 Good Friday- Church Offices Closed 7pm Worship- 3rd Pres	19
20 11am Easter Sunday Worship Sanctuary FB Live	21 Heidi-off	22 10am Bible Study (L)	23 6pm Handbells 7pm Choir	24 5:30pm WSO Rehearsal (S)	25	26 7:30pm WSO Concert (S)
27 11am Worship Sanctuary FB Live Jeff-off	28	29 10am Bible Study (L)	30 6pm Handbells 7pm Choir			

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

## Letter from the Pastor

### What Does A "Covenant Pastor" Mean?

Last month Session received the recommendation from the Pastor Task Force to have me sign a three-year contract as the "Covenant Pastor" for First Presbyterian. Now, what does this mean, exactly?



A quick history: there have been several changes in the polity of the denomination over the years. One of those changes is simply a name change. What used to be described as a Designated Pastor, is now called a Covenant Pastor. Another recent change will allow congregations to contract with a Pastor from one, to now three years.

A Covenant Pastor signs a contract agreed upon between the Session, the Presbytery Committee on Ministry, and the Pastor. The day-to-day tasks of a Covenant Pastor will typically address general pastoral responsibilities and may focus on several goals outlined in the contract itself. And should all parties wish to renew the contract toward the conclusion of

*(cont. on p. 2)*

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Rev. Dr. Jeff Binder, Interim Minister

## Letter from the Pastor

*(cont. fr. p. 1)*

### What Does A "Covenant Pastor" Mean?

the three years, then negotiations for a contract renewal will resume at that time. There are some other details that differentiate an "Installed" Pastor from a Covenant Pastor, but in most things, the reality is that you won't be able to tell the difference!

As we have discussed before in congregational settings, First Presbyterian is ready to move into a new chapter of ministry and mission. Let me be candid: my goal as a Covenant Pastor is not to keep things the same as they have been. In fact, we have been slowly changing ever since my beginning in July of 2023. My prayer is that First Presbyterian will continue to listen to the voice of God calling us ever-forward in faith.

There are no guarantees in the years ahead. There continues to be pressing needs in the life of this congregation. The church is still operating from a deficit budget. There continues to be new and more expensive building-related costs. Our membership continues to age and decline.

But I am also extremely hopeful for the future here at First Presbyterian. In fact, that is why I feel called to remain here with you all for these coming years. I believe that God wants this church to repurpose its property to better serve the needs of the community. I believe that this church has a unique location and culture that can intentionally welcome the individuals and families of our downtown neighborhoods into this church community. And I believe that the focus of this congregation can transition from insular survival, to that of an external heart for those outside of the church walls here in Staunton and Augusta County.

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## In Memoriam



### Stephany A. Morgan

April 29, 1941–February 27, 2025

Stephany A. Morgan of Staunton, VA, passed away Thursday, February 27, 2025, at UVA Hospital after a short battle with acute leukemia (AML). She was the elder daughter of the late Benjamin F. and Ruth McClintic Morgan of Marlinton, WV.

Stephany grew up in Marlinton and was a graduate of Marlinton High School. After high school, she attended Winthrop College in Rock Hill, SC, receiving her BA degree. She took additional course work at Penn State before beginning her lifelong profession and passion as a social worker. She subsequently received her Master of Social Work (MSW) from the University of Louisville. Her first position was in Buckhannon, WV before relocating to Richmond, VA and then to Staunton, VA as Supervisor of Child Protective Services for Staunton-Augusta Co.

On each of her stops along the road, she became involved in a Presbyterian Church, quite often joining both the choir and the handbell choir. She actively participated in leadership on church committees, as a Deacon and Elder and a variety of outreach programs, as well as serving on Presbytery-wide committees.

During summers in her college years, she worked on the support staff of the Presbyterian Church's Massanetta Springs Conference Center, making lifelong friends, and she continued her commitment and service to Massanetta throughout her life.

Stephany liked having a furry friend around and rescued several Westies, who found a loving home with her.

She is survived by her sister, Nancy Morgan Roche, of Charlottesville VA, her nephew, Jim Roche (Genevieve Greely) of Ambler PA, and niece, Caroline Roche West (Robert) of Nashville, TN, great nephews Jamie and John Roche and Benjamin West, and great niece Lillian West. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her brother-in-law, James K. Roche, M.D.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests gifts in her memory be made to the First Presbyterian Church of Staunton Home Goods Pantry at 100 E. Frederick St., Staunton, VA 24401.

## Church News



**Mary Baldwin University Choir Concert**  
The MBU Choir will perform in our sanctuary on Wednesday, April 2 at 7:00pm. We hope you can be there!

### Waynesboro Symphony Orchestra Concert Saturday, April 26 at 7:30pm

Please join us for a concert performed by the Waynesboro Symphony Orchestra on Saturday, April 26 at 7:30pm in the sanctuary. All are welcome!



#### April Birthday List

2	Sherry Cox Robin Dietrich Elizabeth Lowman Bret Ritchie Fay Knicley	
11	Molly Morris	
16	Rev. Jeff Binder Sam A. Clem	
17	Evan Lendermon	
22	Jenny Dixon	
23	Helen Wood	

### 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.

## Letter from the Pastor

*(cont. fr. p. 2)*

I want to invite you to join us in this new chapter ahead. If you've been waiting to see what will happen with First Presbyterian, this is your answer. We are ready to move forward as a new church for a new day. Will you join us?

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

In Christ,

Pastor Jeff

## Church News

### Palm Sunday Procession, April 13th

All are invited to celebrate Palm Sunday with a parade! Members of local churches will all gather at the front lawn of Trinity Episcopal Church (214 W. Beverley St.) at 9:45am on April 13th. From there we will parade with palms toward St. Francis Catholic Church, where the members of First Presbyterian will split off as we head to our own worship service.



Interested in joining the fun? RSVP with Pastor Jeff to walk over together.

## Church News

### Session Meeting Monday, April 14

There will be a Session meeting on Monday, April 14, at 5:15pm in the library.

#### Highlights of March 10, 2025 Session Meeting

- ◆ Session accepted the recommendation of the Pastor Task Force to offer a 3-year contract to Jeff Binder in the position of *Covenant Pastor*. The task force was dismissed with thanks and gratitude.
- ◆ Cindy Cooke has agreed to serve as chair of the Administration Committee.
- ◆ A maturing CD will be transferred to the endowment.
- ◆ We will be taking up a special offering to support Massanetta's *Building A Place For All* capital campaign. This offering will go through April 13, and will be matched by Session in honor of Stephany Morgan.
- ◆ The Home Goods pantry will be using the old office in the chapel for storage and packing of materials.

#### Church Attendance for February-March 2025 (in person and online)

February 23	In person: 27	Online: 15
March 2	In person: 24	Online: 10
March 9	In person: 31	Online: 15
March 16	In person: 33	Online: 12
March 23	In person: 32	Online: 16
Average Worship Attendance for Past Month: 43		

## Church News

### Special Offering to Support Massanetta Springs Camp & Conference Center

Over the next few Sundays (through April 13), we will be collecting donations to support a new building facility at Massanetta Springs Camp & Conference Center. Their campaign, "Building a Place for All", will be supported by your Session by matching your gifts dollar for dollar to maximize your generosity. This new facility will impact every aspect of Massanetta's ministry in a positive way.

Checks can be made out to "First Presbyterian", with "Massanetta Springs Camp & Conference Center" in the memo line.

- Thank you, Mission & Outreach Committee

#### Congregational Life Committee Needs Volunteers!

The Congregational Life Committee needs help sending "thinking of you" cards to the VIP members of the church and/or delivering flowers or gifts on occasion. Also, help is needed to set up and clean up coffee and cookies after the worship service. A sign-up sheet and directions are on the table in the back of the sanctuary.

The Congregational Life Committee thanks all who have helped with the luncheons after church and with the reception after Stephany's funeral. Stephany's sister requested that the flowers in the church be taken to the VIPs: Nancy Carey, Helen Wood, Nancy Rhea, Nancy Hall, Jim Cooke, Opal Homan, and Louisa Dixon. Mary Meade and Martha Tillen arranged the flowers in bud vases. They were delivered by Alice Herbst, Cindy Cooke, and Barbara Richardson.

## Church News

### Home Goods Community Pantry Continues to Serve!



Pictured: Sue Ann McAllister



Our Home Goods Community Pantry is continuing to thrive and serve our community, serving 84 households in March 2025. If you read the News Leader, you're already aware that the pantry made front page news on March 17! Donations are always welcome as well. Thank you!

## Church News

### Mission & Outreach Committee Meeting

There will be a Mission & Outreach Committee meeting on Tuesday, April 1, at 2:00pm in the parlor.

### Worship Committee Meeting

There will be a Worship Committee meeting on Wednesday, April 2, at 5:15pm in the library.

### Congregational Life Committee Meeting

There will be a Congregational Life Committee meeting on Monday, April 7, at 10:30am in the library.

### Church Offices Closed Good Friday, April 18



The church offices will be closed Friday, April 18 for Good Friday. We hope everyone has a great holiday!

### Heidi—Upcoming Schedule

Heidi will be off Monday, April 21. Fay Knicley will kindly be filling in. Thank you!

### 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!

## Church News

### Palm Sunday Worship Service April 13 in the Sanctuary

We will have our Palm Sunday worship service on April 13 at 11:00am in the sanctuary. We hope you can join us!

### Agape Feast & Maundy Thursday Worship Service April 17

Please join us for an Agape feast in the library on April 17 at 6:00pm in the library, followed by our Maundy Thursday worship service in the chapel.

An Agape Feast is a simple meal which includes dried fruits, nuts, olives, figs, crusty breads, hummus, crackers and cheese cubes. It is a time of fellowship and hospitality.

The congregation is asked to bring any of the items listed above to be shared in a communal meal. Grape juice and water will be provided.

The agape meal will begin at 6:00pm in the library, followed by worship at 6:30pm in the chapel. All are welcome!

### Good Friday Worship Service April 18 at Third Presbyterian Church

There will be a Good Friday worship service on April 18 at 7:00pm at Third Presbyterian Church.

### Easter Sunday Worship Service on April 20

Our Easter Sunday worship service will be on April 20 at 11:00am in the sanctuary. Please join us!

## Church News

### Easter Flowers

If you would like to donate flowers in honor or in memory of a loved one this Easter season and beautify our sanctuary, please fill out the insert provided in our bulletins (also available in the church office), and drop it in the offering plate or give it to Heidi in the office. You will be able to take home a pot of flowers after the service on Easter morning.

### Home Goods Community Pantry Wednesday, April 16



Our Home Goods Community Pantry will be open on Wednesday, April 16. We served 84 households in March, and we continue to grow. 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. Items needed include: Paper towels (2-pack), toilet paper (4-6-pack), tissues (small pack), trash bags (15-20 count), dish soap (one bottle), laundry detergent, and disinfectant wipes. Thank you!

### Presbyterian Women

PW Circle will meet Tuesday, April 8 at 12:45pm 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!



### Newsletter Deadline for May 2025

The deadline for submissions for the May 2025 issue of First Impressions is Thursday, April 17. Please submit any info you would like to include by then. Thank you!