

November 2025



First Impressions

Newsletter of
First Presbyterian Church
Staunton, Virginia

November 2025



| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat 1 |
|--|--|--|---|---|--------------------------------|--|
| 2 11am Worship Sanctuary FB Live 2-5pm Session Fall Retreat -Wilson's | 3 10:30am Cong. Life Comm. Mtg. (L) | 4 10am Bible Study (L) 2pm M&O Committee Meeting (P) | 5 5:15pm Worship Committee Meeting (L) 6:00pm Handbells 7:00pm Choir | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 9 11am Worship Sanctuary FB Live 12:15pm Admin. Comm. Mtg. (L) | 10 5:15pm Session Meeting (L) | 11 10am Bible Study (L) 12:30 PW Meeting (L) | 12 6:00pm Handbells 7:00pm Choir | 13 11:30am Trinity Lunch 5pm WSO Dress Rehearsal (S) | 14 | 15 7:30pm WSO Chamber Groups Concert (S) |
| 16 11am Worship Sanctuary FB Live | 17 Newsletter Deadline- December | 18 10am Bible Study (L) | 19 10am Home Goods Pantry 6:00pm Handbells 7:00pm Choir | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 23 11am Worship Sanctuary FB Live Pastor Jeff -out | 24 Christmas Flowers Deadline | 25 10am Bible Study (L) 6pm Church Christmas decorating | 26 6:00pm Handbells 7:00pm Choir Heidi-out | 27 Thanksgiving Day-Church Offices Closed | 28 Church Offices Closed | 29 |
| 30 11am Worship Sanctuary FB Live | | | | | | |

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

Letter from the Pastor

The Impact of Stewardship

*This article includes an excerpt from a sermon preached on 8/31/25.

The *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms* defines *stewardship* as:

The responsibility given to humans in creation for managing the resources of the earth (Gen. 1:26). In the church, Christian stewardship involves the whole of life since all life comes from God and is to be lived for God's glory (1 Cor. 4:1-2; 9:17; 1 Peter 4:10).

We are not being asked to think about stewardship only once a year as a check written to the church as part of some formula for religious piety.

No, stewardship is a daily decision to offer our whole selves to God's life-saving works in this world—every aspect of our being.

Stewardship, then, is about giving glory to God with each and every day that we are given on this earth.

Why?

Because at the end of the day, we understand that everything we have been given in this world is not of our own doing, but by God's grace and blessing.

(cont. on p. 2)



FIRST IMPRESSIONS is a publication of First Presbyterian Church
100 East Frederick St., Staunton, VA 24401 (540) 886-0704
stauntonfirst@gmail.com and www.1stpres-staunton.org
Rev. Dr. Jeff Binder, Pastor

Letter from the Pastor

(cont. fr. p. 1)

The Impact of Stewardship

We are simply the caretakers of God's unlimited gifts given to us and this world.

And so, stewardship, now in our present-day realities, can look very different than how we have traditionally understood it.

- ♦ The time we spend, is it being spent helping to realize the kingdom among us today? This goes for everything, from how we spend our days at work and school, to who we choose to spend our hours with, to how we spend our free time. Are we using our time on this earth with intentionality, or passively waiting for the hours to tick by?
- ♦ Are we using the skills and talents that God has bestowed us with to give glory to God today? Some of us have a heart to care for others. Others of us are well-organized. Still others of us know how to fix a toilet. All are incredibly important gifts! How can your God-given gifts be shared with the world?

Stewardship becomes a daily spiritual practice when we can utilize our gifts and talents in life to give praise to God, and to bless others.

- ♦ And yes, when stewardship becomes a spiritual practice, how we understand our finances should reflect what we value in this world and God's kingdom, not only with church operating budgets (although, as I mentioned, this is a necessity for our earthly organizations), but with how we spend all of our resources and money.

The **impact** of stewardship is likewise, of a kingdom perspective; an investment into the "already, not yet" realization of God's kingdom. Like the sacrifices that our spiritual ancestors made on our behalf generations previous to realize the church today, the time, talents, and treasures we invest in the year 2026 is not meant only for our own needs, but for the future calling of First Presbyterian years from now.

(cont. on p. 3)

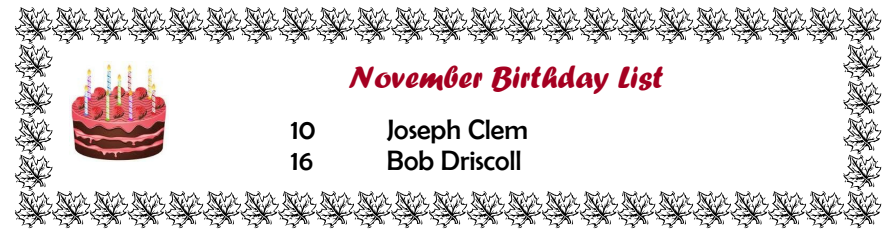
Church News

Church Attendance for September-October 2025

(in person and online)

| | | |
|--------------|---------------|-----------------|
| September 28 | In person: 21 | Online: unknown |
| October 5 | In person: 28 | Online: 6 |
| October 12: | In person: 34 | Online: unknown |
| October 19 | In person: 27 | Online: Unknown |

Average Worship Attendance for Past Month: 29



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

Presbyterian Women Tuesday, November 11

PW Circle will meet Tuesday, November 11 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!



Home Goods Community Pantry Wednesday, November 19



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

In October, we handed out 134 bags and assisted 366 individuals. The pantry is thriving and growing!

If you wish to donate items, there is a donation basket outside of the sanctuary for your convenience. We ask that donations be limited to the following items, including: 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. Cash offerings are also welcomed.

Thank you to those who have already donated. Your generosity is greatly appreciated!

Christmas Decorating in Sanctuary Tuesday, November 25!

We will be decorating the sanctuary for Advent & Christmas Tuesday, November 25 at 6:00p.m. Pizza and cookies will be served. Everyone is encouraged to attend! Many hands make light work. Please join us!

Waynesboro Symphony Orchestra Concert

Please join us for a chamber groups concert presented by the Waynesboro Symphony Orchestra on Saturday, November 15 at 7:30pm in our sanctuary. We hope you can join us!



Letter from the Pastor

(cont. fr. p. 2)

The Impact of Stewardship

When we welcome a community school into our building, we are investing relationship with the entire Staunton community for years to come.

When we repair and upgrade our boiler heating system, we help keep future churchgoers comfortable during those cold winter months ahead.

When we volunteer to serve food to the hungry, or hand out home goods to those in need, or even serve on a committee of our choosing, we are investing our very selves for the work of God both here today, as well as in the future.

Look around! I'm so thankful to see the many hands and feet of the First Presbyterian community helping to share the good news of God's kingdom with our church family, with the Staunton community, and with the world, for all to give praise to God.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeff'.

Pastor Jeff

Church News

Session Fall Retreat

There will be a Session fall retreat on Sunday, November 2 from 2:00-5:00pm at Scott & Sharon Wilson's home.

Session Meeting Monday, November 10

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

Church News

Stewardship Message: Building for Our Future

Dear Members and Friends of First Presbyterian,

It is my privilege to coordinate the fall stewardship campaign on behalf of the Session, in preparation for the 2026 budget year. In your recent October newsletter, I wrote a stewardship message stating that this year's theme would be *Building for Our Future*. This past year, we have heard a good deal about the *Building for Hope* program and our church's involvement in this exciting partnership that will help "congregations see the space they inhabit in their neighborhoods as sacred spaces that should be utilized for the best and highest good for the glory of God and the blessing of others."

You may recall a time when the Sanctuary was full on Sundays, but over the last 20 to 25 years, like many mainstream churches across America, our membership has declined, leaving us with large buildings that speak to the past and not to the future. There is no magic formula for building back the numbers First Presbyterian enjoyed up through the 1990s, but when Pastor Jeff and the Session re-imagined our church's Mission and Vision statement late last year, it opened our doors to new possibilities. *Building for Hope* addresses how we might "create a movement of sustained revitalization through community-based uses for our underutilized church facilities," allowing for greater connectedness to the Staunton community. *Building for Our Future* will allow us to realize the potential for use of our sacred spaces in ways we never imagined decades ago.

As we look ahead to 2026, our stewardship theme resonates with numerous ways we have already opened our doors and hearts to others. Think about the world-class music that fills our Sanctuary with groups like Heifetz, Staunton Music Festival, and Waynesboro Symphony Orchestra. Think about the community outreach we have with the Trinity Noon Lunch

(cont. on p. 5)

Church News

Highlights of October 13 Session Meeting

- ♦ The Congregational Life Committee is sponsoring a pumpkin and pizza event for October's fellowship activity. The Christmas Lunch will be on December 7. The committee is working with 2nd and 3rd Presbyterian to plan some events together for 2026.
- ♦ The Mission Committee designated CASA as the recipient of our loose plate offering for the month of December. This would include Christmas Eve. The committee will also be sponsoring a giving tree to supply gifts and need items to local seniors in need.
- ♦ The Nominating Committee will present a full slate of elders to be elected at a Congregational meeting on October 26. Lisa Caywood has resigned from Session.
- ♦ The Property Committee is working on repairs to a window and a light on the top floor of the Fraser building. The new heating system for the Potter building has been installed.
- ♦ Session removed the following from our roster who did not respond to our inquiry letter: Cynthia Ashbridge, Rodney & Anna Griffith, George & Jesse Laase, Michael Palmer, Thomas Rhea, Reese Roper.
- ♦ Session approved a stewardship letter & pledge card to be distributed to members and friends of the congregation.
- ♦ The Worship Committee is completing plans for Advent. They will hold an event on Tuesday, November 25 at 6:00p.m. to decorate the sanctuary for Advent & Christmas. Pizza and cookies will be served. Everyone is encouraged to attend! Many hands make light work. The committee is organizing music for the season and members and friends to light the Advent candles each week. If you are asked to help with the lighting or reading, please say yes!

Church News

Flowers



The flowers in the sanctuary Sunday, November 2, are given in loving memory of Fulton B. Kegley (May 13, 1931–November 6, 1980) by his family Betty, Mary Huffard, Sarah, and Fulton B. Kegley II.

Christmas Flowers



It's that time of year again! If you would like to remember or honor a loved one at Christmas, we will have the poinsettias again during the advent season. An insert will be in the bulletin by which you can give the name or names of the person(s) you wish to remember. Then put your check (made out to First Presbyterian Church) in the collection plate and mark it "Christmas flowers." The deadline for donating, and to be published in our bulletin insert, is **Monday, November 24**. Thank you for helping our sanctuary look beautiful during this special season!

Thanksgiving Holiday

The church offices will be closed Thursday, November 27 and Friday, November 28 for Thanksgiving. Heidi will be off Wednesday, November 26. We hope everyone has a wonderful and safe holiday!



Fall Back!

Daylight savings time ends Sunday, November 2. Don't forget to set your clocks back one hour!



Church News

(cont. fr. p. 4)

Stewardship Message: Building for Our Future

program and our Home Goods Pantry. And, we just partnered recently with Sacred Heart of Jesus Classical Academy, providing classroom and recreational space for a new school based on traditional education and core spiritual values. Staunton City Council's decision in September to assist WARM (Waynesboro Area Refuge Ministry) to create a day center at First Pres for the unhoused, continues our vision to find meaningful ways to connect with those less fortunate in our community.

As we re-imagine what First Presbyterian Church can be, let's open our minds and hearts to building for our future through community, making the best use of our historic downtown facilities to benefit all. Read our Mission and Vision Statement carefully and be open to the possibilities those words imply. It's time to move on from simply dreaming about pews filled with hundreds of parishioners and examine how we can be a visible witness to the Gospel in a vibrant and diverse community. Our numbers may be smaller than in years past, but we have the ability to make a lasting impact for our city's citizens – including the "least of these."

As stated in October's newsletter, none of this can happen in a vacuum. This church needs your support. We need financial support and the time and talent you can give on committees, worship, music, fellowship gatherings, and more. We urge you to re-evaluate your current financial giving. As we re-evaluate our church assets, I ask you to re-think your own giving as a measure of success in *Building for Our Future*. Re-imagine First Pres as a beacon of hope, a place rich in creativity and spirit, and a refuge where inclusiveness and love for one another is a testament to the Holy Spirit. Won't you join us and build together?

(cont. on p. 6)

Church News

(cont. fr. p. 5)

Stewardship Message: Building for Our Future

By the way, pledge cards, along with our stewardship letter, have been mailed out. If you don't receive one in the mail, you can get one from the church office or the narthex.
- Lucinda Cooke, Stewardship Coordinator

Message from the Nominating Committee

This year the Nominating Committee consisted of the following: Chair, Lucinda Cooke; Sam Clem; Donna Goble; Martha Tillen; Sharon Wilson; and Pastor Jeff Binder, ex officio. All worked hard and, I might add, successfully to put together a terrific slate of officers for 2026. Sherry Cox, Donna Goble, Robin Knott, Mary Meade, and Mark Shore will be elected as officers at the October 26, 2025 Congregational Meeting, to be held immediately following worship. Officer training will take place in November and installation in January.

The Nominating Committee is deeply appreciative of all those who have agreed to serve. I wish to personally thank the committee members for their diligence to fill this slate.

- Lucinda Cooke, Chair

The Gift Tree Returns This Month!



Staunton First Presbyterian Church is again offering a gift tree to help older adults in the area. The gift ornaments are provided by the Shenandoah Valley Social Services Adult Services group and will be placed on a Christmas tree in the Sanctuary by November 28. Please sign up for

a gift or two (there will be at least 30 gift ornaments). Please bring each gift in an open gift bag with the ornament attached to the Sanctuary next to the tree or to the church front office in the Fraser Building. All gifts must be returned by December 11.

Thank you! - The Mission & Outreach Committee

Church News

Home Goods Community Pantry and Project Grows Working Together!!



The Home Goods Pantry has been working with Project GROWS mobile truck over the last few months to provide fresh produce to individuals at a reduced price. They will continue to come next year during the growing season (May-October) in conjunction with the Home Goods Community Pantry. It's been a very successful partnership!

Church News

"Being a Presbyterian" Classes

"Being a Presbyterian" classes were held in the library on Sunday, September 28 and Sunday, October 5. They were enjoyed by all!



Delicious refreshments were provided for all attendees at the classes.

Church News

Congregational Life Committee Meeting

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

Mission & Outreach Committee Meeting

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

Worship Committee Meeting

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

Administration Committee Meeting

There will be an Administration Committee meeting on Sunday, November 9, immediately following worship at 12:15pm in the library.

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!

Newsletter Deadline for December 2025

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

Salvation Army Red Kettle Campaign

It's that time of year again! First Presbyterian is asking for donations for the Salvation Army Red Kettle Campaign. Your gift supports local families this season and beyond in our community. If you would like to donate, please make your check out to First Presbyterian Church with "Salvation Army Red Kettle Campaign" in the memo line. Thank you!



Church News

Worship & BBQ Picnic on the Lawn

Sunday, September 21

First Pres held worship on the lawn Sunday, September 21, followed by a BBQ picnic on the lawn.. It was a beautiful day with lots of fun, fellowship, and great food!



Church News

(cont. fr. p. 8)

Staunton Police Department Volunteers for the

First Pres Home Goods Pantry!

We are very thankful to 8 officers from the Staunton Police Department for donating their time during their day of service to pack 126 bags for the October Home Goods Pantry.

