

# April 2026



# First Impressions

Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church  
Staunton, Virginia



April 2026

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

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

## Letter from the Pastor

### How Do We Share the Good News?

What does *Evangelism* mean to you today?

The basic definition is pretty generic at first glance: "The sharing of the gospel of Jesus Christ through a variety of means."

I imagine that for many of us growing up in the US, we associate evangelism with street corner preachers, door-to-door greeters, and people handing out tracts. We may even recount the fiery sermons of charismatic revival preachers, calling all to repent and to turn to Jesus.

Some of us might have known missionaries that were sent to exotic locales like Asia and Africa in the hopes of sharing the gospel.

Still, for those churches and individuals more culturally reserved (like many Presbyterians), one might invite a friend or neighbor to church, to Vacation Bible School, or a fellowship picnic, where people in the community can connect.

*What is your story? How did you first hear about Jesus, or come to church?*

It seems that there is no one way to evangelize; each approach reaching a different context, community, or person.

(cont. on p. 2)



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Rev. Dr. Jeff Binder, Transitional Minister

## Letter from the Pastor

(cont. fr. p. 1)

### How Do We Share the Good News?

And this worked really well...until it didn't.

Somewhere around the 1960s, American church attendance started to decline. It happened subtly at first, especially here in the Bible Belt. In fact, many churches with new worship styles continued to grow. Many of our missionaries continued to serve globally. People still wanted to know which church you went to in town.

But little by little, decade by decade, Christianity became less "popular," as more people started finding other things to do on Sundays, and fewer people identified as Christian.

Today, about 65% of Americans identify as Christian (as compared to about 95% in the 1960s). This may be hard to conceptualize here in Staunton, but the trends show that the younger the generation, the lower the number affiliated as Christian, with the youngest generations reporting just over 50%.

If we are an "Easter people," as is fun to say this time of year, what is our message to those who do not identify as Christian today?

Should we be going back to the church growth efforts of previous generations? Or perhaps, is a new message needed to the share the good news of the resurrected Christ?

How do we care for the "least of these"?

How do we serve as the hands and feet of Christ?

How do we share the gospel of Jesus in new and creative ways?

In Christ,



Pastor Jeff

(cont. on. p. 3)

## Church News

### OGHS - One Great Hour of Sharing

As the people of Israel returned from the cloud of exile and struggled to rebuild their lives, Isaiah questioned their efforts: [Are you not called] "to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them?" (Isaiah 58:7).

When we give to One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS), we are combining our efforts with thousands of churches across the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to repair peoples' lives — people who are hurting, oppressed, lost or on the margins of society. The exact people about whom Isaiah is speaking of. The people we are called to connect with every day, but especially in the light of the Good News of the resurrection.

You can visit the OGHS website ([pcusa.org/oghsmap](http://pcusa.org/oghsmap)). Find a partner on the map and see how your gifts are used by the ministries these offerings support all over the world.

Our church is participating in this effort by collecting donations for OGHS on Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. You may give by writing OGHS in the memo line of your check or by contributing cash in the offering plate on the two Sundays mentioned. The bulletin insert on those Sundays also includes information on how to give electronically. This is an opportunity for our congregation to participate in and pray for the ongoing repair of the world God so loves.

- The Mission and Outreach Committee

### Agape Feast & Maundy Thursday Worship Service April 2

You are cordially invited to our second annual Agape Meal "Love Feast" - a simple meal of finger foods shared in a cozy family setting, very similar to the way Christ dined with his disciples in the upper room at the Last Supper.

The meal begins at 6:00pm in the library (please arrive 10 minutes early so trays can be assembled).

At 6:30, we will go into the chapel for the Maundy Thursday service. We hope to see you there!

## Church News

### Presbyterian Women

PW Circle will meet Tuesday, April 14 at 12:30pm in the library. Please respond to Alice Herbst if you can make it. And feel free to bring guests—all are welcome!



### Home Goods Community Pantry Wednesday, April 15

Our Home Goods Community Pantry will be open Wednesday, April 15. 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. 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.

On March 18, the Home Goods Pantry handed out 137 bags and assisted 349 individuals. Thank you to everyone who made this possible!

FYI: During the first quarter, the Pantry handed out a grand total of 407 bags and assisted 1062 individuals.

Thank you to those who have already donated. Our pantry is thriving and growing, and your generosity is greatly appreciated!

### April Birthday List

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 2  | <b>Sherry Cox</b><br><b>Robin Dietrich</b><br><b>Elizabeth Lowman</b><br><b>Bret Ritchie</b><br><b>Fay Knicley</b> |
| 16 | <b>Rev. Jeff Binder</b><br><b>Sam A. Clem</b>  |
| 17 | <b>Evan Lendermon</b>  |
| 23 | <b>Helen Wood</b>  |



## Church News

### Church Attendance for February – March 2026

(in person and online)

<b>February 18 (Ash Wed.)</b>	<b>In person:</b> 11	<b>Online:</b> 0
<b>February 22</b>	<b>In person:</b> 27	<b>Online:</b> 12
<b>March 1</b>	<b>In person:</b> 25	<b>Online:</b> 12
<b>March 8</b>	<b>In person:</b> 27	<b>Online:</b> 9
<b>March 15</b>	<b>In person:</b> 33	<b>Online:</b> 12
<b>March 22</b>	<b>In person:</b> 26	<b>Online:</b> 8

**Average Worship Attendance for Past Month: 34**



### Easter Sunday Worship Service on April 5

Our Easter Sunday worship service will be on April 5 at 11:00am in the sanctuary. Please join us!

### Newsletter Deadline for May 2026

The deadline for submissions for the May issue of First Impressions is Thursday, April 16. Please submit any info you would like to include by then. Thank you!

### 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

### Session Meeting Monday, April 13

There will be a Session meeting on Monday, April 13, at 5:15pm in the library.

### Administration Committee Meeting

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

### Congregational Life Committee Meeting

There will be a Congregational Life Committee meeting on Monday, April 6 at 10:30am in the library.

### Mission Committee Meeting

There will be a Mission Committee meeting on Tuesday, April 7 at 2:00pm in the parlor.

### Worship Committee Meeting

There will be a Worship Committee meeting on Wednesday, April 8 at 5:15pm 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!

### "The Shepherd's Crook" Returns Next Month!

Eddie Homes' column, "The Shepherd's Crook", will return in the May 2026 issue of First Impressions. Stay tuned!

## Church News

### Church Offices Closed Good Friday, April 3



The church offices will be closed Friday, April 3 for Good Friday. We hope everyone has a great holiday!

### Heidi—Upcoming Schedule

Heidi will be off Monday, April 6, and will return Tuesday, April 7.



### Mary Baldwin University Spring Choral Concert

MBU Choir will perform their spring choral concert in our sanctuary on Wednesday, April 15 at 7:00pm. We hope you can be there!

### Waynesboro Symphony Orchestra Concert

#### "Celebrating America"

Saturday, April 25, 7:30pm



Please join us for a concert performed by the Waynesboro Symphony Orchestra on Saturday, April 25 at 7:30pm in the sanctuary, where WSO's 30th anniversary will be celebrated with Grammy-nominated piano soloist, John Novacek. All are welcome!

### Lunch with 2nd & 3rd Presbyterian Churches

#### Sunday, April 19 Following Worship



You're all invited to lunch with 2nd & 3rd Presbyterian Churches on Sunday, April 19, immediately following worship in the fellowship hall. First Pres will provide chicken tenders and drinks. Those attending are asked to bring finger foods. Please RSVP to the church office at [stauntonfirst@gmail.com](mailto:stauntonfirst@gmail.com) or 540-886-0704. We hope you can join us!