

May 2026



First Impressions

Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church
Staunton, Virginia



May 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri 1	Sat 2
3 11am Worship Sanctuary FB Live Pastor Jeff-out/ Melissa Harmon preaching	4 10:30am Cong. Life Comm. Mtg. (L) Pastor Jeff-out	5 10am Bible Study (L) 2pm Mission Committee Mtg. (P) Pastor Jeff-out	6 5:15pm Worship Comm. Mtg. (L) 6pm Handbells 7pm Choir	7	8	9
10 11am Worship Sanctuary FB Live Admin. Com- mittee Mtg.- after worship (L) Mother's Day	11	12 10am Bible Study (L) 12:30pm PW Circle (L)	13 6pm Handbells 7pm Choir	14 11:30am Trinity Lunch	15 Newsletter Deadline- June	16
17 11am Worship Sanctuary FB Live 12:15 Hometown Grill with 2nd Pres.	18 5:15pm Session Meeting (L)	19 10am Bible Study (L)	20 10am Home Goods Pantry 6pm Handbells 7pm Choir	21	22	23
24 11am Worship Sanctuary FB Live	25 Memorial Day- Church Offices Closed	26 10am Bible Study (L) Heidi-off	27 6pm Handbells 7pm Choir Heidi-off	28 Heidi- off	29 Heidi- off	30
31 11am Worship Sanctuary FB Live						

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

Letter from the Pastor

Lessons Learned in Transitional Ministry

I've been reflecting on what we have learned since my arrival back in July of 2023.



Some days it feels like we are making huge steps forward in progress, and other days... smaller steps. And when those "other days" occur, I like to try and be curious about what possible lessons lie within such days both for me as your pastor, and for First Presbyterian as a congregation.

I have identified a few topics that I'd like to share over the course of the next few months. *What might you add?*

Here is one to begin...

Congregational healing can take longer than one might initially expect.

We should be thinking in terms of years, not months. This congregation went through not only a pandemic, but a tumultuous pastoral transition, leaving many members and friends of the church in conflict with the minister, possibly the remaining staff, and one another.

(cont. on p. 2)

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Rev. Dr. Jeff Binder, Transitional Minister

Letter from the Pastor

(cont. fr. p. 1)

Lessons Learned in Transitional Ministry

Every individual will deal with such conflict and trauma uniquely. Some of us were ready to “move on” immediately. Others of us may always carry a scar.

Even after nearly three years of ministry since my arrival, there are occasions where previous experiences will be brought up. I feel it’s part of my job to help listen as the person tells their story, and then to perhaps contextualize what happened as needed. I don’t doubt that some people will keep on telling these stories for years to come, and the pastor needs to be around as a safe place to listen and to help process.

So how do churches that have gone through experiences like this eventually “heal”?

Well, there is no “one size fits all” solution of course, but I have a few suggestions on what we can be doing today.

- ◆ Let’s speak openly about our pain that we have experienced, and perhaps we may still be experiencing, even years later. And let’s be sure to listen to those voices with loving, non-judgmental hearts.
- ◆ Let’s celebrate community where and when we can. There is value in making it a priority to show up in person for worship, meals, and gatherings, even when it’s not easy or convenient.
- ◆ And let’s remember that we are part of a much larger, resilient, faithful cloud of witnesses here at First Presbyterian. There have been numerous ups and downs for the members of this congregation throughout the 220+ year tradition of this church.

Time and time again, God has called us forward. We worship a God of faith, hope, and love. And we worship a God of healing, reconciliation, and new life.

In Christ,



Pastor Jeff

From the Shepherd’s Crook



Since this very practical pole barn was built N 1969, when my parents sold our “Family Farm” and relocated, “up the hill,” sheep had ALWAYS been a distinct part of the landscape. But, the times, “they have a’ changed!

From the Shepherd's Crook



Since Shepherd Edward dispensed of his beautiful flock of expectant ewes in late February, the barn, sadly, is "Closed".

On March 10, 2026, "Snowball Bush," one of Shepherd Eddie's favorite ewes, delivered a beautiful pair of twins at her new home (barn), out in nearby Swoope, Virginia!



Church News

Church Attendance for March – April 2026 (in person and online)

March 29 (Palm Sunday)	In person: 30	Online: 8
April 2 (Maundy Thursday)	In person: 34	Online: 0
April 5 (Easter Sunday)	In person: 34	Online: 12
April 12	In person: 30	Online: 10
April 19	In person: 24	Online: 15

Average Worship Attendance for Past Month: 39

Presbyterian Women

PW Circle will meet Tuesday, May 12 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!



Happy Mother's Day!



Happy Mother's Day to all of our mothers. We hope you have a much-deserved wonderful day!

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, May 18

There will be a Session meeting on Monday, May 18, at 5:15pm in the library.

Administration Committee Meeting

There will be an Administration Committee meeting on Sunday, May 10, immediately following worship at 12:15pm in the library.

Congregational Life Committee Meeting

There will be a Congregational Life Committee meeting on Monday, May 4, at 10:30am in the library.

Mission Committee Meeting

There will be a Mission Committee meeting on Tuesday, May 5, at 2:00pm in the parlor.

Worship Committee Meeting

There will be a Worship Committee meeting on Wednesday, May 6, at 5:15pm in the library.

Newsletter Deadline for June 2026

The deadline for submissions for the June issue of First Impressions is Friday, May 15. Please submit any info you would like to include by then. 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!

From the Shepherd's Crook



My ewes found a new home in nearby Swoope, Virginia. Last week, the arduous task started: - shearing the sheep! Shepherd Eddie does NOT miss that hard work, at his place, this spring!

Shepherd Edward says, "It just does not seem right that the barnyard area(s) would not be full of ewes and their baby lambs this spring! In fact, it really is just NOT NATURAL!"



From the Shepherd's Crook



A snow scene right outside the shepherd's kitchen door! This snow-covered "ewe" is the best Shepherd Eddie can do, these days!



Cleaning up the fallen brush, found in and around the meadow, was a priority ~ a necessary chore to do ~ shortly after the expectant ewes left the meadow, that sad, sad winter day! Looks like a pickup truck load, for sure!

Church News

Church Offices Closed Monday, May 25




The church offices will be closed Monday, May 25 for Memorial Day. We hope everyone has a great holiday!

Upcoming Schedules for Pastor Jeff and Heidi
 Pastor Jeff is out for continuing education until Wednesday, May 6. Heidi will be off Tuesday, May 26–Monday, June 1, returning Tuesday, June 2.

**Lunch with 2nd Presbyterian Church—Hometown Grill
 Sunday, May 17, Immediately Following Worship**

Second Presbyterian Church has invited the First Presbyterian Church to join them for a Dutch treat lunch at the Hometown Grill and Buffet, 30 Sangers Lane, Staunton, Sunday, May 17, following the church service. An RSVP is needed by **May 12** so they will know how many tables are needed. All are welcome!



 *  *
 * **May Birthdays** *
 * **3 Nancy Rhea** *
 * **8 Emily Kullman** *
 * **Bill McIntyre, Jr.** *
 * **9 Susan Lendermon** *
 * **12 Ron Lowman** *
 * **18 Sarah Kegley** *
 * **20 Danny McAllister** *
 * **21 Nancy Dod** *
 * **23 Ann McIntyre** *
 *  *

Church News

Home Goods Community Pantry Wednesday, May 20

Our Home Goods Community Pantry will be open Wednesday, May 20. 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-pack), tissues (1 box), trash bags (10-count), dish soap (small bottle), laundry detergent (small bottle), and disinfectant wipes. Cash offerings are also welcomed.



On April 15, the Home Goods Pantry handed out 126 bags and assisted 317 individuals. Thank you to everyone who made this possible!

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



Home Goods Pantry volunteers Robin Dietrich, Darlene Mason, Margaret Armstrong, and Sue Ann McAllister. Check out the snazzy new aprons with our First Pres logo!

Church News

Second Annual Agape Meal "Love Feast" on Maundy Thursday, April 2

