

# July 2026



# First Impressions

Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church  
Staunton, Virginia



July 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 5:15pm Worship Committee Meeting (L) Capital Campaign Begins	2	3 Church Offices Closed	4 Independence Day
5 11am Worship Sanctuary FB Live	6 10:30am Cong. Life Comm. Meeting (L) Heidi—off	7 10am Bible Study (L) 2pm M&O Committee Mtg. (P)	8	9 11:30am Trinity Lunch 6pm Picnic w/ 2nd & 3rd- Gypsy Hill Park Pavilion	10	11
12 11am Worship Sanctuary FB Live 12:15pm Admin. Committee Meeting (L)	13 5:15pm Session Meeting (L)	14 10am Bible Study (L) 12:30pm PW Circle (L)	15 10am Home Goods Pantry	16 Newsletter Deadline— August	17	18
19 11am Worship Sanctuary FB Live 4pm Chrismon Workshop (FH)	20 Pastor Jeff-out	21 10am Bible Study (L) Pastor Jeff- out	22 Pastor Jeff-out	23 Pastor Jeff-out	24	25
26 11am Worship Sanctuary FB Live Heifetz-in worship	27	28 10am Bible Study (L)	29	30	31	

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

## Letter from the Pastor

### What Is General Assembly?

Happy General Assembly!!!

“What even is General Assembly?” you may be asking yourself. Lucky for us, the PCUSA.ORG website has all sorts of information about it! Here are a few words from the site:



Every two years, the national level of the Presbyterian Church (USA) gathers to celebrate the national church, and of course, to get some work done.

This year, General Assembly (GA) is currently meeting in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, from June 22 to July 2. GA includes the gathering of committees (made up of elders from churches and presbyteries around the country) who recommend actions to plenary sessions, opportunities to break bread through shared meals, educational opportunities, moments of public witness, and more.

As the highest council of the Presbyterian Church (USA), the General Assembly is made up of commissioners from presbyteries, with Young Adult Advisory Delegates, Theological Student Advisory Delegates, and Partner Advisory Delegates also constituting the assembly.

*(cont. on p. 2)*

**FIRST IMPRESSIONS** is a publication of First Presbyterian Church  
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Rev. Dr. Jeff Binder, Pastor

## Letter from the Pastor

(cont. fr. p. 1)

### What Is General Assembly?

These individuals gather for the business meetings of committees and plenary to discern the future of the church and make decisions that are implemented throughout the life of the PC(USA).

The General Assembly's commissioners, with the advice of advisory delegates, vote on issues that guide the work of the church.

Decisions made by the General Assembly include, but are not limited to:

- recommendations for changes to the constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA),
- policies that provide a foundation for how the church lives out its beliefs through public statements and social witness,
- decisions regarding how the church should faithfully invest its time, funds and personnel,
- and decisions regarding how the church can best organize itself to reflect the will of God.

As a worshipping body, the General Assembly is a time when people from across the PC(USA) and beyond gather in their diversity as one. In worship, the General Assembly considers scripture, celebrates sacraments, and proclaims God's work in the world.

If you are interested in learning more about the conversations or votes taking place during GA, let's get together to chat! Or if you are interested in following along online, visit the PCUSA website for more information on how to follow along with all that is taking place.

In Christ,



Pastor Jeff

## Around Our Community

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY AMERICA 2026

#### A Once-in-a-Generation Celebration at Gypsy Hill Park

The 2026 Happy Birthday America celebration in Staunton, Virginia, will be a historic, two-day Semiquincentennial event honoring 250 years of American independence. As an official VA250 Commemorative Partner, this 100% volunteer-led 501(c)(3) nonprofit—built on a legacy started by the Statler Brothers—continues its 50-year tradition by transforming Gypsy Hill Park into the ultimate “America’s Block Party” destination.



#### The Festivities: July 3–4, 2026

The celebration begins Friday, July 3, at 6:30 PM with an inspirational kickoff featuring the 2025 IBMA New Artists of the Year, Red Camel Collective, followed by a full carnival midway and live entertainment.

On Saturday, July 4, the excitement builds with the Firecracker 5K and a massive Semiquincentennial Parade at 10:00 AM, showcasing community groups, military units, and patriotic floats. Throughout the day, Gypsy Hill Park becomes a vibrant community hub filled with local food vendors, artisan booths, and family-friendly activities.

The evening reaches its peak on the Main Stage with a free concert at 7:00 PM by Wilson Fairchild, followed by a special performance at 7:30 PM from Country Music Hall of Famer Jimmy Fortune. The celebration concludes with a spectacular, expanded fireworks finale at 10:00 PM, lighting up the Shenandoah Valley in a powerful tribute to the American spirit.

#### About Happy Birthday America

Happy Birthday America is an official VA250 Commemorative Partner dedicated to hosting a free, large-scale Independence Day celebration in Staunton, Virginia. Rooted in the values of faith, freedom, and unity, this event remains a gift to the community—free and open to the public, always.

Learn more: [www.happybirthdayamerica.org](http://www.happybirthdayamerica.org)

## Around Our Community

### Staunton Cooling Shelter - Volunteers Needed!

The following announcement is from Mary McCoy, the volunteer coordinator for the Staunton Cooling Shelter:

Faith Lutheran Church in Staunton is organizing a cooling shelter beginning on June 29 for Waynesboro, Augusta County, and Staunton residents who are unhoused or lack working A/C. They are providing a cool, air-conditioned space for visitors to seek shelter in during the hottest part of the summer.

They are seeking volunteers in the Staunton, Augusta, and Waynesboro area to fill volunteer slots at the cooling shelter. If anyone at First Presbyterian Church is interested in volunteering, they would love to have them! (Volunteers must be at least 18 years old.)

Following is a link to a spreadsheet where folks can sign up for a volunteer shift:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1H3vsm1ViBz4jOAFs2oJA20xShHsQnS8HbcajqESKU-Q/edit?pli=1&gid=0#gid=0>

If parishioners have any questions, please send an email to [stauntoncoolingshelter@gmail.com](mailto:stauntoncoolingshelter@gmail.com).

Your consideration is appreciated. -- God bless!

Warmly,

Mary McCoy

Staunton Cooling Shelter | Volunteer Coordinator  
(540) 324-8909

## Church News

### Church Attendance for May-June 2026

(in person and online)

May 24	In person: 26	Online: unknown
May 31	In person: 24	Online: unknown
June 7	In person: 26	Online: 6
June 14	In person: 23	Online: 14
June 21	In person: 27	Online: 10

Average Worship Attendance for Past Month: 31

### Presbyterian Women

PW Circle will meet Tuesday, July 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!



### 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, July 13

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

### Worship Committee Meeting

There will be a Worship Committee meeting on Wednesday, July 1, at 5:15pm in the library.

### Congregational Life Committee Meeting

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

### Mission Committee Meeting

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

### Administration Committee Meeting

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

## Church News



### July Birthdays

4	Betty Kegley
14	Eddie Homes
19	Dan Layman
27	Margaret Mackay



### Betty Kegley Turns 93 Friday, July 4!

Betty Kegley turns 93 on Friday, July 4! Cards and messages would be greatly appreciated. You can send these to: Betty Kegley, PO Box 555, Bland, VA 24315. Thank you!

## Church News

### Newsletter Deadline for August 2026

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

### Upcoming Church Office Schedule

- ◆ The church offices will be closed Friday, July 3, for the July 4 holiday.
- ◆ Heidi will be off Monday, July 6.
- ◆ Pastor Jeff will be out Monday, July 20–Thursday, July 23.

### 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

# FIRST, SECOND, & THIRD PRESBYTERIAN ANNUAL CHURCH PICNIC & COVERED DISH

## WHEN:

**Thursday, July 9  
6:00pm**

## WHERE:

**Gypsy Hill Park  
Pavilion**



**Enter through the Thornrose entrance; go past the lake, tennis courts & armory; the pavilion will be on the right near the golf course.**



**Please join us for food & fellowship! Please bring a side salad or dessert to share. Fried chicken, drinks, and paper goods will be provided. Tables & chairs will be available.**

**Come and bring a friend!**

**All are welcome. We hope to see you there!**

**First Presbyterian Church  
100 E. Frederick St.  
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 FirstPresbyterianChurchStaunton**

**Please RSVP to the church office at [stauntonfirst@gmail.com](mailto:stauntonfirst@gmail.com) or 540-886-0704 by July 1 so we will know how much chicken to prepare.**

## Church News

### Home Goods Community Pantry Wednesday, July 15

Our Home Goods Community Pantry will be open Wednesday, July 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-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 June 17, we handed out 130 bags and assisted 303 individuals. For the second quarter, the pantry handed out 389 bags and assisted 956 individuals. From January to June, 796 bags were handed out, and 2,018 individuals were assisted. Thank you to everyone to made this possible!

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

## Church News



Front Doors of Sanctuary

## Church News

### New Life for Proud Old Doors

On the sidewalk outside the entrance to our Sanctuary are the words, "THE DOORS THROWN WIDE OPEN, INVITING ALL TO COME AND WELCOME." And then you look up at those welcoming doors and see, instead, the ravages of deterioration; cracked, peeling paint hanging from the wood of this once elegant entrance to our beautiful church. For those of us who attend First Presbyterian Church on a regular basis, you are more than familiar with the appearance of these decaying doors. They are the "face" of First Pres, a great historic structure that has stood more than 150 years, one with a past – and a future – of "worshipping Christ in downtown Staunton as a visible witness to the Gospel." With our ever-expanding number of community partnerships, First Pres has greater usage of facilities and opportunities to share our church with people of diverse backgrounds, interests, and locales. There is so much life beyond those tired, peeling doors. But you might not know that just walking by for the first time. Together, we can help preserve our legacy and refresh for the future.

Consequently, Session has approved a modest Capital Campaign of \$20,000 to begin July 1 and conclude Labor Day weekend. We ask that you prayerfully consider a contribution toward restoring the Sanctuary doors. Each of the three sets of doors will be done separately to minimize any issues with our congregation and outside groups accessing the Sanctuary. The work is to be completed by the second week in August, barring adverse weather conditions. Gifts can be made by check to First Presbyterian Church with "Sanctuary Door Campaign" written in the memo section. Obviously, if you give in ways other than a check, just note what the money is for. It is our hope that our campaign to restore the Sanctuary doors will be a tangible and visible "facelift" to our beloved First Pres.

## Church News

### Christmas in July Chrismon Workshop

Hosted by the Worship Committee to repair existing chrismons and make new ones. Chrismons are Christian symbols that we use to decorate the sanctuary Christmas tree. Ours were made years ago and are very worn.

Sunday, July 19—4-6 p.m.

First Presbyterian Fellowship Hall

Patterns and Supplies Provided

Seasonal Music and Light Refreshments

Please join us!

### Trinity Lunch Team Serves Lunch Thursday, June 11!



Pictured: Amanda Avery, Robin Dietrich, Scott Wilson, Robin Knott, and Margaret Armstrong

## Church News

### A Treat for Our Canine Friends (and Their Owners!)

Many thanks to Molly Cox, Dick Cox, John Sheaves, and our Missions and Outreach Committee members for the selection and installation of a dog waste station on our church quad. Every day many local residents and visitors come to our downtown area, and their dogs make use of the quad. Special thanks goes to Molly Cox, who purchased and donated the dog waste station. Molly also helped to decide on the best place to locate the station — close to a sidewalk for access during rainy or snowy weather and placed where everyone can see it. The many of us who walk our pups around town (including Pastor Jeff) are already enjoying the new station.



- The Missions and Outreach Committee



## Church News

### Home Goods Community Pantry Receives Grant!

Congratulations to our Home Goods Pantry, recipient of a grant from the Community Foundation! Thanks to all who made this possible. And thank you, Sue Ann, for your tireless efforts!

