

October 2026



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3 3pm Annual Picnic w/ 2nd & 3rd @ 3rd
4 11am Worship Sanctuary FB Live	5 10:30am Cong. Life Comm. Mtg. (L)	6 10am Bible Study (L) 2pm M&O Committee Meeting (P)	7 5:15pm Worship Committee Meeting (L) 6:00pm Handbells 7:00pm Choir	8 11:30am Trinity Lunch 7pm WSO Dress Rehearsal (S)	9	10 7:00pm WSO Concert (S)
11 11am Worship Sanctuary FB Live 12:15pm Admin. Comm. Mtg. (L)	12	13 10am Bible Study (L) 12:30 PW Circle (L)	14 6:00pm Handbells 7:00pm Choir	15 Newsletter Deadline— November	16	17 12pm Staunton Pride Festival (Gypsy Hill Park)
18 11am Worship Sanctuary FB Live	19 5:15pm Session Meeting (L) 6pm Sacks of Love (First Baptist)	20 10am Bible Study (L)	21 10am Home Goods Pantry 6:00pm Handbells 7:00pm Choir	22	23	24
25 11am Worship Sanctuary FB Live	26	27 10am Bible Study (L)	28 6:00pm Handbells 7:00pm Choir	29	30	31 Halloween

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

First Impressions

Newsletter of First Presbyterian
Church

Staunton, Virginia

October 2026



Letter from the Pastor

Scenarios for First Presbyterian

The year is 2028. The transitional preparatory work has been done. The church is healed and hopeful. It is time to begin the next chapter for the First Presbyterian Church of Staunton. Which scenario feels most faithful and inspiring?



A brief history:

Previously in 2024, Session and the congregation did a similar exercise where we first examined possible ministry and mission directions moving forward, and then decided on a staffing model to complement such a direction. What was decided in 2024 was to move forward with a revitalization/redevelopment approach through the *Building for Hope* program, and extending the transitional pastor contract for an additional three years.

Questions to ponder:

How have things progressed since then? What has changed? Looking back on things, would you have done anything differently? What have we learned from the past three years of transitional ministry?

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Rev. Dr. Jeff Binder, Pastor

Letter from the Pastor

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Scenarios for First Presbyterian

In November, Session will gather once again to discern the next steps for First Presbyterian by examining eight different “scenarios” for the congregation. These are all faithful potential decisions; churches in similar circumstances have made all of these scenarios listed at one point or another. Some churches have experienced positive change since then, while others have struggled. There is no perfect answer, and there is no certainty over the outcome.

Here is a very brief summary of the eight scenarios:

1. Call a new pastor
2. Yoked ministry
3. Merger
4. Incorporation
5. Sell property
6. Rebirth
7. Re-structure
8. Chaplaincy

We want to hear from you, as the First Presbyterian community. By yourself or in a group, feel free to share your thoughts: your hopes, your dreams, and your suggestions on the future direction for this church community.

And if you would like to see the eight scenarios themselves with complete details, reach out to me at any point, and I’m happy to share them!

In Christ,



Pastor Jeff

In Memoriam



Fay Carrington Lyle Knicley

Fay Carrington Lyle Knicley, 87, passed away on Monday, August 3, 2026, at the University of Virginia Medical Center in Charlottesville. She was born on April 8, 1939, in Staunton, VA to the late Harvey Francisco and Agnes Virginia Ashby Lyle.

Fay was a graduate of Robert E. Lee High School in Staunton and the Elizabeth Brant School of Business in Staunton. She began her career with the Right of Way Division of the Virginia Department of Transportation, where she worked for several years before serving as Administrative Assistant to the President of Blue Ridge Community College in Weyers Cave for eighteen and a half years. In recognition of her dedicated service, she was honored with the Blue Ridge Community College Staff Lifetime Service Award in May 2013. Following her retirement, Fay continued her career by working for several years with the late Virginia Supreme Court Justice George M. Cochran.

A lifelong member of First Presbyterian Church in Staunton, Fay's faith and commitment to her church were central to her life. She faithfully served as an Elder and Clerk of Session and was an active member of the Chancel Choir, Presbyterian Women, and the Covenant Fellowship Class. Through her devoted service, both professionally and within her church, Fay touched the lives of many and leaves a legacy of dedication, kindness, and quiet leadership.

She is survived by her brother-in-law, Roger D. Knicley and his wife, Angie; her sister-in-law, Fay Shifflett and her husband, Kenneth; several cousins, and numerous nieces and nephews.

In addition to her parents, she is preceded in death by her husband, Jerry Lynn Knicley (d. April 12, 2016).

Memorial contributions may be made to First Presbyterian Church (100 East Frederick Street, Staunton, VA 24401).

“To everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under Heaven: a time to be born and a time to die.” – Ecclesiastes 3:1-2

Around Our Community

Staunton Pride Festival
Saturday, October 17, 2026
Noon–5:00pm



The Staunton Pride festival takes place on Saturday, October 17, 2026, from noon to 5:00pm at Gypsy Hill Park (Bandstand Area) in Staunton.

Festival Details

- ◆ **Date:** Saturday, October 17, 2026
- ◆ **Time:** Noon–5:00pm
- ◆ **Location:** Gypsy Hill Park, 600 Churchville Ave, Staunton, VA (Bandstand Area)

- ◆ **Admission:** Free and open to the public

What to Expect

- ◆ **Community Vendors:** Around 50 local and regional community vendors
- ◆ **Entertainment:** Live music, drag performances, and spoken word poetry
- ◆ **Food & Drinks:** Food trucks and an on-site beer garden
- ◆ **Health & Wellness Hub:** Free walk-in STI testing, blood pressure checks, diabetes screenings, and flu/mpox vaccines

First Presbyterian Church will be have a table at this year's festival. We hope to see you there!

Church News

Church Attendance for August–September 2026 (in person and online)

August 30	In person: 27	Online: 12
September 6	In person: 28	Online: 9
September 13	In person: 24	Online: 5
September 20	In person: 35	Online: unknown

Average Worship Attendance for Past Month: 35

October Birthdays

1	Amanda Avery	25	Richard Dietrich
2	Anthony Caywood		Mary Meade
6	Ruth Ennis		Martha Tillen
21	Chuck Lendermon	29	James Garrison
	Heidi Marsh		Sue Ann McAllister
22	Nellie Garrison		



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

Congregational Life Committee Meeting

There will be a Congregational Life Committee meeting on Monday, October 5, at 10:30am in the library.

Mission & Outreach Committee Meeting

There will be a Mission & Outreach Committee meeting on Tuesday, October 6, at 2:00pm in the parlor.

Worship Committee Meeting

There will be a Worship Committee meeting on Wednesday, October 7, at 5:15pm in the library.

Administration Committee Meeting

There will be an Administration Committee meeting on Sunday, October 11, immediately following worship at 12:15pm in the library.

Session Meeting Monday, October 19

There will be a Session meeting on Monday, October 19, 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!

Around Our Community

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Hilltop's Lucky Penny Apple Butter

We will provide a lunch meal that starts when we feel like it and then sprawls all afternoon. We provide a main course of some sort, chips, sodas and some other stuff. Please bring something you think someone else would enjoy to add to our spread. You earn points for something unusual, lose points if it's no good. As always, we reserve the right to ridicule what you bring and to make profoundly unfair judgments based upon our uneducated opinions. We will endeavor to be creative when communicating such judgments, but no promises.

Directions are provided below. Show up whenever and leave whenever. Bring a friend. Bring a chair or two.

Directions to 528 Whiskey Creek Road, Churchville, VA, 540-430-3484 or 540 280-9071:

- Take Route 250 from Staunton to Churchville, about 6 miles.
- In the middle of Churchville, turn left on Route 42 (South).
- About one mile after leaving Churchville and crossing Whisky Creek, take first right turn, Route 725 (Whisky Creek Road).
- Continue on Whisky Creek Road about a mile to the first intersection.
- At intersection, take left hand fork, which is Route 723 and remains Whisky Creek Road.
- Continue about 1/4 mile, passing two white houses and barn on your left directly on road.
- 300 yards beyond barn is entrance with cattle guard and post with street numbers attached on the right hand side of the gate.
- Enter and follow farm road to top of hill. Park in field beside house at top of hill.

Around Our Community



The Garrison Family invites you to join them at some point during the day of Saturday, October 24, 2026 to assist in producing this year's run of Hilltop's Lucky Penny Apple Butter

Yes, We Have No Bananas. Due to two late spring frosts, we do not have a single apple in our orchard this year. Not a single apple, not a single pear, not a single peach. But, fortunately, the Garrison Family is hardheaded, so we are going to proceed with making apple butter this year and ignore a little detail like no apples. Should be interesting to see what happens.

As always, the crazies will be starting at 0-dark-30 and quitting just before dinner time, probably around 6:00 pm. The less twisted of our regulars start showing up around 11:00 am and trickle in and out all day. It is our objective and practice to display an impressive level of disorganization to all of our neighbors, and to have them shaking their heads and mumbling to themselves, though not calling the police.

Apple Butter Party Rule: No politics. Federal, state or local. Issues or politicians. Can't even have an opinion about the new courthouse. Don't care how clever your comment, unconcerned with how right you are and how wrong the other guys are. Guests who insist on political chat will be sent down to the pond where they can assist Tater with his podcast "WHY YOU SHOULD THROW THE BALL NOW". Tater will listen to and agree with whatever it is you have to say as long as you are willing to THROW THE BALL NOW. If you are unwilling to THROW THE BALL NOW, please keep your politics to yourself.

And, as we have said before, this event insists on being highly unstructured, and children of all ages are welcome. Dogs that don't fight are welcome. We will be offering apples, fresh cider, and free turns at the stirring pot. We should also have some apple butter left over from last year available: first come, first served. We hope to have some music after lunch.

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Church News

Home Goods Community Pantry Wednesday, October 21

Our Home Goods Community Pantry will be open on Wednesday, October 21. Financial and product donations are always welcomed. Please bring any donated items to the church office or place in the donations basket outside of the sanctuary.



On Wednesday, September 16, the pantry handed out 167 bags, which assisted 397 individuals. For the third quarter, 494 bags were handed out, and 1161 individuals were assisted!

Many thanks for your continued support!

Presbyterian Women Tuesday, October 13

PW Circle will meet Tuesday, October 13, 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!



Newsletter Deadline for November 2026

The deadline for submissions for the November 2026 issue of First Impressions is Thursday, October 15. Please submit any info you would like to include by then. Thank you!

Church News

Much-Needed Help for Those in Our Community



In August and September, our congregation and our Presbyterian Women's group contributed respectively to both a protein foods drive (peanut butter, canned meats, dried and canned beans), and a toiletries drive (deodorant, shampoo, body wash, toothpaste, shaving cream), for the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank (BRAFB) to help those in our area. (see picture of dropoff at BRAFB).

In total, 150 pounds, equivalent to 125 meals, were donated for the protein food drive.

The BRAFB donation coordinator commented:

"Thanks to the members of your church, families in our community will have more food on the table. We are grateful for your generosity and for helping nourish our neighbors."

She also said: "Hygiene items are frequently requested from our partner agencies, and the Food Bank does not purchase these items. The [toiletries] you generously provided will certainly be picked up by our partner agencies almost immediately, and will allow our neighbors to feel clean and cared for by the community."

Thank you, First Presbyterian, for your kindness and generosity in supporting those in our community in what are challenging times for many.

- The Missions and Outreach Committee

Church News

Annual Picnic with Second & Third Presbyterian Churches Saturday, October 3

You are invited to Third Presbyterian Church's Annual Picnic on Saturday, October 3 at 3:00pm in their fellowship hall and/or outdoor area.

They plan on having hamburgers, hot dogs with all the trimmings, tea (sweetened & unsweetened), and lemonade. They are asking that everyone bring a covered dish, salad, or dessert to share.



Please RSVP to stauntonfirst@gmail.com or 540-886-0704 by **Monday, September 28**, so that they know how many to expect. Please come & enjoy fellowship & fun with your friends from Second & Third Presbyterian churches!

Waynesboro Symphony Orchestra Fall Concert

Please join us for a concert presented by the Waynesboro Symphony Orchestra on Saturday, October 10, at 7:00pm in our sanctuary. We hope you can join us!



Sacks of Love Monday, October 19, at First Baptist Church

On Monday, October 19, Sacks of Love will be packing school bags for area students. They will meet at 6:00pm at First Baptist Church in Staunton in the fellowship hall. Volunteers are needed to help with the packing. Please join us!