



# The Bell Tower

## First Presbyterian Church Happenings

September MMXXV



Both K24/7 and 612 will meet **twice a month** and a full calendar of meeting dates and special events will be sent home after our **kickoff meeting on September 7**.

**Kindergarten through 5th grade** and will meet with awesome lessons, games, and fun. K24/7 meeting at 4:00 PM-5:30 PM.

**612 Youth Group 6th–12th Grade** we're launching **two new breakout groups** meeting from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM. We can't wait to see you there! Let's grow in faith and have a great time together this school year!

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL AGES TO STUDY AND GROW IN OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH

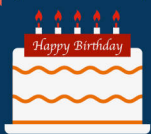
- Sunday morning prayer gathering - 9:00 AM in the Church Library
- Sunday School 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM
  - ★ Children's Music led by Erin Warren
  - ★ Preschool - Room 106, taught by Jackie Grisetti/Kathy Scobbie
  - ★ K - 3rd grade - Room 107 taught by Karen Edwards/TBD
  - ★ 4th - 6th grade - Room 109 taught by Mary K Miller/Jill Murchak
  - ★ Jr/Sr High School - High School Lounge, taught by Matt & Kelly Minner
  - ★ Adult Class - Chapel, led by Sharon Nystrom - Learning to Love the Psalms, Ligonier series, Robert Godfrey
  - ★ Adult Class - Conference Rm., led by Tom Brainard, the Gospel of John, Tony Evans on Right Now Media
- Sunday Morning Worship - 10:45 AM
- Sunday Morning Children's Church
- The Nursery volunteers provide care to our youngest children during Sunday Worship
- Youth Sunday Evening Ministries gathering in Calvin Hall
  - ★ Elementary - 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM - 24/7 KIDS led by Terri Deist, Ericka Dersheimer, Molly Davis, Pastor Ben
  - ★ High School - 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM - 612 Youth led by Terri Deist, Molly Davis, Dan Baker, Pastor Ben
- Men's Breakfast - second Saturday of the month from 8:00 AM to 9:00 AM
- Women's Bible Study - Meets Thursdays at 10:00 AM in the Conference Room
- Men's Bible Study - Meets Tuesdays at 1:00 PM in the Church Conference Room
- Men's Evening Bible Study—Meets Tuesdays at 7:00 PM in the Church Conference Room.
- The Church Library provides many pertinent Christian resources and enjoyable books to read.
- RightNow Media offers free online Bible studies—access your free subscription through the church website's Livestream page.



### Rally Day: Celebrating 200 years 'Generations of Faith'

Join us on Sunday, September 7th to kick off our Fall Christian Education opportunities with Rally Day! All ages are invited for donuts and coffee, introduction to our programs and teachers, singing, and guided tours of the classrooms. Come celebrate the start of a new season of learning, fellowship, and growth. We look forward to seeing you in Calvin Hall at 9:30 a.m.!

# September



Helen Zahniser	9/4
Brian Christman	9/6
Mary Ann Dawson	9/6
Sharon Nystrom	9/7
Lyle Anderson	9/12
Bonnie Barr	9/12
Karen Shilling	9/12
Terry Cooper	9/13
Carole Thompson	9/13
Sue Hart	9/19
Kyle Petty	9/20
Scott Sankey	9/20
Viola Godfrey	9/21
Tom Warrender	9/21
Dillon Groover	9/22
Fred Kiser	9/24
Melissa Miller	9/25
Kirk Smith	9/25
Ben Reither	9/29

## Youth

Journey Blum	9/4
Alexa Straw	9/7
Julia Crompton	9/15
Aleck Scobbie	9/16

## Men you are invited:

### Men's Bible Study – Tuesday Evenings

Starting **Tuesday, September 9 at 7:00 PM**, a new Men's Bible Study will begin meeting every Tuesday evening. We will be using the **Discovery Bible Study** method and will start by working through one of the four Gospels.

This study is especially for men who are interested in learning more about the Bible but are unable to attend the Tuesday morning study. All men are welcome—come ready to grow in God's Word together!

### Men's Bible Study – Tuesday Afternoons

Beginning **Tuesday, September 9 at 1:00 PM**, our Men's Bible Study will continue meeting every Tuesday afternoon. This fall, we'll be using the **LifeGuide Bible Studies** series, focusing on **1 & 2 Peter and Jude**.

This study is open to all men who want to dig deeper into Scripture and grow in faith together. Join us as we explore these powerful letters and their message for our lives today.

### Men's Breakfast — Second Saturdays at 8:00 AM, September 13, 2025

Fuel up your Saturday with hot breakfast, good conversation, and spiritual growth. We're watching and discussing the **BetterMan** series—practical teaching on authentic, biblical manhood. Bring a friend and come hungry!



## Please join us for The Presbyterian Women's Soup, Salad, and Dessert Supper

**When:** September 16, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

**Where:** Calvin Hall, First Presbyterian Church

**Program:** Bonnie Barr will have a presentation "Gardening with Kids"

All women of the church and guests are invited to attend.

Women from some of our sister Presbyterian churches will be joining us.

Hope to see you there!



**Women's Daytime Circle** will meet Tuesday, September 2, 2025 at 1:00 p.m. in the Conference Room. Bonnie Barr will lead the Bible Study on Salome, Mother of the Zebedees, pg. 201. Sally Fagley will share devotions. All women are welcome to join us!

### SEPTEMBER NURSERY SCHEDULE

9/7	Diane Dawson & Kim Brainard
9/14	Janice Harbison & Kaye Williams
9/21	Sue Blum & Paul Johnson
9/28	Michelle Harris & Sue Wilson

### Greeters Schedule

9/7	Larry & Carole Lentz
9/14	Dan & Sue Wilson
9/21	Karen Shilling
9/28	Randy & Sue Blum
10/5	Jackie Grisetti
10/12	Karen Patterson

## PEN FROM BEN



Christendom—do you know what this word means? It is not a word most people use, but many still live as if it were the reality today. Christendom describes a time when Christianity was the dominant religion in a country and its values shaped both written and unwritten laws. In the United States, this cultural reality began to fade in the 1970s, though remnants of it lingered in some places.

In Christendom, Christianity shaped daily life in very visible ways. In the 1960s, major newspapers like The New York Times and The LA Times printed Bible reading plans. Churches didn't bother tracking attendance because if you skipped, your boss might ask, "Why weren't you in church yesterday?" Martin Luther King Jr. could quote Scripture and people instantly recognized it. Blue Laws closed businesses on Sundays. Some may look back and say, "Those were the great days," but that world no longer exists.

Today is very different. Christianity is one of many religions in America. Our culture debates even the most basic questions of human identity (What is a woman?) And sexuality issues. People no longer know the Bible stories, and many do not understand what Christmas truly means. Worse still, many only know Christianity by what we oppose rather than by who we serve. The world around the church has changed, and at times it feels hostile. Yet this is why we must begin thinking like missionaries. The world needs to hear the Gospel. A series on church leadership I watched recently asked a piercing question: "What bad news story in your community needs to hear the GOOD NEWS story of the Gospel?"

To answer that question, we must rethink how we "do church." Too many congregations still operate with a Christendom mindset, but that world is gone. Christendom has ended—but Christ remains. It is His Kingdom we proclaim, not our own. This means our Session must wrestle with new questions: How do we lead spiritually, not just administratively? How do we listen for God's voice and direction? How do we shape Session meetings to be spiritual gatherings of prayer and discernment, not merely business meetings? This is exactly what ECO recommends and what their presbytery gatherings model so well: a rhythm of learning, worship/praying, and then doing business.

We need not be afraid. Jesus is with us, and Jesus is in control. Too often we forget the "bookends" of the Great Commission: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go..." and, "Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Those promises give us the courage to go. The world around us does not know Christ, so they are not coming to us. We must go to them. We will try new things, and yes, we will sometimes fail, but that is not the end—we simply start again because of Jesus.

If we put God first, great things will happen. If we put His ways above ours, great things will happen. If we fully trust Him in all things—all things—great things will happen.

Greater things are yet to come!



I cannot thank you enough for all your prayers for me. Cleveland Clinic is working to return me the quality of life I had just five months ago. Recently, they identified what is causing my current health concerns. I am seeing improvement since my last appointment. God is great and has been with me through all my fears, concerns and has answered my prayers. Once again, thank-you!

Darlene Artman



Dear First Presbyterian Church,  
Thank you for always thinking about the college age kids. Hearing from you, receiving your kind words and receiving your thoughtful gifts is always so nice. I truly appreciate the gift card you sent our way and I truly appreciate everyone at FPC. Thank you again.

Love, Joshua Ickes



Dear church family-

We have been deeply touched by the thoughtful foresight and efforts of the church leadership and family during Gail's recent surgery and continuing convalescence. We attest that the good teaching that has been placed before us all is being returned multi-fold in many ways, all unique to each of you. Thank you all for your generous gifts expressed in so many ways, among them: time, talent, prayer, cards, email, phone calls, visits and more. We encourage us all to continue the good work that has begun among us.

Blessings to you all! - Doug & Gail Moon



Dear First Presbyterian Church, Thank you so much for taking the time to think of me and send such a generous gift. It always means so much to know that people within the church community continue to think of me, pray for me, and support me while I'm away at school. First Presbyterian Church is truly such a special place and a family I am so incredibly grateful to be part of.

Love Megan Ickes



### Baking Cookies, a Beach Picnic and a Boat Ride

What do cookies made by youth and adults of our church, an afternoon picnic at Jamestown's Main Beach and pontoon boating on Pymatuning Lake have in common? The answer: an enjoyable day of relaxation and fellowship for our friends at Hope Center Ministries on Saturday, August 9, 2025. To begin, over 20 elementary and high school youth and adults gathered in the Calvin Hall Kitchen on Wednesday morning, August 6, to mix, bake and decorate dozens and dozens of cookies. This gathering included a much needed lunch break at Dairy Queen sponsored by the Christian Education Committee. Then on Saturday, several Covenant Partners of the Congregational Life Committee organized a picnic on the shores of Pymatuning Lake of abundant sandwiches, salads, snacks and the delectable cookies (made on Wednesday) for the hungry, energetic, spirit-filled men from Hope Center Ministries. The afternoon was topped off by an adventurous pontoon ride around the lake with heart-felt comradery and laughter. In a note from Hope Center's chaplain, Brian Devereaux: "Thank you again! It is transformational for the guys to experience the Christian community desiring to welcome them and love them." First Presbyterian Church is blessed by our friendship with these men.

**Music Concert**  
**Saturday Sept 20 @ 3pm**

**Featuring:**

**The Bravura Quintet**

**Jane Gregg on the violin**

**and**

**Randall Curtis on  
the Sanctuary organ**



**No tickets required**  
**Free to the public**

**First Presbyterian Church**  
**323 Main St**  
**Greenville, PA 16125**

**Invitations will be coming soon to two very special events to celebrate First Presbyterian Church's 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.** The Bicentennial Committee is very excited to present our covenant partners and friends with these opportunities of fellowship, fun and food!

Our first event will be held at Fresh Grounds Coffee House on Saturday, October 18 from 2-4 pm. The second event will be following the Church Service on Sunday, October 19 at 12:00 pm in Calvin Hall. This will be a catered lunch. Reservations for this event are needed.



## Session Notes from the August 11, 2025 Meeting

### Information:

- **Certified Transitional Pastor Search Team**  
The CTP Team received news that our latest candidate has chosen to take a permanent position at another church. He had nothing but kind words for his experience in Greenville, but felt this was best for his family. We have notified the ECO team assisting us in the search. They will continue to look for a candidate that will meet our needs. Please continue to pray for the person that God is preparing for us, our congregation, and Pastor Ben. We will continue to provide updates as we progress.  
Thank you, Gail Fay & Jill Jones, co-chairs CTP team
- **Clerk's Report:** (Jim Miller) The Fall Gathering of the Rivers of Life Presbytery Meeting will take place on Saturday September 20<sup>th</sup> at Vandergrift Presbyterian Church.
- **Christian Education/Youth:** (Dan Baker and Laura Stitt) 939 Prayer Partner's breakfast will be held on Sunday, August 24<sup>th</sup>, during the Sunday School time, all Covenant Partners are invited. Rally Day is being planned to kick off the new CE 2025-2026 year (September 7<sup>th</sup>).
- **Social Concerns:** (Tim Eckhardt and Jack Hittle) The Fall dinner that FPC prepares for the Good Shepherd Center is scheduled for October 13<sup>th</sup>
- **Mission:** (Joel Nystrom and Linda Camlin) A hot dog lunch after morning worship took place on August 7<sup>th</sup> at the Green Garage, about 80 persons were present. During mid-week the committee walked and invited the surrounding homes and businesses to join us.
- **Personnel:** (Gail Fay and Sam Dailey) A card was circulated for our custodian Dan Dibble. His granddaughter was hurt in an auto accident. Financial support was given to him, in order to help with his transportation to and from the hospital. At the stated Meeting of Session, February 10, 2025 the following motion was passed: (msp) to approve granting Pastor Claypool one (1) additional week of paid vacation, to be used once a "temporary pastor" is in place. Also, to compensate Ben for extra duties that he has been performing in the amount of \$2500. After 6 months, if extra work has continued, we will reevaluate.  
With this in mind the Personnel Committee will see that Pastor Ben Claypool is fairly compensated.  
The need of hiring someone for the technology of FPC was discussed and will be reviewed at a later date.
- **Bicentennial Group:** (Michele Groover, Randy Curtis) Upcoming Event Dates – September 20<sup>th</sup>, October 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>, next meeting Wednesday August 13<sup>th</sup>.
- **KOK Preschool:** (Laura Stitt) Director Jen Forbes by way of the Preschool News Letter shared the following: get acquainted parties – August 27<sup>th</sup>, around 17 children are signed up for the Pre-K and Preschool learning experiences. The first day of school will be Wednesday September 3<sup>rd</sup>. The offerings: 2 day a week classes, 3 day a week classes, Discovery Science Class, Tots of The Kingdom Classes, and there are Extended Hours available. The Open House is planned for October 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- **Security:** (Randy Blum, Sam Dailey, David Fay, Jack Hittle) a discussion developed in reference to our video and audio capabilities and its usage.

### Approved Motions:

- **(msp)** Elder Jack Hittle will be our voting delegate to the Fall Gathering of the Rivers of Life Presbytery Meeting.
- **(msp)** to approve installation of screens in the Sanctuary as described in attached files at a cost of \$7099 to be paid from Session Benevolence and Charitable Unrestricted Funds. Installation to be started after electrical work is complete.
- **(msp)** to approve attached proposal from VG Printing for website redesign at a cost of \$880 - \$2000, to be paid from Session Benevolence and Charitable Unrestricted Funds.