



WEEKLY NEWS

First Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
20 N. Dixie Ave, Cookeville TN, 38501 931-526-4424
4/25/2025



From The Minister

Grateful Renewal

This Sunday will be my last time preaching and helping to lead worship until September as I am gratefully and excitedly beginning a three-month sabbatical on Monday. Thanks to the faithful wisdom of the Session members who, years ago, established a sabbatical fund at FPC, I will be able to finally begin a writing project I have been researching and mulling over since 2007.

The Presbytery of Middle Tennessee has a sabbatical policy which applies to all congregations with full-time Ministers of Word and Sacrament like me as well as Certified Ruling Elders serving for at least six years. Below is a portion of the PMT sabbatical policy which gives a nice overview of what this is all about:

“A Sabbatical has its roots in the Bible. Sabbatical means to rest or to break from work. The biblical pattern of 6 days of work and 1 day of rest served to identify the people of God...This paid time away is intended for refreshment and renewal, both for the servant and for the congregation. The servant withdraws temporarily from the spiritual and emotional demands of ministry. A Sabbatical might be used to travel, pursue a passion, volunteer in a mission, study, or relax and renew. Sabbaticals can help avoid burnout and increase energy and vision for future ministry.”

Our Session, staff, and I have made plans which will ensure the continued pastoral care, worship and other leadership will be in place for the congregation while I am away for the summer. The Rev. Judy Arnold from Westminster Presbyterian Church in Fairfield Glade will serve as the moderator of our Session for the three meetings during the summer and the pulpit will be ably filled by The Rev. Katie Ory, Cade Arnold, Kelly Appleton, The Rev. Lisa Herman, and The Rev. Jeannie Hunter. In addition to the care provided by our Deacons, Katie will also be available during the week for pastoral care needs, adding another to the many hats she already wears.

By no means will the summer be less active as we will have a super fun Wednesday night Cricuts and Crafts gathering next week, we will have another wonderful tent at the Pride festival on June 7th, Dr. Robert Owens will lead an excellent program called Race, Racism, and Civil Rights in the U.S. Past and Present on Tuesday afternoons in June, Thriving Congregations work will continue, and our Mission committee will be hosting the wonderful new Giving Griddle meals on a Wednesday evening and a Saturday brunch in June. Our youth and faithful adult chaperones will be attending the blessed Montreat Middle School and Montreat Youth Conferences as well.

We have much to be grateful to God for at FPC and I am so grateful for all of you, our Deacons, Elders, and phenomenal staff! Have a wonderful summer.

Grace and peace,
Rev. Michael D. McLaughlin



First Pres Outreach Committee presents:

CRICUTS & CRAFTS

Wednesday
May 28th
at 5:15 pm



We'll have pizza and snacks and then get crafting!

WHAT IS A CRICUT?

A Cricut is a smart cutting machine designed for crafts and DIY projects



We will have at least 2 Cricut machines, if you own one and would like to bring it, please bring it and your laptop!

We will also be making beaded keychains to give away at the Pride event on June 7th

PLEASE BRING A PLAIN T SHIRT!

questions? Email Dina at dinaaval@me.com



The Religion & Culture Class

9:30am in room #6 and Zoom

The Religion and Culture class is going on summer break and will resume discussions when school starts in August. For more information, please email Heide Weidner at hzweidner@gmail.com.

Meeting ID: 849 4646 5534

[ZOOM LINK](#)

Passcode: 245160



Race, Racism, and Civil Rights in the U.S. – Past and Present

A class with Dr. Robert Owens

**Tuesday afternoons in June
from 4pm to 5pm (June 3-24)**

**First Presbyterian Church
Fellowship Hall
20 N. Dixie Ave, Cookeville TN**

**\$25 (entire class) for community members and
"pay what you can" for members of First Pres**

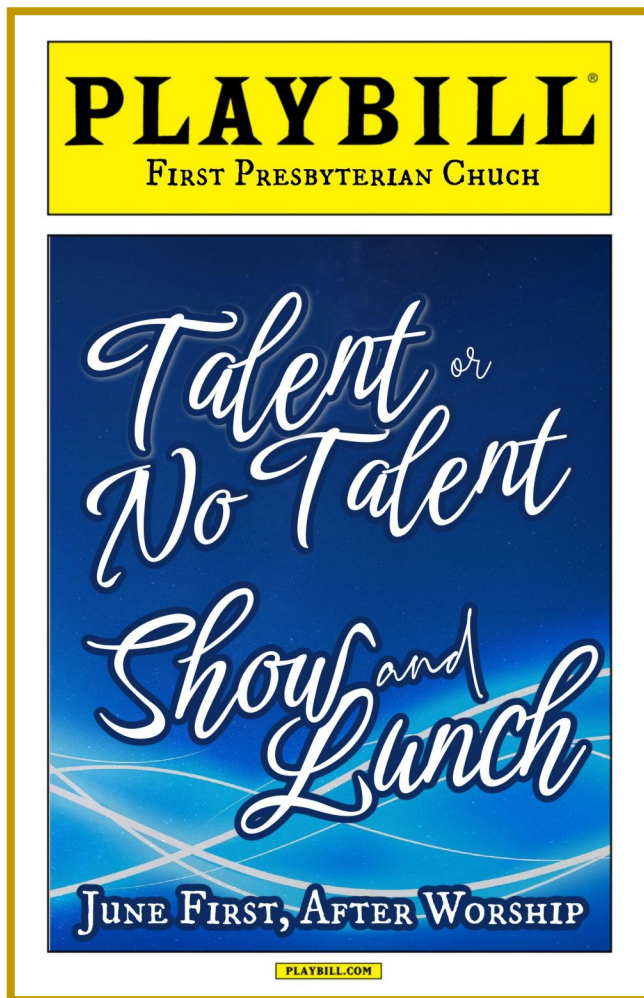
**For more information contact Donna Simpson
931-265-5648 or to register contact First Pres at
(931) 526-4424**

The class will explore the ideology of race and the outgrowth of racism in America from the early years immediately following the abolition of slavery to the present day. This class will also view civil rights efforts in the United States in its close connection to racism. There will be some additional exploration of the involvement of the Church in the American civil rights movement.

Robert Owens has worked for years in Access and Diversity at Tennessee Tech University. In January of 2020, Owens was appointed Interim Vice President of Student Affairs at TTU. He serves as Chief Diversity Officer at Tech and in July of 2024, he became Senior Executive for Access and Community Outreach. Dr. Owens has helped TTU reach its highest levels of ethnic diversity in history. He has given presentations about TTU's retention programming for students of color across the United States.

In addition to his work at TTU, Dr. Owens serves as Pastor of a multi-ethnic church situated in the heart of Cookeville, TN; has served on boards of the Cookeville-Putnam County Chamber of Commerce and Highlands Residential Services (formerly the Cookeville Housing Authority); and coaches middle and high school boys basketball.

Talent or No Talent Show and Meal Youth Fundraiser Event



On June 1st, we will have our annual Talent or No Talent Show. Join us in the Fellowship Hall following worship service. This will be our last fundraiser for Montreat 2025.

Anyone with talent or not talented are welcome to join. You can sing a song, juggle some scarves, play a recorder, hula hoop, or share some parlor tricks. It's all in fun.

The students really appreciate your support!





Pride Festival

Join us Saturday June, 7,
11am-5pm @ Dogwood Park as we
hand out kindness, smiles, and snacks to the
children of God.



Church Summer Schedule!

- Chancel Choir—Summer break begins May 28, until July 9.
- Religion & Culture Sunday School-Summer break begins June 1, until Aug.17.
- Adult Sunday School—Adult S.S. will combine, June 1. Class will meet in the Fellowship Hall at 10am. Nursery will be available and breakfast refreshments will be served. All are welcome!
- Wednesday Night Gathering—Summer break begins June 4, until Sep. 10.
- Sunday Night Youth Group—Summer break begins June 1, until Sep. 7.
- Connected Voices-Summer break begins June 22, until Sep. 28.

Giving Griddle Breakfast

We served approximately 25 people, many asked for “second rounds”. They said that Saturday was a great day and really liked the breakfast foods because they don’t get breakfast often. We listened to music, chatted, and played some cornhole.



Sam, Heidimarie, Alexis, Alex, Stacey, Nick, Jill, Ben, Ms. Geri and her daughter, Kelly, Annabelle, Chris, Ron, Dee



**Join us again, June 18, 6pm-8pm and June 28, 10am-Noon,
as we serve great food and kindness.**

Update: Warming Shelter hours & needs

The Warming Shelter needs large bottles of body wash and shampoo because 10 to 12 unhoused friends take a shower there every Friday.

Drop them off on Fridays between 9 and 1 at the shelter,
United Church of Christ
502 Gould Ave, near Willow Ave., south of I-40
Tell them you're from First Presbyterian Church.

OR at our church anytime. Please label them: **UCC Showers**
They really appreciate our help!

BLESSING BOX

We continually collect food supplies in order to restock the box twice a week.



May Special Requested Items:

Peanut Butter, Ramen, Baby Wipes, Deodorant, Comb/Brush, Razors and Bug Spray

Here is a list of some suggested items:

- Protein drinks
- Peanut butter crackers
- Tuna in foil pouches
- Small cans of fruits and veggies with pull tops
- Small raisin boxes
- Individual cereal boxes
- Bottled water, juice or juice boxes
- Individually packaged hygiene products
- Pull tab cans of soup or chili
- Small cereal boxes
- Granola bars
- Non-perishable food

No glass containers please.

Raised Bed Garden

Sabrina Bauer of the Food-Energy-Water (FEW) graduate program at TTU donated a compost tumbler to the raised bed garden last week.

Creek, a PhD student in the FEW program, recommended this upgrade to our garden. TTU FEW students can help assemble the tumbler.

Look forward to composting food and flowers for the garden!





The Pentecost Offering unites us in a church-wide effort to support young people and inspire them to share their faith, ideas, and unique gifts with the church and the world. Psalm 71 testifies that a foundation of faith established during childhood helps ensure lifelong faith and service. The patterns and lessons established during these formative years continue to bear fruit throughout a person's life.

Over the next two weeks we will be sharing about this special offering and receiving your donation during worship.



Staying Connected

QUICK LINKS



You are able to give from the homepage of our website or click [here](#)



Lesotho Orphanage

Enjoy this new BBC segment on Lesotho: [Link](#)

Learn more from the Associated Press: [Link](#)

New [Video of Lydia and the kids](#)

Notice it is cold and winter time in Lesotho.



Church News Deadline

Please submit your announcements for the newsletter, bulletin, website, marquee, etc.,
by **Wednesday, the end of the day.** Thank you!

STAFF

The Rev. Michael D. McLaughlin.....**Pastor**
The Rev. Katie Ory.....**Director of Children & Youth Ministry**
Paul Thurmond.....**Director of Music**
Amy Ainsley.....**Administrative Assistant**
Virginia Fillers.....**SoulSong Coordinator**

First Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
20 N. Dixie Ave, Cookeville TN, 38501
931-526-4424

www.firstprescookeville.org

Office Hours: Wed.-Friday 9am-3pm

Rev. McLaughlin's Office Hrs.: Tue-Thur. 10am-1pm

ELDERS

2025 Dina Smith, Rick Woods
2026 Cade Arnold, Josh Dore
2027 Sidonie Sansom, Dee Tompkins

DEACONS

2025 Chris McCormick, Erica Scott
2026 Michelle Dore, Ron Ledbetter, Stacey Trent
2027 Kelly Appleton, Ann Hayes, Tony Lawson,
Colleen Mestayer, Gabrielle Pate, Shelley
Wiley

Clerk of Session: Donna Simpson, Interim