

The Presbyterian
A Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church

October 2026

Exalting Christ.
Denying Ourselves.
Loving Our Neighbors.

A Light in the Window

Western culture places a high value on leadership, but largely for the wrong reasons. Leadership is treated as the work, and leaders take the credit for “their” accomplishments (and blame failures on someone else). It’s an individualistic imagination that sees leaders as people who decide what needs to be done and then get it done—which boils down in the end to the assertion that being a leader means having the right to get your own way. Over time, the institution (or country, or whatever) comes to be seen as existing for the sake of its leaders rather than the other way around.

Secular leadership, at least in contemporary Western culture, is self-followership. It gets put in prettier language than that—follow your dreams, follow your heart, follow your vision—but Rich Mullins had the right of it in his song “The Maker of Noses”:

They said, “Boy, you just follow your heart,”
but my heart just led me into my chest;
they said, “Follow your nose,”
but the direction changed every time I’d go and turn my head.

However you dress it up, it’s all just following yourself, and the only dog I’ve ever seen who could take himself for a walk was Rowlf in *The Muppet Movie*.

There’s no integrity to this understanding of leadership. Personal integrity can carry you for a while as a leader, but personal integrity on its own will be eaten away by the acids of power. Eventually, under stress, it will buckle and break. This is why so many leaders start well and finish badly.

There’s a second approach we might call spiritualized leadership: letting our understanding of God change our goals but not our assumptions about how to pursue them. See: “The church should be run like a business,” which far too many churches take as given. We decide what we think God wants us to accomplish, we determine how to go about it, we put our plan in motion, and then we ask God to bless it. This is outwardly different from secular leadership, but even if we’re talking about God and using all the right “spiritual” language, this is still self-followership. It’s no different at the heart because it doesn’t begin with submission.

The third approach, I would call servant leadership, but I don’t mean what you probably think. Servant leadership isn’t a *type* or *style* of leadership, it’s the understanding that leadership *is not the work*. Whatever the organization, whatever work it’s doing, leadership is not the work. The purpose of leadership is to *equip and enable* the people doing the work. The folks upstairs in the big offices exist to support those out on the shop floor making the screws and rods and plates, because the screws and rods and plates are what the company exists to produce. Therefore, *in its essence*, leadership is a work of service. To the extent one is *truly* a leader, one is a servant.

When it comes to leading the people of God, there’s a further dimension that doesn’t exist in other contexts. Christian leadership is *mimetic*, which means this: the essence of Christian leadership is saying with Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:1, “Follow my pattern of living as I follow the pattern of Christ.” It’s an expression of *followership*, for we can only lead God’s people with integrity if we’re doing so by following Jesus. The call to

leadership isn't a call to dominance, control, or privilege, it's a call to submission: obviously to God, to lay down my will at his feet, but also to God's people, to lay down my life with and for the church.



Group and Committee Dates October



Ladies' Discipleship will meet on October 6.

Finance Team – The next Finance Team meeting will be in October 12 @ 3:00.

Deacon's Meeting – The next Deacon's meeting will be in October 14th @ 6:30.

Gamma Delta will meet October 15th.

Session Meeting – The Session will meet on Thursday, October 15th @ 6:00.

Presbyterian Men - The Presbyterian Men's Bible Study meets each **Friday @ 7:00 AM, at the Pelican.** All men of FPC are invited to attend.



Adult Sunday School

Adult Sunday school will resume
on **October 4 at 9:00 a.m.** in Fellowship Hall.

Jake Ritzhaupt will be leading the class on a study of the book of Habakkuk.



Birthdays

- 1 Charles Rager
- 5 Lucille Gilliland
- 6 Bob Thompson
- 7 Rebekah Harrison
- 9 Leon Diebler
- 10 Marcia Burkhart
- 17 Marcia Stout
- 23 Austin Britton
- 29 Howard Gilliland

Anniversaries

- 09 Hannah & Levi Schafer
- 24 Randy and Cindy Inscho

Ushers/Greeters

- 04 – Lori Rager
- 11 –
- 18 –
- 25 –

Flowers

- 04 – Tasha Nickler
- 11 –
- 18 – Tami Robinson
- 25 –

Liturgist

- 04 – Tom Britton
- 11 –
- 18 –
- 25 –

Prayer Requests

Shut-Ins:

Donna Watts, at home, cards appreciated
Phyllis Reed, Commonwealth Senior Living at the
Devonshire, 2220 Executive Drive, Apt 171,
Hampton, Virginia 23666
Chet Johnston, cards can be sent to Altercare,
Room 108. He would appreciate visitors.

Cancer

Sawyer Dennison, radiation treatments for a tumor,
Cindy Inscho's 15 year old nephew
Jim Scott, Colon Cancer, Kathy Bardon's nephew
Marcia Dishon, continued prayers
Eliza Cole, completed radiation, Phyllis Cole's
granddaughter
Sophie Beck, relative of Courtney Posey
Annette Cheney, metastatic breast cancer, friend
of Kathy Bardon
Amanda Compton, Lori Rager's step-daughter

Surgery

Tom Ahlefeld, pending foot surgery
Deb Hablitzel, recuperating from back surgery
John Maddox, surgery for abdominal aneurysm
Bob Thompson – Shoulder surgery
Abigail Sutherland, Dishon's granddaughter

Members, Family and Friends of Members:

Judy Eichhorn, recuperating at home
Pastor Rob's mother, Shari
Patty Neff for caring for her sister who has had a
sudden loss of memory
Gary Bishop, Lauren Bishop's father
Donna Parsons, friend of Kathy Bardon
Kaitlyn Bardon
Simon, Courtney Posey's friend
Kathy Hildebrand, Courtney's Mother
Whitney Hildebrand, Courtney Posey's sister
Jenny McKee, torn retina, friends of Kathy Bardon
Becky Bellamy, Parkinson's, sister of Kathy Bardon

Military:

Keagan Rios, Gennie Rios grandson
Levi Diebler, member and Carrie Diebler's son
Grayson Robinson, Tami Robinson's grand-nephew

Special Prayers – Please keep Barb Price and family for the passing of Dan.

First Presbyterian Church News

From the Elders

The Church has a **defibrillator** in the Brides room on the main floor. This unit includes paddles for adults and children. We would like to know if anyone is willing to take the training to be able to use. Please contact Michelle at the office. If you are already certified please let us know. Thank you.

From My Cozy Corner Office

*Know'st thou not at the fall of the leaf
How the heart feels a languid grief
Laid on it for a covering,
And how sleep seems a goodly thing
In Autumn at the fall of the leaf?*

So begins the first stanza of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's contemplative little poem, "Autumn Song." He captures a feeling we often get this time of year, "a languid grief" when the leaves begin to fall and a little extra sleep seems a welcome and comforting idea.

I love autumn. It's my favorite season. I love the colors, the food, and the weather. One of my favorite activities is curling under an old quilt with a good book while the leaves dance outside my window and the smell of pumpkin bread rises in the oven. When my family lived in South Florida, we didn't have seasons, just various degrees of hot. After our first year there, I felt "seasonally challenged" and so I began decorating our home to remind us of the month. I quickly learned that pumpkins are not a good idea in the south, though; they rot on the doorstep!

In addition to our meaningful weekly worship services, many activities are available this season for your deepening spiritual growth: Men's and Women's Discipleship

groups, Friday morning Men's Bible Study at The Pelican, a new adult Sunday school class beginning Oct. 4, and an upcoming Ladies' Retreat on Oct. 17. Additionally, your church leadership is planning another inspirational violin and organ concert from our friends Dr. Fred Ripley and Josh Brodbeck, a church family outdoor gathering, and the formation of a steering committee to begin preparing for our church's 200th birthday!

So, as you go apple picking and look for funny, unique gourds, and bake the good loaves from this year's harvest, remember that life is short. We have but a little time to love, to serve, to forgive, and to gather and worship our gracious Lord and Savior.

Blessings,
Marcia
Director of Spiritual Care

Women's Discipleship *The Broken Way* by Ann Voskamp 2026 Reading Schedule

October 6 Chapters 17 & 18

200th Anniversary Planning Committee 1828-2028

In less than two years' time, our church will be celebrating its 200th anniversary! What an *amazing opportunity* for us to be part of this moment in history. As such, we are looking to form a "Think Tank" committee to begin generating ideas for what this momentous celebration should be. The initial planning committee is for idea generating, so anyone can be part of it. (Worker Bees will be asked to take part later!) It would be great to have a wide variety of ages represented. If you are interested, please contact Pastor Rob or any of the elders, Michelle Bacon in the church office, or Jan Fulton.



To Contact the church

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Staff

Robert Harrison	<i>Pastor</i>
Marcia Stout	<i>Director of Spiritual Care</i>
Michelle Bacon	<i>Administrative Assist</i>
Jan Fulton	<i>Church Treasurer</i>
Deloris Kruse	<i>Janitorial Service</i>

Session Elders

Rev. Rob Harrison, Moderator

Michelle Bacon, Clerk of Session

Class of 2027

Tom Britton
419-569-2988
Best to Call

Class of 2028

Harley Shaum
419-564-2733
hshaum35.hs@gmail.com

Class of 2029

Brydan Lohr
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Board of Deacons

Jan Fulton – Moderator
Courtney Posey

Sandra Britton
Barb Price

Victoria Lohr
Tami Robinson

