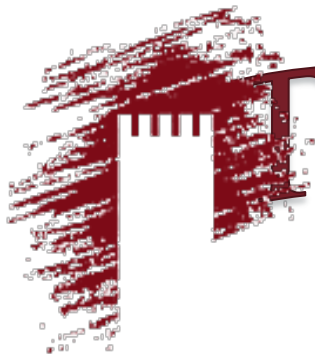




The PresbyRecord

A community beacon of faith, love and hope.

Volume LX Issue 8

August 2026

A Story for the End of Summer

The king had always loved summer.

It was the season when his gardens were heavy with fruit, when the vineyards shimmered in the heat, when the pools he had carved from stone sparkled under the sun. Summer made everything look successful; lush, full, alive. And so, in one golden season, he decided to chase pleasure with all his strength, as if he could stretch summer forever.

He laughed until his sides hurt. He drank wine that warmed his spirit. He built houses, planted orchards, and filled his courts with music. Every desire he had, he satisfied. Every whim he followed.

His life became a feast of summer days.

But as the season wore on, he began to notice something unsettling. The fruit that looked perfect one morning was overripe the next. The laughter that filled his halls faded into silence. The wine dulled. The gardens browned at the edges. Even the great works he built, stone, timber, water, felt strangely temporary.

One evening, as the first cool breeze of autumn brushed the palace walls, the king stood alone and looked over everything he had made. The vineyards. The gardens. The treasures. The pleasures, and he whispered, *"It is all vanity. Like chasing the wind."*

Summer had taught him something he could not learn in any other season: *fullness does not last*. Even wisdom, he realized, fades like daylight. The wise and the foolish both die. Both are forgotten. Both return to dust.

He felt the ache of it; like watching the last fireflies disappear or seeing the first leaf fall. All his toil, all his accomplishments, all his pleasures... someday they would belong to someone else. Someone who might not care for them at all.

The king felt the grief of summer ending, but as he watched the sun sink earlier each day, a gentler truth settled over him; quiet as the first cool night of September.

He realized that God had woven time into seasons on purpose. A time to plant and a time to pluck up. A time to laugh and a time to weep. A time to gather and a time to let go.

(cont.)

Summer was never meant to last forever. Its very ending was part of its beauty.

And so, the king said, *“There is nothing better than for people to eat, drink, and find enjoyment in their work. This is God’s gift.”*

Not endless pleasure. Not endless accomplishment. Not endless summer, but daily joy; the kind that doesn’t depend on the season.

The king learned that pleasure without God is hollow, work without God is exhausting, wisdom without God is frustrating, but life with God, even ordinary life, is sweet. He learned that the end of summer is not a failure. It is a reminder.

A reminder that fullness fades. A reminder that seasons change. A reminder that joy comes not from chasing the wind, but from receiving each day as a gift from the One who made the seasons.

And as the first leaves began to turn, the king finally understood:
Summer’s end is not the loss of joy; it is the invitation to find joy in God instead of in the season.



Helmer Osslund, *Autumn*, 1907

Helmer Osslund was a Swedish painter from an artistic family. His father, Daniel, was also a painter, as was his brother Elis, while his sister Frida was an author. Osslund specialized in motifs from Lapland and often painted on greaseproof paper.

In *Autumn*, he painted a mountain motif from Northern Sweden, a popular source of subjects around 1900. At the same time, the country’s industrial development was underway, and the landscape became a national asset.

Here, the autumn landscape is shown from a low perspective, inspired by Japanese prints.

Communion Servers

August 2nd

Raven Lanham - Set Up
Dave Harvey - Server
Kathleen Jordan - Server

September 6th

Wanda Bowman - Set Up
Jack Roger - Server
Jennifer Burgess - Server

Liturgists

August 2nd - Kathleen Jordan
August 9th - Raven Lanham
August 16th - Buck Ivey
August 23rd - Dave Harvey
August 30th - Raven Lanham

In Care Facilities:

Ann McCormick, Apt.106, English Meadows,
5 Bexley Dr, Scott Depot, WV 25560
Sadie Ashworth, 5 Rolling Meadows Dr., Room
118, Scott Depot, WV 25560

Prayer Concerns Members:

Ellie Malcomb	Alex Dayfield
Carolyn Reed	Mike Merguc
Mike Clark	
Dolly Locke	

Anniversaries

Brucie and Bill Kessler	August 13, 1977
Cathy and Steve Holstein	August 10, 1996
Sarah and Bryan Roberts	August 14, 2004
Holly and Adam Greathouse	August 30, 2006

Military

Captain Allie Curtis, US. Army (United States)
Hunter Parsons, U.S. Navy (Virginia)
Mickey Swartz, Aircrew Flight Equipment Technician, U.S. Air
Force (Eugene, Oregon)
Lieutenant Jack Wiles, U.S. Air Force
PFC Joseph Sutphin, US Army

Prayer Concerns - Family and Friends

Family of Ashley Nestman, passed away from lymphoma
(Connie Ivey)
Victoria Reynolds (Wanda Bowman)
Flo Rogers (Jack's wife & Raven's mom) health complications
Jason Haught, complications from spinal surgery (Vickie
Haught's son, Jack Rogers' nephew)
Brett and Linda Foster, glioblastoma (Laurie's nephew and his
wife)
Kate Lichtenfels' family
Jason Turley, major health concerns including leukemia
(Laurie's son and Holly's brother)
Matt Waldie, lung cancer (Kathleen Jordan's friend)
Mary Jo Swartz, health problems(Kathi Curtis)
Annette Burns, liver issues (Ann McCormick)
Sharon Peterson's parents, Decision-making for long term care
Angie Saunders, pancreatic cancer and lupus (Raven's Cousin)
Willie Williams & Millie Astin , ICU in Atlanta
(Kathryn Weed)
Cindy Lucas, ovarian cancer (Tony & Alex Dayfield)
Charlotte Cloud, broken hip, (Jack Rogers Aunt)
Eva, MS, (Katie Reyes friend)

Birthdays

August

2 – Brendon Cook
3 – Abbie Burch
5 – Dolly Locke, John Harvey
6 – James Resler
9 – Sara Hedrick
13 – Susan Allowatt, Lillian Roberts
17 - Lindsey Duvall
20 – Kevin Duvall
21 – Regina Dayfield
24 – Jon Cox
31- Patrick Curtis

Littles Story Time Team



Littles' Story-time by Donna Merguc

We are taking a little break...Our last day with Littles was Friday, June 26th. We will be back on board August 21, 2026.

We had six Littles attend the VBS Pre-K class. They were familiar with the room and the teachers, Raven, Kathryn and Donna. We had the best time celebrating the Love of God.

We enjoyed reading these books during the month of June: Summer is Here, When Dads Don't Grow Up, Dini Dinosaur, and Time to Fly. I do believe the children really enjoyed them too.

I continue to thank God for our 18 helpers who read, prepare a craft and snack for them: John and Jackie Jones, Andi Pease, Connie Ivey, Debbie Duvall, Jennifer Burgess, Raven Lanham, Abbie Burch, Kirk King, Sara Kell, Linda Slappe, Regina Dayfield, Teresa Evans, Julie Hartman, Kathleen Jordan, Kathryn Maddy, Kathy Leftwich, and me! We could not do this program if it wasn't for you sharing your time.

A BIG "thank you" to Kathy Leftwich for donating the books, *The Other Side of Christmas* (An Upside Down) book written by Beth Gully, Kathy's Sister and *The Other Side of Easter* (An Upside Down) book written by Beth Gully also.

A BIG "thank you" to Tara Adkins, Donna's daughter-in-law for donating these books in honor of Michael and Logan: *I Am a Masterpiece*, a story about a little girl with Down syndrome and *Ember, the Brave Bear*, a story of healing and courage.

Donna prepared a writeup or story about "How Littles Got Started" and "Why First Presby started a Story-time" for Julie Hitsman, Session.

JULY and AUGUST Birthdays

David VanScoy – July 26

Mao Shimizu – August 14

Aiden Lane – August 30

We sing "Happy Birthday" to them on the first Friday of each month. Birthdays are extra special just like our Littles!

On our last day with Littles, we gave them a bottle of bubbles as a gift with this poem by Ruth Reardon:

SOMETIMES...

let's just blow bubbles,

For no good reason,

let's just blow bubbles.

Laugh a little, watch them disappear,

not even wonder where.

Smile and touch the rainbow colors

watch them float in air.

No reason why--

no goals—no structure.

Sometimes...

let's just blow bubbles...



Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to:
nurture our faith through prayer and Bible study,
support the mission of the church worldwide, work for justice and peace, and build an inclusive, caring
community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and witnesses to the promise
of God's kingdom.

Women's August Lunch Gathering

Join us Friday, August 14 at Cozumel in the St. Albans Loop at 11:45am. If you need a ride, call
Kathryn at (304)539-2573.

Circle will resume in September! Zoom study is on Tuesday, September 8. In person study is at noon
on Wednesday, September 9, 2026.

NEXT FALL'S BIBLE STUDY:

United Through Christ, Bound to Each Other: Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians
by Rhonda Mawhood Lee
Suggestions for Leaders by Sarah Leer
(the 2026–2027 PW/Horizons Bible study)

Join Presbyterian Women and learn about Paul's first letter to the church in Corinth. This Bible study
explores the letter's setting, divisions within the congregation, and ultimately, the gifts given to all
through the work of Christ. Readers will be fascinated by this journey to Corinth and will explore how
Paul's timeless message of loving unity calls Christ's followers today.

Our books are in!

Our first order of the new Bible study book is ready for pick up in the church office. If you ordered
regular print copy the total cost is \$15.25. If you ordered the large print it is \$21.25 total.

A second order should arrive any day now, but we can still place another order. Everyone is welcome
to join the circle Bible studies, with or without the book.

Facilities & Worship Committee

No July Meeting

- Basement dorms prepped for mission team.
- Installed locking caps on the AC units outside the kitchen door.
- We are discussing the upscaling of the first floor men's room. We have some donations for new fixtures.
- We are still investigating upgrading the Sanctuary audio/visual equipment.
- We had the basement AC units recharged.
- We are updating the basement hallway lights to LED.
- Had the dishwasher serviced due to clogged drain line.

Dear Andi,

We thank you so much for planting and maintaining the beautiful flowers around our church. The petunias bring so much joy and beauty to our church building. It has definitely been a challenge to keep them watered during this hot weather, but, you have done it! We are deeply grateful for your time and kind heart.

With Love and Thanks,

Your Church Family



Pastor Search Update #2

from Rev. Julie Hitsman, moderator of First Presbyterian Church of St. Albans

If you like this and it's helping, I need more of your questions for future updates. Email me or the church office. Or write them down and hand them to Raven (during her work hours or leave it on her desk).

What is a PNC and what do they do?

The PNC is the Pastor Nominating Committee. This group is representative of your church, and they will be interviewing pastors. Your PNC is composed of 6 people: 3 from your church and 3 from Teays Valley. Of those, one person from each church is on their session and two are members who are not on session. The goal is to get a representative group who can speak for each of the churches. They have been meeting and writing up more stuff - yes, we're Presbyterian and there is always another layer of reflection and writing it up. They have submitted it to the Presbytery, who will authorize it being put into the Presbyterian employment system soon. Once it is there, it's a lot like online dating. Your PNC will receive a pile of matches that the system thinks might be a good fit. Your PNC will sort through them, and start to talk to some that seem to have potential. This can be a slow process, even if your PNC is working hard. The goal is to find the right person, even if that takes a little time. In some ways it will look to the rest of us like nothing is happening. But your PNC is already hard at work and will continue to work away until they have a potential pastor to bring before us.

Are we getting a real Presbyterian pastor?

Let's start by better defining what people probably mean by that question. Traditionally a Presbyterian pastor has gone to seminary, has a Masters of Divinity, and has passed their ordination exams. They either have already been ordained, or are ordained at their first pastor job. This is different than a commissioned pastor, which is what it's called if an ALP like Adam or Kathy continue their training through the Presbytery and become the pastor of a church.

Now as to the question of are we getting a seminary trained Presbyterian Pastor. Maybe. The PNC will be looking at seminary trained pastors. It is currently the hope to hire one. One of the wonderful things about partnering with Teays Valley is that we have enough money to come up with an appropriate compensation package for a seminary trained pastor. However, there is openness and flexibility in this process. If the PNC doesn't find any good candidates from the Presbyterian pastor pile, or if a really good option for a pastor comes up that isn't a traditionally educated pastor, then all options will be considered.

Where will the pastor live?

A pastor is an employee of the church. As such, the church has no say in where they live. However, the church does have a say in how many hours the pastor will be in the building and what those hours will be. We have heard how much people want to be able to drop by and see the pastor. The top request in what we want for a pastor was one who will be in the building and have regular office hours. As an extension to this, the church has no control over how much time a pastor's spouse and children spend at the church or if they even attend. I understand this is a painful concept and that it is hard to hear. But the church as an employer does not get a say in how the family of one of their employees spends their time and does not get to dictate their religious identities, beliefs, or practices. It is ok to hope the pastor's family will be present and it's ok to be welcoming and inviting to them. It is not ok to punish the pastor if his or her family doesn't come to church. So, the pastor will live wherever makes sense for them, but he or she will be in the building at predictable times to be available and present with the congregation. Everything else we don't know and can't control.

Can we just hire you? Are you applying?

I was surprised and flattered as this question kept coming up, but I am not applying. I spent a long time picking a church that I love to be a part of and that really appreciates the gifts and talents I bring to ministry. I've been the pastor at Spencer Presbyterian for almost 7 years, longer if you count my time as a regular pulpit supply. Its a great fit for me, for my family, and for my church. It is my sincere hope that we can find you a pastor that feels the same about your church. So I will be part of the team support you all during this transition period, and then I will joyfully hand you off to your next pastor.

How can I help?

"There is one body, but it has many parts. But all its many parts make up one body. It is the same with Christ...You are the body of Christ. Each one of you is a part of it." 1 Corinthians 12:12, 27

This transition to a part time pastor is going to be different. This church is used to being able to rely on a full time pastor plus extra staff to do alot of the work. This is going to be a shift away from that. We are going to need everyone's gifts and talents to not only survive, but to thrive. Things that were traditionally the pastor's job, like leading Wednesday night Bible study, may no longer be the pastor's job. The exact details won't be known until the new pastor is in place, but in general, some of the things the pastor used to do will need to be done by other people.

Additionally, this church does not have any paid staff on Sunday mornings, other than the visiting pulpit supply. Raven and Mike might be in the building on Sunday, but they are not on the clock. This means that if the trash is overflowing or the phone is ringing, it is up to whoever is nearby to handle it.

Churches are run by human energy. Strong, thriving churches have many people willing to step up and share the work of being a church together. Find what you're good at and can help the church out with.

Blessing Bag Needs

Socks – for men and women

Toilet Paper

Every donation helps bring comfort and care to someone in our community.

Thank you!

Please leave all donations on the stage

Benelovent Ministries & Community Events

St. Albans City Council Meeting August 3 @ 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm

1st & 3rd Mondays of each month, except on holidays, whereas the meeting will be moved the first following regular business day. All meetings are at Council Chambers located at 51 6th Avenue, St. Albans, WV 25177 unless otherwise posted. All meetings are open to the public.

Back to School Magic Bash Alban Arts Center August 8 @ 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

Join us for a back-to-school bash with Joey Stepp! Great magic and laugh out loud fun for the entire family.

Mountaineer Mainstreet August 22 @ 2:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Live music, WVU teams, and more.
Free event for all. Join us for Mountaineer spirit!

CAN A CHURCH BE A REAL CHURCH WITOUT A FULL TIME PASTOR?

It's a scary question, but an important one.

Join us as we explore the ways churches can experience more vitality with a part time pastor, and the ways we can support this transition.

Wednesday nights starting August 26
1st Presbyterian Church of St Albans
Free dinner at 5:45, Discussion starts at 6:30

Saint Albans Farmer's Market

201 Kanawha Terrace

Bringing fresh harvests, local creativity, and hometown spirit together in one welcoming market.

Saturday Market Dates: Night Market Dates:

10-3

5:30-8:30

June

June 30

6 & 20

July 31

July

August 31

11 & 25

August

8 & 22



Shelly Belly Unapologetically Me Tour LIVE

August 16 @ 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm
Alban Arts Center

Shelly Belly brings her hilarious southern sass to the Alban Arts Center for a Sunday evening of fun! Enjoy a hilarious evening at the Alban Arts Center with the hilarious Shelly Belly

Christ's Kitchen & St. Albans Food Pantry

Christ's Kitchen and the St. Albans Food Pantry continue serving our neighbors.

Donations can be placed in the Fellowship Hall cart.

Volunteers are always appreciated.

Kitchen: Mon-Thurs & Sat, 10-1

Pantry: Tues & Thurs, 8:30-10:30

405 B Street

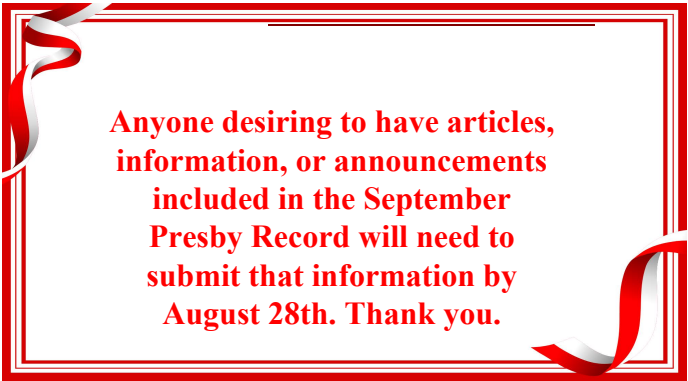
Top 5 pantry needs: hamburger helper, pasta sides, cake mix, pudding, and tuna.



Historical Society Museum Open 10am-2pm August 1 & 15

Stop in and see us! Our museum is open to the public the first and third Saturday of each month.

First Presbyterian Church
201 Kanawha Terrace
St. Albans, WV 25177



Trustees

Class of 2026: Holly Greathouse
Class of 2027: Dewitt Bowman
Class of 2028: Buck Ivey

Officers

Class of 2028	Class of 2026	Class of 2027
Dave Harvey (1)	Kathleen Jordan (2)	Jennifer Burgess (1)
Adam Greathouse (1)	Valerie Wade (2)	Kathy Harrah (1)
Buck Ivey (1)	Kristi Sutphin (1)	Jack Rogers (2)

Church Staff

Ministers.....	Every Member of the Congregation
Pastor	
Administrative Assistant.....	Raven Lanham
Custodian	Jennifer Gil & Mike Merguc
Musician.....	N. David Stern
Treasurer	Buck Ivey
Tech Team	Dave&Wendy Harvey, Betty King, Logan Roberts

First Presbyterian Church
201 Kanawha Terrace, St. Albans, West Virginia 25177
Phone: 304 727-2241
Email: fpcsa@firstpresbychurch.com
Web site: www.firstpresbychurch.com
Facebook: First Presbyterian Church of St. Albans

Note: The number in parentheses refers to first or second consecutive three-year terms in office.