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One in Spirit

It would be hard to find a Christian that does not know the song *They'll Know We Are Christians*. I first heard this song back in my Middle and High School Youth group days, but only recently have I fully come to understand the lyrics. Take a look.

We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord;
We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord;
And we pray that all unity will one day be restored.

Chorus: And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,
yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.

We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand;
We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand;
And together we'll spread the news that God is in our land.

We will work with each other, we will work side by side;
We will work with each other, we will work side by side;
And we'll guard each man's dignity and save each man's pride.

All praise to the Father, from whom all things come;
And all praise to Christ Jesus, His only Son.
And all praise to the Spirit who makes us one.

The part of the song that gets repeated heavily in modern covers, like the For King & Country rendition, is “by our love”. That is literally the name of the King & Country version. This is a wonderful part of the song. It is what the world sees, and it is what sets us apart from the worldly expectations and values. The problem is, that’s not supposed to be the focus! Let me explain.

What is the first line? We are one in the Spirit, one in the Lord. What is the last line? All praise to the Spirit who makes us one. If you tried to show the kind of love that turns people’s head and makes them say, “That is a Christian,” or “What’s different about them?”, could you do that on your own? We are so focused on the effect that we don’t give a second thought to the cause! You can’t try to love people more and simply change your behavior by sheer willpower. You must surrender to the Holy Spirit, abiding in Jesus, seeking the will of the Father, dying to your self-nature. Then, and only then, will the love of God flow out of you.

It is simple cause and effect. If you are plugged into the flesh, what you produce will be of the flesh, but if you are connected to the Holy Spirit then you will produce fruit of the Spirit. We love because we have first been loved by God who sent His son to set us free and forgive our sins. As we lean into the truth and reality of God’s love for us, we cannot help but to love others.

~ Pastor John



October 4 – 19th Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Title: Ten Commandments

Scriptures: Psalm 19; Exodus 20:1-20

October 11 – 20th Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Title: The Golden Calf

Scriptures: Psalm 106:1-6, 48; Exodus 32:1-14

October 18 – 21st Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Title: Presence of the Lord

Scriptures: Psalm 99; Exodus 33:12-23

October 25 – 22nd Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Title: Are You Ready? (End of Series)

Scriptures: Psalm 90:1-6; Deuteronomy 34:1-12

November 1 – 23rd Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Title: What We Are

Scriptures: Psalm 34:1-10; 1 John 3:1-3

Table – First Pres is beginning an outreach for the congregation to fellowship together monthly beginning later in October. Watch emails and for invitations placed in the main hallway, near the office, to sign up. Attendees will be selected on a First Come First Serve basis. A lunchtime gathering for a fun, relaxed way to get to know one another in a more personal and spiritual way.

Committee Hostesses: Sallie Adams, Carol Foster, and Frances Harrell



We have gotten off to a great start with this new ministry. Meeting each Tuesday at 6:30 pm. Group study is taken from “The Prayer Practice” on RightNow Media. Come out and join the group and invite others to come as well.

Prayer List – We lost several friends and First Pres family in September: Dabney Gilliam and JoAnn Newland. Carol Foster’s son-in-law’s father, and Sam Golightly Jr. passed on. Tom Raab – serious health issues. His wife Anne Harvey has returned to teaching at CH Friend. Patricia Burton had a heart procedure in Lynchburg. Joni Owens



and Robin Hall have a friend battling cancer in Richmond. Sandi Hughes’ grandson, Lake, broke his leg playing soccer. He is slowly healing. Elaine and Craig Glenn’s son-in-law, Trey, was in a serious car accident, he was the sole income earner, he and his wife are expecting a 4th baby in December. David Harrell is doing well and tolerating chemo treatments. Jennifer McIntosh, from Women’s Bible Study was in Richmond doing medical testing. She is doing better. Many obstacles of health for many of our friends. Prayers continue for: Ted and Pat, Andy Newland after JoAnne’s passing, Dwight Stewart, Danny Hazelwood, Kit Hooper, Robin Hall, Jim & Kathy Debiec, and all who are dealing with acute & chronic illnesses.







Discover how God used an Operation Christmas Child shoebox in my life...



Manar

After finishing their homework,
Manar and his brother liked to watch cartoons. Their favorite part was the commercials advertising toys and school supplies that weren't common where they lived in the Middle East. They dreamed about having quality items like those, but that seemed out of reach until he and his brother each received an Operation Christmas Child shoebox gift while at church when Manar was 13. Hear what quality items have stood the test of time and how much they continue to mean long after the boys opened their shoebox gifts.

A Shoebox Changed a Life

- Date:** Friday, October 16, 2026
- Time:** 6:30 p.m. est
- Place:** First Presbyterian Church
800 N Main Street
South Boston, VA 24592





... fear not,
for I am with you;
 be not dismayed,
for I am your God;
 I will strengthen you,
 I will help you,
 I will uphold you
 with my righteous right hand.
 Isaiah 41:10

Learning from Isaiah

In teaching the youth in Sunday School, we have been reading and studying Isaiah.

I have struggled with Isaiah for years. His writings seem hard to understand, and yet Christ often quoted him and questioned those leaders who profess to know scripture but didn't understand them.

Christ said, "Yea, a commandment I give unto you that ye search these things diligently; for great are the words of Isaiah."

Isaiah was such a skilled writer and great prophet who would prophesy of events soon to unfold, as well as those many years in the future - during Christ's life, and, during our day. With him jumping around and often in the same verse, it can be very confusing to read. But what I have come to know and appreciate is though his writing can often seem dark and gloomy, he also offers hope. He lived at a time that the Israelites were turning away from the traditional ways and taking on gods and ideas of those around them. Isaiah called them to repent.

I don't know any human that enjoys being called out and called to repentance, but these words are for our benefit. Not only did he call them to repentance, but he offers hope through Christ's resurrection. Sometimes we can read the Old Testament and see a vengeful God, but Isaiah shows us that as any parent must show force at times to get the children to obey, and then shows love afterward, God is the utmost and perfect example of this love. Isaiah in chapter 41:10 is speaking for the Lord: "Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

What a beautiful message! God isn't just sitting in His throne watching what the crazy people on this earth are doing. He is involved. He is relentless in His pursuit of us to bring us back home to be with Him. I want to calm our fears and help strengthen us in our trials. But we must turn to Him and obey His commandments.

What a blessing to know the love He has for us, His children. He is ever willing to forgive if we will just repent and draw closer to Him. I pray I will look at Isaiah with new eyes and realize how he is calling out to me, to come and know God, Jesus Christ more fully.

~ Sherolyn



Loving and Serving

Recently I have been praying more and exploring what it means to see God's mission in our church, community, and world...what it means to be God's instruments as we are the expressions of His mission, love, and discipleship.

The Tuesday night Prayer Group at 6:30 pm has helped me grow and mature in my prayer relationship with God as well as give me more confidence to pray with others and in groups. Telling my story is much easier. After only one session, Pattie Grubbs said in a text to me, "Thank you for suggesting this. I enjoyed it immensely."

We are also offering and embarking on a new ministry, "At the Table" this fall. More information is forthcoming; but this opportunity will help us look at what it means to engage in a small group with food, fellowship, discussion, study, and prayer at the table. Praying that we will have a large number of the First Pres Family participate in these offerings so we can dig deeper into communication with each other and grow in community together.

It is hoped that these two fall activities (Prayer and Table) can put God's teachings into practice in our real lives. May we come away grateful for this community of apprentices of Jesus who link arms week in and week out to love and serve God right here in Halifax County. I am excited to participate and see where He will lead us into the future.

~ Deacon Robin Hall

OCTOBER

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
27 9:45 am - Sun Sch 10:30 am - Fellowship 11:00 am Worship 6:30 pm - Big Questions/Honest Conversations	28	29 6:30 pm—Prayer Meeting	30 10:30 am—WBS 12:00 pm - AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	October 1 7:00 pm - Al-Anon	October 2 - Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	October 3
4 - Communion 9:00 am - Diaconate 9:45 am - Sun Sch 10:30 am - Fellowship 11:00 am -Worship 6:30 pm - Big Questions/Honest Conversations	5	6 6:30 pm—Prayer Meeting	7 10:30 am—WBS 12:00 pm - AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	8 7:00 pm - Al-Anon	9 - Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	10
11 9:45 am - Sun School 10:30 am - Fellowship 11:00 am Worship 6:30 pm - Big Questions/Honest Conversations	12	13 6:30 pm—Prayer Meeting	14 10:30 am—WBS 12:00 pm - AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	15 7:00 pm - Al-Anon	16 - Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	17
18 - 5 Cents a Meal collection 9:45 am - Sun Sch 10:30 am - Fellowship 11:00 am -Worship 12:30 pm - Session 6:30 pm - Big Questions/Honest Conversations	19	20 6:30 pm—Prayer Meeting	21 10:30 am—WBS 12:00 pm - AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	22 7:00 pm - Al-Anon	23 - Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	24 6pm - AA – Back 2 Basics
25 9:45 am - Sun Sch 10:30 am - Fellowship 11:00 am Worship 6:30 pm - Big Questions/Honest Conversations	26	27 6:30 pm—Prayer Meeting	28 10:30 am—WBS 12:00 pm - AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	29 7:00 pm - Al-Anon	30 - Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	31 6pm - AA – Back 2 Basics 



- 4
- Susie Luedtke
- 7
- Laurie Edwards Morris
- 10
- Kelly Chappell*
- 13
- James Wyatt Barczak*
- 15
- Jerry Grubbs
- 20
- Virginia Crutchfield
- 21
- Pat Guthrie *
- 21
- Rev. Glenn Coleman
- 22
- Les Powell III
- 23
- Suzanne Tuck
- 26
- Kathy Farley
- 26
- Red Guthrie *
- 26
- Joni Owens
- 27
- Jim Debiec
- 29
- Pattie Grubbs
- 29
- Rowena Van Duser Smith



Session Notes: Since our last Newsletter, our Session discussed:
The Session met on Sunday, September 20, 2026.

1. Rev. John McCarthy opened the meeting with prayer.
2. News of the congregation was shared by Pastor John.
3. The minutes of the August 16th Congregational meeting and Stated Session Meeting were approved.
4. Next Presbytery Meeting – October 22 (Thursday): In-person, Raleigh Court Presbyterian Church (Don Cherry – Commissioner).
5. Membership Roll – JoAnn Stoneburner Newland passed away on September 3, 2026, the roll currently stands at 99 members.
6. Local Missions – Operation Christmas Child 2026 – August collection: School supplies. Pastor John and Jennifer have attended training. There will be a meeting on September 26th for final planning.
7. Good Samaritan – September collection: after school snacks.
8. Prayer Meeting – Each Tuesday beginning September 8th at 6:30 pm. In the Fellowship Hall.
9. Discovering Faith – Sunday Evening Service. Coming Sunday, September 13 at 6:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall.
10. Worship – Next Communion, Sunday, October 4, 2026 (World Communion Sunday).
11. The Session approved a Congregational meeting for Sunday, October 18th for the purpose of electing the “at large” members for the Nominating Committee.
12. Sunday, November 8th there will be a Chili covered dish meal after worship.
13. Budget & Finance – Financial reports for August 2026 were reviewed.
14. The Session reviewed a quote from Green Edge Services for annual care of the church property.
15. The Session went into executive session to review the Pastor Performance Review conducted by the Personnel Committee.
16. Don Cherry closed the meeting with prayer.
17. Next meeting will be on Sunday, October 18, 2026.



- **Choir** - Wednesday's at 6:00 pm
- **Communion** - Sunday, October 4
- **Diaconate** - October 4 at 9:00 am
- **Session** - Sunday, October 18 at 12:30 pm
- **5 Cents-a-meal** - Sunday, October 18

First Presbyterian Church
800 North Main Street
South Boston, VA 24592

Here is your October 2026 Newsletter