
OCTOBER 2025

The Messenger

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



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Rev. Dr. Kip Laxson

During the dark days of the Great Depression in 1930s America, Mr. Ira Yates was like many other ranchers and farmers in dusty West Texas. He had a lot of land, and a lot of debt. Ira wasn't able to make enough on his farmstead to pay the principal and interest on the mortgage, so he was in danger of losing everything. With little money for the basic necessities of life, his family was forced to live on government subsidies.



Then one day a seismographic crew from the Standard Oil Company came into the area and informed Ira that there might be undrilled oil on his land. They asked permission to drill an oil well, and in desperation, he signed a lease contract.

At 1,115 feet they struck a mammoth oil reserve. The first well came in at 80,000 barrels a day! Many subsequent wells were more than twice as large. In fact, 30 years after the initial “wildcat” dig, a government test of one of the wells showed it still had the potential flow of 125,000 barrels of oil a day! And Mr. Yates owned it all!

Think of it: the day he purchased the land he had received the oil and mineral rights. Yet, he and his family had been living on bare minimums. A multimillionaire who did not know it, living in abject poverty. He had all the resources he would ever need right under his feet...literally. But, he didn't even know it.

Why am I sharing this story with you? Because we are a lot like Mr. Yates spiritually speaking at times. We are beneficiaries of a vast cache of God's spirit and power, and

yet we live in spiritual paucity, settling for far less than the best of what God has for us.

One of the things that has impressed me so much since I first arrived at First Presbyterian, is the vast resources. You see, I believe that God has all of the power and provision that we need to be the community of faith that God needs us to be right here in Florence, Alabama. All we need to do is tap into the resource and stand back and watch what God is going to do in and through us. FPC has such a rich history. But, I also am convinced that we have an even brighter future as we work together to be all that God wants us to be.

Allow me to share three things that I need you to do to make all of this a possibility:

1. Invite. Extend an invitation to your friends and family who might not have a church home or may be looking for a new place to belong.
2. Invest. The First Presbyterian church family has proven so faithful to share their financial gifts in the to make us as strong as we are today. However, there are so many ministries that we need to engage in today! Pray about what God might be calling you to do in this important aspect.
3. Involve. We are only as strong as those who are willing to involve themselves in our ongoing mission and ministry. Find a Sunday School class or Bible study to be involved in as a way of strengthening your walk with Christ. Or start a new class or study yourself and provide leadership in a crucial arena of our church life together.

I am so excited to be your senior minister, and I am so thrilled about all that I know God has ahead for us. But, I need your help to make it possible. Show up for church, prove faithful to being in worship and sharing your time, talent, and treasure at FPC, and I know that we will all stand amazed in the presence of the One who is calling us upward and onward.

Looking forward to seeing you in worship this Sunday!

Pastor Kip

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 3
5:30 pm



First Friday

Friday, October 3
5:30 pm

CHURCH
WORKDAY



SATURDAY
OCTOBER 4

Church Workday

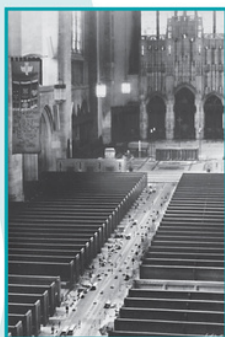
Saturday, Oct. 4
8:00 am – 12:00 pm



Children's Choir Performance

Sunday, Oct. 5
11:00 am Worship Service

ENGAGE
DISCIPLESHIP



PARTICIPANT'S BOOK

Engage Discipleship Study

October Schedule

Sunday, October 5 (9:45 am) last class
Monday, October 6 (5:30 pm) last class



Pastor Kip continues a new sermon series!

Happiness is an Inside Job: Jesus' 8 Principles for Powerful Living!

Together, we'll explore how to live a joyful, purpose-filled life. Come be part of the journey.

Ladies Bible Study
Tuesday mornings 10:00 am
October 14, 21, 28

Join us in the Meade Conference Room
as we begin a new study series
led by Carl Gebhardt.

Ladies Bible Study
Tuesday mornings at 10:00 am

October 14
October 21
October 28

Candy Donations

Help us get ready for our Trunk or Treat event! We're collecting individually wrapped candy to share with kids in our community.

Please drop off donations in the bin located in the Welcome Center.

Thanks for helping make this event sweet and fun for all!



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY



Trunk or Treat

Sunday, October 26

4-6 pm

Mark your calendars for our annual Trunk or Treat. It's fun for all ages!



Household & Cleaning Supply Donation Drive

The Children's Ministry & Mission Committee are collecting items needed at The Help Center. Please help them reach their goal of 500 items by October 31.

Items needed:

- toilet paper
- paper towels
- dish soap
- laundry detergent
- cleaning products (glass cleaner, toilet cleaner, shower scrub, etc.)

"What's in the Box?"

A Special Time for Children's Worship

On the second Sunday of each month we will have a unique and interactive Children's Worship time with Pastor Kip, called **"What's in the Box?"** Each month, one child will bring a special item to place in the box—Pastor Kip won't know what it is until it's opened! He'll then create a meaningful, on-the-spot lesson inspired by that item. It's a fun and faith-filled time designed to spark curiosity, creativity, and connection to God's Word.





What a great year!

Yes, it has been a whole year since we set out to create something new with DownTown Youth. It has been an amazing experience, and I am so thankful to be a part of it.

It has been such a blessing to meet you and your awesome students!

I will be forever grateful for this opportunity.

I am always here if you need me.

Love, Tammy Spake =)



Mission Opportunities



Volunteers are desperately needed for Community Soup Kitchen, as we continue to serve more and more people!

Example of jobs: ticket takers, plate scrapers, and clean up helpers.

Volunteer hours: 11:45 am- 1:30.



We aim to exemplify Jesus' charge in Matthew 25 by serving our community's unhoused population with overnight shelter, meal distribution, job searches, housing application assistance, and distribution of essentials.

director@shoalsshelter.org
(256) 272-1660

P. O. Box 1713, Florence, AL

Shoals Shelter

(formally Home Free Haven)

We had our first cooperative church meeting on September 28 and couldn't be more grateful for the turnout we had!

We had great interest and insight into how the program will unfold this season, and we appreciated all of the feedback, questions, and excitement everyone brought to the table.

These folks love their neighbor in such tangible ways!

If you have questions on how you can get involved, we hope you'll come to our next meeting, **October 12th at 2PM!**

We will also be holding a volunteer meeting for those who are interested in personal involvement, so keep an eye out for when that gets scheduled!

Tom Gillis

Mission and Service Committee, Moderator

Session Minutes - August 26, 2025

New Business

- Approve Kip to be the new officer for the church credit card – It is required by the financial institution to name a new officer for the church credit card. The officer must be named in the church minutes per the financial institution. A motion was made by Randy Pettus, seconded by Tommy Bowser, and approved by vote to name Dr. Kip Laxson as the officer for the church credit card.
- Parking for Uhland Redd III service – This was briefly discussed. Action is being taken by Tommy Bowser and John Carter to secure the parking lot for Mr. Redd's service. No action is required by the Session.

Committee Minutes - September 2025

Christian Education no Moderator Notes

Congregational Care no Moderator notes

Engagement & Fellowship

- Church picnic September 21 Shelter 2 at 3pm-5pm Eating at 3pm, Games to follow;
- First Friday FPC table October 3; Chili Cookoff and Bingo November 8 at 3pm

Mission and Service

- Plan to engage youth at FPC in missions in progress. First activity will be through Cleaning Supplies Drive for folks in need.
- Engagement of FPC with winter shelter program under review.

Stewardship

- Expenses exceeding income, but less than the budget deficit that was expected at this time of the year.
- Still with sufficient reserves to pay bills and complete the landscaping on the new building.
- Please be in prayer about your stewardship plans for next year as we prepare our budget.

Worship no Moderator Notes

Committee Meetings

Tuesday, October 14

5:00 pm Christian Education/Library

4:00 pm Congregational Care/Appleby

5:15 pm Worship/Meade

6:00 pm Engagement & Fellowship/Meade
Mission/Appleby

Tuesday, October 21

5:00 pm Stewardship/Library

Tuesday, October 28

5:30 pm Session Coordinating/Appleby

6:00 pm Stated Meeting of Session/Meade

**Committee minutes
are due by 4:00 pm
Tuesday, October 21**



We are there
LET US BE PEACEMAKERS.

Let us be called the children of God,
speaking boldly with moral conviction
to the nation and to the world,
building, with God's grace,
a new moral order in the world community; and
acting now for world peace,
an enterprise of justice, an outcome of love.

The Peace & Global Witness Offering
brings us together to pursue peace in our
own communities and around the world.

25% of this Offering stays with our congregation to support
peacemaking and reconciliation in our own community.

25% of this Offering goes to our mid-council to join with other
congregations to support peacemaking work in our region.

50% of this Offering supports the work being done by
Presbyterians across the globe

Please give what you can.
IF WE ALL DO A LITTLE, IT ADDS UP TO A LOT.
Thank you!