THE COMMUNIQUE: APRIL 2024

A publication of First Presbyterian Church Athens, TX



PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

We have experienced the joy of Easter and now we are looking at April 1st. That's right, April Fool's Day. On that day people try to come up with some of the wildest tales and statements they can to trick or "fool" their family members and friends. I've known people to work for weeks fabricating stories that sound so real that you're drawn right into them and even start believing them until you hear those fateful words, "April Fool".

There are people who still believe that the resurrection of Jesus is nothing more than a cruel April Fool's joke. You might even know some of them. They feel the empty tomb didn't happen or, if it did, Jesus' body was stolen and never recovered. It was nothing more than an elaborate scheme to trick people into believing in someone that was nothing more than a good person or, at best, a prophet and teacher. We know better!

In this world of change, doubt and fear those of us who proudly wear the title "Christian" know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that our Lord lives and reigns and will return soon. One statement has echoed down through the hallways of time and has never lost its intensity; "The Lord is risen!"

This is no April Fool's prank. This is no joke to be laughed at and forgotten. This isn't a statement that you can point your finger at the person and say; "That's a good one. You sure got me." No, this is the most reliable truth that can, and must be shared with the world.

"The Lord is risen!" No longer do we walk in darkness, now we walk in the light of God's Son. No longer do we fear the future, for our future is to be at home with Christ. And, after all of this, to those who still don't believe? The joke is on them.



First Presbyterian Church-Athens 405 East Corsicana Street Athens, Texas 75751

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 927 Athens, Texas 75751

Office Phone:903-675-3530 Website: www.fpcathens.com Email: secretaryfpcathens@gmail.com Pastor Woody



Welcome to FPC-Athens



LEARN MORE ABOUT US BY VISITING WWW.FPCATHENS.COM





FPC - Athens is a warm, nurturing, supportive and inclusive church family of deeply committed disciples who are excited about following Christ out into the world through our extensive mission and ministry programs. Founded in 1855, FPC Athens is steeped in the nearly 500 year old Reformed Tradition, and yet our leadership team is always actively seeking God's spirit to lead us as we minster to God's people in new and creative ways.

The church's active congregation participates in both local and worldwide ministries, such as the Athens Soup Kitchen and Agape Quilts. Additionally, the church grounds host many groups throughout the week, including Mother's Day Out, a twice-a-week children's ministry that has been held here for 30 years and Love In Action, a monthly lunch for the homeless prepared by our church members. We also support Presbyterian Church USA missionaries in South Korea.

If you are looking to actively engage in meaningful, spirit-filled worship, hands-on volunteering, life-changing mission work, a powerful music ministry, intergenerational programs, and lifegiving fellowship, the FPC family is the home for you. We offer a variety of mission and ministry opportunities, thoughtful Christian education for all ages, two different styles of worship, programs for families, youth and children, attentive childcare during worship and events, and a loving, inclusive atmosphere where all are welcomed!

If you have questions about what it means to be a Presbyterian, are seeking a new church home, or just want more information, please contact our church office at 903-675-3530.



Mission Statement:

A family of disciples touched by God's grace, called to share Christ through worship, ministry, and outreach.

We strive to live out our Mission Statement by providing worship and Christian Education experiences that allow for personal spiritual growth. As equipped disciples we then go into the world to model Christ's love to others.

We would love to have you be a part of this loving and joy-filled family of God.





First Presbyterian Church Prayer List: April 1, 2024

Sharon Chasey, Bob & Dolores Herrington, Burt Lively, Roberta Ferris, Sharron Clark, Mike Babler, Jan Capelle, Bates Bates, Don Geddie

Those Who Are in Need of Our Visits & Prayers Oak Hills Terrace Memory Care: Don Geddie Lakeland Assisted Living: Fred Davies Oak Wood Assisted Living: Fran Jones (Hospice), Susan Underkofler, Mark Carlson **Those Who Are Grieving** Family of Denice Bailey Family of Scotty Thomas Family of Wayne Weeks **Prayers For Those Serving In The Mission Field** Kurt Esslinger and Hyeyoung Lee – Missionaries in Korea **Prayers For Church & Country** Our church and its leaders, Our community and its leaders, Our nation, and its leaders. **Those We Love Needing Prayer** Evelyn Jackson (cousin of the Lively's) Joe Ed, Becky & Del Young (neighbors of Martha McSweeney-Sandy Perkins sister), DeeDee Manton, Margaret Moore (friends of Sandy Perkins) Jan Suhr, Brandon Monkerud (friends of Susan Sparkman) John Baggett (friend of Ann & Elliott Boyles) Jessica Rodriguez, Olan & Maryanne Timmons (friends of Eric & Kara Davis) Nation of Israel and those in the Texas Panhandle Hailey Durran (friend of Susie House) Sue Dover (Melanie Whatley's Mother) Luis Chavez (brother-in-law of Jim & Karen Brack) Denice Bailey (friend of Angela St. Valentine) Susan Saxe (Elizabeth Van Orden's Mother) Brother of Nikki DuBose John Walsh (Carol Morton's Brother) Becky Adams, Norma Pieper (friends of Sharon Harding and Cathie Scarborough) Hank Sauls (Donna Meredith's cousin-in-law) Rob & Shereia Fulton (friends of Donna Meredith) Jan Wright (friend of Jan Capelle) Randy Daniel, Janis Marshall

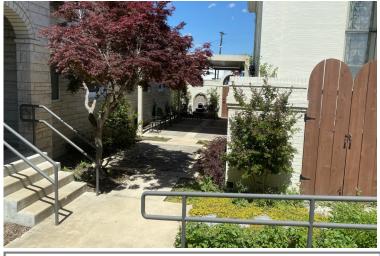
Those We Love in the Armed Forces

Si Robson, U.S. Army Ranger, Missouri	
Those Away at School	

Chloe Wright	Elaine Hendrickson	Madison Rhodes
Hannah Davis	Tate Elfarr	Toby Rhodes
Alex Elfarr	Olivia Whatley	Heidi Davis

Session Members and Where They Serve

Building and Grounds: Chairman-Rick Stroupe Christian Education: Chairman-Kathryn Hendrickson Communications: Chairman-Scott Cruce Community Concerns/Missions: Chairman-Kara Davis/Claire Grant Congregational Life: Chairman-Melanie Whatley Caring Connections: Chairman-Joan King Personnel: Chairman-Steve Yarbrough Stewardship: Chairman-Steven Smith Witness: Chairman-Nancy Perryman Worship: Chairman-Marcy Warren Clerk of Session: Donna Ward



Columbarium News

For many centuries, cemeteries were commonly found in churchyards, allowing churches to minister to the spiritual needs of their members. But there is a modern alternative which churches are offering their members: the Columbarium.

A Columbarium is a collection of niches designed to house urns inscribed with the person's names and dates of birth and death.

The principal benefit a Columbarium affords church members and their families is the opportunity to select their final resting place in the shadow of the church where their loved ones can visit and meditate at any time.

> The Columbarium is part of First Presbyterian Church and functions under the authority of the Session.

A Columbarium Committee oversees operation of the Columbarium.

If you wish to discuss the purchase of a niche within the Columbarium, please contact the church office.

Community Prayer Box





Please continue to spread the word about the community prayer box located behind the Cain Family Building.

If you have a prayer request, please do not hesitate to ask for prayers from your church family & friends.

We are called to pray for one another.

CHURCH LIBRARY

Do you need a new book to lose yourself in or maybe revisit one you haven't read in a long while? Then, we want to invite you to visit the church library and take one home. The library is open Monday-Friday from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm and on Sunday from 8:30 am to Noon.

Easy book check-out instructions are posted. We welcome suggestions for new books, videos or CD's to order, and book donations in honor or in memory of someone special.

For questions or help, contact Kim Scott (kscott7938@aol.com).

The library is located in the church office area, past the front desk, 2nd door on the right.





All are welcome! Please join us; you'll be glad you did! Call the church office at 903-675-3530 with any questions.

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

Disciples Class

The **Disciples Class** makes use of "The Wired Word" or similar materials, which blends national or world events of the previous week and relevant Bible verses to guide our discussion.

Come join us. Our class encourages enthusiastic discussion and is led by four different teachers.

Disciples Contact Person: Lacey Ward

Rotation of Teachers: Carol McNatt, Sheri Robson, Lacey Ward & Linda Horton

Location: Conference Room in the Main Building Time: 9:45am Sunday morning

Friendship Class

The **Friendship Class** is currently discussing the book "The Great Disappearance: 31 Ways to be Rapture Ready" by Dr. David Jeremiah. Come join us if you want to explore more of God's Word.

For more information, please contact Donna Meredith at (903) 286-2085 or donnafostermeredith@gmail.com.

Friendship Leader: Mike Babler Location: Main Church Building, Friendship Classroom Time: 9:45am Sunday morning

Seekers Class

The Seekers Class is currently studying,

"The Case for Faith: A Journalist Investigates the Toughest Objections to Christianity" by Lee Strobel. This bestselling book is for those who may be feeling attracted to Jesus but who are faced with difficult questions standing squarely in their path.

We would like to invite you to join us during our time of study and fellowship.

Seekers Contact Person: Steve Grant Location: Main Church Building, Upstairs east side. Time: 9:45am Sunday morning

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL & MORE

If you have any questions, please contact Kathryn Hendrickson at 903-681-2887.

OH WHAT FUN!!! ST. PATRICK'S DAY & PALM SUNDAY



Toddler and Baby Nursery Open in the Main Building

Sunday Nursery remains the same for Older Children in the Children's Building.

In order to accommodate our younger families and visitors with infants and toddlers, the crib and toddler rooms in the main church building are open and staffed with two workers.

In addition, we will continue to staff the Children's Building with two workers for children ages 3 and up.

Nursery workers are available during both worship services as well as during the Sunday School hour.

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

Ages 3 and up

Teachers: Kathryn Hendrickson & Susan Sparkman

MIDDLE SCHOOL & HIGH SCHOOL SUNDAY SCHOOL

Watch for monthly meeting date reminders!

All Youth ages <u>6th - 12th grades</u> meet on Sunday mornings in the Youth House located by the Main Parking lot at 9:30am.

> Teachers: Steve & Claire Grant and Steven & Lolly Smith

EASTER FUN















...MORE EASTER FUN





























IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Precinct 4 - LaRue Waste Station Information

Precinct 4 Waste Station Pricing Waste Station Location Monday, Wednesday and Saturday 8:00am - 3:00pm (903) 675-7750

Recently the FPC-Athens Disciples Sunday School Class considered three reports dealing with changes in the environment that have the potential to dramatically alter what the future looks like for this planet and its inhabitants.

Then we looked for guidance from Scripture:

The earth mourns and withers, the world languishes and withers; the heavens languish together with the earth. The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants; (Isaiah 24, 4-5)

But also:

You have given [humans] dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet, all sheep and oxen,

and also the beasts of the field,

the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,

whatever passes along the paths of the seas (Psalm 8:6-8)

This led us to the question: What positive, practical steps can you as an individual or family unit take to care for God's creation?

After spirited discussion we discovered that not everyone in the class was aware of some "positive, practical steps" such as recycling that are available for us right here in Henderson County. As an example, **Henderson County has a recycling center at Precinct 4 in LaRue**, which was instituted through the efforts of the late commissioner Ken Geeslin. Precinct 4 accepts the following items for recycling free of charge: Paper, Plastic, Cans, Glass, Oil & most Electronics. While all county precincts will take other trash and many other items for a small fee, only Precinct 4 offers the free recycling of those items listed above. Gary Espy currently serves as the manager at the location, and he can provide additional details, as well as free Hershey's kisses to those who stop by. And Gary has his own way of taking care of the "beasts of the field." He keeps a few dog treats in his office!

The Precinct 4 center is located in LaRue at 9769 CR 4719, just north of Highway 175, about 12 miles southeast of Athens. The center is open on Monday-Wednesday-Saturday 8:00am-3:00pm.

AIM Recycling: We also want to remind everyone that there is a wonderful metal salvage and recycling business in Athens that goes by the name, AIM Recycling. It is located at 951 Hwy 175 West, Athens 75751. This facility will accept all metal items of virtually any size and will EVEN PAY YOU FOR IT!

CHURCH MINISTRIES



Sally's Soup Ministry

Sally's Soup Ministry was born as a result of the love that one woman had for the people God had placed around her, Sally Jean Hawn Sparkman. Sally loved to cook and frequently made soups to take to those who were not feeling well, who had new babies at home, to make someone feel better or as a Christmas gift. She had several specialty recipes that were well received by all those she visited. She had a big, contagious laugh that could fill up a room. When she found something funny, there was no doubt about it!

In the shadow of a car accident that took her life in 2004, those that she had loved on and cared for during their times of need, began to talk about her 'gifts'. Thus the idea was born to begin "Sally's Soup Ministry", to continue in her footsteps, by caring for those that need it.

Today there are many volunteers who prepare soup and other meals to be delivered to those who need them. It is just a small tribute to our friend, Sally, who taught us through her example, the power of the gift of hospitality.

If you are interested in being a part of the Sally's Soup Ministry, we meet the 1st Wednesday of each month at 6:00PM in the Fellowship Hall kitchen. Be ready for a time of fellowship, as we prepare soup for those who will need it.

Are you new to FPC-Athens? We would love to have you join us!

If you are not a new member, but haven't had the privilege of joining us in the past, please contact Claire Grant at clairewgrant@aol.com or Steve Sparkman at srsparkman@yahoo.com

821M, The Rebecca Project

Each Saturday morning at 9:00 am in the Fellowship Hall volunteers prepare and deliver home-cooked meals to the elderly, shut-ins and the homeless.

Delivery drivers, and others, are needed weekly.

Questions?

Please contact Jim & Jana Thompson at 903-880-2855 if you are interested in volunteering.

HC FOOD PANTRY



Henderson County Food Pantry

donations. Donations can be brought to the church offic or dropped off at the pantry location listed below.



The Henderson County Food Pantry is always in need of donations and volunteers!

They are open from 9:00AM to 12:00PM on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Food may be dropped off at the church office or at the pantry location.

Contact Mamie Downing at 903-477-3010. Email: mamie.d.downing@gmail.com or call the church office for more information.



Showing the love of Jesus to the homeless and poor in Henderson County

We will be providing lunch for Love in Action on the 4th Friday of the month.

An email is typically sent out 2 weeks before hand with the list of items needed to prepare the meal.

Questions?

Email the church office at secretaryfpcathens@gmail.com

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Volunteer

Don't forget... We are needing members in our congregation to prayerfully consider volunteering to prepare a meal quarterly with a team of your choosing.

Please consider helping, as this is an important mission in our church & community.

For more information, you may contact Kara Davis @ 903-203-2184.

If you would like to be added to our SignUpGenius meal distribution list, please contact the church office or email Kelly at secretaryfpcathens@gmail.com



Soup Kitchen

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!



Contact Sharon Chasey if you are interested in helping or would like more information. 903-292-1639 or 903-477-7498 Email: skchasey@aol.com.

We are currently only serving 50-100 people on Tuesdays or Thursdays and providing "take-out" service of soup, sandwich & dessert.

Serving time is from 11AM-1PM



"CASA of Trinity Valley provides independent, highly trained volunteer advocates for children in the custody of Texas Department of Family and Protective Services in Anderson, Cherokee and Henderson counties.

We empower volunteers to advocate for the children's best interests, to ensure that their needs are met, and to secure a permanent, safe, and nurturing home as soon as possible."

FPC-Athens provides financial support and the use of its Fellowship Hall, as a meeting place for the CASA staff each month.

To find out more information on becoming a CASA advocate or volunteer visit their website www.casaoftv.org or contact director, Keith Loper at <u>casakeith@casaoftv.org</u> or by calling 903-675-7070/903-802-1939.



This collegiate ministry is located adjacent to Trinity Valley Community College, here in Athens, TX.

Volunteers are on campus weekly to connect with students by having lunch with them and offering a designated space where they can come with questions or just conversation. Bible study is offered twice a month on Fridays, and final Fridays have a structured event which includes a meal.

> If you would like to know more about this wonderful ministry or would like to volunteer to help, please contact Jolene Taylor, our liaison to The Ark at 713-816-6830 or bobjolene1@gmail.com



Presbyterian Children's
Homes and Services™CARE AND SUPPORT for
children & families in need.

With faithful support from individuals, churches and foundations, PCHAS serves nearly 4,500 children and families across three states every year.

As stewards of this trust and support, PCHAS follows these tenets of excellence to ensure families achieve self-sufficiency and children are placed into loving, permanent homes.

First Presbyterian Church-Athens provides school supplies for middle and high school students, Christmas presents to families located in the East Texas area as well as family baskets. The family baskets contain games and activities to promote family togetherness.

> Members also attend the PCHAS Annual Meeting located in Dallas during the month of November.

Would you like more information about PCHAS?

Visit the PCHAS online at www.pchas.org or contact Claire Grant, the FPC Athens liaison at clairewgrant@aol.com

FPC Athens Agape Quilts Ministry



When you walk into the Cain Family Building on Monday mornings, you are greeted by the hum of sewing machines and the laughter of the wonderful volunteers of this ministry.

Quilts are flying off of the tables and getting ready to be delivered to those who need them most. However, to continue the work we do we are asking for your help as we are in great need of **Fabric Donations**.

Please see our wish list below and if you have any questions or would like more information, please reach out to Sofia Yarbrough at 720-936-5225 or sofiathegreek@gmail.com

Agape Quilts Wish List:



Quilts, bedspreads, blankets, and fleece throws. Donations should all be washed and in good condition to piece together for sleeping bags.

Thank you so much, Sofia and her partners.



MEN FOR HIM

Men for Him Chorus meets weekly and practices on Tuesday evenings from 6:30-8:00 in the Fellowship Hall at First Presbyterian Church.

The chorus sings four-part barbershop style religious music and is made up of men from area churches. If God has gifted you with a singing voice, you may want to consider using that gift with the chorus.

We invite and encourage you to visit and check us out. We have fun, create lasting friendships with men from other churches and share our witness through music.

> If you would like more information, please feel free to call Ken Myers at 903-279-5065.

Join Us! Ladies Bible Study

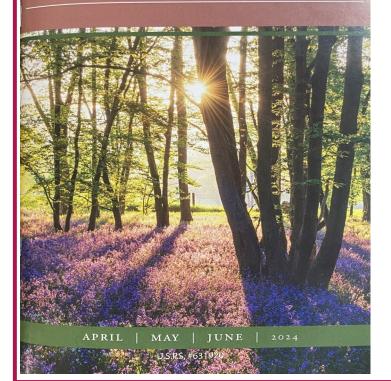
Thursday Mornings at 9:30AM



We meet on Thursday mornings in the upstairs classroom in the main church building at 9:30AM.

You may also call or email Kim Scott at kscott7938@aol.com or 903-368-0338 if you have any questions.





These Days, Daily Devotions for Living by Faith.

> Pick up your copy today!

~April, May & June~

Located in the church foyer



Pentecost Offering: April 1st-May 19th THE PENTECOST OFFERING HELPS OUR YOUTH BEGIN LIFE WITH A STRONG START — A SOLID FOUNDATION OF FAITH FORMED IN THE FIRST THIRD OF LIFE, FROM CHILDHOOD THROUGH YOUNG ADULTHOOD.

More information to come!



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH-ATHENS, TX



We are located one block east of the Courthouse Square in Athens, TX. June 18th-21st: Ages 6-10 Limited Enrollment to 25

June 25th-27th: Ages 3-5 *Must be potty trained! Limited Enrollment to 25

Registration forms are available on our website or you may pick one up at the church office

REGISTER NOW! Free Event

405 E. CORSICANA STREET ATHENS, TX 75751 903-675-3530 WWW.FPCATHENS.COM SECRETARYFPCATHENS@GMAIL.COM

Follow Us on Social Media

Get Connected and Informed about the Latest News & Happenings within the life of the church.

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@firstpresbyterianchurchathenstexas



Instagram: @fpcathenstx



YouTube: @fpcathenstexas532



Website: www.fpcathens.com **April Activities**

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat 4 5 1 2 3 6 9:00am-3:00pm MDO 9:00am 12:00pm ETCADA (CR) 9:30am Ladies 9:00am-3:00pm 9:00am 4:30pm Worship AGAPE Quilts (CFB) Bible Study (UC) MDO Rebecca Project (FH) Committee Mtg. (FC) 5:00pm Bell Practice (Not meeting) 5:15pm CC/Missions 5:30pm Christian ED Mtg. (FC)-Not Mtg! Committee Mtg. (FC) 6:30pm Men for Him 6:00pm Sally's Soup (FH) 7 2nd Sunday of Easter 8 9 10 11 12 13 and Communion 12:00pm ETCADA 9:00am-3:00pm Color: White and Gold 9:00am 9:30am Ladies 9:00am-3:00pm 9:00am (CR) AGAPE Quilts (CFB) MDO Bible Study (UC) MDO Rebecca Project (FH) 8:30am Worship Service (FH) 5:00pm Bell Practice 6:30pm Men for Him 9:45am Sunday School (FHC) (FH) 11:00am Worship Service 6:15pm Session Mtg. (Sanctuary) (FHC) 1:30pm Chancel Choir 15 16 17 18 19 20 14 **3rd Sunday of Easter** Color: White and Gold 12:00pm ETCADA 9:30am Ladies 9:00am-3:00pm 9:00am 9:00am-3:00pm 9:00am 8:30am Worship Service (FH) (CR) Bible Study (UC) MDO AGAPE Quilts (CFB) Rebecca Project FH) MDO 9:45am Sunday School 5:00pm Bell Practice 11:00am Worship Service (FHC) 6:30pm Men for Him (Sanctuary) (FH) 6:00pm Family Night 1:30pm Chancel Choir Supper (FH) 27 21 22 23 24 25 26 4th Sunday of Easter Color: White and Gold 9:00am 9:00am-3:00pm 12:00pm ETCADA 9:30am Ladies 9:00am-3:00pm 9:00am AGAPE Quilts (CFB) Bible Study (UC) MDO Rebecca Project FH) MDO (CR) 8:30am Worship Service (FH) 6:30pm Men for Him 5:00pm Bell Practice 10:00am CASA Staff 9:45am Sunday School (FH) (FHC) Mtg (FH) 11:00am Worship Service LIA Meal Served (Sanctuary) 1:30pm Chancel Choir 11:00am-Henderson LIA Meal Items due to FPC **County Homeless** Athens by 12:00-noon. Ministry. 28 29 30 5th Sunday of Easter Color: White and Gold 9:00am-3:00pm 9:00am 8:30am Worship Service (FH) AGAPE Quilts (CFB) MDO

PW - Presbyterian Women CFB - Cain Family Building FH - Fellowship Hall

6:30pm Men for Him

(FH)

9:45am Sunday School

11:00am Worship Service

(Sanctuary) 1:30pm Chancel Choir

FHC - Fellowship Hall Classroom CB - Children's Building

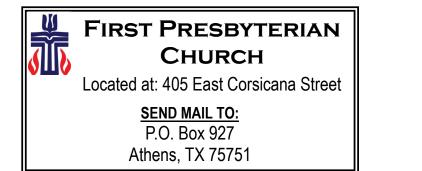
YH - Youth House CR - Conference Room FC - Friendship Classroom UC - Upstairs Classroom



	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Anna Fontana	2	3	4 Sofia Yarbrough	5	6
-	7	8 Roberta Ferris	9	10 Les Funkhouser	11 Jim Brack	12	13
-	14	15	16 Judy Willis	17 John Cain Kelly Ketelboeter	18 Joh Hurley	19	20
	21 Harry Budow	22	23 Kevin Endsley Finley Endsley	24	25	26 Shelli Morrison	27 Toby Rhodes
-	28	29 Elaine Hendrickson	30	We would like to wish the following congregation members a very Happy Birthday.			

Anniversary Blessings

04/07: Charlie & Andrea Meadows 04/24: John & Felecia Cain



APRIL 2024 Communique

Get our Communique Newsletter delivered to your Inbox!

Visit www.fpcathens.com and select Church Communique from the menu bar.

Simply fill out the form. Remember to check your email spam folder if you didn't receive an email.

Join Us On Sundays

Contemporary Worship at 8:30am in the Fellowship Hall.

Sunday School at 9:45am see newsletter for locations or visit the church website.

Traditional Worship at 11:00am in the Sanctuary

Child Care-Children's Building (For both services & Sunday School) Pastor Rev. Woody Meredith woody@fpcathens.com

Director of Music Janis Capelle

Organist & Bell Choir Leader Mamie Downing

> Music Leader Kara Davis

Business Manager Marshall Endsley marshall@fpcathens.com

Office Manager Kelly Sasenbery secretaryfpcathens@gmail.com (Facebook/Messenger/Newsletter Editor/Webmaster)

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION

Submit your items for the Communique by the 21st of each month!

Email news & photos to secretaryfpcathens@gmail.com

We Are

A family of Disciples, touched by God's grace, called to share Christ through Worship, Ministry & Outreach.