



Member of PC-USA

The Communique: *January 2026*

A publication of First Presbyterian Church-Athens, TX



We are a warm, caring, nurturing, and supportive Church family of deeply committed disciples who are excited about sharing the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ with the world through numerous avenues of ministry.

We are rich in history, having been founded in 1855, but we continue to be actively seeking God's will in the 21st Century. We continue to rely on God's Spirit as we strive to serve God's people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love. We would love to have you be a part of this loving and joy-filled family of God.

If you are searching for answers to life's pressing questions, you are welcome here. If you are looking to be a part of a spirit-filled worship experience that can fill you with God's love and power, you are welcome here. If you are seeking a Church home where your individual talents can be shared, you are welcome here.

Please accept my personal invitation to come and experience the love, joy and peace of God that's found at First Presbyterian Church of Athens.

Our doors and hearts are open to you. Welcome! Rev. Woody Meredith

"The Communique"

is a monthly newsletter publication distributed electronically in pdf format to subscribers.

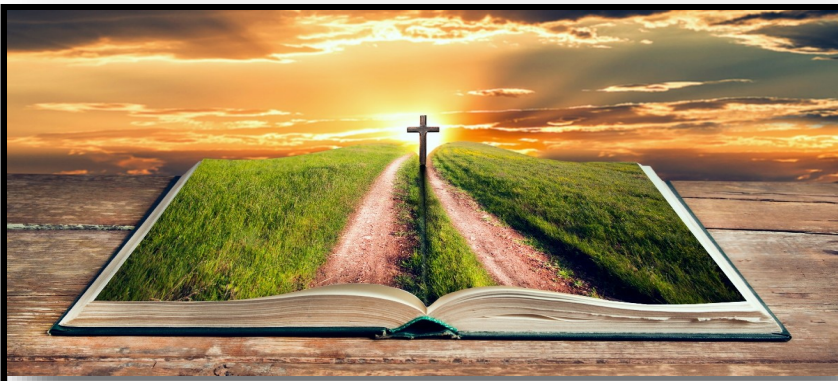
If you are interested in receiving a digital copy, please visit our "About" section of our website at www.fpcathens.com and select the heading "Communique Newsletter".

Simply fill out the form provided and submit.

***Items being submitted for the Communique are due by the 21st of every month to secretaryfpcathens@gmail.com**

Highlights:

- ◇ PASTOR'S PONDERINGS
- ◇ CHURCH REPORTS: DECEMBER 2025
- ◇ MINISTRY ACTIVITIES & NEEDS
- ◇ JANUARY 2026 ACTIVITIES CALENDAR
- ◇ LOVE IN ACTION MEAL DETAILS
- ◇ FAMILY NIGHT SUPPER: 01/21
- ◇ JANUARY SPOTLIGHT: SALLY'S SOUP



Pastor's Ponderings:

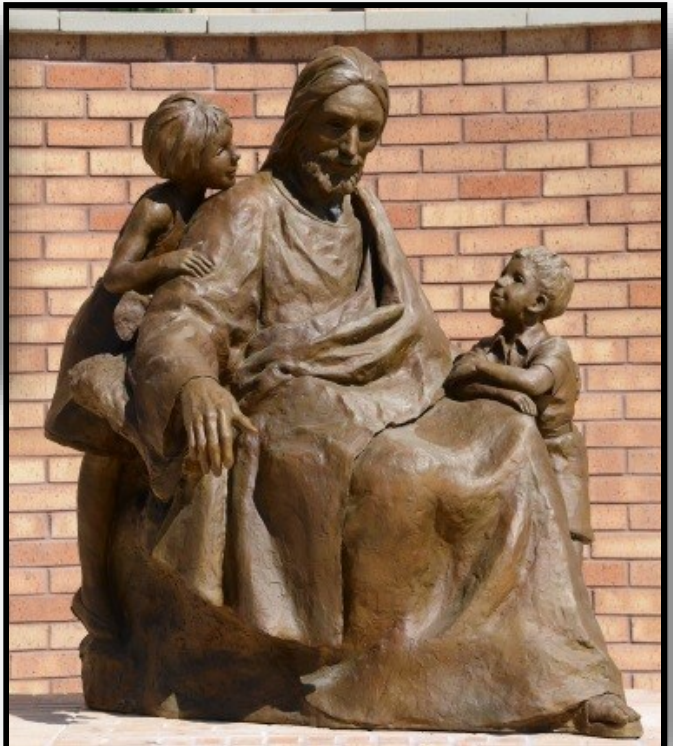
As we begin a new year I am reminded of the story of when D. L. Moody preached in Brooklyn in 1875. Thousands were converted. Pastor Henry Ward Beecher struggled to understand this phenomenon until he met Moody personally. "I saw the secret of his work and plans," wrote Beecher. "He is a believer in the second advent of Christ, and in our own time He thinks that Christ may even come tomorrow." Beecher added, "I should be a burning fire all the time if I believed like that."

Peter expected Christ to come again too, writing, "The end of the world is coming soon. Therefore, be earnest and disciplined in your prayers. Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins.... God has given each of you a gift from his variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another"

My friends, as we begin a new year, we need to realize that time is short, and we need to work as though this may be the year when Christ returns. Like D. L. Moody, prioritize your life with the Second Coming in view. Let's speak and serve as those who are longing for our Lord's swift appearance. In 2026, let's follow the example of Henry Ward Beecher and strive to be on fire all the time. Happy New Year!



Pastor Woody



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.



Would you like to have the opportunity to become a part of FPC-Athens worship experience?

Contact the church office about Liturgist and Greeter opportunities.

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 8:00am to 2:00pm and on Sunday from 8:30am 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.



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.

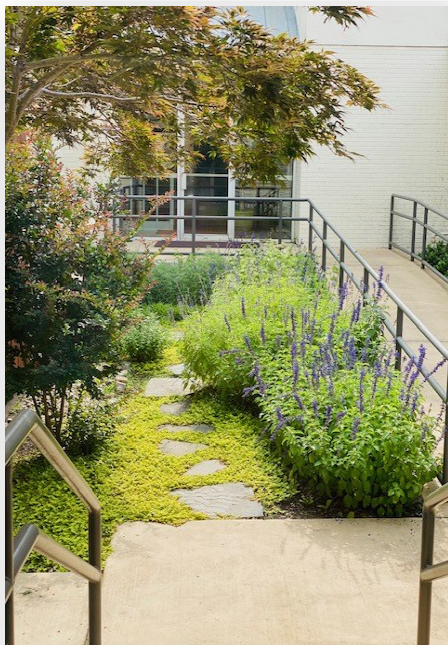
The principal benefit a Columbarium affords church members and their families is the opportunity to select their final resting place in the shadow of the church where their loved ones can visit and meditate at any time.

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.

Sherry Smith Prayer Garden:



Our church prayer garden (shared in the same space as the columbarium) is a peaceful sanctuary surrounded by blooming flowers and shaded trees.

Whether seeking comfort, expressing gratitude, or simply enjoying the scenery, visitors & members alike feel embraced by the presence of God.

It is a cherished corner of the church, reminding all who enter of the beauty of faith and the power of prayer.

Contact the church office if you are interested in lending a hand in maintaining the prayer garden.

PRAYER LIST



Congregation Members
Who Need Our Prayers

Burt Lively, Jan Capelle,
Sue Murray, Sharron Clark,
John Kidwell, Elliott Boyles



Those Who Are in Need of
Our Visits & Prayers

Lakeland Assisted Living:
Fred Davies
Oak Wood Place Assisted Living:
Susan Underkofler, Mark Carlson
Arabella of Athens:
Dolores Herrington
Mary Lynn Smith



Those Who Are Grieving

Family of Stacy Kissinger
Family of Charles Donaldson
(father of Rev. Diana Hartman)



Those We Love in the Armed Forces

Si Robson,
U.S. Army Ranger, Fort Campbell, KY
Adam King (grandson of Joan King)
Army, Fort Bragg, NC



Prayers For Our Church & Country

Our church and its leaders.
Our community and its leaders.
Our nation, and its leaders
and the nation of Israel.



Prayers For Those Serving
In The Mission Field

Kurt Esslinger and Hyeyoung Lee
Missionaries in Korea



Those Away at School

Madison Rhodes, Heidi Davis, Tate Elfarr, Sophie Wright



Those We Love Needing Prayer

DeeDee Manton (friend of Sandy Perkins)
Jennifer McSweeney (niece of Sandy Perkins)
Becky Young (friend of Sandy Perkins)
Kay Ruiz (friend of Eric & Kara Davis)
Paige Reeves (friend of many)
Grady Chancellor (friend of many)
Eugene Buford (family member of Morrison's
& Cole's, friend of many)
Mike Pulley (friend of many)
Kathy Moser (friend of The Neill's)
Pam Tischler (friend of Kenn & Shirley Hornbeck)

Nancy Kissinger (mother of Nikki DuBose)
Janice Russell (friend of The Grant's)
Cheryl Hartman (cousin of Paul & Diana Hartman)
Bill Hartman (brother of Paul Hartman)
Randy Daniel (friend of many)
Rob & Shereia Fulton (friends of The Meredith's)
Brenda (Johnson) Smith (friend of many)
Mike Wood (friend of many)

Session Members and Where They Serve

Building and Grounds: Charlie Tidmore
Christian Education: Angela St. Valentine
Community Concerns/Missions/Witness:
Kara Davis/Steve Grant/Nancy Perryman
Congregational Life:
Melanie Whatley/Marcy Warren

Personnel: John Youngblood
Stewardship: Steven Smith
Worship: John Purser
Clerk of Session: Donna Ward

CHILDREN'S *Sunday School*

FPC-Athens Christian Education Committee offers educational activities that occur on Sunday mornings to encourage growth & leadership as disciples of Jesus Christ. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Angela St. Valentine at 817-271-2211.

BABY & TODDLER

The nursery is open in the main church building. Note: 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.

Nursery workers are available during both worship services & during Sunday School.

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

**Located in the Children's Building for ages 3 and up.
Staffed with at least two workers.**

Teachers: Kathryn Hendrickson, Susan Sparkman, and Phyllis Kidwell.

MIDDLE SCHOOL SUNDAY SCHOOL

We meet in the Youth House located in the main church parking lot at 9:45am.

Our Teachers (Rotating Schedule):

Steve & Claire Grant

Angela St. Valentine & Alex Fernandez

Eric & Kara Davis

Pam Douglas & Tyler Hendrickson

Adult

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES

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

DISCIPLES CLASS: 9:45AM

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 three different teachers.

Disciples Contact Person: Lacey Ward

Rotation of Teachers: Sheri Robson, Lacey Ward, Lou Sutton, & Christy Purser

Location: Main Building-Conference Room .

FRIENDSHIP CLASS: 9:45AM

The **Friendship Class** is currently discussing "The Rapture: Fact or Fantasy" by Dr. Robert Jeffress.

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

Friendship Leader: Mike Babler

Location: Main Church Building-Friendship Classroom.

SEEKERS CLASS: 9:45AM

The **Seekers Class** is currently studying

What Was I Thinking?: Things I've Learned Since I Knew It All. By Rev. Steve Brown.

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

Seekers Contact Person: Steve Grant.

Spotlight

January 2026

Each month, FPC-Athens highlights a mission, ministry, or community outlet in our Communique newsletter.

Past and present editions can be found on our website at www.fpcathens.com

Sally's Soup Ministry

First Presbyterian Church-Athens, Texas, 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.

Contact Marcy Warren if you are interested in leading a hand or would like more information about this ministry at 903-603-8687.

We meet the 1st Wednesday of each month at 6:00 p.m. in the FPC-Athens Fellowship Hall Kitchen.



LOCAL MISSION PARTNERS & FPCA MINISTRIES

Join us in ministering not only to our own community, but to the world. The members of FPCA desire to carry out the mission of our LORD, Jesus Christ and to engage the members of our congregation in service to our community, so that they may grow in Christ. In addition to our volunteer work, we also provide financial support to the following ministries and missions.

For more information about the list below, visit our website or call the church office.



Local Mission Partners

- The Ark—Prepare meals for TVCC students.
- Athens Soup Kitchen
- Camp Gilmont
- CASA of Trinity Valley
- The Disciples Clinic
- Family Peace Project
- The Farm (Family Shelter)
- Fuel Fund via HC Help Center
- Henderson County Food Pantry
- Henderson County Young Life
- Labor of Love
- Lila Lane Outreach
- Love in Action (Monthly Meals-4th Friday)
- Meals on Wheels (North Texas)
- Presbyterian Children's Home & Services
- Rainbow Room
- Rebecca Project
- Skiin' with the Galilean Ministry

Other Opportunities within the Church

- Agape Quilt & Bedroll Ministry
- Chancel Choir
- Christmas Benevolence Program
- Hand Bell Choir
- Ladies Bible Study
- Men's Chorus "Men for Him"
- Monthly Family Night Supper
- Mother's Day Out
- PC USA Special Offerings
- Presbyterian Women's Fellowship
- Sally's Soup Ministry
- Vacation Bible School



**HENDERSON COUNTY
HOMELESS MINISTRY**

January's Love In Action meal items will be due at 12 noon on the 21st to the main church kitchen.
The meal will be served on the 23rd.

A Sign-Up Genius will be sent out the 2nd week of the month.

If you would like to be added to our distribution list, kindly contact the church office.



AGAPE Quilts:

If you have or know someone who might have heavier types of fabric & material to donate (quilts, bedspreads, blankets, & fleece throws),

Please contact Sharon Harding at 903-681-4649 or shar7@suddenlink.net



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH-ATHENS

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

FAMILY NIGHT SUPPER

Join Us! Wednesday, January 21, 2026
6:00pm in the Fellowship Hall

Featuring: 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.



BRING YOUR FAVORITE DESSERT, SALAD, CRACKERS &/OR CORNBREAD.
NO NEED TO RSVP! PLEASE CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE IF YOU HAVE
ANY QUESTIONS AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU!.

SPECIAL OFFERINGS

GET READY FOR 2026 UPDATES

Exciting updates are coming! The new year is the perfect time for fresh starts, and that's exactly what's coming for Special Offerings in 2026. The 226th General Assembly (2024) voted to update the Churchwide Special Offerings, transforming them into three caused-based opportunities to create global impact. Aligned with causes that speak to our ministry and mission, the refreshed Special Offerings will support initiatives to end injustice, feed the hungry, protect the vulnerable, and safeguard our shared future.

One Great Hour of Sharing — Supporting ministries of compassion through causes addressing hunger, disaster, poverty, climate change, and immigration/migration and refugees.

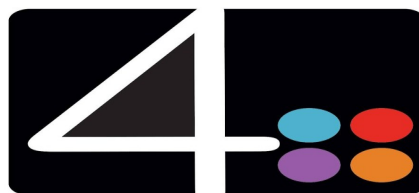
World Communion Offering — NEW in 2026! Calling all God's people to cultivate forms of reconciliation through racial justice, gender justice, peacemaking, global witness and ecumenical and interfaith relations.

Christmas Joy Offering — Supporting causes and ministries that serve God's children, including youth and young adults, children at risk, leadership development for people of color, Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color and servants of the church in need.

These updates provide Presbyterians with unique opportunities to create positive change for our children, our global siblings, and our world.



Contact the church office or Sandy Perkins if you are able to lend a hand. Thanks in advance!



WE GO
**FOUR
FOR
FOUR**


FPC-Athens has once again met the annual Special Offering commitments.

A tribute to the giving heart and commitment of our church's Session & members to our "broader church" commitments & obligations.

Thank you for the ongoing generosity & support!

FPC-Athens Activities Calendar

January 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			 ☆ Happy New Year ☆ 2026 ☆	1 New Year's Day --Church Office Closed--	2	3
4th Sunday of Christmas & Communion Color: White and Gold 8:30AM Worship Service (FH) 9:45AM Sunday School 11:00AM Worship Service (Sanctuary) Installation/Ordination of Incoming Session Members 1:30PM Chancel Choir	5 9:00am AGAPE Quilts (CFB) 10:00am Decorating the Church 5:15pm OC/Missions/Witness Cmte Mtg (FC) 6:30pm Men for Him (FH)	6 9:00am-3:00pm MDO 4:30pm Worship Cmte Mtg 5:00pm-6:00pm Bell Choir Practice (FH)	7 5:00pm-6:00pm Bell Choir Practice (FH)	8 9:30am Ladies Bible Study (UC)	9 9:00am-3:00pm MDO	10 9:00am Athens Amateur Radio Club (FH)
11 Baptism of the Lord Color: White 8:30AM Worship Service (FH) 9:45AM Sunday School 11:00AM Worship Service (Sanctuary) 1:30PM Chancel Choir	12 9:00am AGAPE Quilts (CFB) 12:00pm Book Club (Lean King-CR)	13 9:00am-3:00pm MDO 6:30pm Men for Him (FH)	14 5:00pm-6:00pm Bell Choir Practice (FH)	15 9:30am Ladies Bible Study (UC)	16 9:00am-3:00pm MDO	17 9:00am Athens Amateur Radio Club (FH)
18 2nd Sunday after Epiphany Color: Green 8:30AM Worship Service (FH) 9:45AM Sunday School 11:00AM Worship Service (Sanctuary) 1:30PM Chancel Choir	19 9:00am AGAPE Quilts (CFB)	20 9:00am-3:00pm MDO 6:30pm Men for Him (FH)	21 12:00pm LIA Meal Items DUE (MCK) 5:00pm-6:00pm Bell Choir Practice (FH) 6:00pm Family Night Supper-Hosted by Sally's Soup (FH)	22 9:30am Ladies Bible Study (UC) 12:00pm CASA Staff Meeting	23 9:00am-3:00pm MDO	24
25 3rd Sunday after Epiphany Color: Green 8:30AM Worship Service (FH) 9:45AM Sunday School 11:00AM Worship Service (Sanctuary) 1:30PM Chancel Choir	26 9:00am AGAPE Quilts (CFB)	27 9:00am-3:00pm MDO 6:30pm Men for Him (FH)	28 5:00pm-6:00pm Bell Choir Practice (FH)	29 9:30am Ladies Bible Study (UC)	30 9:00am-3:00pm MDO	31

PWF - Presbyterian Women Fellowship CFB - Cain Family Building FH - Fellowship Hall FHC - Fellowship Hall Classroom
FHK - Fellowship Hall Kitchen CB - Children's Building YH - Youth House CR - Conference Room FC - Friendship Classroom
 UC - Upstairs Classroom MCK-Main Church Kitchen

FPC-Athens Birthday Calendar

January

Happy Birthday

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Charles Tidmore	2	3
4 Marsha Stroupe	5	6	7 Bill Breedlove Marcy Warren	8	9	10 Chris St. Valentine
11	12 Raleigh Cates	13 Nick Grant	14 Randall Kimes	15 Stacey Arnold-Pell	16	17 Mark Smith
18	19 Elliott Boyles Heath Skelton	20	21	22 Derek Davies	23	24
25	26 Erin Harrison Kyle Johnson	27	28 Shelby Endsley	29 Rev. Woody Meredith	30 Karen Brack John Miller II	31 Barbara Elfrar

FPC-Athens Anniversary Calendar

January

Happy Anniversary

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12 William & Barbara Elfrar	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
John & Beth Youngblood	26	27	28	29	30	31



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Located at: 405 East Corsicana Street

SEND MAIL TO:
P.O. Box 927
Athens, TX 75751

JANUARY 2026 COMMUNIQUE

We invite you & your family to join us for worship on Sunday mornings:

Contemporary Worship

8:30am in the Fellowship Hall.

Sunday School at 9:45am

Traditional Worship

11:00am in the Sanctuary

5th Sunday Worship

10:00am in the Sanctuary

Child Care: Children's Building
(For both services & Sunday School)

*Communion is served the
1st Sunday of each month.*

**(see inside this newsletter for
more information)**

Pastor

Rev. Woody Meredith
woody@fpcathens.com

Director of Music

Janis Capelle

Organist & Bell Choir Leader

Mamie Downing

Music Leader

Kara Davis

Business Manager

Office Manager

Kelly Sassenbery
secretaryfpcathens@gmail.com
(Facebook/Messenger/Newsletter Editor/Webmaster)

Connect With Us

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First Presbyterian Church-Athens, TX

FOLLOW US ON *social media*

Find us on Facebook, YouTube, & Instagram.
Use your cell phone camera to scan the QR Codes.



FOR QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE.