



Member of PC-USA

A publication of First Presbyterian Church-Athens, TX

The Communique: *February 2026*



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"

A monthly newsletter publication distributed electronically in pdf format to subscribers.

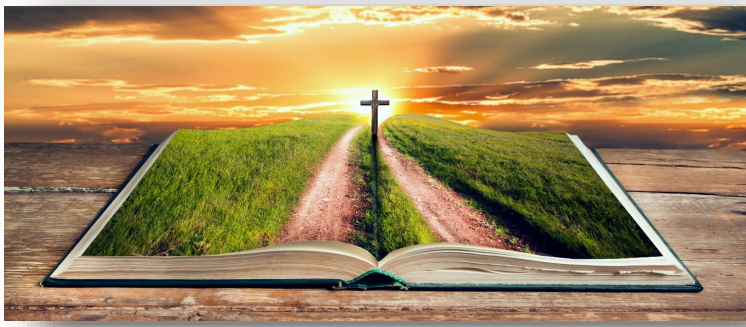
If you are interested in receiving a digital copy, please visit our "About" section of our website at www.fpcathens.com and select the heading "Communique Newsletter".

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**

Monthly Highlights

- **HOMEBOUND COMMUNION: ACTION NEEDED**
- **CHURCH REPORTS: JANUARY 2026**
- **MINISTRY ACTIVITIES & NEEDS**
- **FEBRUARY 2026 ACTIVITIES CALENDAR**
- **ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE: FEB. 18 AT 6PM**
- **SPECIAL OFFERING UPDATE**
- **LOVE THY NEIGHBOR WORSHIP: 02/22 @ 6PM**
- **FEBRUARY SPOTLIGHT: FUEL FUND**



Pastor's Ponderings:

Well, in the Meredith house Christmas is a fond memory, and now Valentine's hearts are on display. As I look back, what a crazy season Christmas was. It seemed like we were running one way or another every day. Run, run, run.

The truth of the matter is, we're all running after something. What are you chasing? A certain amount of money in your investment portfolio? A certain sized home? A degree? Maybe a relationship with another person. There's nothing wrong with working toward these things – unless you're thinking that achieving them will satisfy you. The fact is none of these things can ever provide lasting satisfaction.

Twelve plus years ago, as I was preparing to move to Athens, I was cleaning out some files and came across an old folder that contained a list of specific goals I had made for myself as I began pastoring my first congregation back in 1975. I tried to answer questions like: What did I want to accomplish with the congregation? What size congregation did I want to be pastoring in 10 years? In which direction did I want my ministry to go? As I looked over those goals, I realized I had obtained every goal on the list. I was overwhelmed by two emotions. One was gratitude to God for allowing me to achieve those goals. And second, I was overwhelmed that I wasn't more satisfied.

I wasn't focused on the things I already had, but rather on people who had more than I did and people who had done more than I had done. That is why we should never depend on outward circumstances for our inward happiness.

I discovered that contentment is being satisfied with what God has given you, realizing that God has given you everything you need to enjoy life. Enjoy the blessings God has given you, and the people He has placed in your life.



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 church yards, allowing churches to minister to the spiritual needs of the 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.

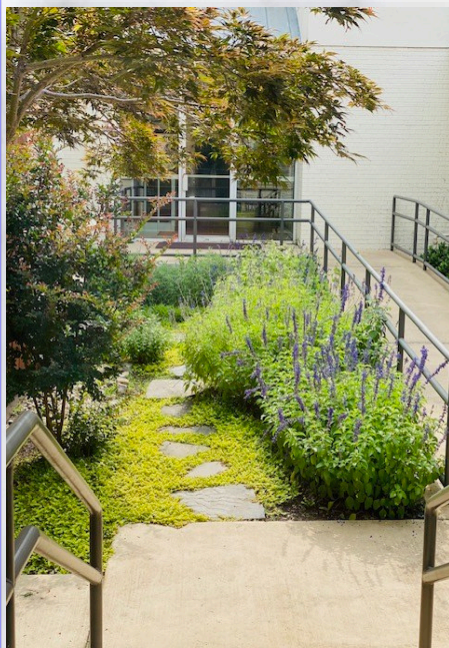
The Columbarium is part of First Presbyterian Church and functions under the authority of the Session.

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.

Community Concerns & Missions Committee:

End of Year Report for 2025.

Committee Members: Kara Davis and Claire Grant, Co-chairs, Nancy Perryman –Witness, Eric Davis, Steve Grant, Penny Endsley, Sofia Yarbrough, Lou Sutton, Sharon Harding, Kay Moore, Pam Douglas, Jolene Taylor, Beth VanOrden, Zan Tidmore, Terri Budow, Kathryn Hendrickson and Rev. Woody Meredith.

The Community Concerns and Missions Committee had a very busy and productive year. Several organizations in the Henderson County community and beyond are helped financially through funds distributed by the Programs, Missions & Benevolence Committee. These include Labor of Love, Mo-Ranch, Food Pantry, The Ark, CASA, Family Peace Project, Camp Gilmont, Skiin with the Galilean, Lila Lane Outreach, The Farm, Rainbow Room, Rebecca Project, Love in Action, Matthew 2535, FPC Mothers' Day Out, Henderson County Young Life, TVCC Cardinal Resource HQ and Presbyterian Children Homes and Services.

We have several church members who are involved in local ministries. Here is a recap of 2025.

Agape Quilt Ministry: This ministry, under the leadership of Sofia Yarbrough, produces 30 quilts per month for the homeless community of Henderson County. Other quilters include Sharon Harding, Steve Yarbrough, Ken Lemmon, Cathie Scarborough, Judy Willis, Barbara Kimes, Christy Purser and Jan Richardson. Although the Yarbrough's moved to California in the Fall, the committee continues its ministry.

The Ark: Jolene Taylor is our Ark liaison. She and her team have been very busy, serving lunch to approximately 200 students on four separate occasions. Our church also provided dessert over Thanksgiving to those students who were unable to go home. Ark volunteers in addition to Jolene were Christy Purser, Beth Youngblood, Lou Sutton, Donna Bennett, Ken Lemmon, Anna Fontana and Margaret Edginton.

Beat the Heat: This past May, 40 box fans were purchased by church members and distributed to people in the community to help combat the summer heat.

Christmas Benevolence Program: After many years of dedication, Penny Endsley stepped down as coordinator of the Christmas Benevolence Program. Terri Budow volunteered to head the program and did an amazing job. Fifteen volunteers shopped at Walmart for fifteen families and 54 children. Each family received items for Christmas, a \$150 Brookshires gift card and a bible. Six volunteers shopped for eight angels from Oakwood Nursing Center.

Food Pantry: Several of our members volunteer at the Food Pantry. They are: Mamie Downing, Kim Scott, Kay Moore, Donna Ward, Penny Endsley, Beth Youngblood, Emily Carlson, Claire Grant, Jo Ann Johnson, Barbara & Randy Kimes.

Fuel Fund: The Fuel Fund, which is a non-budgeted item and depends solely on donations, provided assistance to more than 85 families in the Henderson County area. The HELP Center distributes the \$6,000 given annually by our church.

Love in Action: Our church provides a meal to approximately 30 people on the last Friday of every month. This year we had quarterly teams provide the meals, and members of the congregation generously provided the ingredients. Volunteers who helped prepare the meals were: Pam Douglas, Kay Moore, Zan and Charlie Tidmore, Jolene Taylor, Terri Budow, Anna Fontana, Christy Purser and Claire Grant. We also collected snacks to fill bags for people to have for over the weekend.

Missionary Partners: We received an update from our missionary partners in Korea, Kurt Esslinger and Hyeyoung Lee. Their current work has concluded, but they have a new assignment in PC (USA).

Presbyterian Disaster Relief: Our committee sent a donation to First Presbyterian Church of Ruidoso to help those affected by the devastating floods.

Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services (PCHAS): Claire Grant is our liaison to PCHAS. Our church participated in two projects. Several members provided school supplies for ten middle school and high school students in late Summer, and 20 family baskets were filled in December to be distributed to families under the PCHAS umbrella.

Skiin With The Galilean: Several members of our congregation provided cookies for their annual event.

Soup Kitchen: Several church members continue to work tirelessly to provide meals on a takeout basis to people in the Athens community. 160-170 sandwiches are made daily, in addition to soup and desserts. Volunteers are Sharon Harding, Cathie Scarborough, Gary Espy and Kathryn Hendrickson.

Special Offerings: Lou Sutton has headed up our special offerings for many years and is taking a well-earned break. Nancy Perryman has agreed to head up our special offerings beginning in 2026. One Great Hour of Sharing collected \$975, \$390 of which stayed in our community. Our committee voted to donate the funds to the library for summer programs. Pentecost Offering raised \$905. Peace and Global Witness Offering brought in \$550, \$137.50 which we sent to PCHAS. The final special offering, Christmas Joy Offering, received \$605. Thanks to the generous giving of our members, our congregation once again went "Four For Four".

Prayer List



Congregation Members
Who Need Our Prayers

Burt Lively, Jan Capelle,
Sue Murray, Sharron Clark,
John & Phyllis Kidwell,
Elliott Boyles, Melanie Endsley,
Penny Endsley,
Steve & Sofia Yarbrough



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 Kathy Moser



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
& 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 the Morrison's & the
Cole's, and friend of many)
Mike Pulley (friend of many)
Pam Tischler
(friend of Kenn & Shirley Hornbeck)

Nancy Kissinger (mother of Nikki DuBose)
Janice Russell (friend of The Grant's)
Randy Daniel (friend of many)
Rob & Shereia Fulton (friends of The Meredith's)
Brenda (Johnson) Smith (friend of many)
Bobby Hendley (friend of many)
Adalee Grey
Janis Marshall (friend of many)

Session Members and Where They Serve

Building and Grounds: Charlie Tidmore, Paul Hartman

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.

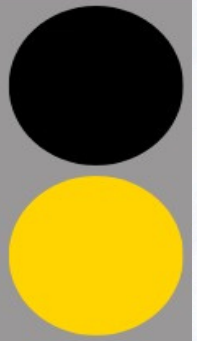
We would like to invite you to join us during our time of study and fellowship.

Seekers Contact Person: Steve Grant.

Location: Main Church Building-Upstairs East Side.

Spotlight

February 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



Our February 2026 Communique Spotlight features FPC Athens Fuel Fund.

Started in the early 1980's, the Fuel Fund is given to individuals in the community who need assistance for paying utility bills. This giving is above the tithing to the First Presbyterian Church paid by the members of FPC Athens. The Henderson County Help Center assists FPC-Athens in screening & vetting applications.

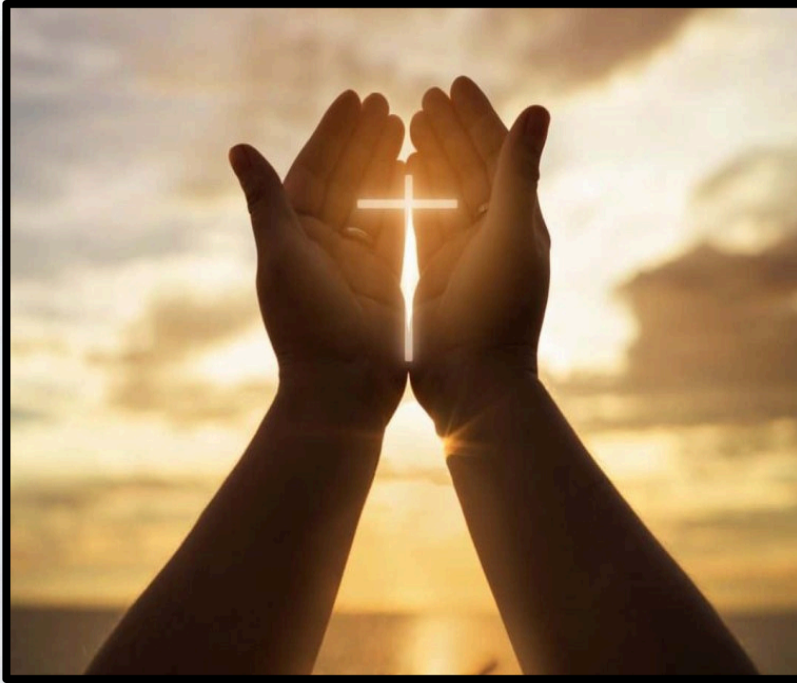
The Fuel Fund is always in need of funds, especially during the hot summer months. If you are looking for a way to give back to the church & the community, this is a wonderful way to help. Simply make your check out to the church & in the memo write: *FUEL FUND*.

Thank you for your donation & providing a much needed resource for so many.
FPC Athens Community Concerns and Missions Committee.

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**

February's Love In Action meal items will be due at 12 noon on the 25th to the main church kitchen. The meal will be served on the 27th.

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



ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

What does the Lord require of you?

...to do justice

*and to love kindness and to walk
humbly with your God. Micah 6:8*

*Responding to Christ's call to ministries of
compassion for the world's most vulnerable.*



SPECIAL OFFERINGS

February 18 - April 5, 2026

Serve the most vulnerable around the world,
offering aid to people lacking access to life's
basic necessities.

Around the world, millions of people lack access to sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation, education, and opportunity. The work done in support of the causes supported by One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) — disaster, hunger, poverty, climate change, and immigration/migration and refugees — serves individuals and communities in need. This work provides people with safety, sustenance, and hope.

Received during the season of Lent (Feb. 18–April 5), each gift to OGHS helps to improve the lives of people in these challenging situations. The Offering provides us a way to share God's love with our neighbors in need.

In fact, OGHS is the single, largest way Presbyterians come together every year to work for a better world.



Communion for the Homebound: We need your input!

Please contact the church office via email or telephone if you would like to be included in the **Homebound Communion list** or would be interested in volunteering to serve those that may not be able to attend church on Communion Sunday.

More information to come
& thank you.

February Birthdays



FPC-Athens Birthday Calendar

February

Happy Birthday

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Robbie Richardson	2	3 Felecia Cain Joan Meadows Cindy Wofford	4	5	6 Sara Carlson Donna Meredith	7
8 Janet Skelton	9	10 Lou Sutton	11 Rosalie Babler	12 Joe Whatley	13	14 Carmen Hunt
15 Dolores Herrington	16 Si Robson	17	18	19 Sheri Robson	20 Donna Dunbar	21
22	23 Ann Boyles	24 Damon Douglas	25	26	27 John Kidwell	28 Madison Rhodes

SAVE THE DATE



Ash Wednesday

{INTO DUST YOU SHALL RETURN}

FEBRUARY 18, 2026

6:00PM Service

Held in the Church Sanctuary



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH - ATHENS

405 E. CORSICANA STREET ATHENS, TX 75751

903-675-3530

WWW.FPCATHENS.COM SECRETARYFPCATHENS@GMAIL.COM

DISCOVER HOPE, FAITH, & COMMUNITY.

SAVE THE DATE & JOIN US:

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2026
6:00PM IN THE SANCTUARY.

LOVE THY NEIGHBOR WORSHIP.
HOST: FPC ATHENS

Communion will be served!

First Presbyterian Church-Athens
405 E. Corsicana Street, Athens, TX 75751
903-675-3530
www.fpcathens.com





FPC-Athens Activities Calendar

February 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 4th Sunday after Epiphany & Communion Color: Green 8:30am Worship Service (FH) 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Worship Service (Sanctuary) 1:30pm Chancel Choir	2 9:00am AGAPE Quilts (CFB) 5:15pm CC/Missions/ Witness Cmte Mtg (FC)	3 9:00am-3:00pm MDO 6:30pm Men for Him (FH)	4 3:00pm-4:00pm Music Reading Class (FH-Beth VanOrden) 5:00pm-6:00pm Bell Choir Practice (FH) 5:30pm Christian ED Cmte Mtg (FC) 6:00pm Sally's Soup Committee Mtg. (FHK)	5 9:30am Ladies Bible Study (UC)	6 9:00am-3:00pm MDO	7
8 5th Sunday after Epiphany Color: Green 8:30am Worship Service (FH) 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Worship Service (Sanctuary) 1:30pm Chancel Choir	9 9:00am AGAPE Quilts (CFB) 12:00pm Book Club (Joan King-CR)	10 9:00am-3:00pm MDO 6:30pm Men for Him (FH)	11 3:00pm-4:00pm Music Reading Class (FH-Beth VanOrden) 5:00pm-6:00pm Bell Choir Practice (FH) 6:15pm Session Mtg (FHC)	12 9:30am Ladies Bible Study (UC)	13 9:00am-3:00pm MDO	14
15 Transfiguration of the Lord Color: White 8:30am Worship Service (FH) 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Worship Service (Sanctuary) 1:30pm Chancel Choir	16 9:00am AGAPE Quilts (CFB)	17 9:00am-3:00pm MDO 6:30pm Men for Him (FH)	18 3:00pm-4:00pm Music Reading Class (FH-Beth VanOrden) 5:00pm-6:00pm Bell Choir Practice (FH) 6:00pm <i>Ash Wednesday</i> Ash Wednesday Service (Sanc.)	19 9:30am Ladies Bible Study (UC) 2:00pm DAR George Washington Tea (FH)	20 9:00am-3:00pm MDO	21 9:00am Athens Amateur Radio Club (FH)
22 1st Sunday in Lent Color: Purple 8:30am Worship Service (FH) 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Worship Service (Sanctuary) 1:30pm Chancel Choir 6:00pm Love Thy Neighbor Worship (Church Sanctuary)	23 9:00am AGAPE Quilts (CFB)	24 9:00am-3:00pm MDO 6:30pm Men for Him (FH)	25 12:00pm LIA Meal Items DUE (MCK) 3:00pm-4:00pm Music Reading Class (FH-Beth VanOrden) 5:00pm-6:00pm Bell Choir Practice (FH)	26 9:30am Ladies Bible Study (UC) 12:00pm CASA Staff Meeting	27 9:00am-3:00pm MDO Henderson County Homeless Ministry LOVE IN ACTION 11:00am Meal served @ LIA Homeless Ministry	28



**ONE GREAT
HOUR OF SHARING**

February 18 - April 5, 2026

Serve the most vulnerable around the world,
offering aid to people lacking access to life's
basic necessities.

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



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Located at: 405 East Corsicana Street

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

FEBRUARY 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 followed by lunch in the FH.

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

Mamie Downing

Hand Bell Choir Leader

Beth VanOrden

8:30am Music Leader

Kara Davis

Business Manager

Office Manager

Kelly Sassenbery
(Facebook/Messenger/Newsletter Editor/Webmaster)

Connect With Us

Office Phone: 903-675-3530
Website: www.fpcathens.com

Email: secretary@fpcathens.com

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.