



Beyond the Columns

First Presbyterian Church

July 2026 | NEWSLETTER | DANVILLE, VA |

Wrestling with the Word

July arrives each year with a certain brightness to it. The days are longer, the pace of life often slows, and many find themselves traveling, resting, or simply enjoying the rhythms of summer. Yet even as our schedules shift, the call of Christ does not lessen. If anything, this season offers us a particular opportunity to consider what it means to abide in Him—not merely in the structured patterns of church life, but in the ordinary, unhurried moments of daily living.

Scripture reminds us, “Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10). Stillness is not something our culture easily grants, nor something we naturally pursue. We are accustomed to noise, movement, and constant engagement. But summer, in its own quiet way, invites us to recover a posture of attentiveness before the Lord. Whether sitting on a porch in the evening, traveling with family, or enjoying a slower morning, these moments can become occasions of grace—times in which we remember that God is not distant, but near, sustaining us by His Word and Spirit.

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As Reformed believers, we confess that all of life is lived coram Deo—before the face of God. This means that our faith is not confined to Sunday worship, though it is certainly nourished there. Rather, every moment belongs to Him. The same Lord who meets us in Word and Sacrament is present in our homes, our conversations, our rest, and even in our weariness. July, then, is not a departure from our discipleship, but a different setting in which it is lived out.

It is also worth remembering that the life of faith is not sustained by our effort alone. The apostle Paul writes candidly of his own struggle: “For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing” (Romans 7:19). These words resonate because they are true to our experience. Even in seasons of rest, we are aware of our need (our need for grace, for forgiveness, and for renewal). The good news of the gospel is that Christ meets us precisely there. He does not wait for us to become stronger or more consistent; He calls us to come to Him in our weakness: “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

This rest is deeper than physical relaxation. It is the rest of knowing that our standing before God does not depend on our performance, but on the finished work of Christ. It is the rest of belonging to Him; securely, permanently, and graciously. From that place of rest, we are then sent back into the world, not as those striving to earn God’s favor, but as those who already possess it in Christ.

As you move through this month, I would encourage you to hold together two simple practices. First, remain rooted in the means of grace. Attend worship as you are able, stay connected to Scripture, and give yourself to prayer. These are not burdens, but gifts—God’s appointed ways of strengthening His people. Second, be attentive to the quiet opportunities for faithfulness that summer provides: a conversation that invites encouragement, a moment that calls for patience, a need that can be met with generosity.

Finally, let's not lose sight of our life together as a congregation. Even as some travel and others rest, we remain one body in Christ. Pray for one another. Reach out to one another. And when we gather, do so with a renewed sense of gratitude for the fellowship we share.

May the Lord use this season not only to refresh your body, but to renew your heart. And may we, as His people, continue to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jackson

Dear FPC family,

The surprise celebration on June 7 will be our fondest memory of this transition-to-Blacksburg phase. Thank you for being so thoughtful, supportive, and kind always. For us, our inclusion in this church has been a grand gift from God. We will continue to pray for First Pres as you minister in this community and beyond, and we look forward to visiting Danville and to welcoming you in our new home!

With the greatest affection,

Sam and Becky

Missions

Christ for the Island World

In a recent newsletter from CFTIW, we learned about 2 missionaries that have been doing work for 30 years. She and her husband have been working in Indonesia for many years. They share the gospel and plant churches, to date they have one church with 4 assistants and 27 branches. Each branch has their own pastor. Their daughter has also followed in their footsteps and is training others in evangelism. Please continue to pray for this country and the Christ for the Island World missionaries. "Reaching Indonesians for Christ through other Indonesians."

~submitted by Wil Cocke



Music Department

Thanks and Updates

Thank you so much for your support of Danville Symphony's "Star-Spangled Celebration" and DACAS Ringers' performance at Pittsylvania County's celebration of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence! Our symphony concert here in Danville had a fully packed audience at the Historic North Theatre. It was so exciting and inspiring to see a full house from the stage! Thank you, also, to our Handbell Choir for sharing our space with DACAS Ringers, and some of our handbells. Thanks again to Greg Robey and Mark Gourley for their assistance with moving equipment to and from the Olde Dominion Agricultural Center in Chatham. It was a successful day despite the extreme heat!

This month we will continue our preparations to share rehearsal space with DACAS, including welcoming their new board members into the new DACAS library. We will also move our handbell equipment back to room 315. The membership of DACAS has agreed to hold rehearsals here beginning next month, so there will be more choral preparations to come soon after moving the handbell tables and equipment.

Summer Choir Invitation – You Are Still Invited!

If you would like to sing with the choir during the summer, please join us! We will meet at 10:00am on Sundays only from June 28th through August 2nd. All are welcome to come sing with us for one week or all six weeks – we will focus on hymns. No outside practice time will be needed or expected. Come make a joyful noise to the Lord together! Guests and visitors are welcome – there is an extra folder of music ready for you.

Hopeful Updates from Massanetta, Montreat, and here at home!

- Massanetta Springs Camp and Conference Center has raised \$5.14 million of the \$6 million goal for their renovation and expansion.
- They will break ground at Massanetta this month, July 2026, on the new hotel-style building which will replace most of the Richardson dormitory accommodations.

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- If you would like to donate to this project, helping to ensure that Massanetta will be there for many future generations of campers, pastors, church musicians, Presbyterians, and neighbors, please send a check to Massanetta Springs, 712 Massanetta Springs Road, Rockingham, VA 22801 with “Building a Place for All” in the memo line or written on an enclosed note.
- Online donations are also welcomed at this web address: <https://massanettasprings.org/bpa-donating>
- If donating online, please type “Building a Place for All” in the additional information section.
- Over 1,500 people attended the 2026 Worship & Music Conference at Montreat last month! There were over 850 attendees during week 1 and over 650 during week 2.
- Attendees represented at least forty-one states and twenty-four denominations. All numbers increased from last year – total attendees, attendees in each age group, home states, and denominations!
- We have added over a hundred hymnals to our sanctuary here at First Presbyterian in Danville. Thanks to your generosity and stewardship, we can all sing together on the same page – even at large celebrations like weddings.
- We will host three weddings in our sanctuary this year – that is a record in a single year for me! Thank you for trusting me with the honor of playing for your special days.

Wishing each of you a safe and happy summer!
Peace of Christ,
Ashley

Happy Birthday

1 Paula Perez

2 Alex Garcia

Dickie Green

3 Sophie Van Valkenburg

7 Gail Davis

Elizabeth Walden

10 Ben Lowther

Davis Shelton

11 Pam Green

Laura Jones

13 Judy Hooker

18 Amy Belk

25 Cliff Walden

Whitney Barrow

26 Colin Meadors

28 Mallie Walden

30 Scott Machado

31 Matthew Dolianitis

Anniversaries

July 7, 1984 Martha & Barry Cutright

July 29, 1973 Brenna & Calvin Takata

July 29, 1989 Leigh & Eddie Blount

If we've missed your special day please
let us know!



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, DANVILLE

Founded in 1826, we were the first organized congregation in Danville. Our sanctuary and offices are located at 937 Main St, next door to the Sutherlin Mansion and Museum and a few blocks of west downtown.

You can reach us at (434) 792-7822 or admin@fpcdanville.com

Office hours are Monday– Thursday 9 am—1 pm

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