



SEPTEMBER 2023

MEDITATIONS ON THE APOSTLES' CREED

Check out the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall for photographs of our recent new members!



**Rob and Arleita Dirne  
Raymond, Jennifer, and Timothy Duncan  
Mark Pitts**

“I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER”—the very first ascription that the Apostles’ Creed attributes to the God in whom we Christians claim to believe. But, what do we mean by calling God “Father?”

The terms “Father,” “Son,” and “Holy Spirit,” are all too often downplayed as mere names—simple identifiers for the three persons of the Trinity. But they are so much more than mere placeholders for the three *personae* of the triune Godhead. Indeed, the term “Father” is a biblical name that represents God’s dynamic role as the prime mover of creation, the pilot of cosmic destiny, and the author of salvation history.

The Apostles’ Creed affirms our belief in God as the Father of Jesus Christ. But, more so, it affirms our belief in God as *our* heavenly Father also. Indeed, Jesus himself invites us to become God’s children and to share in this intimate relationship—to know and enjoy God as *our* Father. As Jesus addressed his followers in his sermon on the mount, he instructed them how to pray to God by saying, “*Our Father in heaven, may your name be revered as holy*” (Matthew 6:9). In his post-resurrection appearance to Mary Magdalene, Jesus charged her, “Go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God’” (John 20:17). Even the apostle Paul recognizes our kinship to God in the salutations of most of his letters, e.g., “Grace to you and peace from God *our* Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 1:7).

Our claim that we are children of God is not an assertion that we too are begotten of the Father like Jesus Christ. Rather our claim to divine kinship is through adoption. This adoption is the work of Christ’s Spirit, the Holy Spirit, becoming one with our spirit. As the apostle Paul explains:

**“All who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs: heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.”** (Romans 8:14-17a)

But, what does it mean to say that, like Christ, we are children of God who cry, “Abba! Father?” Let us first respond to this question by acknowledging what it does not mean. Being children of God does not mean that we Christians have exclusive access to God. Many Christians have erred in believing that God does not hear the prayers of non-Christians, and they have based this erroneous belief on their misunderstanding of Jesus’ statement, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). Note that Jesus did not say, “No one comes to God except through me.” Rather, he is affirming that he is the way to know and experience God as more than some generic deity. Jesus, the Son, is declaring that we, as God’s children, can know God as a loving Father—as a Father who loves his Son—as a Father who loves his children. “See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God, and that is what we are” (1 John 3:1a).

To be called children of God, then, is to affirm that God loves us as dearly as a parent loves the children. Jesus chooses to illustrate the Father’s great love for his children in the parable of the prodigal son. Accordingly, a son goes to his father and demands his share of the estate—a share that would not otherwise become his until his father’s death. This demand was tantamount to a declaration of severing the familial bonds between himself and his father. Inexplicably, the father acquiesced, and gave his son all that he would otherwise inherit.



BLESSINGS  
ON YOUR  
BIRTHDAY

OCTOBER



- |    |  |    |  |
|----|--|----|--|
| 2  | Dale Lawrenz<br>Sue Fain               |    |  |
| 4  | George Ferrell<br>Randall Gray         |    |  |
| 6  | Tracy Lamb<br>Joel Stanley             | 1  | Betty Park Adams<br>Rhonda Ortteneburger |
| 7  | Amelia Shew Trinh                      | 11 | Julie Stanley<br>Eden Stanley            |
| 8  | Bruce Bonar                            | 12 | Dan Lichty                               |
| 14 | Pierce Johnson, Jr.                    | 15 | Paul Hager                               |
| 16 | Karen Losson                           | 17 | Beth Underwood                           |
| 22 | Carter Lamb                            | 18 | Curtis Christian                         |
| 27 | Gene Wolf                              | 23 | Nancy Crider                             |
| 28 | Phyllis Gump<br>Jeanie Smith           | 25 | Abigail Adkins                           |
| 30 | Bill Carrico<br>Jim Ney<br>Mandy Owens | 26 | Phillip Seyfrit                          |
|    |  | 29 | Shelby Dale Lamb                         |
|    |  | 30 | Rob Dirne                                |

Continued from page 1

In a distant country, the son prodigally squandered his wealth until all of his inheritance was spent. Now poor and destitute, he resolved to return home, to denounce his right to sonship, and to plead for a servant's role in his father's household. Then, according to the parable, "he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him" (Luke 15:20).

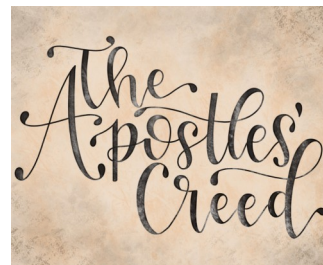
The magnanimity of the father's love is evidenced in his running to embrace this prodigal son while he was still far away. In ancient middle-eastern societies, it was regarded as unseemly for an adult man to run. So, the fact that the father endured the personal indignity of running displays the very depth of his compassion for a son who was lost to the family and was as good as dead.

Perhaps no other parable in the New Testament describes the loving and caring nature of God as well as this story of a father waiting for the return of a wayward son. This parable is arguably his best illustration of what Jesus meant when he addressed God as *our* Father.

And yet, for many modern-day Christians, the term "Father" might be problematic; their image of fatherhood has sometimes been tainted by an experience of a less-than-loving father. For such persons, the term "Father" conjures up images, not of sacrificial compassion, but of apathy or perhaps even abuse. Some Christians have preferred a feminine image of God, having received more nurture and compassion from their mothers than their fathers. Indeed, the Bible is replete with many maternal allusions to God's love; e.g., "As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem" (Isaiah 66:13); or, "Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you" (Isaiah 49:15). Of course, for those whose image of motherhood has been blemished by an experience of an uncaring mother, these biblical allusions to God as "Mother" are just as disconcerting as the term "Father" might be for others.

To be sure, we certainly stand on firm biblical and theological foundations to speak of God in our spiritual devotions and prayers as a loving father, as a nurturing mother, even as a compassionate parent. So, why does the Apostles' Creed address God as Father rather than Mother or Heavenly Parent?

While both masculine and feminine images are aptly utilized in scripture to describe God's loving nature and compassionate activities, the term "Mother" is inexplicably never used to address God by name. For this reason, the authors of the creed opted to call God "Father" by name—a hallowed name that Jesus Christ employs to proclaim God's unconditional parental love. So, whenever we meditate upon the words of the Apostles' Creed, may we hear the name as a bold declaration that we are the children of a compassionate, sacrificial God.



## INVITING ALL WOMEN...

...to Camp Burnamwood, Sat., Sept. 16, 2023, for the annual **FALL GATHERING of Transylvania Presbyterian Women.** A luncheon and program to "Celebrate the Women Pastors" in our Presbytery.

Fall Gathering: Coffee/fellowship at 9:30 A.M., program at 10. **Guest speaker: The Rev. Dr. Kris Bentley**, Lexington Theological Seminary, Director of Bi-vocational Ministry Research, and long-time pastor. **Reservations (\$15 each, due by Sept. 8)** and info to Emily Carroll, Treasurer, 409 Cheyenne Tr, Georgetown, KY 40324, [ecarroll1@roadrunner.com](mailto:ecarroll1@roadrunner.com). Checks payable to "PW of Transylvania Presbytery". *Join us supporting our women pastors!!*



...**Save the Date: Saturday, April 13, 2024**, for the annual **SPRING GATHERING of Transylvania Presbyterian Women.**

The Program will be on "Food Insecurity" with **Guest Speaker, Jim Embry**, recently recognized national by the James Beard Leadership Award for his work with issue of food insecurity everywhere. **At First Presbyterian Church, Richmond, KY.** Coffee 9:30 A.M., program, worship, communion, election of PW Coordinating Team members, recognition of sisters who have joined the Circle Eternal, and more. *Registration TBA in early April. All women...and men...are invited to join us for this enlightening program.*



...**SAVE This date, too: August 8-11, 2024,**

**The CHURCHWIDE GATHERING of PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN, St. Louis, MO.** Women from all over the world come together for three days of faith-filled fellowship, Bible study (both the current and upcoming Horizons Bible studies), enlightening workshops and plenary sessions. It's a not-to-be-missed opportunity that only comes every three years and is "close" to us in KY! The theme "Do Everything in Love." *There will be several scholarships for registration awarded to Transylvania PW's, so be sure to come to the PWP FALL GATHERING, Sept. 16, 2023, for details about the scholarships!* Info about the CWG, [presbyterianwomen.org/gathering](http://presbyterianwomen.org/gathering).



*Women are invited and encouraged to join the leadership team of Presbyterian Women in Transylvania.*

*There are opportunities on the **Coordinating Team for women** who want to be a part of this "liaison" group connecting local churches to the Synod PW and to the national Churchwide PW. Exciting things are going on with PW's at all levels and across the world. We look forward to hearing from you – (whether or not you participate in or have a women's group at your church). Find out more.*

### Mission Goings-on...

Everyone is invited to the first **Mission Fair of Transylvania Presbytery, Saturday, October 14, 2023, at Camp Burnamwood.** Groups including Eastern Ky Flood Relief Task Force, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, KY Council of Churches, Presbyterian Youth/Triennium, Presbyterian Women, Living Waters for the World, Together for hope for Appalachia, PC(U.S.A.) special offerings, and more.... **This event is sponsored by the Transylvania Presbytery Mission Ministry. More Info: The Rev. Brad Napier, Stanford PC, [pastorbradspc@gmail.com](mailto:pastorbradspc@gmail.com).**

[www.richmondfpc.com](http://www.richmondfpc.com)

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**ONLINE GIVING 3 easy ways!**

\*Click the **GIVING** button on our church website  
OR

\*Text **fpcgift** to **73256** OR  
Download the **Abundant Giving** app on your  
phone. Locate our church name and select.

**Follow all prompts to give online. Of course  
you can always sign up to give through your  
bank site or by mailing a check to:**

**First Presbyterian Church  
P O BOX 165  
Richmond, KY 40476-0165**



**Called Congregational Meeting  
Sunday, September 10**

There will be a Called Congregational  
Meeting on Sunday, September 10,  
immediately following worship. This  
meeting is for the purpose of electing a  
new Elder.

**ELDERS CLASS OF**

David Deaton	2024
James Exline	2024
Bonnie Gray	2024
Eric Everett	2025
Jennifer Wilke-Deaton	2025
Philip Gump	2026
Paul Hager	2026
Bill Mitchell	2026

**DEACONS CLASS OF**

Linda Adams	2024
Donna Cox	2024
Lynn Shearon	2024
Sue Reeves	2025
Julie Stanley	2025
Gene Wolf	2025
Jennifer Brubaker	2026
Kathy Shew	2026
Coy Weldon	2026



**Evening Women's Circle**

Tuesday September 5th at 6:30 pm  
in the church parlor.

**Rebecca Esther Circle**

Tuesday, September 19  
10:30 a.m. for the meeting, followed by the lesson and lunch.

Everyone who attends is asked to bring sandwiches or finger food for the lunch. We will have the yearly Thank offering and Melody will have the first lesson in our book, *Sacred Encounters*. You can pick up a book in Dana's Office.

**Presbyterian Women**

The First Presbyterian's Women group is hosting the Transylvania Presbyterian Women's Spring Gathering on Saturday, April 13, 2024. We are excited to announce our guest speaker for the morning is Mr. Jim Embry from right here in Richmond. He uses his love of gardening and plants to involve individuals with ways to nurture their souls and feed those who can benefit from what is raised. He has promoted programs like Farm to Cafeteria in the public schools, Glean Kentucky where they gather surplus produce from farms and local restaurants/ groceries to distribute, and the Purple Lunchbox program for women in rehab to learn cooking skills to be able to cater meals. Mark your calendars and join us (men and women) for an uplifting journey.

Becky Elam and Melody Mitchell  
Elizabeth Cluster Leaders





August 2023 Love Fund Summary

<i>Category</i>	<i># of families served</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<i>Utilities</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>\$1,972.58</i>
<i>Rent</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>\$3,400</i>
<i>Hotel</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>\$340</i>
<i>Save A Lot bill (food vouchers)</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>\$1,501.27</i>
<i>Gas</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>\$200</i>
<i>Car repair</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>\$125</i>
<i>Medicine Assistance</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>\$90.84</i>
<i>Love Cupboard Pantry assisted</i>	<i>13</i>	
<i>Total</i>		<i>\$7,629.69</i>

**50 Unique Families served (includes 24 children)**

Teaching with Soul by Joel  
The Zak Zone!



VBS  
2023!



Hey Everyone! My name is Zak and I will be writing Joel's newsletter article today! Some of you might know me from YouTube. I'm kind of a big deal there. Anyway, I hang out a lot in Joel's office when he is working (this is why his office is usually so messy) and I noticed this morning that he was spending a lot of time staring at a blank computer screen, scratching his head and muttering to himself. I asked him what was wrong and he told me that he had absolutely no idea what he was going to write for his newsletter article this month and that he was going to take a walk and see if he couldn't come up with something. I tried to convince him that nobody actually reads his newsletter articles and that he shouldn't worry so much about it, but that didn't seem to make him feel any better. After he left, I had the great idea that I could write the article for him while he is out walking! That way, when he gets back, it will be done and he'll be in a better mood and we can play cards together or make a pillow fort in the parlor or go annoy Rev. Christian instead of spending all day at the computer writing some article. Now I haven't ever written anything for a newsletter before, but this computer has spell check and grammar check so I imagine that it really can't be as hard as Joel makes it out to be. I hate to say it but sometimes Joel can be a real whiner about things. Really the only thing you need for a good newsletter article is an interesting thing to talk about, and I've come up with just the thing! So without wasting any more time here is my article on the top 4 reasons kids should go to church even though sometimes it can be boring!

4. **Kids should go to church because you meet great people there.** Most all of the friends I have come from church, but church is more than just a place to meet friends. Being a part of a church is like being a part of some big extended family. It's a place where you can get to know people of all ages and all sorts of backgrounds and share in Christ's love. You can never be loved too much, especially when you're a kid and when I am at church I certainly get to see how much my church family loves me.
3. **Kids should go to church because it is a place of peace.** Life can be hard on a kid. I think sometimes grownups might not realize that. School can be stressful, friends can be mean and a lot of times you can get into trouble without even realizing you've done something wrong. Church is a place where you can forget about the things that are bothering you and enjoy a peaceful time with God. Kids need that too sometimes.
2. **Kids should go to church because it brings them closer to God even if they don't realize it.** This is something I hear Joel saying a lot. Church might be boring at times to us kids but that doesn't mean that God isn't working within us during the service. We take in a lot more than you might realize and while we sit there drawing on our bulletins or resting comfortably in the crook of your arm or knocking hymnals down onto the floor in the loudest way possible we are, believe it or not, actually growing in our faith as well.
1. **Kids should go to church because sometimes it is exciting!** I remember the first time I felt God move within me. It was at church while the choir was singing a particularly beautiful song and I didn't really understand what was happening, but it was exciting and I knew something was up. Later during the car ride home, I asked my dad about it and he told me it was the Holy Spirit working inside of me. Exciting things happen in the church when God's people get together to worship. Kids might not always be able to put words to it, but they can still feel and be a part of it.

So there they are! Several good reasons why kids should be in church! I know I'm going to be there, hope to see you all too!

# RALLY DAY

9/10/23  
9:45 AM

COME HELP  
KICK OFF THE  
NEW SCHOOL  
YEAR!

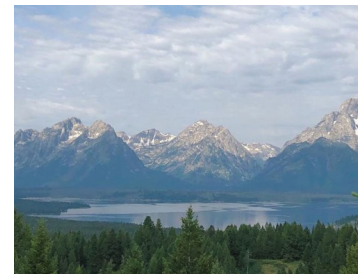
Coffee and Pastries served  
at 9:45 in the gym,  
program to follow

## GREETINGS, My Christian Friends: The Lord Be With You!

Starting soon, the church Fellowship Committee will be offering monthly spiritual hikes as an intergenerational fellowship event. Once a month, on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon (weather permitting) we will get a group together to go hiking at different places of sacred beauty and inspiration. We will hike, take photos, read a passage of scripture, have prayer, and perhaps break bread together at a local eatery. From month to month, our hiking locations will include the Pinnacles, Anglin Falls, Raven Run, maybe even Natural Bridge, Red River Gorge, or even Cumberland Falls.



A great opportunity for fellowship, witness, inspiration, spiritual growth, even a little exercise and lots of fun. Watch for announcements for upcoming spiritual hikes.



*O Lord, O Lord,  
How majestic is Your  
name in all the earth!*

### News Brief from Session

- Session wants to thank everyone who participated at the Town Hall meeting.
- Our church had the largest donation in the Presbytery for the One Great Hour of Sharing. Kudos!
- Watch for Saturday work days to help spruce up the church.
- Missions is working on plans for hiring a Communication facilitator.
- Do you like to square dance? Watch for future details from Fellowship.
- **Rally Day** set for Sunday, September 10.
- Sunday, October 15 set for **Stewardship Kickoff**. *Dedication Sunday* November 5.
- July pledge giving ahead of last year.
- Congregational meeting set for after church on Sunday, September 10 to fill vacancy in Class of 2025.
- Officers to participate in Boundary training.

*Melody Mitchell, Clerk of Session*



**MISSION.....a body of people sent**

**GREETINGS FROM THE MISSIONS COMMITTEE!**

We thought you would like to know that we received a call recently from the Presbytery of Transylvania to inform us that our congregation gave the most money of any church in the Presbytery to the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering we collected on April 2<sup>nd</sup>. The amount we collected was just a few dollars short of \$3000.00. This is noteworthy because our congregation is not the largest nor even the second or third largest in the Presbytery. We continue to be very mindful of the many needs of others in our local community and in our world.

On August 13<sup>th</sup> we collected our third 5 Cents a Meal Offering of the year totaling \$850.00. We will send 80% of that total to the Presbyterian Hunger Program and 20% will stay in Richmond and be given to support the work of Grace Now.

The next special offering of this year will be on September 10<sup>th</sup> and 100% of that offering will go to support the Buckhorn Children's Home, an agency near and dear to the hearts of the congregation of First Presbyterian Church.

Three more special offerings remain to finish up the year after the Buckhorn Offering is received on September 10<sup>th</sup>. They are the Peace and Global Witness Offering given on October 1<sup>st</sup> which is World Communion Sunday. On November 12<sup>th</sup> we will collect the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 5 Cents a Meal Offering. The last special offering of the year is the Christmas Joy Offering which is collected on the Sunday before Christmas which is December 24<sup>th</sup> this year.

We will provide you with more specific information about these special offerings as the collection dates get closer. The Missions Committee commends the faithfulness of our congregation as we support our brothers and sisters around the world who are suffering from hunger, natural disasters, and many other pains and tragedies.

With Gratitude to Our Giving Spirit from the Missions Committee,  
Bonnie Gray and Philip Gump, Co-chairs

**Thank you for your church's donation to fund the digging of a well in El Negrito, Honduras. It is a blessing to the community. May God continue to bless all your donors for their generous and compassionate hearts.**

**Walking in faith, Brenda Williams, Founder  
Hands of Love International**

**YOUTH GROUP!**

**Vacation Bible School**

A big thank you to all the volunteers, children and parents who came out to help make this year's Vacation Bible School the success that it was. We had about 40 kids in attendance and everyone had a great time singing songs, playing games, doing crafts, serving others, listening to Bible stories and even going back in time to visit an authentic ancient marketplace! We learned all about the story of the woman at the well and how that story compels us to seek out diversity, to be aware of what we're thirsting for and to go out into the world and tell others what we know! It was a great 3 days and we'll do it again next summer for sure!



**Youth Group Kick Off**

Our annual youth group kick off celebration is scheduled for Sept. 10th at 6pm in the Christian Life Center. This event is open to all youth and their families. We will share a meal together, reflect on past events, set dates for the coming year and discuss the direction in which our youth group is headed, as well as do some important house-keeping things. Please bring a calendar with you when you attend. Our youth program is looking at another GREAT year coming up, so come on out and help us start off with a bang!



SEPTEMBER 2023

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

P O BOX 165      Richmond, KY 40476-0165  
 859/623-5323      (fax) 859/623-5329  
 www.richmondpc.com

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4 <i>Office closed</i> 	5 <i>Tuesday crew 9-11</i> <b>Mission mtg. 7:00 pm</b> <i>Evening Circle 6:30 pm</i>	6 <i>Bible Study 6:30 pm</i>	7	8	9
<b>10 RALLY DAY!!</b> <i>Buckhorn Children's Home Offering</i> <b>Deacon's mtg. noon</b> <b>Called cong. Mtg. noon</b> <b>Youth kick-off 6:00</b>	11 <i>Bible Study 10:30 am</i>	12 <i>Tuesday crew 9-11</i>	13 <i>Bible Study 6:30 pm</i>	14 <i>Needle Arts Fellowship 11:30—1:30</i>	15	16
17	18 <i>Bible Study 10:30 am</i>	19 <i>Tuesday crew 9-11</i> <b>Presbyterian Women 10:30</b> <b>Preschool/CE mtg. 4:30</b>	20 <i>Bible Study 6:30 pm</i>	21	22	23 
24	25 <i>Bible Study 10:30 am</i>	26 <i>Tuesday crew 9-11</i> <b>Session mtg. 7:00</b>	27 <i>Welcome Wednesday/Potluck 6:00 pm</i>	28	29	30