

THE WINDOW

First Presbyterian Church

Hendersonville, TN

August 2026



WHEN BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO GOOD PASTORS (AND TO YOU, PERHAPS?)

This is the space where you would usually find Pastor Michael's monthly column, filled with words of wisdom, comfort, and challenge. Not this month, sorry to say. By now you've surely heard that Pastor Michael has been hospitalized to treat a sudden and severe case of sarcoidosis that has attacked his heart. It's a somewhat mysterious disease with a lengthy recovery time, but as this is being written, he has just been released from ICU, appears to be doing well, and hopes to go home soon.

However, this unwanted and unexpected development may have left you with questions: *Why Michael? What did he do to deserve this? And if God allows something like this to happen to such a dedicated servant as Michael, what does that mean for a regular person like me?*

A group of people once presented Jesus with similar questions after a tragedy had struck some friends, and he made it clear that most victims of evil people and tragic accidents (and I think we could also include diseases and other physical ailments) are by no means "worse sinners" than others. Tragedies are usually random, often unavoidable, events. Jesus said, essentially, that bad stuff happens to everyone and we should never presume the victim was guilty of something. His advice was to quit looking for someone to blame and instead focus on our own spiritual condition so we'll be ready the next time tragedy hits *us*. (See Luke 13:1-5.)

A basic awareness of Scripture should lead us to the same conclusion that distressing events should never be presumed to be judgments of God. Think of the stories of Joseph, Daniel, Job, Elijah, Paul, and others. Their biographies are filled with various trials and undesired sufferings. In the past, God's people "faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated—the world was not worthy of them." And yet, "These were all commended for their faith" (Hebrews 11:36-39).

With that in mind, all believers are now challenged to "consider it pure joy whenever you face trials of many kinds" (James 1:2). How do you feel about that? Although most of us may be reluctantly willing to "endure hardship as discipline" (Hebrews 12:7), is it going too far to be expected to feel *joyful* about it? Consider this perspective from Pastor Timothy Keller:

We must not define *rejoicing* as something that precludes feelings of grief, or doubt, weakness, and pain. Rejoicing in suffering happens within sorrow. Here is how it works. The grief and sorrow drive you more into God. It is just as when it gets colder outside, the temperature kicks the furnace higher through the thermostat. Similarly, the sorrow and the grief drive you into God and show you the resources you never had. Yes, *feel* the grief. . . . Look at Jesus. He was perfect, right? And yet he goes around crying all the time. He is always weeping, a man of sorrows. Do you know why? Because he is *perfect*. Because when you are not all absorbed in yourself, you can feel the sadness of the world. And therefore, what you actually have is that the joy of the Lord happens inside the sorrow. It doesn't come after the sorrow. It doesn't come after the uncontrollable weeping. The weeping drives you into the joy, it enhances the joy, and then the joy enables you to actually feel your grief without its sinking you. In other words, you are finally emotionally healthy.

(Continued on next page)

(Continued from front page)

From *Walking with God through Pain and Suffering*

David expressed a similar sentiment: “Weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning” (Psalm 30:5). As we pray for (and suffer with) Pastor Michael during this time of trial, may our sorrow drive us all closer to the Lord to receive the joy and peace that only he can provide. May we all joyfully pitch in to help Linda and the Session keep the church active and energized as Michael takes it a little easier for a while. May we all commit to praying for Michael in the weeks and months to come. Although he is expected to gradually improve, the effects of his disease will be lifelong, so encourage him with your cards and calls, but also keep him at the top of your prayer list. And may we never forget:

“The prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. . . .

The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective” (James 5:15-16).

Save the Date: Rise Against Hunger 2026



Our annual Rise Against Hunger event will be held on Saturday, August 22, 2026. Rise Against Hunger is a non-profit organization that coordinates meal packaging events and sends meal packs of rice, soy, and dried vegetables around the world. All volunteers (children and adults) are welcome, and the event will be fast paced with lots of music and gong ringing! Our goal again this year is to package an entire pallet of meals - 14,256 meals! We need both volunteers and donations to reach our goal. Our fundraising goal is \$4000.

Volunteers needed:

8:00 am -9:00 am: 8-10 volunteers needed for unloading and set up – we need some strong muscles to unload the rice and equipment from the truck and get Martin Hall set up.

9:00 am -11:30 am: 40-50 volunteers for the meal packaging event. There are jobs where you can stand, sit, or run!



Online link to register for RAH:

<https://riseagainsthunger.org/register/?id=701Pj000011kX7y>

Please email, call, or text Eva Dye if you would like to volunteer (evadye@yahoo.com, 615-559-3860).

Donations can be sent to the church office and designated for Rise Against Hunger.



Coffee Talk: The date for First Wednesday Coffee Talk is August 5th at 10:00 a.m. We have been learning so many interesting things about each other during our meetings, over the past few months, as we share our stories. Come and hear our August story. All are welcome. The coffee is good, the laughter abounds, and there are always cookies to enjoy.

Around the Church! After several months of legal proceedings the issue regarding removal of the skeletal remains was heard and signed off in Sumner County Court on Tuesday, July 14th. We were represented by our attorney Jason Elliot. On the following morning July 5th a team of archeologists began the process of removing the remains. The removal was a long and meticulous process of carefully locating, and removing every bone and bone fragment. New South Associates is expert in this field. The work was completed on Monday, July 20th with reburial in the church cemetery. Barry Ingram and Paul Decker have been assisting with this process.

Our contractor (The Barn Store) was notified and we met on site with the project manager on Tuesday morning July 21st. The immediate plan is to spray out the weed growth which had accumulated and LASER verify the condition of the existing forms . No firm schedule has been committed to by the contractor as the mobilization from other jobs is being evaluated. However, we expect work on site to begin in the next couple of weeks.

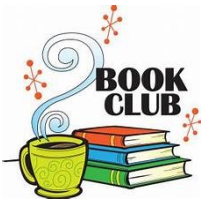


Lauren and Clélie, our onsite archaeologists, are “digging up bones” and carefully restoring our unknown individual for a proper burial.

The remains will be placed in this box built by New South Associates and the church will purchase a marker to mark the new burial site.



Excavating a “final resting place” for the skeletal remains for reburial in the church cemetery.



The FPC Evening Book Club is currently reading *Once We Were Brothers* written by Ronald H. Balson and recommended by Suzi Bass. This is the gripping tale about two boys, once as close as brothers, who find themselves on the opposite side of the Holocaust—a riveting novel of survival, justice, and redemption.

Join us for our discussion on **Monday evening, August 10, at 6:30 pm.**

Read along and meet with us for discussion from the comfort of your own home as we meet by Zoom. Just send an email to our “Zoom Master” Charles Lott so he can send you a link. (clott@bellsouth.net). For any further questions, contact Jackie Decker (thepauldeckers@comcast.net).

Looking ahead: *Hamnet*, by Maggie O’Farrell



The Mystery Member This Month Is ...



It's BACK! You might wonder if this will be my pattern ... I'm going to TRY to be better about getting these articles to Linda before the newsletter is all done! This month, our Mystery Member is someone who has spent many years here, although she took a break from regularly attending after she became a wife and a mother. A lot of young adults take a break for awhile... we are very happy that this member is involved again.

She is the third of four children. She and her brothers and sister grew up attending HFPC. She was born in Baptist Hospital in Nashville, and lived in Gallatin during her school years. Her family still lives in Gallatin. She attended Indian Lake Elementary School, started high school in Gallatin, but transferred to a private high school in Nashville, which is her alma mater. She went to college at the University of North Carolina, in Chapel Hill. She's a math person. She worked as a statistician for Proctor and Gamble, in Cincinnati, OH. She has nine nieces and nephews, who she loves spending time with when she can.

She met her husband as a college student. They have lived in a few places around the country, but is happily living back in middle TN. She returned to Chapel Hill to get her masters degree in applied mathematics. I don't know what that is, exactly, but like I said, she is a math person. Her husband got his degree in mechanical engineering, and he worked in the automotive industry for nearly 20 years. During that time, they moved to New Haven, CT. Though they enjoyed their stint in the northeast, when the opportunity came up to return to Nashville, they took it. He now works at Vanderbilt, working on artificial medical devices. Our MM was offered a teaching job in Nashville, where she taught algebra to 8th graders at a private school. It just happened to be her alma mater, and she was happy to return there, teaching for 12 years. She now works in real estate, although she is not an agent.

She and her husband and 16-year-old son enjoy traveling. They love visiting in New York City ... she describes herself as someone who really enjoys big city living. The family has a vacation coming up this summer to Austin, TX. Her husband's family lives in Atlanta, but when he was in high school his mom took a job teaching in Germany! She worked for the Dept. of Defense.

In her spare time, this Mystery Member LOVES playing with her favorite fur baby. Her six year old Golden Retriever, Flo. We spent some time talking about our love for this amazing breed of dog. Anyone who has known me for awhile, knows that when I lost my Golden/Saluki mix girl about 5 years ago, I was devastated. She had lived a great life, and aged more gracefully than I did.

She also loves reading fiction, watching tv (she's a big Netflix fan!), and cooking. I asked if there was anything in particular that she loved cooking, and she said she'll enjoy every opportunity to make a dessert! She has an unusual food allergy, that has definitely affected the kinds of food she cooks and enjoys. She was diagnosed with Alpha-gal, which is a pretty rare food allergy. She is not able to eat ANY beef, pork, or lamb! She has no problems with chicken or fish, including shellfish. She discovered this about 5 years ago, and it is something very unusual. She always has Benadryl and an EpiPen handy, just in case. But she said she does occasionally miss a nice juicy burger! But the reaction is just not worth it. If you have never heard of Alpha-gal allergy, you are not alone. It has been discovered that it is a tick-borne allergy! It's caused by a bite from the Lone Star tick. She learned a lot about this situation after it became a part of her life.

And just when you thought the tick couldn't interrupt our lives any more! In Hendersonville we have about a million deer, so we need to be on the lookout for the tiny deer tick, which can lead to Lyme's disease. Or the tick usually found in areas of CO or other western states, the tick that will cause Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever.

Montreat Music Conference

Andrew and I, Laurie Dishman and Tara Mielnik had a wonderful week at the Montreat Worship and Music Conference in early July. The theme was , "Who will be a Witness?" and it was a very meaningful and inspiring experience for all of us. We stayed in a lodge with members of Lexington First Presbyterian Church and enjoyed that fellowship also. We cooked and ate together, worked some puzzles and some of us even learned to play mahjong! Andrew and I participated in the sunrise hike up Lookout Mountain and Andrew made it all the way this year! It was a beautiful sight from the top with the sun coming over the mountains.

Andrew and I loved the adult choir - the great music, the excellent director, and the experience of singing with so many talented singers. We sang a piece called "Thou, O Lord" which had a line that said God was the lifter of my head. I thought it was kind of a strange phrase, but our director said he really related to it when he was being treated for cancer and could barely lift his head off the pillow and that totally changed my understanding of the song. Andrew and I also did intermediate handbells which we enjoyed and learned new bell techniques. I took a class called movement as a form of worship that I loved! Our class found lots of creative ways to include movement in the church service, some very simple that could include the whole congregation. Andrew and I also took ukulele class which was totally new to us. It was quite a challenge, especially for me, but I persisted and made some progress. We will keep practicing at home. Laurie, Tara and I also took an art and painting class. We learned some very interesting things about art and our teacher told us that God created us in His image so we should be creative. We had fun painting a primitive art angel. I also played bassoon in the instrumental ensemble with my bassoon friend, Sherri of many years. I always enjoy getting to play in a band again. Laurie and Tara took lots of bell classes: intermediate, advanced and Laurie participated in the auditioned chamber bell choir. Andrew also took a class taught by the pastor who is a scholar on the book of Mark. This was one of his favorite things at Montreat. He also took a class that reviewed the daily worship service. This was a treat because our pastor for the week was amazing, so engaging, often brought tears to your eyes and gave us lots of ways to be a witness with a huge emphasis on social justice. In his sermons he talked about how bearing witness isn't necessarily comfortable , especially in these troubling times, but we are called to protect the people who are marginalized in society. The daily worship service had so many creative new ways to do the different parts of the service. For example, on more than one occasion, the scripture was told by an excellent storyteller who really helped us understand the story.

We really hope that more members of our church can participate in this wonderful experience in years to come. Montreat has classes and activities for children and adults and is not just for highly skilled musicians. Save the date! July 27, 2027 is the next Worship and Music Conference. The theme is Through the Generations. If anyone is interested, please talk to one of us for more information.—Jean Getter



Andrew performing with the Bell Choir



Pictures of Jean's dance class during service



No trip is complete without a stop at Buc-ees!

DAILY BIBLE READING

This year we will read through the New Testament. There will be one chapter for each weekday and no reading assignments on weekends. This time can be used to reflect on the weekly readings. Here are some reflective questions after you read the chapter through twice. Is there a word or phrase that gets my attention? How does this touch my life? Is there an invitation for me? How will this impact my life today?

August 1	Reflection
August 2	Reflection
August 3	2 Corinthians 12
August 4	2 Corinthians 13
August 5	Galatians 1
August 6	Galatians 2
August 7	Galatians 3
August 8	Reflection
August 9	Reflection
August 10	Galatians 4
August 11	Galatians 5
August 12	Galatians 6
August 13	Ephesians 1
August 14	Ephesians 2
August 15	Reflection
August 16	Reflection
August 17	Ephesians 3
August 18	Ephesians 4
August 19	Ephesians 5
August 20	Ephesians 6
August 21	Philippians 1
August 22	Reflection
August 23	Reflection
August 24	Philippians 2
August 25	Philippians 3
August 26	Philippians 4
August 27	Colossians 1
August 28	Colossians 2
August 29	Reflection
August 30	Reflection
August 31	Colossians 3

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Anthony Hunt on his June 2026 graduation from York St. John's University in York, England. Anthony is the son of Andy and Anna (Blackwell) Hunt and the grandson of Freda Blackwell.

Anthony received a BSc degree with Honors in Physiotherapy with clinical experience across acute, community, respiratory, orthopedics, frailty, neuro-rehabilitation, and pediatrics. Entering the health care field as a newly qualified physiotherapist, Anthony brings knowledge, strength, compassion, encouragement, and hope to patients in the area of East Riding of Yorkshire.

Prior to attending York St. Johns, Anthony received a Diploma of Higher Education in Health Professions from Stamford College in Stamford, England. He received 3rd level distinctions extended diplomas in Sport and Exercise Science, Gym Instructor, and Sports Massage.

The ceremony for the 2026 graduates of St. John's University will be held in November in the beautiful York Minster, the Cathedral Church of St. Peter. It is the largest Gothic cathedral in Northern Europe, and one of the most magnificent architectural landmarks in the United Kingdom.





Thru June 2026	
Revenue	\$ 157,992.33
Expenses	\$ 201,391.04
Shortfall	\$ - 43,398.71



ADULT FELLOWSHIP NEWS

SUMMER POOLSIDE FELLOWSHIP RECAP

A recent adult fellowship gathering held on June 27th at the home of John Allen brought over 20 of our church members together for a fantastic evening of food and fellowship by the pool. With our gracious host manning the grill and everyone sharing their favorite picnic potluck dishes, the event was a joyful success that perfectly captured our church's warm, welcoming spirit.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR FALL

Our next event will be held on Saturday, October 17th at the home of Janet and Drew Covington. Please mark this date on your calendar and watch upcoming newsletters and bulletin inserts for additional details. Adult fellowship events are hosted in members' homes three to four times a year. All adults and friends of FPC are invited and encouraged to join in the fun and fellowship!



**Master Chef, John Allen,
hard at work, grilling hot dogs and
burgers**



**Alida Williams, Ruth Woodworth,
and Julian Avery**



**Jerry Klym,
checking out the spread**



**Linda Ballenger, Hal
Hubbell and Brenda
Hubbell chilling
poolside**



**Pat Smith, Janice
Yearout and Cathy
Young**



**Our great group of
ladies sharing
fellowship**



**Janet Covington and
Ched Yearout**

CHURCH STAFF

Michael Davis, *Pastor*

michael@fpchendersonville.org

Linda Agee, *Church Administrator*

linda@fpchendersonville.org

Sheri Brazelton, *Music Director*

sheri@fpchendersonville.org

Lee Druce, *Pianist*

leetdruce@gmail.com

Tina Yar, *Nursery Attendant*

Tina.ostovar@gmail.com

Lauren Finn, *P.D.S. Director*

PDSDirector123@gmail.com



**This month's
Mystery Member is
Sarah Ice**

First Presbyterian Church

172 W. Main St. | Hendersonville, TN

(615) 824-8604

Website: www.fpchendersonville.org

Email: linda@fpchendersonville.org

Sunday School—9:00 a.m.

Worship Service—10:00 a.m.



- 2 - Eva Dye
Missie Colson
- 4 - Brenda Hubbell
Matt Iceman
- 5 - Jimmy Tarbutton
- 14 - Mitzi Head
- 15 - Linda Ballenger
- 20 - Kaylie Parrotta
- 28 - Ariana Brew
- 29 - Sarah Ice