

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR:

Terrible Math

I failed basic high school algebra twice. I failed during my freshman year, failed summer school (how is THAT possible), and finally passed, barely, sophomore year. I'm terrible at math. That's why I connected with Kate Bowler's statement:

"I've always said that giving is very bad math. You give your time, your energy, your love; by all reasonable calculations, you should have less. And yet, somehow, joy comes rushing in to fill the gap. It's terrible arithmetic."

Or as Jesus said, "For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?" Terrible math. Or "For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." Terrible math.

Thank you for being terrible at math! You give generously of your time, your love, and your resources, so that we can proclaim the gospel and meet humanity in Athens. The math doesn't work, but I see the richness of God's grace in you and rejoice.

And so I leave you with a poem by Malcom Guite:

More than good measure, measure of all things,
Pleroma overflowing to our need,
Fullness of glory, all that glory brings,
Ungessed-at-blessing, spring from each seed,
Even the things within the world you make
Give more than all they have for they are more
Than all they are. Gifts given for the sake
Of love keep giving; draw us to the core, where love and giving come
From: the rich source
That wells within the fullness of the world,
The reservoir, the never-spent resource,
Poured out in wounded love, until it spilled
Even from your body on the cross;
The heart's blood of our maker shed for us.

Terrible math, indeed.

Serving Together On the Square,

Jim



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

NOVEMBER 8, 2026

PULPIT SUPPLY: REV. SHERRAD C. HAYES, III

Short Biography:

Rev. Sherrad Hayes has served as pastor of Union Baptist Church near West Point, GA, since 2023. Ordained in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in 2017, Sherrad has previously ministered to multiple Baptist and Presbyterian congregations as an associate pastor and youth minister. He is a graduate of Beeson Divinity School at Samford University (MDiv, 2014) and Auburn University (BA, 2007). While in school, he served as an infantryman in the Army National Guard, taking a “break” from his seminary studies to lead a company in Afghanistan from 2012-2013. Sherrad and Pastor Jim Truesdell have been good friends since 2013 when they were both living in Birmingham, AL.

A native of Lanett, Alabama, Sherrad married his high school sweetheart, Amy in 2007. They live in Auburn, Alabama, with their two boys, Will (12) and Cooper (8).

Church:

Union Baptist Church is a lovely, family-style congregation in rural Harris County, GA. Union has been an active Baptist voice in West Point, Pine Mountain, and surrounding neighborhoods since its founding in 1838. The church is affiliated with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Georgia.



PRAYER REQUESTS:

THOSE SERVING IN THE MILITARY:

Brandon Noel - Army
Sean Miller - Army
Adam Naves - Marines
Damien Williams - Army
Kevin O'Neill-Army Nat. Guard
Joshua Hargrove - Deployed
Jay Tulley- Middle East
Terrance Wilson- Deployed
Justin Ruf- Army Air Guard
Joshua Wilcox - Marines
Billy Nelson- Air Guard

FAMILY AND FRIENDS:

Hazel Ruf (Mason Ruf's mother, home)
Gary Kilgo (Health, Kay Baugher & Carol Quillen's family member)
Karen Ferguson (Potter's Hand)
Keith Clem (Healing, cousin of Chris Paysinger)
Amy Cotten (Potter's Hand)
Telula Thornton (Healing and Comfort, mother of Karan Baker)
Shannon Underwood (Healing, daughter of Barbara Welborn)
Karryl Anderson (Healing, Mexico mission supporter)
Gerry Smith (Healing for knees and back, cousin of Jan Ruth)
Ronnie Cottles (Healing, father-in-law of Michae & Gail Cottles)
MaryJo Ghadimi (Healing, friend of Matt Robinson)
Judy Cramer (Healing, neighbor of Jan Ruth)
Sue Guyer (Healing, sister of Bonny Noel)
Macie Garrett (Healing/Fractured Knee, 12 years old, great niece of Christy Arnett)
Evelyn Walker (Health/Healing, daughter of Sarah Pearson Walker)
Maureen Mathes (Healing/Health, cousin of Jan Ruth)
Margaret Gray (Health, mother of Travis Gray)
Mary Roper (Healing, family of Matt Robinson)
Heather Hopcraft (Health/Healing, comfort, family of Matt Robinson)
Cindy Richardson (Health, sister of Kevin Richardson)
Claude McKee (Health, Family of Jan Ruth)
Jesse Saunders (Health, Friend of Jan Ruth)
Deon Hargrove (Healing from MRSA Infection, Sister of DeAnna McNeill)
Candace Brooks (Healing/cancer, student of Cindy Witt)

CHURCH FAMILY:

Marv & Elizabeth Price (Health)
Doris Welch (Home)
Dean Steele
Susie Fogg (Home)
Sharon Massey
Melvin & Ruth Clem (Health)
Duane Counter (Healing)
Suzanne Weeks (Healing)
Jac Catlett
Diane Lynn (Health)
Gale Cottles (Healing)
Charlotte Lyle (Healing)

Nominating Committee

Each year we elect 3 new elders to serve the church. Elders are spiritual leaders who discern the work of the Holy Spirit and provide for the governance of God's people. God calls imperfect people to this work. Nevertheless, the Spirit raises up people of integrity who love God and strive to love their neighbor. This year the chairperson of the Nominating Committee is Brad Green. He will help the Nominating Committee prayerfully and thoughtfully call people to this important work.

Please include Brad and the Nominating Committee in your prayers. Ask God to identify the right leaders for this time.

If you are asked to serve, be open. Here are some of the basic responsibilities of an elder.

1. An elder is growing in faith and obedience to Jesus. My goal is that every elder believes that they have grown in faith during the 3-year term of service. This is my primary goal for each elder. The work will get done, but we're not going to lose our souls doing it.
2. An elder knows how to use their gifts and is willing to learn new things to serve others.
3. Each elder will chair a standing committee (Worship, Education, Property, etc.) or a special work group (Stewardship or Nominating).
4. Attend "elder training" before term starts. (4 hours: to cover the Book of Order requirements) Probably one Sunday afternoon this fall.
5. Attend 10 session meetings a year. We have 30 minutes of prayer together at the start of each meeting. (Being with Jesus before we work for Jesus.) And most meetings are 90 minutes.



November 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 COMMUNION 9AM SUNDAY SCHOOL 10AM WORSHIP	2 PLAYIN' AND PRAYIN' REVIVAL 5PM	3 PW CIRCLE RODGERS CENTER 1:00 PM	4 9:00-12:00 PM THE POTTERS HAND POTTERY STUDIO CHOIR PRACTICE 6:30	5	6 OFFICE CLOSED	7
8 9AM SUNDAY SCHOOL 10AM WORSHIP	9 PLAYIN' AND PRAYIN' REVIVAL 5PM	10 MISSION SHOWER DAY SESSION MEETING REVIVAL 6PM	11 9:00-12:00 PM THE POTTERS HAND POTTERY STUDIO CHOIR PRACTICE 6:30	12	13 OFFICE CLOSED	14
15 9AM SUNDAY SCHOOL 10AM WORSHIP	16 PLAYIN' AND PRAYIN' REVIVAL 5PM	17	18 9:00-12:00 PM THE POTTERS HAND POTTERY STUDIO CHOIR PRACTICE 6:30	19 CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING BIG SPRING PARK, BELLS WILL CHIME	20 OFFICE CLOSED	21
22 9AM SUNDAY SCHOOL 10AM WORSHIP	23 PLAYIN' AND PRAYIN' REVIVAL 5PM	24	25 9:00-12:00 PM THE POTTERS HAND POTTERY STUDIO CHOIR PRACTICE 6:30	26 OFFICE CLOSED THANKSGIVING	27 OFFICE CLOSED LAST DAY TO DROP OFF DONATIONS TO ALFRC FOR HOLIDAY WARMTH	28
29 9AM SUNDAY SCHOOL 10AM WORSHIP CHRISTMAS FAMILY INFORMATION AND ADOPTION LIST IN RODGERS CENTER	30 PLAYIN' AND PRAYIN' REVIVAL 5PM	1 LUNCHEON FOR WOMEN OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN	2 9:00-12:00 PM THE POTTERS HAND POTTERY STUDIO CHOIR PRACTICE 6:30	3	4 OFFICE CLOSED	

SUBMISSIONS FOR GRAPEVINE AND THE MONTHLY CALENDAR SHOULD BE SENT BY EMAIL
(FPCATHENS@FPCATHENS.ORG) OR BY PHONE (256-232-0122) BY THE 20TH OF THE MONTH.

November Birthdays

2nd Tom RESS

6th Diane LYNN

10th Carole JOHNSTON

15th Hannah JOHNSTON

15th Tim MCNEILL

19th Janet POOLE

22nd Amber Hanes

26th Rebekah Garrison



LUNCHEON FOR THE WOMEN OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

Where: Emily Clem's Home

When: December 1, 2026

Time: 12:00 pm

**For location information, please refer to the Church Directory or
contact Emily Clem at 256-777-4915.**



George + Pamela Pendergrass



LEWISBURG, TENNESSEE

George and Pamela have dedicated over 30 years to enriching lives through music, education, and ministry. Both hold master's degrees from Duquesne University—George in Community Leadership and Pamela in Business Ethics. George also holds a bachelor's from Lubbock Christian University in Bible & Education.

FOCUS ON THE FRONTIER

MISSION MOBILIZATION AMONG PEOPLE OF COLOR

We pray for more people of color to become engaged in missions, and participate in vision trips. We believe that people of similar cultures and life experiences often have unique opportunities to build meaningful connections and make lasting impact for the Kingdom of God.

Join us in prayer

In partnership with ministries like Jossour, the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo and the Bible Society of Egypt, we are witnessing a significant impact across the Middle East. This work is producing a spiritual harvest, even in unexpected and challenging areas.



LEARN MORE OR DONATE

ppendergrass@frontierfellowship.com
gpendergrass@frontierfellowship.com
Phone: 615 939-8051

Frontierfellowship.com | Donate by check | 612.869.0062 PO Box 8548
The Woodlands, TX 77387

Specific prayer requests from their October Newsletter:

Please ask the Lord to make us people of compassion for those who have never heard of Your love. Thank Him for sending us to unreached communities. Pray for open doors for the gospel and prepare hearts to receive it. Protect us from those who seek to harm us or hinder the message. We are grateful for His provision that makes it possible to go to Egypt and South Sudan. Guide our preparations and bless the plans for our 2027 trip. We ask for strength for the missionaries serving in frontier regions. Protect them from danger, sustain them through loneliness and hardship, and grant them wisdom, humility, and love for the people they serve. Raise up local leaders, and let Your peace guide every

step. May He continue to use us and the gifts given to us to serve others and share love. Amen.



WHEN WE INVEST IN OUR NEIGHBORS, WE STRENGTHEN OUR WHOLE COMMUNITY.

10 Years of Community | More Than \$100,000 Invested Locally

Dear Friend and Community Partner,

Sometimes a big idea begins with something simple. For Athens-Limestone Empty Bowls, it began with local potters and a handmade bowl.

The Potter's Hand, a community pottery studio at First Presbyterian Church in Athens, helped launch our local project. Other area potters joined, restaurants provided soup, volunteers gave their time, sponsors invested, and neighbors gathered around the table.

What began with clay and a desire to serve has grown into a ten-year tradition of responding to hunger, homelessness and hardship close to home.

THE POTTER'S HAND: WHERE OUR STORY BEGAN

Located in the basement of First Presbyterian Church, The Potter's Hand is a community pottery studio built around creativity, learning and giving back. The studio welcomes people with varying levels of experience, with seasoned potters helping those who are learning. Supported by donations, pottery sales help fund charitable causes.

Since 2017, The Potter's Hand has taken responsibility for three hundred bowls given out at the Empty Bowls. Many are made by their potters while others are recruited from the local pottery community.

The handmade bowl is more than a keepsake. It connects each guest to the local artists who helped begin this tradition and reminds us that for some of our neighbors, the bowl is still empty.

TEN YEARS OF LOCAL IMPACT

Over the past decade, Athens-Limestone Empty Bowls has provided **more than \$100,000 in support to local organizations** addressing hunger, homelessness, and hardship. The 2026 luncheon alone raised **\$20,000** for local food outreach efforts in Limestone County.

That generosity becomes practical help for people in our community through organizations working on the front lines.

WHERE YOUR SUPPORT BECOMES SOMETHING TANGIBLE

COMMUNITY TABLE

For families experiencing food insecurity, support becomes groceries and food assistance. A recent Empty Bowls contribution provided the equivalent of more than one hundred grocery sets for families of four, helping put food on the table for more than 450 people.

FULL TUMMY PROJECT

For children who may go without meals when school is not in session, support helps provide weekend food bags. In partnership with Athens Rotary, Empty Bowls helps cover this need during January, giving sponsor churches and organizations that serve throughout the school year a needed break.

HEARTS FOR HOMELESS

For neighbors experiencing homelessness, support helps provide food, clothing, winter propane and heaters, tents, sleeping bags, flashlights and emergency hotel accommodation when needed.

BEYOND BLESSED

For individuals and families facing difficult circumstances, support helps provide food, clothing, propane, emergency housing assistance, rent and utility deposits, and other essentials.

Food. Warmth. Shelter. Essential supplies. Practical help when it matters most.

BECOME A 2027 COMMUNITY SPONSOR

As individuals, families and businesses consider their year-end giving, Athens-Limestone Empty Bowls Project offers a meaningful opportunity to make a difference close to home.

For businesses and organizations, sponsorship demonstrates community leadership and a visible investment in the place employees, customers and families call home. For individuals and families, it is a tangible way to care for neighbors facing hardship nearby.

Every level of participation helps carry this tradition forward.

COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP

<u>Sponsorship</u>	<u>Gift</u>	<u>Tickets</u>	<u>Recognition</u>
Soup Spoon	\$100	2	Sponsor recognition
Soup Ladle	\$250	2	Sponsor recognition
Soup Bowl	\$500	4	Sponsor recognition
Soup Pot	\$1,000	6	Sponsor recognition
<u>Silver Soup Pot</u>	<u>\$2,500</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>Enhanced recognition + Premium Bowl</u>
<u>Gold Soup Pot</u>	<u>\$5,000</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>Enhanced recognition + Signature Bowl</u>

All sponsors receive recognition through event signage, social media, and promotional materials. Silver and Gold Soup Pot Sponsors receive enhanced recognition and a Signature Bowl as an expression of appreciation.

MORE THAN A LUNCHEON

On **February 26, 2027, from 11 :30 a.m. to 1 :00 p.m.**, neighbors will gather at Revival at First Presbyterian Church in Athens. A \$20 ticket includes two servings of soup, bread, and a handcrafted pottery bowl to take home.

The luncheon is one day, but the support reaches much further, helping local organizations provide food, warmth, shelter, and other essentials throughout the year.

HELP US SHAPE THE NEXT CHAPTER

Ten years. More than \$100,000 invested locally. And a community ready to keep showing up for one another.

There is a place in Athens-Limestone Empty Bowls for you, whether you participate as an individual, family, business, church, or community organization.

GIVE. SPONSOR. ATTEND. VOLUNTEER. SHARE.

HELP US FILL THE BOWLS FOR ANOTHER DECADE.

With gratitude,

The Athens-Limestone Empty Bowls Project Committee

ATHENS-LIMESTONE EMPTY BOWLS PROJECT

2027 ATHENS-LIMESTONE EMPTY BOWLS COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP COMMITMENT

Friday, February 26, 2027, 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Revival - First Presbyterian Church | 303 W. Washington Street, Athens, AL

Name / Family / Organization:

Contact Name:

Phone:

Email:

Address:

SELECT YOUR COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP

☐ Soup Spoon - \$100 | 2 luncheon tickets

☐ Soup Ladle - \$250 | 2 luncheon tickets

☐ Soup Bowl - \$500 | 4 luncheon tickets

☐ Soup Pot - \$1,000 | 6 luncheon tickets

☐ **Silver Soup Pot - \$2,500 | 6 luncheon tickets + Signature Bowl**

☐ **Gold Soup Pot - \$5,000 | 6 luncheon tickets + Signature Bowl**

☐ Other Gift - \$ _____

I AM PARTICIPATING AS

☐ Individual ☐ Family ☐ Business ☐ Church ☐ Community Organization

☐ I would like my gift to remain anonymous.

PAYMENT AND RETURN INFORMATION

Please make checks payable to First Presbyterian Church and return this form with payment to:



Julie McNeese First Presbyterian Church 112 S. Jefferson Street Athens, AL 35611

For credit card or electronic fund transfer options, contact Julie McNeese at 256-566-4013, or use the QR code provided with the sponsorship materials.

Questions or sponsorship assistance: Emily Clem, Committee Chair | 256-777-4915 | clem.emily@yahoo.com

Public Relations: Courtney Greene | 256-303-5070 | couwhite@gmail.com

Please consult your tax adviser regarding the tax treatment of charitable contributions.

One Bowl. Many Hands. One Community.

ATHENS-LIMESTONE EMPTY BOWLS PROJECT

FPC Athens Christmas Missions

The Mission committee again requests your generous support of our usual two special Christmas Ministries: Faith Ministry (FM) Christmas Fiestas and the Athens Limestone County Family Resource Center (ALFRC) Christmas Families.

Christmas Fiestas in Mexico

First, our Mexico mission partner, Faith Ministry (FM), is asking for our support of their Christmas Fiestas again this year. You can help by providing donations by check to the church marked for FM Christmas Fiestas or directly to Faith Ministry. For more information, ask a Mission committee member, see the paragraphs below, or check online at <https://faithministry.org/what-we-do/spiritual-growth/christmas-fiestas/>.

(Information from FM)

As is Faith Ministry tradition, we will be hosting Christmas fiestas this **December 10-13, 2026**. They are a time for us to gather with our brothers and sisters, eat tons of tamales, sing carols, give toys to the kids, distribute meal packages to the families, pray, and most importantly, remember what the Christmas season is really about. It's a joyful time of community and fellowship, and it is made possible by people like you!

We will have fiestas in Reynosa, Naranjito, and Miguel Aleman for all of the families that we've built homes for this year; children at our different nutrition programs; and our staff. There will be songs, prayer, grocery packages, toys, and a good meal. In addition to the fiestas, we will also deliver grocery packages door-to-door. In total, **we hope to be able to bless more than 1,000 people** through our fiestas this year.

We also accept NEW soccer ball and toy donations. You can send new toys or soccer balls directly to FM or, for example, order soccer balls from Amazon and have them sent directly to the FM office. The office address to send them to is 4200 N McColl Rd, Bldg 200, Ste 203, McAllen, TX 78504. ***Please be sure that the soccer balls arrive by Friday, November 27***

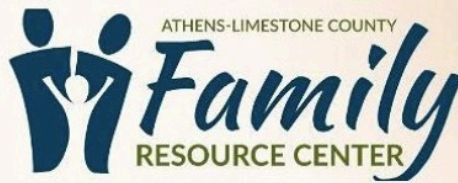
ALFRC Christmas Families

Also, we are asking for your continued support of the Family Resource Center (ALFRC) Christmas Families, a ministry that we developed with them in 2015. The ALFRC identifies families from among their clients that need assistance for Christmas who are not being served by the traditional Christmas charities. As an indicator of the ALFRC's success in its mission, there are seldom repeat families on the Christmas list.

The Christmas Family information and adoption lists will be in the Rogers Center on Sunday, November 29th, with everything needed to be wrapped and back to the church by Sunday, December 13th.

As usual, we plan to supply a Christmas meal by providing each family with a Hometown Grocery gift certificate. With the increase in food costs, we expect to need \$1800 to \$2000 this year. We depend on your donations to do that. You can provide a check to the church marked for the ALFRC Family Christmas.

The Mission Committee thanks you for your generous outpouring over the past years, and for what you will do this year.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

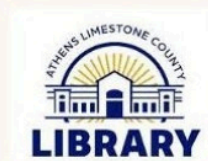
**Help us make the holidays a little sweeter for
Limestone County families!**

**We're looking for volunteers from across our
community to help make Sweets with Santa a special
event for local families. Whether you're signing up on
your own or volunteering alongside others, we'd love
to have you join us!**

**READY TO JOIN US?
Scan the QR code to sign up to volunteer!**



**Every helping hand makes a difference. Thank you for
being part of strengthening Limestone County families!**





WHIP UP SOME HOLIDAY WARMTH!

This holiday season, we're inviting local businesses to partner with the Athens-Limestone Family Resource Center to help make Christmas brighter for children and families in our community.

We're asking businesses to collect:

- New, unwrapped toys
- New or gently used coats and jackets (sizes newborn through adult 2X)
- New or gently used stuffed animals
- 15 gift cards of \$10 value (Walmart, Target, Dollar General, Five Below, or other teen-friendly retailers)

Your generosity will help provide warmth, comfort, and holiday joy to local families in need.

Drop off donations at the Athens Family Resource Center [406 S. Jefferson St., Athens, AL 35611] through November 27, 2026.

Thank you for helping us keep our community warm this holiday season! A simple act of kindness can warm a heart, brighten a season, and make a world of difference.





WHIP UP SOME HOLIDAY WARMTH!

Help us sprinkle a little extra kindness into the season
by donating new or gently used coats and jackets
[sizes newborn through adult 2X].

Every coat donated will help keep local children and
families warm this winter through the Athens-
Limestone Family Resource Center's annual coat drive.

Drop off donations at the Athens Family Resource
Center [406 S. Jefferson St., Athens, AL 35611] through
November 27, 2026.

Thank you for helping us keep our community warm
this holiday season! A simple act of kindness can warm
a heart, brighten a season, and make a world of
difference.



