

The Cumberland

Knoxville First Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Inc.

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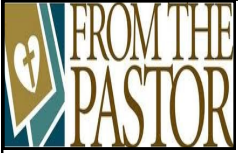
Rev. Mike Wilkinson ~ Pastor

Website: www.first-cumberland.org

Our Weekly Newsletter

"Loving God, Loving People"

January 25, 2017



I want to extend my congratulations to **Phil Bridges**, **Crissy Collins**, and **Dianne Pipkin** on being elected to serve this congregation as the **Elder Class of 2019**. **Phil** and **Dianne** have both served previously, but this is **Crissy's** first time to serve, so additional congratulations on her ordination as an elder is in order. Please keep these "new" elders, as well as the remainder of our **Session** (**Ann Bachman**, **Betty Hammill**, and **Tom Witmer**—**Elder Class of 2017** and **Ryan Haddox**, **Scott Roberts**, and **Steve Summers**—**Elder Class of 2018**) in your prayers. In addition, I want to extend my appreciation to **Jimmy Curtis**, **Dianne Pipkin**, and **Amanda Roberts**—**Elder Class of 2016** for their faithful service. I also want to offer this point of clarification: Typically, someone cannot serve two consecutive terms on our **Session**; however, the exception to this rule is when someone fills out the unexpired three-year term of someone else. This was the case last year as **Dianne Pipkin** was elected by the congregation serve the remainder of **James O'Neal's** term when he and his family moved to Hawaii. Since last Sunday was our annual **Congregational Meeting** to elect our sessional leadership, I chose to preach on the subject of "**Proven Leaders**". Because some of you were not here last Sunday, I have included a transcript of the majority of this sermon as an insert to this newsletter; I encourage you to read it before this week is out. Even if you were here last Sunday, it would be a good idea for you to read it as well, especially the last two paragraphs. I look forward to seeing you this coming Sunday!

Learning the unforced rhythms of grace,

Pastor Mike

Denomination Day Celebration

First Cumberland will host the **Presbytery of East Tennessee's 2017 Denomination Day Celebration** this coming Sunday afternoon, January 29th, at 3:30 p.m. This special musical Worship Service will feature a Presbyterian Choir, as well as various church choirs, groups, and soloists. For those interested in singing in the Presbyterian Choir, be at the church at 2:30 p.m., this coming Sunday afternoon to practice. As part of our hosting responsibilities for the **Denomination Day Celebration**, we have been asked to provide the evening meal that will follow the Worship Service. We need volunteers to provide vegetables, salads, and desserts; the church will provide the meat. We are expecting 150-200 people, so we will need lots and lots of your good, home-cooked food! You may bring your dishes either Sunday morning or by 3:30 p.m. Sunday afternoon. Thanks in advance for all your help! If you have any questions, contact **Dianne Pipkin**. We are also in need of volunteers to help set up the tables and chairs for the meal; we will be setting up this coming Saturday morning, January 28th, at 11:00 p.m.; let **Pastor Mike** know if you can help.

Water Angel Ministry

This coming Sunday, January 29th, will be the first Sunday our church will be collecting bottles of water and men's and women's winter coats for the **Water Angel Ministry**. Aaron Mynatt, who heads up this ministry, said that he has many requests also for hats and gloves. He is very appreciative of our help as there is a great need for all these items. Please bring all to the hallway off the side entrance to the church; help will be available for unloading. Let us see what the whole church can do this Sunday in providing these needed items to the "least of these" in our community. Remember these collections will be on the last Sunday of each month throughout the year. Thank You!

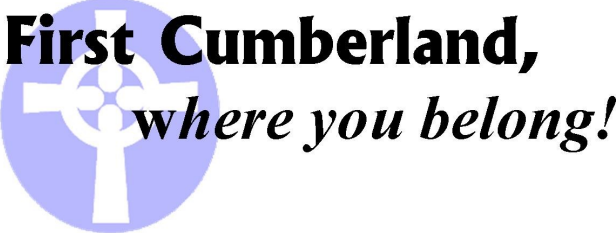
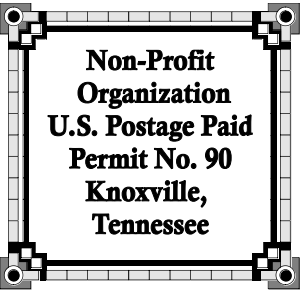
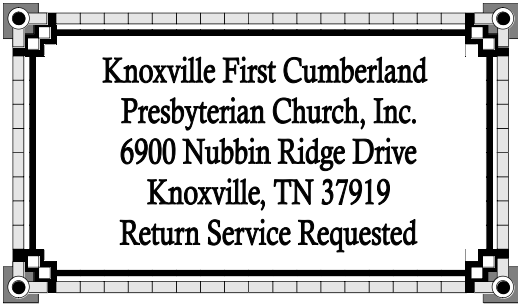
Playground Fundraiser


Thursday Connection—one of the homeschool cooperatives that meets here at First Cumberland—is holding a fundraiser to help refurbish our church playground. They have asked each of their students to sell **Butter Braid Frozen Pastry Dough** in much the same way public school groups ask students to sell fruit or candy or gift wrap. **Butter Braid Pastries** are not available in any retail store. The pastries have a fifteen-month shelf-life in a freezer. The cost is \$14.00 per braided dough with icing or marinara include. Each package will feed about eleven people. **Thursday Connection's** goal is to sell at least 500 pastries (\$6.00 from each item sold will go towards refurbishing our playground). As a congregation, we are not asked to sell anything, but if you would like to purchase some of the braided dough (available in seven flavors—Four Cheese and Herb, Apple, Blueberry and Cream Cheese, Cinnamon, Double Chocolate, Raspberry, and Strawberry and Cream Cheese) order forms will be available on the table in our Narthex and the Church Office this coming Sunday, January 29th. The deadline to order is Monday, January 30th, and the delivery date is Thursday, February 9th.

Scout Sunday

Our annual **Scout Sunday** event will be Sunday, February 5th. On this day, scouts and parents of **Cub Scout Pack 20** and **Boy Scout Troop 20** will be our special guests; various scouts will also participate in the Worship Service. Both of these groups meet at and are sponsored by First Cumberland. Make your plans now to attend this special Worship Service.


*For the glory of God, Knoxville First Cumberland Presbyterian Church exists to **worship** Christ, **evangelize** the lost, **love** one another and our neighbor, and **learn** more about our God.*





Happy Birthday

January 25th - 31st
30th - Kim Halbert



Our Faithfulness Record for January 22 nd	
Sunday School.....	49
Worship Service.....	80
Offering.....	\$2,865.30
Music Fund.....	\$50.00

Activities for January 25 th - 31 st	
Wednesday:	6:30 p.m. Choir Practice
Saturday:	11:00 p.m. Setup for Sunday’s Meal
Sunday:	Water Angel Ministry Collection Day
	9:30 a.m. Sunday School
	10:45 a.m. Worship Service
	2:30 p.m. Presbyterian Choir Practice
	3:30 p.m. Denomination Day Celebration
	5:00 p.m. Evening Meal
(See our web site for complete calendar listings)	

Among Our People


Maxine Curtis has begun outpatient physical rehab. ~ **Larry and Dianne Fielder** went to Disney World last week with their family. ~ **Kim Halbert** had to have yet another gall stone removed from her bile duct on Wednesday, January 18th; she is slowly improving from this procedure. ~ **Jewell Kerr** will not have any additional treatment for her heart-rhythm issue at this time. ~ **Justin and Julie Rech** are back from a Caribbean cruise. ~ **Marilyn Ritchey**, daughter-in-law of Marlene Ritchey, has been diagnosed with breast cancer; she is now post-surgical and moving to the treatment phase of radiation and possible chemotherapy. ~ **Kenan and Sarah Pipkin Saxton** are back from their honeymoon cruise and trip to Disney World. ~ **Rose Wilkinson**, mother of Pastor Mike and Susan Edwards, is still at Morningview Village (Room 128), in Maryville, for rehab following her recent fall and surgery.

Special Guests

It was great having **Abbie Stutts**, granddaughter of Sam and Karen Ware, worshiping with us on Sunday, January 15th; her name was inadvertently left out of last week’s newsletter. It was also great having **Faye Bridges**, mother of Phil Bridges; **Mindy and Gene Landry**, daughter and son-in-law of Jewell Kerr; **Lesa Medley**, daughter of Mary Hellen Daniel; and **Ashlynn and Blaine Stansberry**, niece and nephew of Phil Bridges, worshiping with us last Sunday.

File Cabinets Needed


Our **Worship Committee** is in need of three four-drawer letter-sized vertical file cabinets for our Choir Room for music storage. If you have a file cabinet that you would like to donate, please contact the Church Office. If needed, arrangements can be made to pick it up.



Prayer Concern List

In the Hospital

No one connected to First Cumberland is known to be in the hospital at this time.



Prayer Concerns

Mildred Acuff; Preston Beeler (cousin of Greg Beeler); Gordon Blaylock; Peggy Bradshaw (mother of Dianne Fielder); Wanell Brown (friend of Rose Wilkinson); Charlotte Byrd; **Cumberland Presbyterian missionaries**; Maxine Curtis; Mae Denton (friend of Tammy Eblen); Grace Flory (mother of Lois Witmer); Judy Gammon; Jack Gaston; Kim Halbert; Mark Hester; Bud and Betty Hickman (friends of Mary Ann Haney); Jewell Kerr; **our Kids Hope USA ministry**; Bob Lawson (friend of Pastor Mike); **ALEXI LEWALLEN** (granddaughter of a friend of Rose Wilkinson); Catherine McKinney; Ruth McNabb (mother of Tammy Eblen); Dewaine Moncier, Jr. (cousin of Dianne Fielder); Mary Anne Moncier (aunt of Dianne Fielder); Alice Montgomery; Georgia Moore (sister of Jewell Kerr); Amy Beth Davidson Morgan; Barbara Mullenax; Cliff Parrott; **SARA PAUL** (friend of Rose Wilkinson); **persecuted Christians around the world**; Jan Pipkin (sister-in-law of Dianne Pipkin); Anna Faye Presley (niece of Catherine McKinney); David and Rebecca Rech (parents of Justin Rech); **MARILYN RITCHEY** (daughter-in-law of Marlene Ritchey); Amanda Roberts; John Snoderly (brother of Betty Hammill); John Snoderly, Jr. (nephew of Betty Hammill); Sydney Snoderly (great-niece of Betty Hammill); Jean Stapleton (mother of Elaine Stapleton); Shane Thompson (cousin of Hannah Haddox and Amanda Roberts); Angel Tindell (granddaughter of Catherine McKinney); Carl Ware (father of Sam Ware); Codee Weaver (son of Elaine Stapleton); Lee Wells (mother of a coworker of Susan Edwards); Devan Wilhite (friend of Greg Beeler); Rose Wilkinson (mother of Pastor Mike and Susan Edwards); Bob Witmer (uncle of Tom Witmer); Lois Witmer

Please keep the Church Office informed of any needed changes to our Prayer Concerns list.

“Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us, even as we hope in you.” - Psalm 33:22, NRSV

Friendship Club

The next Dutch-treat lunch outing of the **Friendship Club** will be Wednesday, February 15th, at **The Original Louis Drive-in Restaurant** (4661 Old Broadway), at 11:00 a.m. A sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board near the Church Office. As always, feel free to invite family and friends to join you on these outings.

Friendship Club, P.M. Edition

The next Dutch-treat dinner outing of the **Friendship Club, P.M. Edition** will be Thursday, February 2nd, at **Calhoun’s Restaurant, Bearden Hill** (6515 Kingston Pike), at 6:30 p.m. A sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board near the Church Office. As always, feel free to invite family and friends to join us on these outings.

Proven Leaders

Philippians 2:19-24

Before I share with you the leadership characteristics that Timothy exhibited, I want to give you a little background on Timothy the man. He was the offspring of a mixed marriage—his mother was Jewish and his father was a Gentile, which was considered taboo at the time. He was born in what is modern day Turkey. Though his father was a Gentile, Timothy grew up under the godly influence of his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois. He became a follower of the risen Jesus during one of the Apostle Paul's missionary trips to his hometown. When Paul passed through Lystra on a follow-up visit, he invited Timothy to join his missionary team and for the next several years, he did so—sometimes serving as a scribe writing some of the letters that the Apostle Paul dictated to the churches he had founded. More than a just a secretary, Timothy became Paul's "go-to-guy"; the apostle had even sent him as his representative to some of the most troublesome situations that arose in the various churches.

Now a little background on our text for today: When his Letter to the **Philippians** was written, the Apostle Paul was in jail, most likely under house-arrest in Rome, for preaching the message of Jesus. After a messenger arrived from the Church at Philippi with both a financial gift and some questions about how things were going, Paul wrote back and updated them on his situation—he was confident that God was using his time in prison to further the Gospel—he thanked them for both their faithfulness and their generosity—and he wrote them some words of encouragement, urging them to stand strong in their faith. Again, as the Apostle Paul wrote these words, Timothy was him; he was probably not under house-arrest himself, but instead, came and went visiting and helping his mentor.

In our text for today, the Apostle Paul promised to send Timothy to Philippi at some later date. Since the believers in Philippi knew very little, if anything at all, about Timothy, Paul explained why this particular young man was such an outstanding leader. I would suggest to you that the qualities listed in Paul's description of Timothy offer important insight into the qualities the Lord desires in every Christian leader, especially in the elders and staff of a local church; so let's briefly examine these qualities, but first, let me say that my comments today are intended for all leaders in the Church—elders and staff, myself included.

The first desired quality of a biblical leader is that they have a positive tongue. The Apostle Paul knew that he could count on Timothy for a good report—for words of encouragement. In the original Greek language, the word "cheered" in verse nineteen of our text for today literally means "good souled"—Paul knew that good news about the Church at Philippi would bring joy to his soul. Words can do that, can they not? Words have the power to encourage, and regrettably, they also have the power to discourage. Discouragement drains courage, while encouragement builds courage, and that is exactly what positive words can do, especially the positive words of church leaders, which is why First Cumberland needs leaders who can encourage us. The world has enough discouragers—we have plenty of people who major in sowing despair and fear. We need leaders who can cheer our hearts and souls with their positive tongues. We need leaders who can think positively because they see through the eyes of faith—they are not pie-in-the-sky dreamers who try to wish away problems—rather, they are faith-in-the-Lord believers who know that the God they serve is greater than any circumstance or problem they face. That is the overarching perspective of the Book of **Philippians**. The Apostle Paul wrote this letter from a prison cell, but he was convinced that the Lord he served was more powerful than any chain that Satan used in an attempt to bind him. As a congregation, we do not need leaders who are paralyzed by fear or negative thinking; instead, we need leaders who can see the hand of God in any and every circumstance.

A farmer's pastor once asked him, "How is your cotton crop coming along?" "Ain't got none," replied the farmer, "'fraid of boll weevils." "Well," continued his pastor, "how is your corn?" "Didn't plant none," came the answer, "'fraid there wern't goin' be no rain." His pastor then asked, "Well, how are your potatoes?" "Ain't got none of those either; scairt of potato bugs," was the reply. "Really, what did you plant?", pressed his pastor. "Nut'in," was the calm reply, "I jest played it safe." First Cumberland needs leaders who refuse to "play it safe"—leaders who are willing to take great risks because they are people of great faith, who believe in a great God. Personally, I want to see leaders who know how to be "good gossips". By that I mean, I want a Session and staff full of men and women who major in positive speech. Truth be told, I want a congregation full of people like that. What would happen if everyone here majored in "good gossip"? What if we all pledge to never say anything but positive news about others? What if our leadership was full of men and women who are encouragers and promoters of the welfare of others? That is what we need—we need leaders who will cheer us with their good report of what God is doing in the lives of His people.

We also need leaders with selfless hearts. We have all seen our share of church leaders who seem to be more interested in promoting themselves than in promoting the cause of Christ or the interest of others. The Apostle Paul taught that godly leaders have a genuine interest in the welfare of others. Great churches are led by people who have no need to always be right or always get their way. Effective leaders humbly know that they sometimes make mistakes and that they can easily miss important information. Good leaders depend on other leaders to help them see the bigger picture and make better decisions. In short, godly leaders learn to think like Jesus. First Cumberland needs leaders who trust God completely by thinking like Jesus.

Next, we need leaders with willing hands. The Apostle Paul's choice of words in verse twenty-two of our text for today is instructive. The Greek word he used that is translated into English as "served" comes from the vocabulary of slavery. Timothy was not a leader who served from a position of superiority; instead, he slaved for others—he was their servant—that is the best kind of leader. First Cumberland needs servant-leaders who are willing to get their hands dirty—no job is too small or too obscure—if it needs done, a good leader will do it. Good leaders do not need a spotlight—they can work and serve in obscurity—they do not require credit and acclaim. Obviously, those who are being served should express appreciation and gratitude, but a good leader keeps going even when overlooked or even when disrespected.

Staff and elders—past, present, and future—I appreciate your willingness to step up to the plate and get involved; I honor your refusal to remain on the sidelines; I celebrate your service. In my nearly three-and-a-half-year tenure here, every staff member and elder with which I have served has worked for the betterment of this congregation and has not pushed for some personal agenda. Other pastors tell me that is rare, so we are truly blessed. Congregation, this means that our elders and staff deserve our support—they merit our honor and encouragement, and by freely granting them these things, we have the power to make them even better leaders.

I want to close with a paraphrase of our text for today—if the Apostle Paul were penning a letter to First Cumberland, here is what he might write: "I am glad in the Lord Jesus that we have men and women like you, who are leaders in the church. I am cheered by your positive report about what is happening. I am grateful that you are not like some leaders in some churches who are only interested in themselves. Your congregation is blessed to have leaders like you—leaders who are concerned about the welfare of others about your congregation, and especially about the message of Jesus. They have proven themselves. God is doing good things through you."