CHURCH NEWSLETTER

MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

Why I Believe in God

In a world where so much of today's population are critical, even cynical, about Christians, or religious people, or even those who believe in some kind of higher spiritual power; I am often asked, "Why do you believe in God? Why are you a Christian?" Indeed, I can truly understand why the cynics and critics would ask such questions. It's completely normal to question the very existence of an all-powerful, all-knowing, benevolent deity who allows (or perhaps even causes) earthquakes to kill millions, or children to suffer and die from cancer. "Why would anyone believe in (let alone worship) such a god?" These are valid questions, and I confess that I have no good answer.

Some perhaps well-intentioned Christians have tried to craft an answer that would excuse God of the world's ills by shifting the blame to the Devil. But this is hardly a satisfactory answer. As Sigmund Freud said, "The Devil would be the best way out as an excuse for God. But even so, one can hold God responsible for the existence of the Devil just as well as for the existence of the wickedness which the Devil embodies."

No, I choose to be a Christian, I choose to believe in God not because such faith will resolve the problem of evil in the universe. Rather, I believe in God because my faith addresses the great existential and spiritual questions of who I am and who I ought to be in the universe. I believe in God not because I hope to solve or even explain the problem of evil, but because I believe that, despite evil's ubiquity, there are also truth, beauty, justice, and compassion in the world. I believe in God because I want to transcend who I am and what part I play in the ills of this world. I believe in God because I want to become one with the source and purpose of my very being, the source and purpose of all that is good. I believe in God because there is a yearning, a compulsion within me to exist in relationship to that which gives meaning to my existence.

I am a Christian because I find that this God, this source of my very being, is tangibly incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ. My

relationship with Christ is my relationship in all that is and can be good in the midst of all the evils in the world.

This relationship with God in Christ is what we Christians call "salvation." Salvation means that my very being is rescued; rescued not from the evils of the world, but from my part in that evil. Salvation means that while I may, and most likely will, fall prey to evil's suffering (i.e., taking up the cross), I must never return evil for evil. It means I must meet falsehoods with truth, iniquity with justice, despair with hope, avarice with generosity, brutality with mercy, suffering with healing, and hatred with love. Salvation means being continually transformed by my relationship with God, a relationship which allows my very purpose, my very existence to resonate in tune with all that is good, and merciful, and loving in this world.

Regrettably, many Christians define salvation far too narrowly, thinking that salvation means nothing more than living eternally in heaven after one die. While existing in eternity with an eternal God Who loves us eternally is indeed a facet of salvation, it is merely a consequence of salvation, not its purpose. If getting into heaven is all my belief in God aims to achieve, then I will always live in fear of losing my salvation. But if my relationship with God achieves a transformation from my own darkness and evil and into a transcendence of love and light, then I will live in utter gratitude for my salvation. To quote Carl Jung, "If our religion is based on salvation, then our chief emotion will be fear and trembling. If our religion is based on wonder, then our chief emotion will be gratitude."

I sincerely confess: I do not know the answer to why a presumedly benevolent God would create a universe that indiscriminately kills millions with earthquakes and cancer. But I do know that I am compelled by a power that dwells within me to believe in God as my means of ultimate transcendence, to transcend from what I am to what I ought to be, to become the light that shines in an otherwise dark world.

– Curtis "T" Christian

UPCOMING EVENTS

November – The Women's Evening Circle
The Women's evening Circle will meet on November 10 at 6:30 pm, in the church parlor. Denise Winebarger will bring refreshments. We will discuss lesson 1 in the Horizons Bible Study for 2025-2026, entitled Mary Magdalene, the Tower. No preparation is needed. We will go over the lesson in the meeting.

Nov 7 – AMADEUS LEX!
Shadow of the Curtain – concert.
When: 7:00 PM
Where: Church Sanctuary

Nov 7 &8 – LOCKIN 2026!
Open to Middle and High School youth.
When: 7:00 PM overnight
Where: Church

Nov 14 – Arts & Crafts for Missions
When: 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM
Where: Church Grounds

Dec 24 – The Marshall-Moretz Christmas Eve Dinner
When: 7:00 PM
Where: Church Grounds

MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS

Youth Ministry

Our teens and youth are in the middle of a new school year. We meet every Wednesday for Prayer Breakfast, at Purdy's. Everyone is looking forward to LOCKIN event on November 7-8. Please pray for our youth!

Community Outreach

In October 2026, Love Fund served 53 families (includes 48 children) and assist them with various needs.
Total spent: $7,774.31.

Mission

Mission Garden is coming to the end of the season, next up is installation of the berry boxes.
Waters for the Living Lord – possible in person visit this coming Spring.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Teaching With Soul

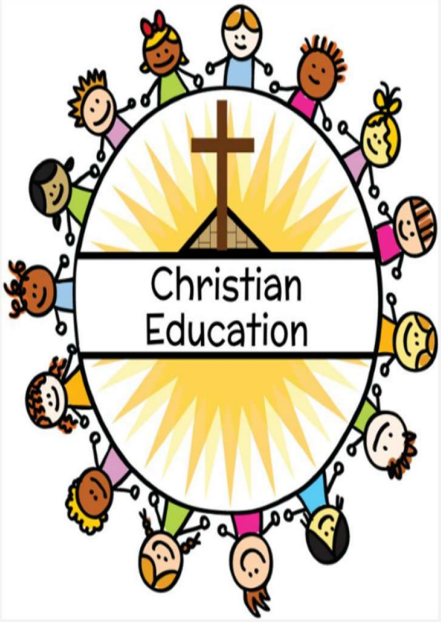
Last month, we introduced a series of newsletter articles on our denomination's stance of openness and affirmation as it pertains to the LGBTQIA+ community. We will continue that series this month with the first of what I see as the three easiest routes towards a theological stance of affirmation and acceptance towards this community. Those routes being the route of conscience, the route of trust and the route of authority. Specifically in this article we will find the path of affirmation and acceptance through the route of conscience. To do this, we will turn to the creeds.

Our church is built on the creeds of those who came before us. Those creeds document a history of a faith community that was not content to abide by doctrines or commandments they saw as being unjust according to their understanding of God's righteousness and grace. This is how we earned the title "Reformed" by seeing things that weren't right and taking action to reform them.

A big part of this is a belief that human beings are blessed with an innate sense of right and wrong. We've come to call this sense a conscience and our theology believes that God works through that conscience. This means that when something seems wrong or unjust, or against our understanding of who God is, God is speaking to us and working through us in that feeling. Following God is, ultimately, being true to that voice at work inside of us.

The Westminster Confession of Faith, one of the creeds in the constitution of our church, probably lays this out the most clearly when it says "God alone is Lord of the conscience and has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are, in anything, contrary to his Word; or beside it in matter of faith and worship". In other words, you have to be true to the God you've come to know and understand as revealed to you in the scriptures. You have to be true to this understanding of God even in the face of laws imposed by governing bodies or doctrines imposed by religious institutions.

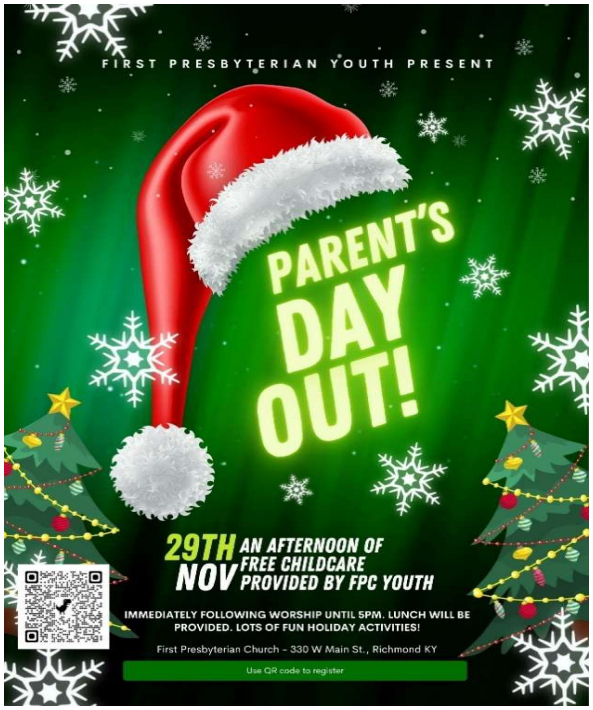
A stance of openness and affirmation can come as simply as that. It can come from being honest about the fact that It feels wrong to suppress people because of gender identity or sexual orientation. It feels wrong to say that the LGBTQIA+ community must deny that part of themselves before they can marry, become



church members or hold positions of leadership in our congregations. That just seems wrong. It seems unjust. That is incongruous with who I understand God to be and incongruous with the direct actions of Christ who is constantly reaching out to those on the margins and calling Pharisees to task for their emphasis on legalism over grace.

If that's where you are in things, CONGRATULATIONS! You can skip reading my newsletter article for the next couple months because you have already arrived at the destination where I am hoping to end up. If you are still unsure, or if your understanding of God and the scriptures and the truth of your conscience perhaps leads you to alternate conclusions, I'd invite you to continue on with us next month as we examine the route of trust.

– Christian Education Director, Joel Stanley



ELDERS	CLASS OF
Jen Wilke-Deaton	2027
Jim Exline	2027
LeAnn Jones	2027
Arleita Dirne	2028
Mark Pitts	2028
Gil Shew	2029
Craig Mapel	2029
Beth Underwood	2029

DEACONS	CLASS OF
Ava Stanley	2027
Wayne Bowlin	2027
Donna Cox	2027
Denise Crump	2027
Marti Exline	2028
Sarah Gump	2028
Amanda Tipton	2028
Lynn Shearon	2029
Morgan Couch	2029

News Briefs from Session for this Summer

- Bulletin Boards to be replaced in the Fellowship Hall.
- Starting in January we will be serving communion by intinction.
- Remember, the front steps are being repaired, so use the side or garage entrances.
- Come and enjoy the crafts, baked goods, silent auction and more at the Arts and Crafts for Missions on Saturday, November 14, from 9:00AM to 3:00PM. Lunch will NOT be served.
- Christmas Pageant set for December 13.
- Sunday School Classes will enjoy Christmas activities together on December 20.
- The Youth Group will be moving to the old preschool play room and are coordinating decorating plans.
- September's Budget was in the black.
- Remember to turn your pledge cards in by the first of December. If you did not receive the packet, call the office.

Clerk of Session, Melody Mitchell

The Marshall-Moretz Christmas Eve Dinner is for those in our community who are less fortunate or lonely at this time of the year. How can you help?

If you are out chopping, and come across small gifts for children, such as: crayons, coloring books, balls, small puzzles, brushes, combs, stickers, hair items, school supplies, small games, small cars, card games, small stuffed animals, bubbles, yo-yos, etc – these will be greatly appreciated.

We will need baked goodies, especially sweet breads and cookies. They need to be wrapped in foil or Christmas wrap. We will need COOKED turkeys and hams. Cupcakes are needed for dessert. All items need to be brought to the church by December 24th, at noon.

We will also need volunteer drivers, kitchen help, servers, reception help plus any other helpers.

If you would like to participate in or have a question about this very special Christmas mission – please call or text:

Linda Adams: 859-200-0762

Craft Fair for Missions - November 14, 2026 (9:00 AM – 3:00 PM)

Vendor space still available

Bake goods are needed

Books for all ages

Volunteers – for all areas

Gently used items for the General Store
Special items or gift baskets for the Silent Auction

Bring baked goods on Friday the 13th, put General Store and Silent Auction items in the former pre-school room (lower level).

Help make this a great year for Missions

Contact Kathy Shew 859-582-6219

LOCKIN 2026!
November 7-8

It is time for our annual youth Lock In! This is always a highlight of our semester. The theme for this year's lock-in is "Finding God In Us" and it will be fun time of games, fellowship bible study and service.

The Lock-In is open to any Middle or High School youth who want to attend; however, spots are limited as the bus only seats 14.

Contact Joel if you are interested to sign up officially and get a permission slip.

Things will kick off at the church at 7:00 PM on November 7th.

Hope to see you there!

November 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Sunday School Morning Worship	2 Bible Study 10:30	3	4 Youth Prayer Break-fast Choir Rehearsal	5	6	7 LOCK-IN 2026—overnight.
8 Sunday School Morning Worship Worship Com Mtg. Deacon Com Mtg.	9 Bible Study 10:30	10	11 Youth Prayer Break-fast Choir Rehearsal	12	13	14 ARTS & CRAFTS FOR MISSION 9:00AM-3:00PM
15 Sunday School Morning Worship CE Committee Mtg	16 Bible Study 10:30	17 Session mtg. 5:30PM	18 Youth Prayer Break-fast Choir Rehearsal	19	20	21
22 Sunday School Morning Worship	23 Bible Study 10:30	24	25 Youth Prayer Break-fast Choir Rehearsal	26 THANKSGIVING 	27	28
29 Sunday School Morning Worship Sunday Supper 6:00	30 Bible Study 10:30					

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
PO BOX 165
Richmond, KY 40476-0165

WITH Gratitude

www.richmondfpc.com

Curtis Christian
curtischristian670@gmail.com

Joel Stanley
Joel.christopher.stanley@gmail.com

Ivan Vajdle
ivanvajdle@@richmondfpc.com

Joyce Wolf
jhwolfsong@gmail.com

Mark Johnson
markjohnson@richmondfpc.com

SAVE THE DATE!!

First Presbyterian's

200th Anniversary

Celebration!

Sunday, July 11, 2027!!

1	Kevin Crump
3	John Harter
4	David Coleman
8	Chris Smart
11	Nancy Brubaker
	John Florell
13	Dwight Barkley
15	Ed Sigmon
17	Lindsey Glass
20	Praveena Salins
21	Hee-Young Shin
	Abby Toutant
	Ella Deaton
22	Suzanne Leung
	Nancy Carrico
28	Linda Adams
	John Gump
29	Chris Laird