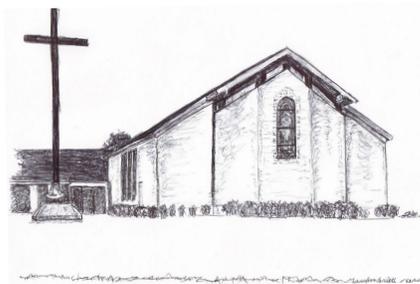


Presby News

FEBRUARY 2026



FROM THE PASTOR . . .

Here in Louisiana, February 2nd is just another date on the calendar. Maybe Napoleonic Law somehow shifted into the world of weather to add even more oddities and weird ways. For other parts of our nation, Groundhog Day is a day of quirky tradition and a brief escape from the winter doldrums. This year, as the cameras flashed and the crowds gathered, Punxsutawney Phil emerged from his burrow and saw his shadow. According to the legend, that means six more weeks of winter lie ahead.

As I look out my window today, it is hard to argue with the groundhog. We have had some pretty unusually cold weather even for the south. The morning air still carries that sharp, biting chill that seeps into your bones. I have only seen one lone oak with a few green buds to suggest that spring is trying to make an appearance. I think this oak is working overtime to remind me that winter will eventually end.

When the world feels stuck in a season of cold and dormancy, that is when our patience is most tested. We are ready for the sun. We are ready for the light to linger longer in the evenings. We are ready to trade our heavy coats for sleeves rolled up in the garden. But nature, much like our spiritual lives, rarely follows our preferred timeline.

Despite what the groundhog says and despite what my eyes currently see, I am holding onto a very specific expectation. I know that soon, the Japanese magnolias will defy the gray. If you have lived in the South for any length of time, you know the miracle of these trees. They don't wait for leaves; they send out those fat, velvety buds that burst into massive blooms of pink, purple, and white while the rest of the world is still shivering. They are often the very first shout that winter's back is broken.

Close on their heels will be the azaleas. Right now, they look like nothing more than scrubby green bushes, but we know the truth: they are currently working in the quiet, storing up the energy for that spectacular explosion of crimson, purple, and white that will eventually brighten our winter doldrums.

The Preacher of Song of Solomon captures this transition perfectly. He reminds us that even the longest winter is only a temporary guest. "*For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.*" (Song of Solomon 2:11-12)

I am reminded that scripture doesn't say the winter *didn't* happen. It acknowledges the winter was real. The rains were heavy and the days were cold. But then it declares, "*the winter is past.*" It is a promise of renewal.

If we are currently in a "winter" of our own because of a season of grief, a period of spiritual dryness, or a long wait for an answer to prayer, remember the Japanese magnolia. Just because you cannot see the bloom today does not mean the life isn't there. God is often doing His most profound work in the fallow seasons of our lives, deep beneath the surface where the frost cannot reach.

Phil may have seen his shadow, and the thermometer may still be hovering near freezing, but the calendar of God's grace is never late. The magnolias are coming. The azaleas are preparing. And soon, we too will say with joy, "*the winter is past.*"

Stay warm, stay faithful, and keep an eye on those branches.

Grace and Peace,
Greg

SPECIAL DATES

February 1	Brookdale Worship Worship/Communion
February 14	Valentine's Day
February 15	Transfiguration of the Lord
February 16	President's Day
February 18	Ash Wednesday
February 22	First Sunday of Lent



FLASHBACK
SNOW AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
JANUARY, 2025



February Responders Schedule

	Usher Narthex	Monitor	Communion Servers
February 1	Robert Kennedy	Elizabette Kennedy	Communion Team: Elizabette Kennedy & Bill Higgins
February 8	Robert Kennedy	Elizabette Kennedy	
February 15	Robert Kennedy Elizabette Kennedy	Elizabette Kennedy	
February 22	Robert Kennedy	Elizabette Kennedy	



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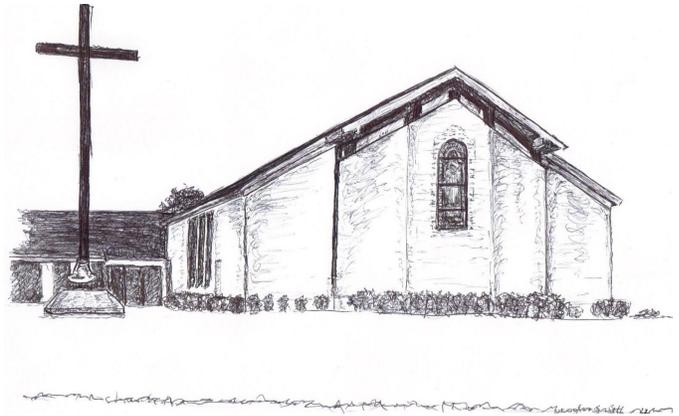
Greg Carroll, *Interim Pastor*

Aaron Rogers, *Music Director*

Jennifer Ciobanu, *Pianist*

Carolyn Sterne, *Administrative Assistant*

Charles Bell, *Sexton*



First Presbyterian Church

357 Windermere Blvd.

Alexandria, LA 71303

Come experience God's love at First Presbyterian Church

Sunday School—9:45 a.m., Worship—11:00 a.m.