



# TOWER BELLS September 2025

## PREACHER'S BLEND

Remembering Elizabeth Austin, the First Woman Ordained as Elder in the First Presbyterian Church.

This year marks a milestone in the life of the First Presbyterian Church: the fiftieth anniversary of the ordination of the first woman to serve as an elder. In 1975 a door was opened that forever changed the shape of the community and our witness in it.

It is difficult now to remember that until 1964 only men could serve as elders and pastors in the southern Presbyterian church. That changed in Palatka with the ordination of Elizabeth Austin. Her courage and faith, and that of the congregation, ushered in a new era for our church and for the many women who would follow in her footsteps. Her ordination did not occur in a vacuum. It emerged from years of dialogue, prayer, and advocacy for inclusion and representation across the Presbyterian Church. As she was ordained, she carried with her the hope and energies of generations of women who had served the church faithfully in unofficial capacities.

As we commemorate this historic achievement and the profound impact it has had on our congregation, let us remember the courage it took to say "yes" to God's call, an uncharted path at the time.

Over the past fifty years, women elders have enriched every aspect of church life. Their gifts have deepened our understanding of faith and broadened our witness in the community. We are thankful for the many women who have since served as elders and deacons, each bringing unique talents and perspectives to our shared ministry.

May this anniversary inspire us to continue building a church where all are welcomed, valued, and empowered to serve.

Your pastor and friend,  
Cliff Lyda

### **September Birthdays:**

Dave Compton	1 <sup>ST</sup>	Carolyn Smith	19 <sup>th</sup>	Alexis Peacock	28 <sup>th</sup>
Steve Cowley	5 <sup>th</sup>	Robert Tindall	21 <sup>st</sup>	Marilyn Young	29 <sup>th</sup>
Pam Matthews	15 <sup>th</sup>	Sherri Kane	24 <sup>th</sup>	Jackie Bodiford	29 <sup>th</sup>
Jill Grant	19 <sup>th</sup>			John Poitevent	30 <sup>th</sup>

**ChEWY:** Is having some fun activities, check the calendar for more information or contact Sherry Tindall. Next activity is Saturday, September 20<sup>th</sup>, Alligator Farm

**Presbyterian Women News:** PW are welcome, Tuesday, September 16<sup>th</sup>, 6:30pm for an evening Gathering in Westminster Hall. The speaker is Jeannie Mayer, founder of ARK, an animal rescue group based in Crescent City.

**Coordinating Team Meeting** – 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month at 10am in the Garden room.

**Morning Circle** – 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month at 10:30 am in the Garden Room  
**Evening Circle** – 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month at 6:30 pm at Pam Browning's home  
Members are encouraged to attend and to bring friends to the Circle meetings.

**The 2nd Sunday offering gives the opportunity to engage in Matthew 25 in our community giving.** This month we are supporting Putnam County Care Coalition in helping the unhoused population.



***Almost there! All the information has been submitted and waiting for the completion of the brochures and website. First Presbyterian Church of Palatka, FL Brick Opportunity.***



The Session hopes to use the proceeds to develop an endowment dedicated to building maintenance and improvement. Call Suzie for a time if help is needed.

**New Opportunity: Praise Worship Services**-coming soon, contact Felicia Nelson at [pinkorchidsjfn@aol.com](mailto:pinkorchidsjfn@aol.com) or 470-800-5367. Interviews and auditions starting Saturday, Oct. 1st and Monday, Oct. 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Session: Rev. Cliff Lyda, Moderating, Robert A. Mattson, Clerk**  
**Ruling Elders Class of 2025** Wayne Bodiford, James Browning, Rick Mills, Gladys Wade  
**Class of 2026** Terry Albright, Dave Compton, Kim Daley, Jackie Bodiford  
**Class of 2027** Ron Bloor, Elliott Kane, Tony Marvin, MaryKay Payne  
**Deacon Chair** Sharon Flatter [sflatter@windstream.net](mailto:sflatter@windstream.net)

**Financial Report –August 31, 2025:** *Our budgeted expenditures for the year 2025 total \$286,000. That is the amount we anticipated receiving from pledges, other donations, miscellaneous gifts and rental of Westminster Hall. In order to reach this total – we need to bring in an average of \$5,500 per Sunday. Our actual receipts through the end of August total \$4,555 per Sunday. In August we received an average of \$3,500 per Sunday. If we are going to reach \$286,000 by the end of the year, we now need to bring in \$7,500 per Sunday.*

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To connect through our Church app contact Suzie Cornelio.



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