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Prayer Garden at Mars Hill Presbyterian Church Honored for Downtown Beautification



Nestled beside the Mars Hill Presbyterian Church sanctuary on North Jackson Street, the Prayer Garden has been named this month's Downtown Beautification Award recipient, recognizing both its peaceful charm and the committee that maintains it.

The garden was envisioned by the late Jim Harrison as a quiet place for reflection, gradually taking shape between 2015 and 2020 with landscape work by Southern Walker Landscape Designs and vintage cast-iron fencing sourced from Dalton, Georgia. It features the only walkable labyrinth between Chattanooga and Knoxville, listed on labyrinthlocator.com.

The space also serves as a resting place for the interred ashes of several church members, with benches donated in memory or honor of loved ones and plaques commemorating those remembered there. "Jim would be so happy and proud," said his widow, Beverly Harrison.

Committee member Durelle Linton, whose husband's ashes are interred in the garden, called it "a beautiful gift to our community... a place where people can pause, breathe, and find a moment of peace."

The Prayer Garden is open to the public, and future plans include an information kiosk explaining how to walk the labyrinth. The committee includes Sylvia Pelley, Durelle Linton, Danny and Sherree Reed, Glen and Liz Ingram, Larry Woodard, John Mankin, and Doug Harrod, who records the garden's history. Donna Brandon maintains the planters.

Pictured: Front row: Beverly Harrison, Durelle Linton, Sylvia Pelley, Sherree Reed, Rev. Dr. Cheryl Bourne. Back row: Stuart Mason, Chair of Main Street Athens; Patti Greek, Doug Harrod

Source: Amy Sullins, Athens Main Street



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Tuesday, August 18, 2026

Morning Fax®...Today's News This Morning Page 2

Athens, Tennessee

Calhoun Elementary Receives 16 New Bicycles Through White Oak Partnership



Students at Calhoun Elementary School are starting the year with a new set of wheels, thanks to a growing partnership with the White Oak Bicycle Cooperative, a Red Bank-based nonprofit that delivered 16 new bikes to the school. The donation includes eight 16-inch and eight 20-inch models sized for young riders and already in use as

the 2026-27 school year begins.

The relationship between Calhoun Elementary and White Oak began with a single conversation last spring and has since grown into a collaboration both hope to continue. Principal Jon Franks said the bikes support the school's goal of keeping students active and healthy, calling cycling "a life-long healthy activity that our students will benefit from."

McMinn County Schools thanked Blake Pierce and the White Oak team for their generosity and commitment to Calhoun students, noting that the partnership highlights how community support can extend learning beyond the classroom and make a lasting impact.

Source: Camille Luttrell, McMinn County Schools

Community News You Can Use

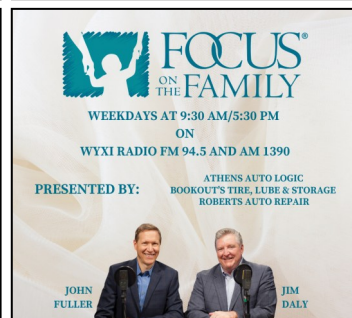
- The Athens Board of Zoning Appeals meets Aug. 26 at 1 p.m. in the City Council Chambers. The agenda includes a Use on Review request from the Athens-McMinn Family YMCA for a child daycare center at 2352 Denso Drive.
- The Athens Area Chamber of Commerce will celebrate a Ribbon Cutting on Wednesday, August 19 at 1:30pm for WarrenJackson CPAs, PLLC at their new location (1005 W. Madison Ave. Athens).
- The McMinn County Living Heritage Museum hosts its Trash & Treasure fall sale Sept. 10-12 at the Museum Annex, 408 W. Washington Ave. Hours: Thu-Fri 10-5, Sat 10-3. "First Pick Thursday" has a \$5 entry fee. Sponsored by The Museum Guild.

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Tuesday, August 18, 2026 Morning Fax®...Today's News This Morning Page 3 Athens, Tennessee

McMinn County Arrest Reports

August 14, 2026

Shania Walker, 34, of Decatur, charged with schedule 2 meth, simple possession of marijuana, and drug paraphernalia.

Larry Lamb, 58, of Madisonville, charged with failure to appear for felony evading.

Larry Crowe, 46, of Cleveland, charged with public intoxication, Bond \$1,000.

Jamie Lemons, 37, of Englewood, charged with false reports and theft of property. Bond \$15,000.

Jody Leroy, 54, of Englewood, charged with financial exploitation of an elderly or vulnerable person.

Chandler Calhoun, 26, of Cookville charged with state violation of probation for two counts of burglary.

August 16, 2026

Alicia Billingsley, 58, of Athens, charged with child abuse, neglect, violent, simple possession casual exchange, and drug paraphernalia.

Francisco Rodriguez, 32, of Dayton, charged with DUI, Bond \$3,000.

Dallas Moses, 33, of Athens, charged with domestic aggravated assault, and Interference with 911. Bond \$24,000.

Christopher Hester, 47, of Athens, charged with burglary, and shoplifting theft of property.

Joshua Dixon, 34, of Niota, charged with criminal trespassing, disorderly conduct, and evading arrest, Bond \$6,000.

Those accused are considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.
Information gathered using public sources.

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