

First Presbyterian News

1

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Office Hours

M-F 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

December 2017



Dear First Folks,

December is a most blessed time for the church, and for all of God's people. During that time we celebrate the birth of Jesus, recommit ourselves to God's wonderful work in the world, and look forward to the future which is complete because of Christmas. Look at the opportunities for worship, giving, and service in the newsletter and other publications. Seek to see that the most important thing we do is to serve God in Christ. And finally let things fall into place as they are meant to be for you and your family.

In Christ,

- Russell



December 3

Sermon: "New Beginnings In Christ"

Scriptures: Isaiah 40:1-5; John 1:1-8

December 10

Sermon: "Prepare the Way of the Lord"

Scriptures: Isaiah 11:1-10; Mark 1:1-3

December 17

Sermon: "How Will This Be?"

Scriptures: Micah 5:2-3; Luke 1:26-35

December 24

Sermon: "Glory & Good News"

Scriptures: Luke 1:46-56; Luke 2:1-14

December 31

Sermon: "Seeing Salvation"

Scriptures: Isaiah 61:10-62; Luke 2:22-40

January 7

Sermon: "A Baptism of Repentance"

Scriptures: Genesis 1:1-5; Mark 1:4-11

Christmas 2017

O King of Kings, our Lord and God
You sent your Son to earth,
To love and save a sinful world,
Our Miracle, his birth.

The Love the Father feels for us
Has no equivalent,
To place on earth His only Son,
Agape, Heaven Sent.

The tiny gentle Lamb of God
Born in a stable bare,
A virgin birth, a lowly scene
Produced a King so rare.

He knew why He had come to us,
Our sins intensely grave,
To suffer, die and rise again
Our souls that he would save.

Eternal life he offers us
The gift of gifts He brings,
To all who take Him in their hearts,
His praises they shall sing.

So on this Christmas, bend the knee
And worship Christ our King,
Give thanks to God, lift up our songs
Let sweet Hosannas ring!

Amen

Pattie Perdue Grubbs



We want to express our gratitude for the officers that have been serving again this year. We elected new officers and will have to say good bye to others. We welcome: Linda Lumsden, Donald Cherry, Sandi Hughes, Kelly Chappell, Dianne Greene, Sue Bales, Richard Harrell III and Terri Smith. Thanks for your years of service: Michael Freshour, Connie Marvin, Sterling Byrd-Roberts, Ray Shields, Kathy Debiec, Ann Edmunds, and Eloise Wilder.

We have several praise reports:

1. Melody N. is a young lady (an orphan) that Leslie and I have known since 2006. In the June Newsletter, we requested prayer for Melody and she was diagnosed with cancer in her left eye. Melody underwent surgery...cancer was “removed” and eyesight appears to be okay.
2. In the June newsletter, we requested prayer for my (CW’s) mother Lois White. She was battling an ongoing respiratory condition and was seeking wisdom as to whether or not to have knee replacement surgery. Mom’s respiratory issue has improved and she underwent knee replacement surgery in late September.

We have several prayer requests:

1. My mother is currently in physical therapy as a result of knee surgery. The knee is improving but it appears the knee has aggravated my mother’s scoliosis as she is experiencing lower back pain. In the past 5 yrs, mom has undergone 2 back surgeries and further medical treatment for her back is limited. Please be in prayer for this lower back pain to subside.
2. Leslie underwent a surgical procedure in September but that procedure was not successful. A second is scheduled for Dec. 21 @ Henrico Doctors Hospital. Please be in prayer for this procedure and full recovery.
3. My (CW’s) sister, Cindy Glisson, is scheduled for throat surgery on Dec. 14. She has experienced sporadic throat issues (loss of voice, difficulty breathing, difficulty swallowing) since childhood. Please be in prayer for this procedure and full recovery.
4. Leslie and I have been waiting, since January, for work permits and other documents to be approved by the Government of Zambia. We received a text assuring us that our documents have been approved. A copy of the documents were requested by FTO but after several promises from Gov’t officials to email copies to us for verification, we have yet to receive the said documents. Please pray for favor among those individuals with the power to approve/forward these documents.

Leslie and I both say “Thank You” to the First Presbyterian congregation and staff for your continuing friendship. Thank you for standing with us in prayer during the good and the not so good. May the Lord continue to bless each and everyone. We hope you had a great Thanksgiving and

Merry Christmas to all! ~ C.W. and Leslie Bing



Stewardship Update- Please continue to pray about tithes and offerings for the Lord’s work here at First Presbyterian Church. It takes everyone’s help, and we urge you to consider giving a little more this year. If you have not turned in your pledge for 2018, you can do so through the remainder of the year. So far we have received pledges totaling **\$143,300** which is **54%** of our budget for 2018.

Community Thanksgiving Ministries—The congregations was able to reach out to those in need in many ways this year. In November we gave away 40 turkeys weighing about 12-15 lb, to hungry folks for their Thanksgiving meal. Several members also helped with the Community Thanksgiving dinner at the Halifax Christian School, preparing, serving and delivering meals to the hungry. Thanks everyone for all that donated time and/or funds for these two worthy projects. We also are one of the major financial sponsors for this event.



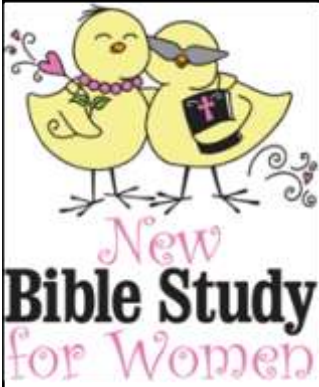
International Missionary Flag Project—We have undertaken a project to display the country flags for each of the countries where our international missionaries supported by First Presbyterian serve. We help support them financially and with our prayers to extend our ministry outreach around the world. Currently we have missionaries serving in six foreign countries.

We have Matthew and Teresa Lee serving with Wycliffe in Cameroon; David and Rachel Carter serving with Pioneers in Chad; Paul and Reinhild Sydnor with International Association for Refugees in France; Mission Possible in Haiti; Overseas Missionary Fellowship International in SE Asia and C.W. and Leslie Binh with Water for the Oppressed in Zambia.



Each country will be represented by its own flag flown on the south outside wall of the church. They will be displayed in alphabetical order so you can tell which flag is for each country. They will be, from left to right: Cameroon, Chad, France, Haiti, Vietnam and Zambia.

We hope the flags will be a regular reminder for us of our church’s outreach and for prayer and financial support for these missionaries.



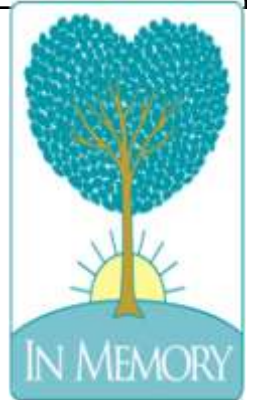
Attention Ladies!! We will be starting a new women's study on Thursday, January 11 at 10:30 am. Our focus will be on the book *Battlefield of the Mind* by Joyce Myers. Our minds and hearts can fall prey to depression, anger, low self-esteem, condemnation and a multitude of other negative mindsets. We will learn how to more effectively set our minds on God and find peace and freedom from these destructive behaviors. Please join us in the Philathea room and bring a friend! Cost of the book is \$8. Contact church office for more info. 572-3581 ~ Pattie Grubbs

The Ladies' Circle will meet on Tuesday, December 5, 2017 at 10:30am. Dr. Russell Lee will provide the program. The meeting will be hosted by Doris Koch, located at 2011 Salishan Drive, Halifax. All ladies are encouraged to attend. Please bring a covered dish to be shared with the group. If you would like to car pool, please notify Eloise Wilder.



We would like to help a family in our area for Christmas. If you know of a family that could really use some help for Christmas (with or without children) please get the information to the church office by Dec. 10 so we can decide on a family or two to provide a blessed Christmas. Let's celebrate all our blessings, by helping others.

The church master plan provides for a columbarium and a veteran's memorial on the north and south properties, respectively. In order to make best use of the available land and due to the similarities of these features, the session decided to combine them together in a Memorial Garden. The Garden will be on the site of the present playground once the existing playground equipment is moved to the new playground being built close to the picnic shelter. Due to concerns expressed by some in the congregation, we are employing an arborist to assess the large oak tree in the center of the playground area. This report will help us determine steps to be taken that will guide our construction process, ensure the long-term safety of the church and the Memorial Garden and enhance the beauty of the property. ~ Mike Koch, Church Growth and Nurture Elder



IN HONOR of _____

GIVEN BY _____

AMOUNT ENCLOSED _____

Please make checks payable to **First Presbyterian Church.**

Deadline: Thursday, December 14th



IN MEMORY of _____

GIVEN BY _____

AMOUNT ENCLOSED _____

Please make checks payable to **First Presbyterian Church.**

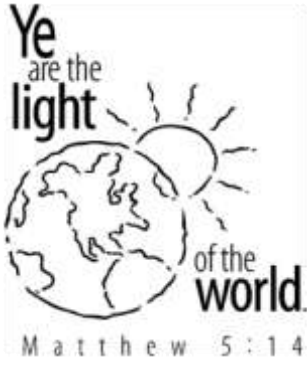
Deadline: Thursday, December 14th

Virtual Poinsettias Ministry— Each year we decorate the sanctuary with poinsettia flowers, and folks are given the opportunity to donate them in honor or in memory of loved ones. We will purchase a certain number, but any number of virtual poinsettias may be given. The cost this year is \$25 per poinsettia. Dollars above the actual cost will be used to help buy wreaths and garlands for outside the church, and the rest will be given to a local charity. Forms will be distributed in the next Newsletter and available at Church during December.



Joy- One of the new lawn decorations this year at the church is a large Joy sign. It was for sale last year at one of our local retailers, and folks were urging us to buy it, knowing it is one

of the pastor's favorite words. After it was reduced to more than 85% of the original price, we were able to share the most important blessing, other than God's salvation through Jesus Christ, with the community. In front of Joy is the manger, without which none of our faith journeys could happen. Behind the Joy is the church. May joy be yours this season and beyond. Come take your picture in front of it. And share it, as others have done. The letters are almost six feet tall, and our joy should be much bigger than that. It sparkles during the day, and shines at night. Remember. Jesus first, Others second, And Yourself last.



Light the World

I love the Christmas season! One of the favorite traditions I enjoyed with my girls while they were growing up, is to go out and travel to see the neighborhoods and gardens all lit up with Christmas decorations and lights. Seeing the lights brings a special joy to all.

When Christ was born, a new star lighted the sky and those who watched and knew the signs, knew the babe was born. The new star brought hope and joy to those who knew the meaning.

Christ is indeed, the light and the life of the world. In John 8:12 we read "Then spake Jesus unto him, saying I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. His example lights our way, and shows us the path we should take.

One of my favorite scriptures Matthew 5:1-16 Ye are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let our "light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." His example lights our way, and shows us the path we should take. A quote I know says it all, "When ye are in the service of your fellow beings, ye are only in the service of your God". So serving others brings light and joy to them, and it fills our lives with light and joy as well. whenever we are doing Christ-like activities He will be close to us and we will have our paths lit before our feet to know the road to take.

During the Christmas season we find more people doing for others and having joy in their hearts. I pray that I can take this joy and light not just through this season, but into the next and then the next. This world would be a much brighter, happier place if we would all turn more to following Christ and the example He set for us.

The babe was born in such meager circumstances, but became the greatest among men. He is the one and only way back to the Father. ~ *Sherolyn*



New Playground at North Property - The new playground on the North Property, in the continued Year of the Child Emphasis, is well underway. The new equipment is here and there are a few finishing touches to be completed on it. Then the ark and other playground equipment will be moved to that location. If you would like to contribute towards the project, mark your check to that effect. Be in prayer for our outreach to current and future children of the First Presbyterian Church.

Christmas Cantata - The choir will present their annual Christmas cantata during 11 am worship on Sunday December 17th. This work titled "Heaven's Child" was written by Pepper Choplin. Plan to come to this wonderful performance celebrating our Savior.



Christmas Eve—This year, Christmas Eve falls on Sunday, so we will have two worship gatherings on that day.

In the morning, we will combine both services at 10am, and have a special time of blessing and caroling as we worship our Lord celebrating his birth, the manger, the angels, and his family as he arrived in Bethlehem two thousand years ago.

In the evening at 5 pm, we will gather for our traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. It will be a blessed time for all of us and family and friends. Invite all you know to this time of music, Christmas Carols, and worship. Jesus Christ our Savior was born in Bethlehem. Glory to God in the highest!

Advent- As we approach Christmas this year, we begin the season of Advent, starting four Sundays before Christmas, on December 3. Be in prayer for the Advent worship times, Christmas ministries, and the Chancel Choir Cantata which will happen on Sunday morning December 17. Christmas Eve morning will be a special worship time for us, with a combined service at 10 am and the Christmas Eve Evening Candlelight Service, at 5 pm, is always a highlight!



December 18
 7:00 pm—Diaconate
 7:30 pm — Elders Meeting



Weekly Happenings
Prayer Group: Mondays at 10 am
Praise Team Rehearsal: Wednesday at 6 pm
Choir Rehearsal: Wednesday at 7:30 pm
Men of the Church: Thursdays at 7 pm



D **DECEMBER 2017**



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26 November 5 cents a meal 9 am Worship 10 am Sunday School 11 am Worship 6 pm NA	27 10:00 Prayer Group 12 pm NA	29 12 Noon NA	30 12 Noon AA 6 pm NA	31 10:30 am—Case For Christ-Study 7 pm Men of the Church 7 pm Al-Anon 8 pm AA	December 1 9 am Bulletins 12 noon AA 6 pm NA	2 NA—Women's Group 12-1
3 9 am Worship 10 am Sunday School 11 am Worship 6 pm NA	4 10:00 Prayer Group 12 pm NA	5 10:30 Ladies Circle 12 noon NA	6 12 Noon AA 6 pm NA	7 10:30 am—Case For Christ-Study 7 pm Men of the Church 7 pm Al-Anon 8 pm AA	8 9 am Bulletins 12 noon AA 6 pm NA	9 NA—Women's Group 12-1 GS Troop 796 meets 2-4
10 9 am Worship 10 am Sunday School 11 am Worship 6 pm 6 pm NA	11 10:00 Prayer Group 12 pm NA	12 12 noon NA	13 12 Noon AA 6 pm NA	14 7 pm Men of the Church 7 pm Al-Anon 8 pm AA	15 9 am Bulletins 12 noon AA 6 pm NA	16 NA—Women's Group 12—1
17 9 am Worship 10 am Sunday School 11 am Worship 5 pm Joy Gift 6 pm NA	18 10:00 Prayer Group 12 pm NA 7:00 pm Deacons 7:30 pm Elders	19 12 noon NA 	20 12 Noon AA 6 pm NA	21 7 pm Men of the Church 7 pm Al-Anon 8 pm AA	22 9 am Bulletins and Newsletters 12 noon AA 6 pm NA	23 NA—Women's Group 12—1
24 Christmas Eve 10: 00 am – Combined Christmas Eve Service 6 pm NA	25 Christmas Day Office Closed 	26 Office Closed 12 Noon NA	27 12 Noon AA 6 pm NA	28 7 pm Men of the Church 7 pm Al-Anon 8 pm AA	29 9 am Bulletins 12 noon AA 6 pm NA	30 NA—Women's Group 12—1
31 New Years Eve 5 cents a meal	Office Closed 	2 12 Noon NA	3 12 Noon AA 6 pm NA	4 7 pm Men of the Church 7 pm Al-Anon 8 pm AA	5 9 am Bulletins 12 noon AA 6 pm NA	6 NA—Women's Group 12-1

- 1 Alice Irby*
- 1 Johnny Watkins
- 4 Joann Newland
- 6 Gary Bain
- 10 Connie Troy
- 11 Diana Shields
- 11 Sherolyn Barnett
- 15 Frosty Owens
- 17 Monica Puckett
- 17 Taylor Raney
- 18 Erin Thackston
- 19 Martha Thompson



If we don't have your birthday listed, please call the office and let us know.



- 20 Colter Wickemeyer
- 20 David McCollum
- 20 Nancy Pool
- 20 Eloise Wilder
- 20 Glola Osborne
- 24 Patrick Cherry
- 24 Michael Owens
- 25 Carroll Seat*
- 26 Wayne Adams
- 27 Glenn Garrett
- 28 Betty Plaster
- 31 Frank McKinney*





November Session Report

At our last session meetings, among other things, we:

1. Approved a combined service with communion for Sunday December 24 morning at 10 am. Our evening Christmas Eve Candlelight will be held as usual at 5 pm.
2. Approved building a ramp for one of our church members.
3. Heard update on new cub scout troop beginning at church on Monday nights, led by Les Powell.
4. Addressed possible security concerns and began to research possible options.
5. Approved baptism of Wyatt Barczak.
6. Heard update on Missionaries and Flag Project update.
7. Discussed congregational communications of concerns about possible removal of 1 large oak in playground area.
8. Heard update on new playground. Equipment delivered.
9. Decided on annual Christmas outreach project- helping several families who are in need.
10. Heard update on Turkey giveaway. 40 turkeys given to those in need on November 20.
11. Heard update on Stewardship Campaign, at 40 percent so far.
12. Approved membership update.
13. Transferred Loretta Brown and Jacquelyn McAbee to Covenant Presbyterian Church in Charlotte at their request.
14. Approved balance sheet.
15. Set joy gift presentation for December 17 at 5 pm
16. Heard update on Stephen Ministry



Joy Gift Pageant and Covered Dish—Our Joy Gift Pageant will happen on December 17 at 5 pm. Following the pageant we will gather for a covered dish meal. Make plans to be apart of a very special gathering. The offering will go to a national fund for retired pastors and spouses of the Presbyterian Church.



First Presbyterian Church
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