

First Presbyterian News

1

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December 2019

Dear First Folks,

Hello to all First Folks. Hope everyone is doing well. I would like to update you all on how the process is moving along to find our new Pastor. The Presbytery has a process that is orderly, and detailed. It is a process that is not done in haste. We are at the beginning of this process. The first part of this process is the completion of a mission study that basically provides a snapshot of our church at this time. This study looks at everything about our church including history, beliefs, programs, mission support, and surrounding community. After this study is complete, the Presbytery will give us permission to elect a Pastoral Nominating Committee. The Congregational Meeting to do this will probably happen early next year. After this committee is formed the work begins to identify possible candidates to be our new Pastor. As I said in the beginning, this process is orderly and detailed, it cannot be done in haste. We want to make sure we find the right person to fill the big shoes that have been left by Russell's retirement. I would ask that everyone keep the church and congregation in their prayers during this process.

Wishing all a safe and happy holiday season and Merry Christmas,

Carter Henderson



December 1

Sermon by Robert Ramey, Jr. A Danville native. Earned his Doctorate of Ministry from Union Presbyterian Seminary in Richmond. He has published 17 books, including *The Eternal Way*, this past summer. Come and welcome him and his wife Gail.

December 8

We will have our Cantata - "Once Upon a Night" by Pepper Choplin

December 15

Sermon by titled "The Journey" by Dick Boswell. Dick has served as Deacon and Ruling Elder at Lynchburg First Presbyterian Church. He trained as the first Confirmed lay Pastor and later Missional Lay Pastor in the Presbytery. We welcome Dick and wife, Elaine, to our church.

December 22

Sermon by Rev. Margie Anderson, pastor at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Lynchburg, VA.

December 29

Sermon titled "The Morning After" by Patrick Cherry. Raised in South Boston, and grew up here at 1st Pres. He is currently the Pastor of Next Generation Ministries at Saxe Gotha Presbyterian Church. We are excited to have him back visiting with us.

January 5

Sermon by Rich Henderson a resident of Buffalo Junction. Rich is a Missional Commissioned Pastor with the Presbytery. He fills a once a month at a variety of churches. Welcome Rich and wife, Carol.



Matthew and Teresa Lee
(a First Presbyterian Ministry)

PRAISE GOD!

Thank you! Our hearts are full of thankfulness and praise to Him. We believe that relationships are our most valuable resource, so a strong partnership team of prayer and financial partners is something worth celebrating! Our prayer team includes over 200 people and our financial team is made up of 59 individual households and 9 churches. Thank you for the privilege of partnering with you! **You are a part of our Wycliffe ministry team.**

We are excited to let you know that we have booked our tickets to return to Cameroon in January! Our flights leave from Dulles International Airport on January 4th and we land **in Cameroon on January 5th.** Please pray

for us as we complete the visa process through the Cameroon Embassy. We cannot wait to update you on all the awesome ways the Lord is working through our partnership in Cameroon.

“I will extol the LORD at all times; His praise will always be on my lips.” – Psalm 34:1

Under His Wings,

Matthew and Teresa

Missionaries to Cameroon with Wycliffe Bible Translators

Contact: Teresa_Lee@wycliffe.org and 434 471-2317



Christmas 2019

In the first light of morning
My heart seeks to see
Our Savior, The Christ,
When He now speaks to me.
And reminds me of time
When He'd not come to earth
Then changed all the world
With His Miracle birth.

Of souls seeking healing,
Forgiveness of sin
A joy to be found and Peace from within.
A manger, with Joseph and
Mary so mild
In a stable so bare, for God's Holy Child.

The Gift that His Father gave all humankind
Jesus Our Savior, Salvation we'd find.
For the Son would then suffer and die for us
all Thus offering forgiveness
If we answer His call.

Come bow the knee, sing praise to His name
Christmas, sweet Christmas,
The Son overcame!
The Gift that was given long long ago
Offers love and forgiveness
Eternal life He bestowed!

Pattie Grubbs

2019

Virtual Poinsettias will be offered again this year. You have the opportunity to give gifts in honor or in memory of loved ones with the majority of the money helping the needy in our community. A small portion will be used to help decorate the sanctuary and the outside of the church. The list of honorees will be printed in the bulletins throughout December. The price will be \$25 for each poinsettia. Contact Carole Woodward or the church if you have any questions.

IN HONOR of _____

IN MEMORY of _____

GIVEN BY _____

AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ _____

Please make checks payable to:

First Presbyterian Church.

Deadline: Friday, December 13th

We will begin having Poinsettias in the Sanctuary on December 8th.





Women's Bible Study

Women's Bible Study - Our study is well under way. We meet every Thursday at 10:30 am. We will break for Christmas holidays after our December 12 class, meeting again in January. We are studying Genesis, and are excited to have many who have volunteered to lead the classes. We have had some great discussions. We have had a good group so far. If you haven't come out, feel free to start.



Women's Circle - December 3 at 10:30 am in the Philathea Room. This will be a special day, singing Christmas carols and enjoying the season. Come out and invite friends and family. *Everyone is welcome*. We will have a covered dish afterward down in the Fellowship Hall.



The Good Samaritan has greatly appreciated the clothing, and the many varied items, that has been donated to help them. As Fall and Winter approach their needs increase. Typically this time of year they run short on peanut butter, canned meats (tuna, spam, etc). They can also use winter clothes. We appreciate all the help and donations. The Good Sam box is in the main lobby, and ready to accept any donations as they come in. Good Samaritan also has a location in Nathalie - open every Saturday from 10-12. Between the two locations they have helped hundreds of people with food, clothing, and utilities. You make a big difference with any and all contributions. They express their gratitude for each of you and your generous hearts. Please think about the Good Samaritan during this holiday season and giving what you can, as it helps the local people.

Our Choir will present their annual **Christmas Cantata** on December 8th this year. The work is titled "Once Upon a Night" by Pepper Choplin. The world chases after the warmth, the joy and love that is known as the Christmas spirit. Join us as we share the words of Luke and his account of the ultimate story of love. Rediscover the story's power and embody the miracle that happened.



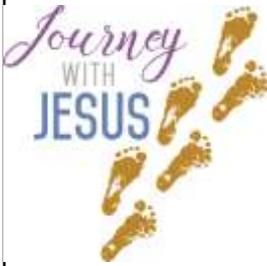
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service - We will gather for our annual Christmas Eve Candlelight service on Tuesday, December 24 at 5:00 pm. It will be a blessed time for all of us. Invite family, friends, and all you know for this time of music, Christmas carols, and worship. Jesus Christ our Savior was born in Bethlehem. Glory to God in the highest! Pastor Richard Henderson will provide our service this year. Richard is a resident of Buffalo Junction, VA where he lives with his wife, Carol. Their home church is Clarksville Presbyterian. Rich is presently a Missional Commissioned Pastor in the Presbytery of the Peaks. Please plan to welcome Rich and Carol

Virtual Poinsettia 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 are on previous page and available at Church during December.



Stewardship Drive - Our Stewardship drive is well underway. Most of you have turned in your pledge cards, and we applaud you and your generous hearts. It is important to have an idea of how much monthly income the church will have in order to pay the bills and take care of the many responsibilities we have. If you have not yet turned in your pledge card, we will continue to take them throughout December.

We currently have pledges totaling 68% of our 2020 budget.



As Christmas approaches, I have been thinking often of Christ and His life. At the beginning of His ministry, He approached some fishermen and told them to drop their nets and follow Him. Matthew 4:18-22 tells us that they "straightway left their nets and followed Him". Moments later He saw two more men who were mending their nets, and again said "follow Me". I am amazed at the ease to which they dropped everything to follow Him. This was their livelihood they were leaving. Not just a mundane hobby. I wonder if I would be as quick to drop everything in the

same situation.

In comparison I think of Matthew 19:21 -22 - a rich man who approached Christ and asked what he needed to do to get to heaven. Christ told him to sell all that he had and follow Him and then he would have treasures in heaven. The man went away sorrowful, and refused to sell his belongings, because he was wealthy and would be giving up a great deal.

I have thought that Peter, Andrew, James and John were poor fishermen, who didn't have much to lose by following the Savior. But with research, we find they were wealthy, had a great business going, and yet still were willing to leave it all for Christ. Knowing this, I realize more similarities between the two stories. One group who easily followed Christ, and the other just couldn't give up the worldly possessions for the richer, more valuable opportunities of heaven.



We too, are disciples of Christ. The definition of disciple is follower. Do we get caught up in the daily tasks of life. We do need to work and provide for our families, but when our desires for work or worldly possessions influence our ability to heed the call to follow Christ and His commandments, we are putting our 'ornaments on the wrong tree' so to speak.

When we think of a net, we think of an object used to catch something. We can think of the nets metaphorically as anything that captures our attention, especially away from Christ. This net can be our jobs, if it takes too much of our time from family and church. A net can be hobbies, these too often can lead us away from church and being where we belong. A net can be many different things to each of us. I wonder and hope that my faith is strong enough that if called to come follow Christ, I could drop everything, my home, my job, anything tying me to one spot and follow Him and trust Him to care for me. If I am truly listening, I will hear his voice as Jesus said in John 10:27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." We are promised to receive eternal life, "which gift is the greatest of all

gifts of God" if we keep His commandments. This is my prayer for us all. ~ *Sherolyn*



Operation Christmas Child - 31 boxes of JOY are on their way to unknown destinations! As drop-off center workers carried in the boxes from First Presbyterian, they remarked, "These are some heavy boxes!" A testament to the generosity of each of you who graciously shopped, packed, and prayed over that little cardboard rectangle which doesn't hold enough. It seems like so little, but we should remember that the boxes themselves are just a small part of Operation Christmas Child (OCC). When the boxes reach their destination and are ready to be distributed there is a program which includes singing, praying, discussions about Jesus, and information about the people who packed the

boxes and why they do this.

I was recently dismayed by an article I saw on social media which was published in the Washington Post, denouncing the shoebox program saying this kind of giving is "a bad idea" in the same way that food giveaway programs don't solve the problem of chronic hunger. The article went on to say that this form of charity "suppresses local markets, creates feelings of dependency, and does not address systemic problems or empower local leadership." This kind of program, the article states, does nothing to help change a community to be able to "address its problems long-term." Additional problems are that because the boxes are not identically filled "there inevitably will be inequitable loot among the kids opening them," and this kind of giveaway program teaches the recipients that "the problem of poverty is primarily a problem of 'stuff.'"

Not all programs can address the root causes of the world's issues, but does that mean we stop giving food to the hungry? Did Jesus stop healing lepers in order to have time to do research into the cause and cure for the disease? Do we quit doing the small stuff because there is bigger stuff that needs to be done?

The OCC program provides an insight into the spirit of the gospel to those who may never have had the chance to hear it, simply by bringing a bit of joy to a child. It can open the door to a heart, provide an opportunity for witness, plant a ray of hope, ignite a spark of curiosity. It's not about solving the world's problems. It's about following Jesus' admonition to love one another, to go and make disciples, and to receive the kingdom like a little child. With each little cardboard rectangle that doesn't hold enough.



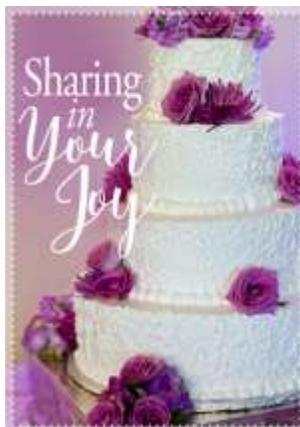
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 6 pm NA	2 6pm NA	3 10:30 am Ladies Circle 12 noon NA	4 12 Noon AA 6 pm NA 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	5 10:30—Women's Bible Study 12 Moms in Prayer 7 pm Men of the Church 7 pm Al-Anon 8 pm AA	6 9 am Bulletins 12 noon AA 6 pm - Girl Scouts 6 pm NA	7 NA 12—1
8 Cantata 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 6 pm NA	9 6pm NA	10 12 noon NA	11 12 Noon AA 6 pm NA 7:00pm Choir Rehearsal	12 10:30—Women's Bible Study Begins 12 Moms in Prayer 7 pm Men of the Church 7 pm Al-Anon 8 pm AA	13 9 am Bulletins 12 noon AA 6 pm NA	14 NA 12-1
15 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 3 pm - Girl Scouts 6 pm NA	16 6pm NA 7:00 pm Deacons 7:30 pm Elders	17 12 noon NA	18 12 Noon AA 6 pm NA 7:00 Choir Rehearsal <i>Newsletter DEADLINE</i>	19 12 Moms in Prayer 7 pm Men of the Church 7 pm Al-Anon 8 pm AA	20 9 am Bulletins & Newsletters 12 noon AA 6 pm NA	21 NA 12—1
22 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 6 pm NA	23 6pm NA	24 Christmas Eve 	25 Christmas	26 7 pm Al-Anon 8 pm AA	27 9 am Bulletins 12 noon AA 6 pm NA	28 NA 12—1
29 5 cents a Meal 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 6 pm NA	30 6pm NA	31 12 noon NA	January 1 Office Closed <i>Welcome, 2020!</i>	January 2 7 pm Al-Anon 8 pm AA	January 3 9 am Bulletins 12 noon AA 6 pm NA	January 4 NA12—1

- 1 Alice Irby*
- 1 Johnny Watkins
- 4 Joann Newland
- 6 Jamie Albert
- 6 Gary Bain
- 10 Connie Troy
- 11 Sherolyn Barnett
- 15 Frosty Owens
- 17 Taylor Raney
- 18 Erin Thackston
- 19 Martha Thompson*
- 19 Donna Carter
- 20 Colter Wickemeyer
- 20 David McCollum



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

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



* In Memory



Session Notes: **Since our last Newsletter, the elders:**

1. Operation Christmas Child was successful. Thanks to everyone for opening their hearts and giving freely.
2. Kym Wiederholt conducted all exit interviews. John Wiederholt attended the Session as Moderator.
3. Installation and Ordination of new officers will be held January 5.
4. Mike Koch joined the Diaconates meeting to discuss "Safety Concerns".

Ladies Circle - Tuesday,
December 3 at 10:30 am.

December 16

Deacons at 7:00 pm

Elders at 7:30 pm



Weekly Happenings

Choir Rehearsal: Wednesdays at 7:00 pm

Women's Bible Study: Thursdays at 10:30 am

Men of the Church: Thursdays at 7 pm

First Presbyterian Church
800 North Main Street
South Boston, VA 24592

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South Boston, VA

Here is your December 2019 Newsletter