

First Presbyterian News

1

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A Time for Prayer and Reflection

Happy New Year 1st Pres. Church Family! This is the time of year where we take a breath, take a moment, to take stock of the past year. Did we accomplish what we set out to do? Did we grow in the areas we wanted to or learn what needed to be learned. In our failures, was knowledge gained? So, why not do that with God? Sit down with a cup of coffee, or beverage of choice, and talk to God. See where you are. See what He has in store for you. There are many examples in the Gospels where Jesus went off to be alone with His Father. When was the last time you went off to be with your Father, or simply had a conversation with Him? Not asking for anything, simply talking to Him about your life and your spiritual journey. Sometimes we get this mindset that prayers have to be said a certain way, in a specific format, like a ritualistic equation. Your Father in heaven just wants to hear your heart. Tell Him your fears and frustrations, your goals and desires, or whatever pops into your head. Share what made you laugh the most this year, and what brought you joy. The point is to simply *BE* with God, to commune with him, but most importantly... to listen. Open your heart to God the Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling within you, but then be still and listen. Listen for the Lord to guide you. Take note of the scriptures He brings to mind. Prayer is a two-way street, and we need to learn how to listen to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Two particular verses come to mind when thinking about reflecting upon the past year and looking forward to what the new year holds. James 4:13, 15 and Romans 12:1-2.

James 4:13, 15 says, ^{“13} Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.”... ¹⁵ Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.” Here James is reminding his audience that God is the one in control and we need to submit to His will in all things.

Romans 12:1-2 says, ^{“1} Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” Paul is also reminding us to submit to God’s will, but also tells us that we must grow in spiritual maturity in order to properly discern the Father’s perfect will for our lives.

So, as we come to this time of reflection on the past year, and look forward to the one to come, let us take some time to be with our Father in heaven. Let us seek His will. Listen to the Holy Spirit as He helps you discern how far you have come, the gifts He has entrusted to you, and discern where He wants to take you for the glory of His Kingdom. Then collectively, as the Church, we can come together as the Body of Christ and discover the amazing things our Father has in store for us in this new year.

In whatever the Lord puts on our hearts, let us be bold for the Kingdom of God and boldly proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ like the apostles when they first received the Holy Spirit! ^{“19} But Peter and John replied, “Which is right in God’s eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! ²⁰ As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.” (Acts 4:19-20, NIV) We can do this because of the Hope, Peace, and Joy Jesus brought us, all because of the love of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Go in peace to serve and love the Lord. I pray you have a blessed New Year!



In Christ, Pastor John



January 4 – 2nd Sunday of Christmas
Sermon Title: The Word Became Flesh
Scriptures: Psalm 147:12-20; John 1:10-18

January 11 – Baptism of the Lord
Sermon Title: Baptism of Jesus
Scriptures: Psalm 29; Matthew 3:13-17

January 18 – 2nd Sunday after Epiphany
Sermon Title: What is Your Witness?
Scriptures: Psalm 40:1-11; John 1:29-42

January 25 – 3rd Sunday after Epiphany
Sermon Title: Repent, the Kingdom is Near
Scriptures: Psalm 27:1, 4-9; Matthew 4:12-23

February 1 – 4th Sunday after Epiphany
Sermon Title: The Beatitudes
Scriptures: Psalm 15; Matthew 5:1-12

Prayer List - Constance "Connie" Gregory's family after her passing. Tom Raab's family after the passing of his sister, Nancy. Chery Hackney's family after her passing. Ronnie Crabtree (and Ann) after the passing of his sister, Peggy Morris. Hazelwood family had COVID, gratefully they have all recovered. JE Tuck had heart catheterization, and doing well.

Prayers continue: Kim and Jim Albert, and Connie Troy.



Mission Opportunity - Main Street Methodist church is planning a NC Rebuild Mission trip. They are planning to help a North Carolina area, likely one that was hit by Helene, in the new year. There will be an information meeting on Wednesday, January 28th at Main Street UMC, in their Education building, where the Food Pantry is located. Watch for more information as it gets closer.

Card Ministry at Commonwealth - The Card Ministry will meet at Commonwealth to help the residents create beautiful cards on Monday, January 26 at 3:00pm. Anyone interested in joining them to make cards and/or to help the residents are welcome to join them. This is a great ministry allowing the residents to have a fun activity.



Officer Installation - We are excited to welcome our new officers. Coming in January. Watch for more information.

Congratulations to our New Officers – Elders: Eric Roberts and Mike Freshour for 3-year terms (2028), Bob Hughes (2026) 1 year. Deacons: Carol Foster, Robin Hall, and Sterling Byrd-Roberts for 3-year terms (2028). Mike Rand is our new Trustee- 3-year term (2028), and Teresa McCollum will be the WW Glass Trustee for 3-year term (2028).

Thank you for serving! - Those rotating off: Elders: Kim Albert, Mike Rand and Robert Guthrie. Deacons: All our Deacons are returning for another term. Eric Roberts as Trustee, and Melissa Fraser as the W.W. Glass Trustee.





The story of Christ and the woman taken in adultery (John 8:1-11) offers a lesson about forgiveness and the power of looking forward. When confronted with the woman's past, Christ did not scold her or dwell on her mistakes. Instead, He simply told her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more" (John 8:11). This response highlights a crucial aspect of His teachings: our past does not define us, and we are called to change and move forward.

This perspective struck me recently when I heard someone reflect on this story. It was as if I'd never heard the story before. It made me consider how often we, as individuals, revisit old grievances – whether our own or those of others. The legendary feud between the Hatfields and McCoys come to mind: generations fought for so long that the original cause was forgotten, yet the bitterness endured. Similarly, I have known people who refuse to speak to someone because of a perceived wrong from years ago. This is not the example Christ set for us.

Christ's teachings are clear: "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgive each other, just as in Christ God forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32). He also taught, "For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, Father will not forgive your sins" (Matthew 6:14-15). Even as He was humiliated, wrongly accused, beaten, and mocked, His words were, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). Such grace and forgiveness are at the heart of what it means to follow Him.

We are commanded to "follow Him" and become more like Him. This journey requires us to forgive – not only others but also ourselves. Forgiveness transforms our hearts and brings healing to old wounds. Christ's sacrifice was meant to remove all sin, freeing us to move forward in hope and love.

As we strive to remember His example, let us commit to repenting, forgiving, and showing grace to ourselves and others. In doing so, we can make each year better than the last and draw closer to Him every day. ~ Sherolyn

Women's Bible study - the next class will be Wednesday, January 7 at 10:30 am. Come out and enjoy this study. Socialize with the women as well as get more familiar with the Bible teachings. Having a group is a great way to see things in a different light than previously thought. This is why Christ commanded us to gather.



Operation Christmas Child - We had a very successful year with the Operation Christmas Child in 2025. We will again collect items throughout the year in order to make less of a burden at the last minute. Our goal was to fill 50 boxes, but we were able to fill 62 boxes. Thank you to everyone who helped! So, for January 2026 we will once again collect Girl WOW items. Watch for more information, we will ask for specific items as it seemed the majority found that to be helpful. But, start thinking about what to give and looking while out shopping.

JANUARY

2026

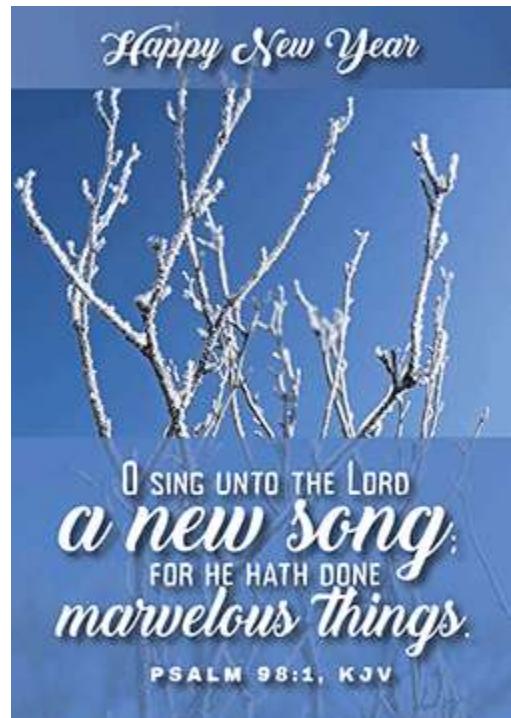
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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
28 9:45 am - Sun Sch 10:30 am - Fellowship 11:00 am Worship	29	30	31 12:00 - AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	January 1 - Office Closed 	January 2	January 3
4 9:45 am - Sun Sch 10:30 am - Fellowship 11:00 am Worship	5	6 10:30 am Card Ministry	7 10:30 am - WBS 12:00 pm - AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	8 7:00 pm - Al-Anon	9- Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	10
11 9:00 am - Diaconate 9:45 am - Sun Sch 10:30 am - Fellowship 11:00 am Worship	12	13	14 10:30 am - WBS 12:00 pm - AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	15 7:00 pm - Al-Anon	16 Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	17
18 - 5 Cents a Meal collection 9:45 am - Sun Sch 10:30 am - Fellowship 11:00 am -Worship	19	20	21 12:00 - AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm - Choir	22 7:00 pm - Al-Anon 	23 - Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	24
25 9:45 am - Sun Sch 10:30 am - Fellowship 11:00 am Worship	26 3pm Card Ministry at Commonwealth	27	28 12:00 - AA 6:00 pm NA 6:00 pm—Choir	29 7:00 pm - Al-Anon	30 - Office Closed 12:00 PM AA	31



- 1 Dabney Gilliam
- 1 Clarice Crews*
- 2 Ruth Jean Slayton*
- 4 John Cranford
- 7 Cynthia Coleman
- 7 Kay Lewis
- 7 Donna Mistal
- 8 Allen Morris
- 10 Leon Plaster
- 10 Joshua Roberts
- 14 Paige Powell
- 15 Karen Henderson
- 17 Patricia Burton
- 25 Linda Lumsden
- 31 Jenny Wilkins*

* In Memory



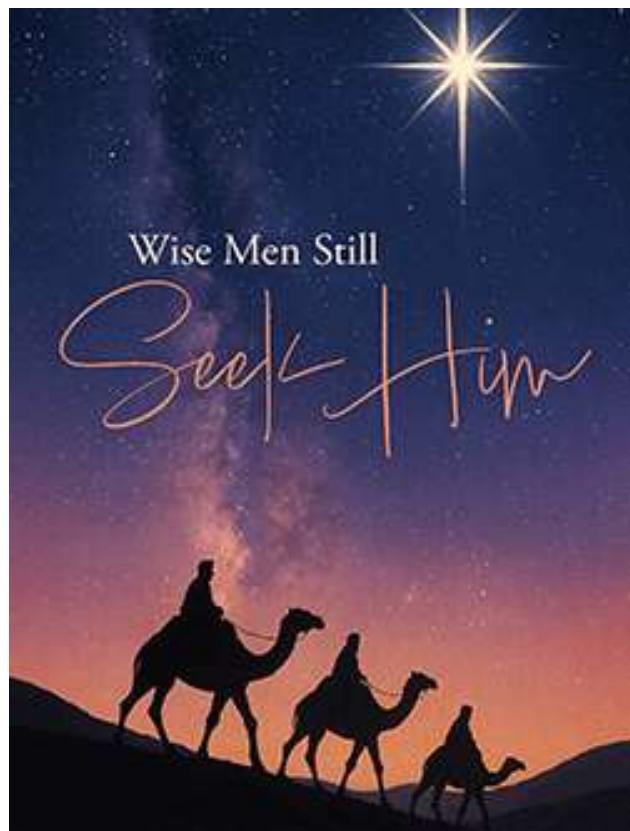
We want to recognize everyone. If we don't have your birthday listed, please call the office and let us know.

What a year we have had here at First Presbyterian! Here are a few pictures that highlight 2025.





- **Choir** - Wednesday's at 6:00 pm
- **Card Ministry** - Tuesday, January 6 at 10:30am
- **Diaconate** - Sunday, January 11 at 9am
- **Session** - Sunday, January 18 after worship
- **5 Cents-a-meal** - Sunday, January 18
- **Card Ministry at Commonwealth** - Monday, January 26 at 3pm



First Presbyterian Church
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Here is your January 2026 Newsletter