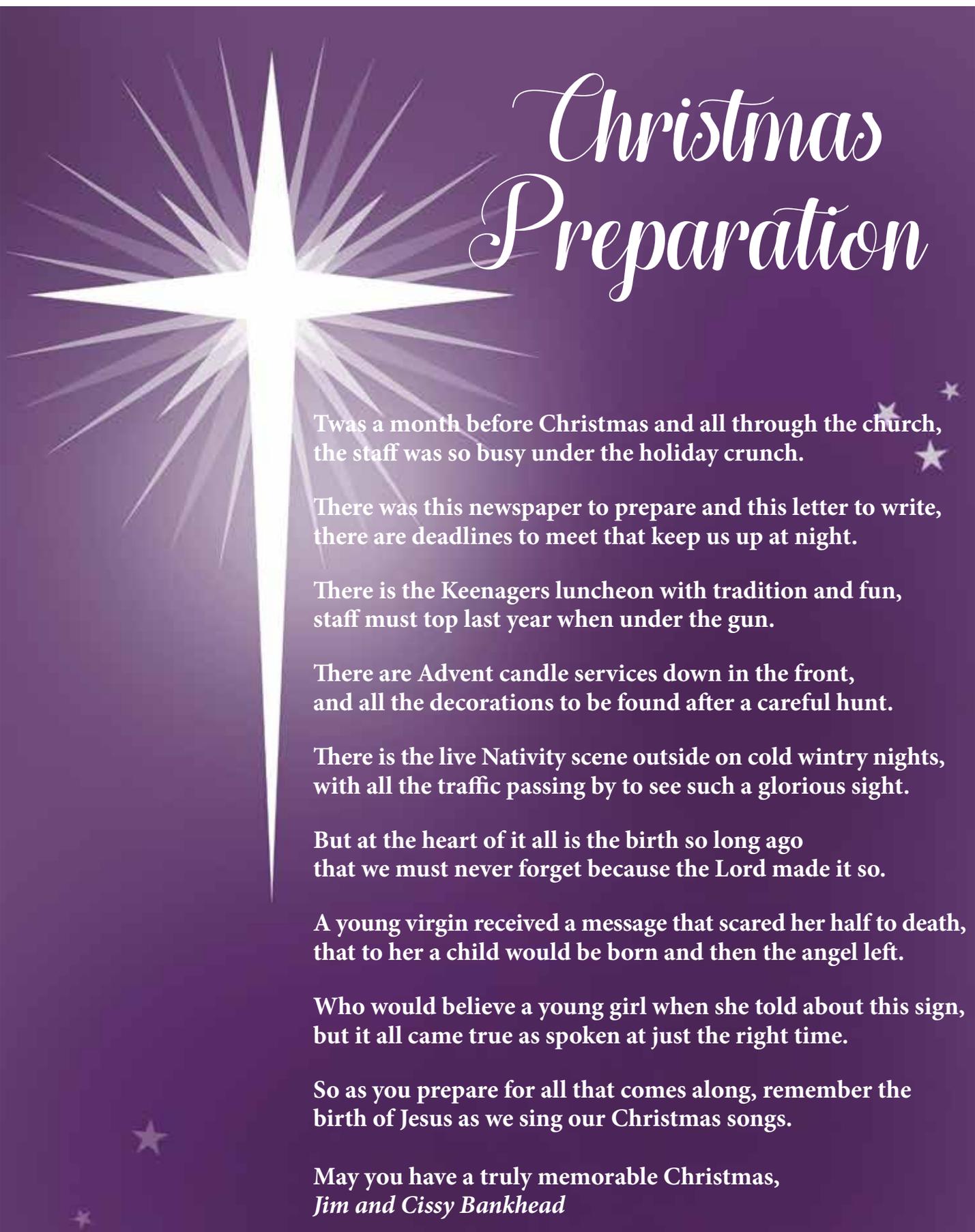


The REMINDER

Growing UPWARD Growing INWARD Growing OUTWARD
worshipping and praising becoming more like Christ sharing the good news





Christmas Preparation

Tw'as a month before Christmas and all through the church,
the staff was so busy under the holiday crunch.

There was this newspaper to prepare and this letter to write,
there are deadlines to meet that keep us up at night.

There is the Keenagers luncheon with tradition and fun,
staff must top last year when under the gun.

There are Advent candle services down in the front,
and all the decorations to be found after a careful hunt.

There is the live Nativity scene outside on cold wintry nights,
with all the traffic passing by to see such a glorious sight.

But at the heart of it all is the birth so long ago
that we must never forget because the Lord made it so.

A young virgin received a message that scared her half to death,
that to her a child would be born and then the angel left.

Who would believe a young girl when she told about this sign,
but it all came true as spoken at just the right time.

So as you prepare for all that comes along, remember the
birth of Jesus as we sing our Christmas songs.

May you have a truly memorable Christmas,
Jim and Cissy Bankhead

A Thought or Two Challenging You Toward Discipleship

Embrace the miracle and grow your love

I just finished reading *The Last Battle* by C. S. Lewis. At the end of the book, Lewis describes a fascinating and wonderful picture of heaven that takes up Isaiah 40 (“those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles”). Wonderful!! Every parent needs to read the entire series of the *Chronicles of Narnia* with their children (7 books). I first read the *Chronicles* when I was a senior in college. The stories are captivating in themselves for children, while at the same time very satisfying for the deepest thinker; because tucked away on each page is Lewis’ theology.

Lewis, in *The Last Battle*, has an ape named Shift and a donkey named Puzzle that come together to give a picture of the sinister and deceptive work of Satan on humanity (us). Lewis portrays how most speaking creatures of Narnia (Narnia is the fictitious land where Aslan, the lion King, rules all speaking creatures; i.e. bears, beavers, unicorns, eagles) are under the influence of the dark lord named Tash/Satan, through

Let your heart wonder with joy this month.

Take time to enjoy Him.

Talk to Him and listen for him.

the dominant ideas of the day. The idea that Shift and Puzzle portray/proclaim is that all religions are the same. Lewis demonstrates how our world/culture is caught in a deceptive trap of universalism (i.e. all religions point to the same god.) I have recently been challenged in conversation, by well-meaning and sincere people, about how B’hai and Jew and Islam and Jehovah Witness are all, like Christianity, pointing people to God. At the end of the *Last Battle* this deception is seen for what it is — a means to destroy. Lewis points to the reality that Jesus/Aslan is breaking into our world to save us from this deception, which brings ultimate destruction.

We celebrate the incarnation this month on December 25. The incarnation is God breaking in and becoming Man. Lewis, in his book *Miracles*, calls the incarnation “the

grand miracle.” He says that all other miracles point to, and are derived from, the incarnation. No other religion gives you anything close to this miracle. The incarnation of the second person of the trinity means that you are privileged by faith to KNOW God! The incarnation means you can know God intimately! No other religion comes close to this even though they may make that claim.

Let your heart wonder with joy this month. Take time to enjoy Him. Talk to Him and listen for Him. He loves you; the incarnation is the supreme evidence of that! As you meditate on that be challenged to grow in your love for Him and only Him.

Chris

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ON THE COVER: Hanging of the Greens. From left: Amy Lynch, Carol Banner, Hunter Burch, Lisa Dozier, and several other women decorate the church for the Advent season. For more about the Chrismons, see page 6.

‘Finish strong’ in supporting ministry

2019 Stewardship Campaign Update

As I write this article, we have received pledges from 156 of our covenant partners totaling \$952,768.00 in support of our 2019 Ministry Action Plan (General Operating Budget). The church leadership (staff, elders, deacons, and others) has been working for a couple of months to develop plans for ministry to our members, our community and around the world. Those ministries have a cost associated with them. The 2018 Ministry Action Plan was approximately \$1.6 million dollars. The 2019 Ministry Action Plan is expected to be in the same range. Funding for the ministries come from the contributions of our covenant partners and others who support the ministries of the church. We are grateful for those who have stepped up and made their commitment to support the ministry of First Presbyterian Church. If you have not already done so, let me encourage you to submit your pledge. We anticipate this amount to increase over the coming weeks as others make their pledges. Thank you for the positive response to our 2019 Stewardship and Generosity campaign.

‘Finish Strong’

I am a big fan of college football. If you follow college football, you’ve probably seen the players holding four fingers in the air as the game transitions from the 3rd quarter to the 4th. This gesture symbolizes the players desire and determination to compete to the last second of the game regardless of the score. During the week the players practice, train and lift weights in preparation for gameday. During the week the coaches instill in their players the importance of finishing strong. As we approach the end of 2018, I want to encourage you to “finish strong” with regard to your commitment to support the ministry of First Presbyterian Church. If you recall, we did not ask our covenant partners to estimate an amount of your giving for 2018. Instead, trusting that all covenant partners would continue to give generously in support of the work of the church, we asked each covenant partner to commit to “pray for the ministry of First Presbyterian Church and to give a

percentage of your time, talent and money to the mission of the Lord through First Presbyterian Church.” In these last weeks for 2018, let me challenge everyone to evaluate the commitment you made and “finish strong” in your support of First Presbyterian Church.

Toward a Healthier Church

Numbers can tell us a great deal about the overall health of an organization. The numbers in the table below are a snapshot of where First Presbyterian Church is financially as we approach the end of 2018.

Ministry Action Plan Budget Needs thru 11/28/2018	\$1,457,000.00
Average Weekly Need	\$31,000.00
Average Weekly Giving thru 11/28/2018	\$26,594.40
Total Ministry Action Plan Receipts thru 11/28/2018	\$1,215,521.00
Firm Foundation Receipts to Date	\$484,816.00

11 Month Contribution Statements

In early December, all covenant partners and regular contributors will receive a statement from First Presbyterian Church that will provide an update of your year to date giving (as of 11/30/2018). Traditionally, some of our covenant partners make year- end contributions. This information is being provided to assist you as you plan your year-end giving. The statement will contain contribution information regarding our General Fund, New Beginnings (debt retirement) and any other contributions to the ministries of First Presbyterian Church. If you are planning to make a year-end contribution please note that checks must be dated no later than December 31, 2018 in order to receive contribution credit for 2018.



Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need. —Malachi 3:10

Emmanuel — God is with Us

The birth of Jesus in Matthew (1:18-25) is only eight verses. Most of our traditions for the Nativity of Jesus come from the Gospel of Luke. Matthew gives us the dream of Joseph as the angel says to Joseph: "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:20)." The birth of Jesus as the Son of God fulfills a prophecy from Isaiah 7:14. The prophecy comes from a time in the history of Judah when Jerusalem is to be attacked by neighboring nations including the nation of Israel known as Ephraim (named for David's son). The Lord God desires for Ahaz, the king of Judah, to rely on the Lord to deliver Judah from warring nations. Ahaz will not pray and ask the Lord for a sign, but the Lord gives him the sign of a son who will be obedient to the Lord. Matthew transfers this prophecy to the birth of Jesus. Mary, the virgin, gives birth to a son, who is Jesus, and Jesus is the Lord with us.

This is the miracle of the greatest gift to the world. The Creator of all we know, the universe and every molecule on the earth, walks the planet in the person of Jesus. We call Jesus the Messiah or Christ which means each believer has faith in the Lord that Jesus is "God with us." How is Jesus with us as we begin Advent? Jesus is now with us as the Holy Spirit of God. Advent is a time of



REV. MIKE FLEENOR'S BLOG
<https://onepastorsponderings.wordpress.com/>

preparation for the coming of "God with us." Our world prepares for the greatest holiday of the year. Each year the consumer culture of America we live in calls us to make our preparation greater than the year before. We have many clichés to remind us to remember the birth of Jesus: "Jesus is the reason for the season" and "Keep Christ in Christmas."

Advent is an excellent time to renew our commitment to follow Jesus as our Lord. Advent is a time to reflect upon the history of God leading the Jewish nation for hundreds of years. As the Church, we are to make a witness to our faith that Jesus of Nazareth, son of Mary, adopted son of Joseph, is God with us. Let us give thanks that the Lord knows us and has given us Jesus as our Lord, Leader, and Savior.

Women in Ministry Monthly Groups

Women in Ministry's aim is to strengthen our relationship with God and build each other up in the body of Christ. Through prayer, Bible study, and fellowship, we are nurtured and empowered to be His light to our families, our church, and the world. We are passionate about Jesus.

If you are not involved in a circle, please, join in for Christian fellowship and Bible study. We have a place for you!

For more circle information, please contact: Patricia Hubbs, Donna Grubb, or Teresa Stewart in the church office, 843-662-2583.



Bread and Fish	Dec. 8	9 a.m.	Call Jan Green
Joyful Hearts	Dec. 11	10 a.m.	721 Waters Ave.
Posies and Petals	Dec. 11	10 a.m.	Lawson-Rain Chapel
SonFlowers	Dec. 11	10 a.m.	823 Mohawk Drive
Soul Sisters	Dec. 11	noon	Price Classroom
Serenity	Dec. 11	3 p.m.	Lawson-Rain Chapel
Women of Grace	Dec. 13	6:30 p.m.	

Christmas celebration

As you enter the Sanctuary this Advent season, be drawn in to a wonderful world, where intricate ornaments give even more meaning to the reason we celebrate Christmas. From the beautiful handmade decorations to the wreaths and window pieces, the women's ministry helps make the season meaningful. Center stage in our Sanctuary are our Chrismon trees. The Chrismon word is a combination of the words Christ and monogram – meaning monogram of Christ. For about nine years, Carol Banner has led the women's Chrismons ministry, having taken workshops, learning detailed patterns, and sharing her passion with those in the spirit. She creates the new Chrismons using varying gauges of wire with pearls, gold beads, and clear crystals.

Chrismons are white and gold, and our true Chrismon trees only display the white-and-gold symbols of Christ. The newer Chrismons are the featured decor on our trees, and the older Chrismons from the 1960s fill them out. White is the liturgical color for Christmas. It also suggests innocence, purity, and perfection of our Savior. It's the color of joy and light. Gold is a symbol for the glory and majesty of God and the Son of God. The tiny white lights on the tree point to Christ as the "Light of the World."

The original Chrismon tree and patterns were created by Frances Kipps Spencer in 1957 for the Ascension Lutheran Church in Danville, Va. In sharing her passion, Spencer's only limitation was they were not to be made "for sale" and that churches kept the Lord at the center of the Christmas celebration.

Our prayer at First Presbyterian is that the beauty of these trees and Chrismons will add meaning to your celebration of Christmas and worship of Christ. May each of you be blessed with the love, joy, and true meaning of Christmas.



Ashton Pennstrom decorates one of the Chrismon trees during the Hanging of the Greens.



Stephanie Spivey, left, and Christina Jeffords assemble the window decorations in the Sanctuary during Hanging of the Greens. Follow First Presbyterian on Instagram and Facebook to see a different Chrismon daily. And share with us your favorites as you discover the beauty of Chrismons. Also be sure to look at the Children's Corner on the left tree, where Jonah and the whale, left, can be seen.



Ring in the Advent season with Chancel Handbells

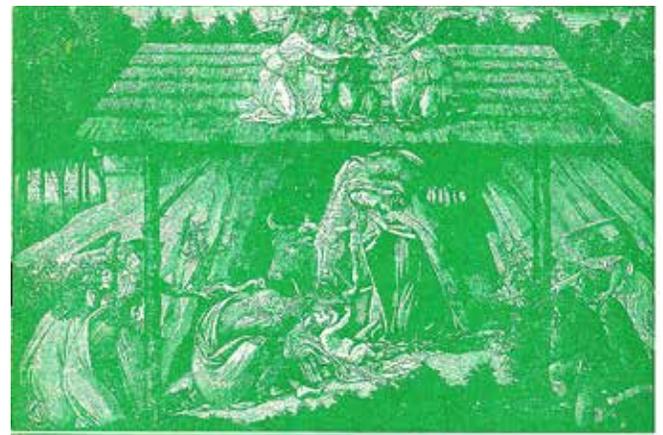


Ring in the Advent season at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 5, in the Sanctuary with our talented Chancel Handbell Choir! This is a First Presbyterian tradition rich with Christmas melodies from around the globe.

Lessons & Carols

At 11 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 16, please join us for a service of Lessons and Carols in the Sanctuary. Lessons and Carols tells the story of the fall of humanity, the promise of the Messiah and the birth of Jesus through nine short readings from Genesis, the prophetic books and the Gospels, along with the singing of Christmas carols, hymns, and choir music.

This service is truly a moving program you will cherish this Advent Season.



A Christmas Cantata

Included in the 11 a.m. Worship Service on Sunday, Dec. 23, the Chancel Choir and musicians will perform selections from Johann Sebastian Bach's For Us a Child is Born. Let us prepare our hearts for this service of sermon and song.

Children dressed up for their participation in the Thanksgiving feast in November.



Special Christmas memories help find true meaning

Most of us are accustomed to our own ways of celebrating Christmas. When asked, almost everyone has a special Christmas memory to share.

In our home, one of our treasured family traditions is to read, the Christmas story, before the gifts are opened. My husband, Jim, reads the biblical account from the Alfred Pleasant Hanner Family Bible, KJV, circa the 1800s. Alfred Hanner was Jim's great-grandfather and also was a cousin of Victor Hanner, a one-time, Florence merchant and a member at First Presbyterian Church. This family tradition started years ago, when we were newlyweds and continued each year, as our family has grown.

When our children were small and their attention spans were short, sitting still and waiting patiently was not easy. Their eyes were focused on the glitz and glamour wrapped up in the packages beneath the Christmas tree. I am reminded that as adults, we, too, sometimes find it hard to focus on the real reason for Christmas. All the secular parts of Christmas tend to crowd out the most important gift of all.

My prayer is that this Christmas we will take time to continue our family traditions and to share the truth of the birth of the Christ Child with our children and our children's children. May we all find our way to the manger. Merry Christmas from all of us at First Presbyterian CDC and a Happy New Year, to all of you! Blessings!

Beth



Children watch as Child Development Center director Beth Hepler cuts potatoes for their stone soup.

SAVE THE DATE

6:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 6: Join us for our third annual CDC "Christmas Celebration" in the church sanctuary. Every class will be participating.

**December 1**

William Jones
Allen McCall

December 2

Liza Commander
Claudia Ervin
Julie Ham
David Porter
Mary Lynn Williamson

December 3

Bobbie Sue Bratton
Emma Eason
George Oliver

December 4

Annette Eason
Vicky McCall
Joey McMillan

December 5

Gracyn Alexander
Campbell Frost
Michele Lewis
George Richardson
Linda Westbrook
Amelia Whitehead
Emily Whitehead

December 6

William Hemmingsen
Fred Swearingen
Matt Tyler

December 7

Will McMillan

December 9

Jessie Moss
Powers Rogers

December 10

Gretchen Page

December 11

Genevieve Draeger
Marie O'Harra

December 12

Jesslyn Ham
John Wyatt Temple

December 13

Getty Page
Steven Tyler

December 14

Katy Ramirez
DeAnn Tiller
Jack Williams
Isam Zakhour

December 15

Adele Kassab
Meg Temple
Nancy Thompson

December 16

Chris Alexander
Caroline Genoble
Mitzy Leach
Cory Swearingen
Kyle Swearingen
Jackie Williams

December 17

Jammie Harris
Jennie Harwell
Brittany Mimms
Melanie Neal
Debbie Valesky

December 18

David Banner
Jacqueline Clancy
Anna Gregg
George Harrington
Rebecca Haynes
Dave O'Harra
Finnigan Page

December 19

Meredith Banner
Olivia Emert
Palmer Kirkpatrick
Darby Moore
Cille Scott

December 20

Haley Davis

December 21

Sam Dozier
Kara Morgan
Carolyn Vaught

December 22

Sarah Nell Harwell

December 24

Jennifer Grimsley
Hannah Welch

December 25

Joy Tedder
Amy Wood

December 26

Laurel Casstevens
Bridge Jernigan
Laurie Tiller
Caroline Toniolo

December 27

Allen Griffin
Mike Lavespere
Milton Morris

December 28

Kendall Babb
Laura Marechal

December 29

Hayns Harris
Ian Johnson
Melba Whitesides

December 30

Jack Halus
Paulina Halus
Melanie Hemmingsen
Kate Moore
Tara Newton
Teresa Stewart
Brent Tiller

December 31

Cynthia Knudsen
Mary Catherine Rawlinson
Nigel Watt

December

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1

- 10:00 AM Gift-making Workshop
- 4:00 PM Basketball Practice: Girls
- 5:00 PM Youth Dinner: JFH
- 6:00 PM Youth Praise & Worship Concert

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 2

- 9:00 AM Contemporary Worship Service
- 10:00 AM Sunday School
- 11:00 AM Traditional Worship Service
- 4:00 PM Sixth-graders' Living Nativity Rehearsal
- 4:30 PM Volleyball
- 5:30 PM Youth Fellowship



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8

- 6:00 AM Parking Lot Mission
- 8:00 AM Girl Scout Leadership
- 9:00 AM WiM Bread & Fish: Call Jan Green
- 4:00 PM Basketball Practice: Girls

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 9

- 9:00 AM Contemporary Worship Service
- 10:00 AM Sunday School
- 11:00 AM Traditional Worship Service
- 3:30 PM Sixth-graders' Living Nativity Rehearsal
- 4:00 PM Angel Choir Living Nativity Rehearsal
- 4:00 PM Good Samaritan Christmas Party
- 4:30 PM Volleyball
- 5:30 PM Youth Fellowship
- 6:30 PM Grace and Truth Christmas party



MONDAY, DECEMBER 3

- 10:00 AM Monday Morning Prayer Group
- 5:30 PM Basketball Practice: 14U
- 6:30 PM GriefShare: Price Classroom
- 7:00 PM Boy Scouts: Scout Room

MONDAY, DECEMBER 10

- 10:00 AM Monday Morning Prayer Group
- 5:30 PM Basketball Practice: 14 U
- 7:00 PM Boy Scouts: Scout Room

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4

- 7:00 AM Men's Breakfast
- 9:30 AM Women's Prayer Group
- 9:45 AM WiM CT Committee Meeting
- 11:00 AM WiM Bible Moderators Meeting
- 12:00 PM Keenagers
- 1:30 PM Ladies' Ensemble Rehearsal
- 5:00 PM Basketball Practice: 8U
- 5:00 PM Women's Prayer Group – Hucks
- 6:00 PM Basketball Practice: Girls
- 7:00 PM Basketball Practice: 17U

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 11

- 7:00 AM Men's Breakfast
- 9:30 AM Women's Prayer Group
- 10:00 AM WiM Joyful Hearts: 721 Waters Ave.
- 10:00 AM WiM Posies & Petals: Lawson-RainChapel
- 10:00 AM WiM SonFlowers: 823 Mohawk Drive
- 12:00 PM WiM Soul Sisters: Price Classroom
- 1:30 PM Ladies' Ensemble Rehearsal
- 3:00 PM WiM Serenity: Lawson-Rain Chapel
- 5:00 PM Basketball Practice: 8U
- 5:00 PM Women's Prayer Group – Hucks
- 6:00 PM Basketball Practice: Girls
- 6:30 PM Living Nativity
- 7:00 PM Basketball Practice: 17U



WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 5

- 5:00 PM Basketball Practice: 12U
- 6:00 PM Family Night Dinner
- 6:30 PM Handbells Concert
- 7:30 PM Basketball Practice: 14U
- 7:30 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal



WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 12

- 3:00 PM WiM Presbyterian Commur
- 5:00 PM Basketball Practice: 12U
- 5:00 PM Adult Handbells
- 5:30 PM Family Night Dinner
- 6:30 PM Living Nativity
- 6:30 PM Praise Team Rehearsal
- 6:30 PM Youth Program
- 7:30 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 6

- 7:15 AM Men's Breakfast: Presbyterian Community
- 6:00 PM Basketball Practice: 10U
- 6:30 PM CDC Christmas Celebration
- 7:30 PM Basketball Practice: 17U



December

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13

7:15 AM Men's Breakfast: Presbyterian Community
 6:00 PM Basketball Practice: 10U
 6:30 PM WiM Women of Grace: 3002 Japonica Lane
 7:30 PM Basketball Practice: 17U

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15

10:00 AM Aglow International
 4:00 PM Basketball Practice: Girls
 4:00 PM Respite Night

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16

9:00 AM Contemporary Worship
 10:00 AM Sunday School
 11:00 AM Traditional Worship Service
 4:30 PM Volleyball
 5:30 PM Youth Fellowship
 5:30 PM Caroling

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 17**

10:00 AM Monday Morning Prayer Group
 5:30 PM Basketball Practice: 14 U
 7:00 PM Eagle Court of Honor: JFH

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 18

7:00 AM Men's Breakfast
 9:30 AM Women's Prayer Group
 1:30 PM Ladies' Ensemble Rehearsal
 5:00 PM Basketball Practice: 8U
 5:00 PM Women's Prayer Group - Hucks
 6:00 PM Basketball Practice: Girls
 6:00 PM Joint Officer Dinner Meeting
 7:00 PM Basketball Practice: 17U

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 19

5:00 PM Adult Handbells
 5:00 PM Basketball Practice: 12U
 6:30 PM Praise Team Rehearsal
 7:30 PM Basketball Practice: 14U
 7:30 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 20

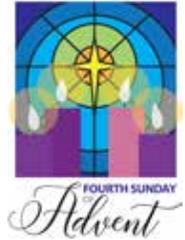
7:15 AM Men's Breakfast: Presbyterian Community
 6:00 PM Basketball Practice: 10U
 7:30 PM Basketball Practice: 17U

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22

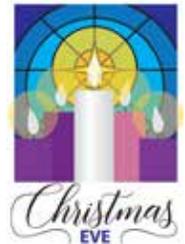
4:00 PM Basketball Practice: Girls

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23

9:00 AM Contemporary Worship
 10:00 AM Sunday School
 11:00 AM Traditional Worship Service
 4:30 PM Volleyball
 5:30 PM Youth Fellowship

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 24**

4:00 PM Christmas Eve Service
 6:00 PM Christmas Eve Service

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 25**

CHRISTMAS DAY — OFFICE CLOSED

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 26**

OFFICE CLOSED

5:00 PM Basketball Practice: 12U

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 27

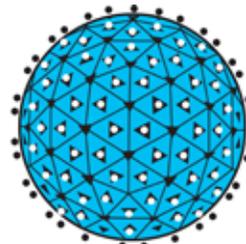
6:00 PM Basketball Practice: 10U
 7:30 PM Basketball Practice: 17U

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29

4:00 PM Basketball Practice: Girls

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 30

10:00 AM Combined Worship Service
 4:30 PM Volleyball
 5:30 PM Youth Fellowship

MONDAY, DECEMBER 31

New Year's Eve

Remember in Prayer

Extended Care

Heritage Home

Malcolm Rogers

Heritage at Lowman

Mac King

Homebound

Linda Foxworth

Dora Hewitt

Pam Hoogenboom

George Richardson

Methodist Manor

Madeline Brice

Joyce Floyd

Marie Jordan

Pee Dee Gardens

Joy Tedder

Presbyterian Community

Hannah Barringer

Ann Cash

Lois Jinks

Aaron Leland

Sympathy

Family of Billy Houck

Households

Whit and Beth Player, Joseph Caine, Worth, Wesley, Lylli

Jim and Mitzy Leach

Mike and Pam Morgan

Pat and Jo Ann Patton

Bob and Marie O'Harra

Charlie Jordan

Mike and Lynn Porter, David, Sarah

Grady and Nancy Moore

Mike Roycroft

Memorials

Dewey Hanna

Billy Houck

Ann Maiberger

Joan Beth Page

Baptisms

Katherine McLean Ryan

born October 19, 2017

Daughter of Rick and Katherine Ryan

Sick & Recovering

Thom Anderson

Jonathan Bankhead

Jack Cagle

Chuck Dennis

Grace DuBose

Amy Graham

Vicki Hebert

Carolyn Holland

Wendell Holland

Rainey Josey

Mike Page

Mary Catherine Rawlinson

*Lord,
Hear Our
Prayer*

Elders

John Hofler

Billy McBride

Deacons

Rob Hall

Margaret Jones

Mission

Bob and Kristi Rice

Women in Ministry

Hunter Burch

Christina Jeffords

Sunday School Teachers

Butch Carroll

Sally Dameron

Staff

Gwen DuRant

Teresa Stewart

God's Work in our Community

Manna House

Founded in 1986 by an inter-denominational group of men and women who observed a need in our community. The Manna House is a nonprofit organization that provides food and other basic services for those who need a hand up.

The Manna House served its first meal on July Fourth in 1987. Since then, the need has grown exponentially — clientele from 11 to over 200 served daily.

Meals are prepared by the staff, cooks, and dedicated

volunteers who work together to serve guests. Among those served are the working poor, the elderly, the chronically or temporarily homeless, and individuals in crisis. The common thread in each of the personal stories is every one is in need of someone who cares.

The Manna House also has an emergency food pantry that's open a few days a week. It provides a two-week supply of food to those in emergency need. The intention is to help stabilize the family until a more permanent way is available.

The Manna House is located at 450 Jarrott St. in Florence.

God's Work Around the World

Bob and Kristi Rice Presbyterian Mission

The Rices began in January 2010 as mission workers of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where they served with the Presbyterian Community of Congo (CPC).

In May 2017, they began a new role and call in South Sudan. Bob serves as an instructor at Nile Theological College and teaches a broad range of courses in theology and biblical studies, with a specific focus in the academic disciplines of systematic theology, public theology, and ethics. Kristi serves as an economic and development adviser for the South Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church. She works to strengthen the identification, development, and management of church development projects that support the financial goals of the church and improve the health and well-being of the communities. They live in Juba, the capital city.

Praise/Prayer Requests:

1. Pray for preparations for NTC's graduation, Dec. 10.
2. Pray for CHE (Community Health Evangelism)



Vision Seminar held in November.

3. Pray for God to guide plans to do a reconciliation workshop in the city of Pochalla in January, and that the Holy Spirit works healing in many hearts.
4. PRAISE God for new steps toward peace in South Sudan. Please pray wisdom and a will for peace in all the leaders.
5. THANK God for protection on us in the midst of a shooting incident in October.



Volunteer CORNER

DIANE ROUSE

How long have you been a volunteer at First?
Seven years.

How long have you been a member at First?
Twenty-nine years. I visited First Presbyterian Church for 3 or 4 years before finally deciding to become a member in 1989. One Sunday morning, Tom Kellam, who was the church Senior Caregiver at the time encouraged me to join the church. I thought about it and decided to join. I also was baptized here. Before that, I never had visited a Presbyterian church.

What is one worship song that has really spoken to your heart?
O Holy Night.

What is one spiritual tradition you have in your life or family?
I have always enjoyed the Christmas Eve Candlelight church service. Christmas Eve wouldn't be the same without it.

Tell us about your family: I have one older sister and two younger brothers, many nieces and nephews who live in Latta. I have a cat named Mary Ann.



The animal shelter gave her that name, and the name stuck. She wants my attention every waking moment.

What is your favorite thing about Florence? I enjoy the various entertainment options available in Florence. I also like that Florence is not far from the beach. My church is a blessing to me, and I have met some wonderful people.

What do you like to do in your free time?
I like to travel, and I like outdoor activities because I love nature and walking. I love animals and spend time playing with my cat. I enjoy boating activities on the lake, as well as going to the beach.

What do you love about being a part of First Pres?
I love the traditional service and our wonderful choir. Our church blesses so many people in the community and around the world. I have grown so much in my faith here through the many wonderful sermons and Bible studies throughout the years.



Christmas Greenery



As we prepare to decorate our Sanctuary for Advent Season, consider sponsoring our Christmas Greenery to honor loved ones or in memory of loved ones. The form is needed so an acknowledgement of your gift can be included in the Christmas Eve bulletin.

In honor / memory of: _____

Given by: _____

The cost is \$12 per designated name or couple and should accompany your order.

Amount included: \$

Return this form to the church office by Monday, December 17.



Youth Schedule

- Sunday School: December 2, 9, 6, 23 / 10-10:50 a.m. / Light continental breakfast, Lesson
- MOVE: December 9 / 5-7:30 p.m. / Dinner, Lesson, Games
- Small groups: December 2 / 5:30-7:00pm / Dinner, Lesson
- 412 on Wednesdays: December 5, 19 / 6:00-7:30pm / Dinner, Bible study, Prayer
- East Florence Mission: December 4, 11, 18 / 4-4:45pm
- No P3BC in December

Youth Praise and Worship Concert

- The youth group is hosting a praise and worship concert from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church on Saturday, Dec. 1. We have arranged for a worship band (Chris Taylor and Avery Milz) in Myrtle Beach to lead us during this time. Our desire would be to have a dinner before the concert from 5 to 6 p.m., then have the concert at 6 p.m. The event is free, but we will take up a love offering during the meal to bless the band.

MOVE on Sunday, December 9

- We will join with St. John's Church's youth group for dinner and participate in Underground Church.

Annual FPC Youth Christmas Party

- We will celebrate the Christmas season from 5 to 9 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 16, with our annual Christmas party. We will have a progressive dinner with stops at three homes. During our travels, we will join with FPC to sing carols to our homebound Covenant Partners. We will finish the night with a White Elephant gift exchange.

412 Movie Night

- On Wednesday, Dec. 19, we will have a movie night at youth group. The time will be 6-8 p.m. Movie TBD.

The Importance of Parents in the Faith of Emerging Adults by Steve Cable

“Foremost among our concerns is the dramatic change in the number of young adults who hold to no Christian religious beliefs or espouse a liberal view of Christianity. From 1970 to the present, we uncovered a disturbing new trend. The number of 18- to 25-year-old Americans who professed no Christian belief was constant at about 20 percent of the population ... and by 2010 the numbers had exploded to around 36 percent. When asked who they felt had the greatest influence on them, more than 65 percent of the respondents reported that the source that had the greatest influence on their religious beliefs was a family member, with the vast majority of those saying it was parents or grandparents.” It is clear, parents, that we have a major influence on our child's religious views, for better or worse. May we live out the words Deuteronomy 11:19, “You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise.”



Christmas Caroling

December 16

Dinner at 5:30 p.m.

Please join us to spread the spirit of Christmas through song as we go caroling Sunday, Dec. 16. Gather in the Jenkins Fellowship Hall at 5:30 p.m.

for a soup supper, and then we will go out into the community to spread cheer to our shut-ins. For more information, call the office at 843-662-2583.



Christmas Eve Family Service at 4 p.m.

Join us for an interactive time of worship for the entire family with candlelight.

Christmas Eve Traditional at 6 p.m.

Join us for Christmas Eve worship with Communion and candlelight

Monthly canned food drive

The first Sunday of every month, all children's Sunday school classes are asked to bring non-perishable food items, diapers, or baby formula for Sunday School offering. There will be collection boxes in the pods.



Living Nativity Rehearsals

SIXTH GRADE ONLY

Sunday 4 p.m. Dec. 2
 Sunday 3:30 p.m. Dec. 9

ALL CHILDREN

Sunday 3:30 p.m. Dec. 9 Cast Only
 4 p.m. Dec. 9 Angel Choir

The Angel Choir (3K-fifth grade) will rehearse from 9:45 to 10 a.m. Sundays in the fellowship hall. Angel Choir comes to the rehearsal on Sunday, Dec. 9. Meet at 4 p.m. in the Lawson-Rain Chapel.



Vacation Bible School: New Week, New Time
 Vacation Bible School will be held from 5:30 to 8 p.m. Sunday, June 9, to Wednesday, June 12.

Mission Camp
 June 24-27

WinShape Camp for Communities
 July 15-19

Downtown Roll
 City of Florence Downtown Roll and Cycling Festival will be held June 15.

ServeFlo
 Helping Florence Flourish's week of service will be held June 15-23.

Looking for a meaningful Christmas gift to give this season?

Give them a week of WinShape Camp in Florence! This full-day camp offers children who have completed 5K-8th grade faith, fun, fitness and family time. Camp will be July 15-19 on the First Presbyterian Church campus. Cost is \$219. Registration opens in March. If you want more information, talk with Brock or Alexis. You also can visit <https://camps.winshape.org>.





Church News

Keenagers lunch celebrates the season

Keenagers will meet at noon Tuesday, Dec. 4, in the Jenkins Fellowship Hall. We will enjoy a delicious meal as well as be entertained by our church staff. Please plan to join us for a time of fun and fellowship.

Volunteers needed for Respite Night

Volunteers are needed for the monthly respite night for families whose child or children has or have special needs. These will be held from 4 to 6 p.m. Dec. 15.

The idea is to give parents a break from caring for their child/children.

We need volunteers to help chaperone and care for the children. Please contact Ashley Hylton for questions or if you would like to volunteer: 843-319-0896 or awhylton13@gmail.com.



Caroling outing to be held December 16

Please join us in spreading the spirit of Christmas through song as we go caroling Sunday, Dec. 16. Gather in the Jenkins Fellowship Hall at 5:30 p.m. for a soup supper, and then we will go out to spread cheer to our shut-ins.



Haiti mission trip will be in late February

Our annual mission trip to Haiti will be in February. Departure will be Feb. 27, and we'll return March 7. Come join the Haiti team 2019 as we minister by our presence and encourage our sponsored children. If you are interested in participating, please call the Rev. Chris Handley for more information.

Living Nativity to be held December 11, 12

Please join us for the Living Nativity at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 11, and Wednesday, Dec. 12. A family dinner will be served on Wednesday night starting at 5:30 p.m. (\$5 per person; Family maximum, \$20). Hot cocoa and cookies will be offered after the performance.

Call for art for church art show

The Second Art Show to the Glory of God will be on exhibit from February 20 to March 25. Artists may submit works on February 15-16. A prospectus with all the information can be picked-up in the Welcome Center.



Volunteers needed for Jobs for Life team

Jobs for Life (JfL) seeks to restore dignity to people's lives and transform communities through a biblical understanding of work. Typical approaches for alleviating poverty involve giving money for food and do not solve the true problem of generational poverty with its many negative effects including depression, domestic violence and crime. For more information on this topic, please read the book "When Helping Hurts" by Steve Corbet. We are seeking volunteers to serve on our JfL leadership team during an 8-week class anticipated to start Jan. 28. For more information, please call the church office or speak with elder Bryon Frost 843-615-8393 or Chris Handley.

Gifts sought for Presbyterian Community

Gift donations for the Presbyterian Community residents will be accepted in our Welcome Center or at the Presbyterian Community on or before Dec. 19. Items approved for the residents: individually wrapped chips, crackers, and popcorn; emery boards, nail clippers; soft candy (bags with individually wrapped pieces are best; no nuts, please); Word Find Books; Bungee key rings; lotion (for sensitive skin); toothpaste and toothbrushes; postage stamps; Kleenex; 2019 calendars; Dove bar soap, body wash (for sensitive skin); slipper socks; note cards; envelopes; pens; and ChapStick. Thank you for your generosity.

Morris completes service project, earns Eagle Scout award

Congratulations to our newest Eagle Scout, Ivan Morris!

Ivan is the 17-year-old son of Milton and Alexis Morris. Ivan has enjoyed many great Hunter Morgan-led scouting adventures during the past 5 years.

He went on backpacking trips in North Carolina's Joyce Kilmer National Forest, Virginia's Mount Rogers Wilderness, and Wyoming's Wind River wilderness. Ivan also attended scouting's premier high adventure Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico in 2017.

For his Eagle Scout service project, Ivan raised the funds and lead Scouts in the building of a gaga pit for the East Florence Mission.

He will receive his award during a December 17 Court of Honor in the Jenkins Fellowship Hall.



Women in Ministry's Mid-Winter Gathering to be held January 24

All women in our church community are invited to the Mid-Winter Gathering from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Thursday, January 24, in the CLC. Once, again we will be cutting, counting, packaging, and praying over prayer cloths for the Tabernacle Project. We will need cutting boards and rotary cutters and sharp scissors. Please notify Donna Grubb if you can supply any of these items by calling or texting 843-409-1234. Also, we will write notes to send to our college students along with a gift card. A vegetable soup lunch will be served.

There will be a short business meeting during which we will elect two women to serve on the Nominating Committee. Be sure the person you plan to nominate is willing to serve.

Please mark your calendars and join us!





700 PARK AVE., FLORENCE, SC 29501
 PHONE: 843-662-2583/FAX: 843-662-1726
www.florencefirst.org

CHURCH STAFF

Transitional Pastor	Dr. Jim Bankhead
Associate Pastor	Rev. Chris Handley
Congregational Care Assistant	Rev. Mike Fleenor
Director of Music/Organist	Mrs. Ann Rodgers Chandler
Praise Team Leader	Mr. Glenn Ham
Director of Youth Ministry	Mr. Brock Page
Director of Children's Ministry	Mrs. Alexis Morris
Child Development Center Director	Mrs. Beth Hepler
The Tabernacle Experience	Mr. Joe Koenig
Church Administrator	Rev. Don Hebert
Ministry Assistant	Ms. Teresa Stewart
Financial Assistant	Mrs. Gwen DuRant
Ministry Assistant	Ms. Kimberly Brauss
Head Custodian	Mr. Ron Echols
Assistant Custodian	Mr. Sidney Ruff
Housekeeping	Ms. Wanda LaSane

