

A Pastoral Message From Dr. Mike Garrett

"HARK"

is a funny word to modern ears.

It's an old English term that means to listen or pay close attention. When was the last time you heard it used in a sentence? You can imagine a teacher upon hearing a forbidden ringing during class saying with a bit of sarcasm, "Hark! Could that possibly be a cellphone?"

This Christmas, that funny, out of place term will guide us in preaching, devotion, and worship. The English carol, "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing", will call us to pay close attention during the weeks of Advent and Christmas to the birth of Jesus. I'll have plenty to say in the weeks ahead about why I think "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" is one of the finest carols ever written. For now let's stick with the word "Hark!" It's no small accomplishment to pay close attention to the birth of a child in ancient Bethlehem in a world as loud and confusing as ours.

Hark! Pay attention we must. The smallness, weakness, humility, and vulnerability of the infant Jesus is how God chose to work the largest and grandest of miracles in this world. We are end-

lessly tempted to believe in the power of the large and the loud. But God sends his Son, born in poor human flesh, to forgive and restore a world that cannot forgive and restore itself.

We will do all we can at First Presbyterian Church to keep our eyes on the true miracle of Christmas, the Word made flesh in Jesus. Please take advantage of the opportunities the church provides to focus on the Christ in worship, song, prayer, learning, and celebration. Set aside some quiet time to reflect again on what it means for God to visit his world as one of us. If you have children at home, remind them of the wonder that God came into this world as a poor child to save us. That's how important their lives are to God.

This newsletter contains many opportunities for Advent and Christmas for folks of all ages. In the midst of other holiday activities, and the desire to reconnect with friends and family, take the time to connect with the God who came and dwelt among us and continues to live in us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn king."**

Sincerely,



A Shared Word from Pastoral Care

Pastor Mitch Watson

In October, I have often heard people expressing this is time the of the year they like most. The weather is cooler. Many have drunk pumpkin spiced coffee (not me, see my bride...lol). October came with transitions, November means moving to the winter season. Days are shorter, the temperature is cold, and more time is spent indoors. We can be less energized, moody, short-tempered, feel down. Add a layer of COVID pandemic and social unrest to it, and behavior experts think this will be a banner year for darker moods and feelings. Some will cry, and others may be more irritated.

There are different tags for this seasonal behavior: Winter blues, Seasonal downs, and S.A.D (short for Seasonal Affective Disorder). Keep in mind there are no definitive medical tests one can run to diagnose S.A.D. One blah, downer day is not S.A.D. Several days in a row can be an insight. If a person is more prone to feel down, moodier, it's amplified, more ill-tempered, etc. There are many simple ways to offset the "winter blues".

The Mayo Clinic says general signs of S.A.D./winter blues are:

- Losing interest in activities
- Low energy, oversleeping
- Weight gain
- Feeling sluggish or agitated
- Having difficulty concentrating

Practical ways of dealing with S.A.D are

- Mental awareness of possible S.A.D
- Put lights on brighter or buy special lighting that imitates sunlight
- Use the fireplace or burn candles to have an offsetting impact
- Cheer up someone else by calls, social media, or socially distanced visits
- Exercise the body and mind
- Bring nature closer to the home with bird feeders
- Play positive-minded/calming music

If the winter blues become more intense with overwhelming darker thoughts, be aware, and seek help.

It is essential, as Christians, to claim God's Promises about winter spiritually. God has a purpose in winter. It is to give creation time to rest and recharge. Isaiah 55:10 says "As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater." Our Church forefathers saw the seasons of Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas as a spiritual renewal in wintertime. The Christ child was born into the darkness to bring the Holy Light of the Spirit to us. God designed the seasons. Yet, He never changes. Malachi 3:6 says, "For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed."

Let us not be consumed by the seasonal changes that God intended to be opportunities to renew earth and humanity! Prayer, Bible, and fellowship can go a long way to help one's soul in seasonal times. I'll testify to it! Just be willing to embrace what God created for our well-being.

God Bless, Pastor Mitch

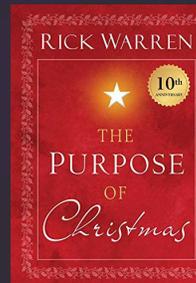
BREAKFAST WITH THE WISEMEN

SUNDAY DECEMBER 4TH
10:00 A.M.
IN ROOM 116



2, 3, 4
YEAR OLD
SUNDAY
SCHOOL
CLASSES

Adult Christian Education Class



The Purpose of Christmas

with Rev. Mitch Watson

based on book

"The Purpose of Christmas" by Rick Warren
following the All In Fellowship Meals

Wednesdays
November 30th,
December 7th &
December 14th

6:30 p.m. in the Activity Room

Purchasing the book is optional & available on Amazon.





Home & Hearth Holiday Fellowship

Do you long for a full-course holiday meal, but you are caring for an elderly relative and don't have time to prepare one? Are you too exhausted to cook after an early morning of opening presents? Maybe you are military whose family lives far away, or new to the church and still getting to know folks, or maybe it seems that your family circle has become too small.

Well, if you fall into any of these categories or just don't want to cook for the holiday, then you're in luck! Your family, your Home & Hearth Church family, is planning a potluck dinner on Christmas Day and you're invited! The Congregational Care Committee will provide the main course meat and drinks. Everyone who participates will fill in with sides, salads, and desserts. The meal will begin at 1:00pm, in the fellowship hall. Food should arrive at 12:50pm.

To make a reservation, sign up on the Google Doc on the church's website, or email Kellie Perkins at kperk16@gmail.com by Wednesday, December 21, 2022, at 9pm.

And remember, your family looks forward to having you join them on Christmas Day!

Suggestions include salads, sides, and desserts, either purchased or homemade, your choice.

Visit firstprez.com/fpc-calendar or scan the QR code to sign up for the Christmas Potluck Dinner.

For planning purposes, please sign up by Wednesday, December 21st, at 9 p.m.



All In Fellowship Wednesday Evening Meal

Enjoy a main entree with potluck sides at 5:30pm, followed by an Adult Christian Education Class, "The Purpose of Christmas" with Rev. Mitch Watson at 6:30 p.m.

Main Entree's for December:

December 7 – Lasagna

**December 14 – Eye of the Round
Roast with Au jus**

Always feel free to invite guests. God will provide!

If you're busy, you can even drop your food off prior to Wednesday night if you are pressed for time on Wednesday. We can accept dropped off food at the church office on Tuesday 9am – 2pm or on Wednesday 10am – 4:30 pm.

What better way to grow and strengthen our church than to dine together engaging in our "All In Fellowship" modified potluck bringing each other and God joy!

Registration is not necessary, however if you'd like to sign up to bring a dish, please visit bit.ly/3FriCEi or scan the QR code



A thought from the Stewardship Committee

Let Us Contribute.

When we are "contributing" in a church setting we almost invariably think of giving money or tithing to the church. It is important that the church be financially supported in order to do the work of God.

Romans 12:8 says "all should financially support the work of God." This support can be financial but can also be gifts of mercy. It is a joyful and cheerful giver that shows compassion and kindness. In this church we have seen the lasting impact that financial contributions can have on the lives of others, particularly with our mission work, both locally and abroad.

If you have not already financially contributed to the church, please consider making a financial contribution and/or investment. Contribution/ investments to the church directly help others either by having a direct effect on their physical and mental wellbeing or by spreading God's word through the teachings of his son Jesus Christ. Please consider these gifts a joyful and cheerful way of following God's teachings.



Holiday Lights

Caroling at Segra Stadium
December 11th at 6 p.m.

All are invited to come and carol at Segra Stadium on December 11th at 6:00 p.m. This will be special night at the stadium because Elsa, Anna, and Olaf will be present as well.

How exciting!

Please RSVP to
Dr. Marcia Mervin,
if you plan to join us in
song that evening.
marcia@firstprez.com



Youth Progressive Dinner

Youth are invited to join us as we go "door to door" and have an extended dinner with their families! We will travel to 5 different host's houses and eat everything from an appetizer all the way to dessert and hot chocolate to end our evening! We will also have a White Elephant Gift Exchange at the church to cap off our evening together. Please join us on December 10th for this event! Drop off will be at 3:00 PM and pick up will be at 7:30 PM, all at the church.



Parents Fellowship Dinner & White Elephant Gift Exchange

December 4th at 4:30 p.m.

While the children will be rehearsing their Christmas program at the church, the adults will gather downtown.

Meet in Eller Hall and then head out for appetizers, beverages, and the White Elephant gift exchange.

Participants in the exchange need to bring a gift under \$10.

For more info email britany@firstprez.com



Save the Date! Youth Ski Trip January 13th - 16th

We will be traveling to Sugar Mountain in Boone, NC to enjoy skiing & games!

For more information, email matt@firstprez.com



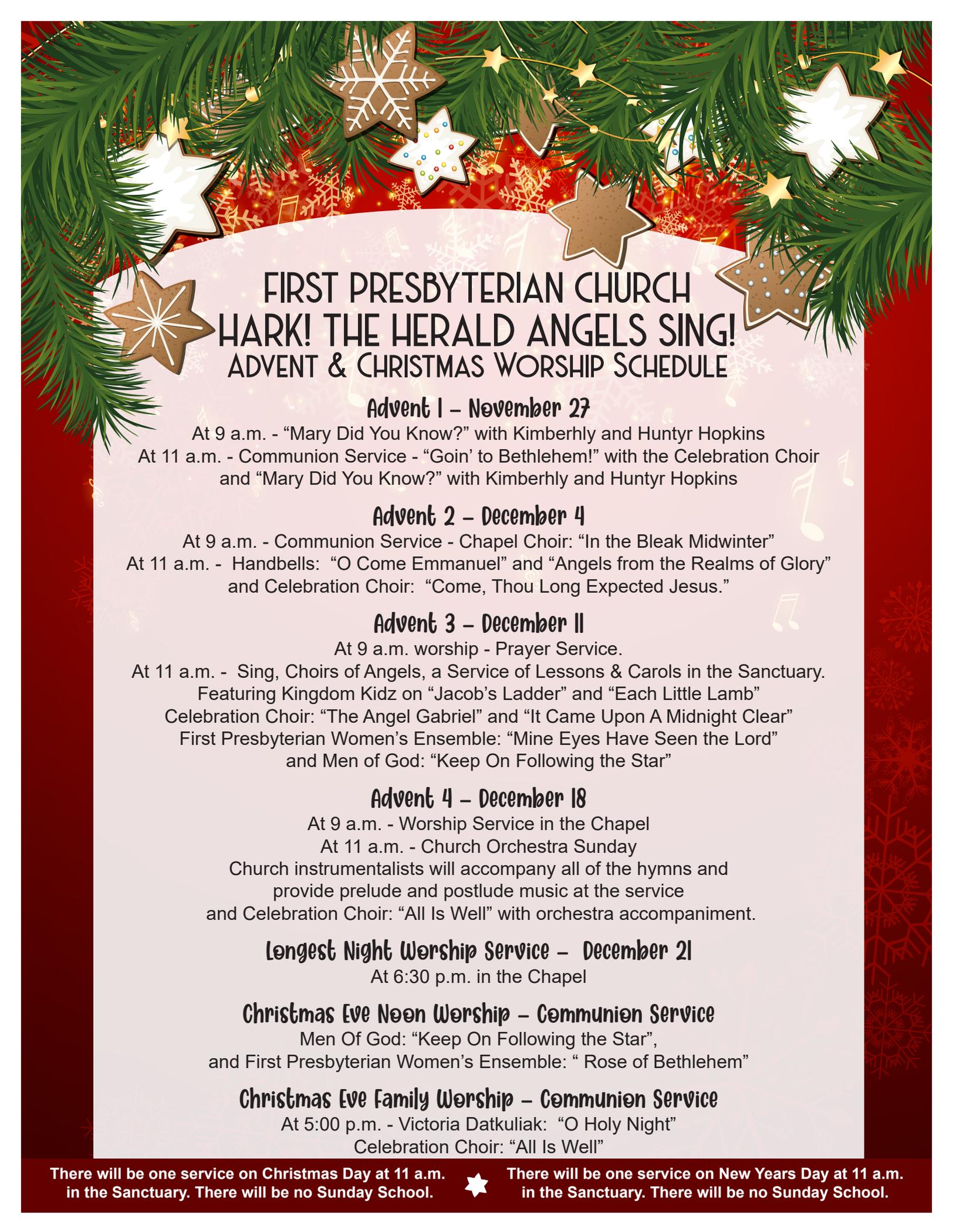
CLUB 543

Sunday,
December 11th
12 - 1:30 pm

Kids will create gifts that will be distributed to special community members during the Christmas season!

RSVP
with
Britany





FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING! ADVENT & CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Advent 1 – November 27

At 9 a.m. - “Mary Did You Know?” with Kimberhly and Huntyr Hopkins

At 11 a.m. - Communion Service - “Goin’ to Bethlehem!” with the Celebration Choir
and “Mary Did You Know?” with Kimberhly and Huntyr Hopkins

Advent 2 – December 4

At 9 a.m. - Communion Service - Chapel Choir: “In the Bleak Midwinter”

At 11 a.m. - Handbells: “O Come Emmanuel” and “Angels from the Realms of Glory”
and Celebration Choir: “Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus.”

Advent 3 – December 11

At 9 a.m. worship - Prayer Service.

At 11 a.m. - Sing, Choirs of Angels, a Service of Lessons & Carols in the Sanctuary.

Featuring Kingdom Kidz on “Jacob’s Ladder” and “Each Little Lamb”

Celebration Choir: “The Angel Gabriel” and “It Came Upon A Midnight Clear”

First Presbyterian Women’s Ensemble: “Mine Eyes Have Seen the Lord”

and Men of God: “Keep On Following the Star”

Advent 4 – December 18

At 9 a.m. - Worship Service in the Chapel

At 11 a.m. - Church Orchestra Sunday

Church instrumentalists will accompany all of the hymns and

provide prelude and postlude music at the service

and Celebration Choir: “All Is Well” with orchestra accompaniment.

Longest Night Worship Service – December 21

At 6:30 p.m. in the Chapel

Christmas Eve Noon Worship – Communion Service

Men Of God: “Keep On Following the Star”,

and First Presbyterian Women’s Ensemble: “Rose of Bethlehem”

Christmas Eve Family Worship – Communion Service

At 5:00 p.m. - Victoria Datkuliak: “O Holy Night”

Celebration Choir: “All Is Well”

There will be one service on Christmas Day at 11 a.m.
in the Sanctuary. There will be no Sunday School.



There will be one service on New Years Day at 11 a.m.
in the Sanctuary. There will be no Sunday School.

Longest Night Service:

Wednesday, December 21st at 6:30 p.m. in the Chapel

While this season is a time of joy and hopefulness as we prepare for the coming of our Lord, this can also be a season of grief and loss. It can be easy to simply skip over the pain someone feels during this season. But this is not what we should do as a church! If this is you or someone you know, we invite you to attend our Longest Night Service in the Chapel on Wednesday, December 21st beginning at 6:30 PM. Please note, this will NOT be a "normal" service. This service will only last roughly 30 minutes and be a time of prayer and reflection with very little other elements. This is just a time to get together and accept where you really are in your grief instead of pretending everything is "okay", while also holding out for healing and hope and looking towards who we are in Christ. We hope to see you all there!

Angel Tree



Be a part of this wonderful gift-giving tradition at First Presbyterian, and share Christmas with families in need of a helping hand. Children's Ministry is partnering with Connections of Cumberland County to sponsor three families this Christmas.

Gifts are due Monday, December 12th. Drop off gifts under the Christmas tree in the Parlor (between the Chapel and Sanctuary) or outside Britany's Office.

Gifts can be wrapped; however, you need to attach the gift receipt, family number and who the gift is to (child/mother gift) to the outside of the gift.

If you would like to donate money for gifts, please contact Britany Spivey.

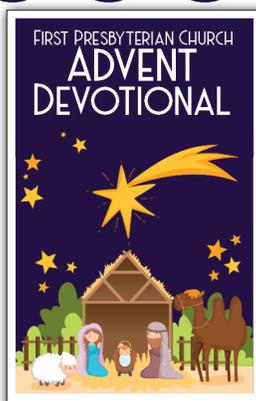


SCAN ME

Sign up to sponsor a gift!
Scan the QR Code or visit
bit.ly/fpcangeltree2022

FPC ADVENT DEVOTIONAL

Pick up a copy of the 2022 FPC Advent Devotional in Eller Hall, in the narthex of the Sanctuary, outside the Chapel, or scan the QR code. This devotional is an opportunity to slow down a little each day and let your heart and mind encounter the reality of a God who shared our flesh and entered our lives. May God bless you in these days of Christmas anticipation and ready your heart to receive the birth of Christ once again.



SCAN ME



All children are invited to join in the intergenerational program "Sing, Choirs of Angels: Lessons and Carols" on Sunday, December 11 at 11 a.m.

If your child would like to have a special part in playing hand chimes or other rhythm instruments, please have them join us on Sunday afternoons during Kingdom Kidz.

**Rehearsals - Nov. 27 and Dec. 4
4:30 to 6:30 PM**

If you can't make it to rehearsal they are still welcome to sing on Sunday, December 11. Bring your child at 10 a.m. that morning to join in the song "Each Little Lamb" by Diane Beckstead. Email Marcia Mervin if you have any questions marcia@firstprez.com

December Birthdays

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Jean Coffman | 15 Lynda Deaton |
| 2 Kimberly Allison | 15 Zaida Montero |
| 2 Dixon Soffe Jr. | 16 Bob Billman |
| 3 Lorene McBryde | 18 D.J. Baileys |
| 4 Jeannie Plummer | 18 Jennifer Spinosa |
| 4 Elyse Brown | 19 Kirby Tyson |
| 4 Tatum Pritchett | 19 Melissa O'Toole |
| 4 Grace McLaughlin | 19 Carol Lyn Wauford |
| 5 Don Perkins | 21 Clark Dunn |
| 5 Noah Hall | 21 Daniel Midgett |
| 5 Bryson Hall | 22 Dot Cromartie |
| 7 Kathy Rouse | 23 Sharon Perry |
| 7 Kris Johnson | 23 Terry Andrews |
| 8 Sybil Russ | 24 Ben McCoy III |
| 8 Isabella O'Keefe | 24 Kelley McCauley |
| 8 Cam Kirby | 24 Charles Cox |
| 9 Ted Lepper | 24 Kirby Cox |
| 9 Renee Beringer | 25 Sydney Darden |
| 9 Berkley Canady | 25 Natalie Wright |
| 10 Leigh Bleecker | 25 Jacob Regensburger |
| 10 Amelia Midgett | 26 David Johnson |
| 10 Blake Yates | 28 Joann Barnes |
| 10 Nancy Kaminska | 28 Mary Reese Barkman |
| 11 Grace Hall | 28 Tiffany Alexander |
| 11 Melissa Smith | 29 Winnie Grannis |
| 11 David Alderman V | 29 Donna Young |
| 11 Laura Dunn | 29 Finley Helmke |
| 12 Travis Hibler | 29 Lori Davidson |
| 13 Alex Barkman | 30 Sue Godwin-Baker |
| 14 Herb Bryan | 30 Madelyn Kelly |
| 14 Rachel Rocker | 30 Hillary Stiles |
| 14 Kelly Taylor | 31 David Canady |
| 15 Janet Holt | |

Welcome
TO OUR NEWEST STAFF MEMBER
VERONICA - OFFICE MANAGER

MEMORIALS

Alice Lafferty
Grace & Tommy Hall

Jane Sutherlin
Linda Adams
Gillie Revelle
Grace & Tommy Hall
Stella Nelson
Ann & Buzz Loyd

John Sumrell
Grace & Tommy Hall

HONORARIUMS

Diane Regensburger
Beverly Stewart

A Look Ahead...

- | | |
|---------|----------------------------------|
| Dec. 1 | • S.A.L.T. Temple Theatre Trip |
| Dec. 4 | • Breakfast with the Wisemen |
| | • Lessons & Carols Rehearsal |
| | • Parents Fellowship Dinner |
| | • Confirmation |
| Dec. 7 | • The Purpose of Christmas Class |
| Dec. 10 | • Youth Progressive Dinner |
| Dec. 11 | • Lessons & Carols Service |
| | • Club 543 |
| | • Stephen Ministry Social |
| | • Music Ministry Party |
| | • Confirmation |
| | • Caroling at Segra Stadium |
| Dec. 14 | • The Purpose of Christmas Class |
| Dec. 17 | • Christmas Orchestra Rehearsal |
| Dec. 21 | • Longest Night Worship Service |
| Dec 24 | • Christmas Eve Worship Services |
| Dec 25 | • Christmas Day Unified Service |
| Jan. 1 | • New Years Day Unified Service |
| Jan. 8 | • Confirmation |
| | • Kingdom Kidz & Youth Resumes |
| | • MOPs Meeting |
| Jan. 12 | • Tapestry Resumes |
| Jan. 17 | • S.A.L.T. Luncheon |
| Jan. 21 | • Jubilate Deo Concert |

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PERIODICALS



Our mission at First Presbyterian Church is to **serve** Jesus Christ and **share** His gospel through meaningful worship, loving fellowship, spiritual growth, and compassionate outreach within our community and throughout the world.



On Saturday November 19th, FPC collected and donated Thanksgiving dinners to local families through Connections of Cumberland County. Many thanks to our volunteers and partners at Mountaire, Operation Inasmuch and Connections of Cumberland County!