

# FIRST PRESS

VOLUME 35 | ISSUE 12 | DECEMBER 2023

First Presbyterian Church, Fayetteville N.C.

## A Pastoral Message from Dr. Mike Garrett



### "O Come Emmanuel"

Christmas has already come, if you have a SiriusXM radio subscription. Multichannel Christmas music to satisfy every taste is streaming twenty-four hours a day. For many it's not a moment too soon. We crave the seasonal uplift as we live with the steady stream of sad news that seems to dominate most media.

With instant Christmas, something is gained, but something is lost. Christmas, the incarnation of God in the flesh of Jesus, snuck up on the world. As one author has written, "Advent begins in the dark." One of our oldest most familiar Advent hymns says:

*"O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
and ransom captive Israel,  
that mourns in lonely exile here  
until the Son of God appear."*

The darkness is real, but Christmas does finally come. Our deepest hunger receives the greatest answer:

*"Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel."*

For the four weeks of Advent we will use the hymn "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" to focus on Jesus as God's deepest answer to our deepest longings. Each week we will watch an empty manger become brighter with the light of God's presence. The hymn

reminds us that Jesus is our Dayspring, Key of David, Wisdom From on High, and Desire of Nations. Behind each of these titles for Jesus is a rich Old Testament picture of the hoped for Emmanuel, God with us.

December 10th, we will have one special service at 11 am, a memorable "Walk To Bethlehem," as we prepare our hearts receive the good news of God's Christmas Love. Christmas Eve this year falls on Sunday. We'll have one service at 11 am as we finish the season of Advent. Then we'll turn our hearts to Christmas with two services on Christmas Eve at 5:30 and 10 pm. Both services will have candle lighting and communion. The first will be a family friendly celebration in the sanctuary. The later service will be quieter and more reflective and will be held in the chapel.

December will be a joyful time! Please make plans to join us throughout the Christmas season. The details for all our seasonal opportunities are found in this newsletter.

The SiriusXM Christmas will end about as fast as it arrived. But Christmas for us is not a fleeting thing. It's far more durable. The light of God's presence is always available. It is Jesus, God with us, who was, and is, and is to come.

Sincerely,

*Mike*

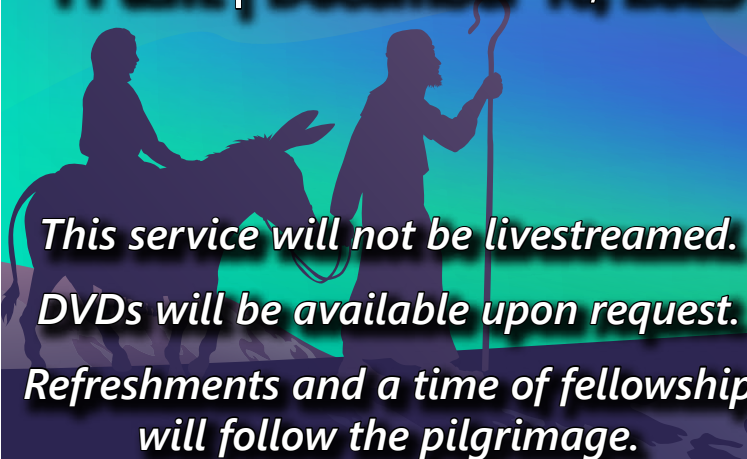
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What are *your*  
hopes and fears?

# WALK TO BETHLEHEM

A Unified Advent Pilgrimage  
with Drama and Music

11 a.m. | December 10, 2023



*This service will not be livestreamed.*

*DVDs will be available upon request.*

*Refreshments and a time of fellowship  
will follow the pilgrimage.*

On December 10th, there will be  
no 9 a.m. Worship Service.

We will have Sunday School  
Classes at 10 a.m.

## The Longest Night's Eve Worship Service

December 20th at 5:30 p.m.  
in the Chapel

A reflective service for those who  
have endured a loss or life change.

The Stephen Ministry and  
Rev. Mitch Watson will lead  
this meaningful service, filled  
with music, scripture, reflection  
and prayer.

Refreshments and fellowship  
will follow.

Everyone is invited  
to attend!



## CAROLING AT SEGRA STADIUM

Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup> at 5:45 p.m.

Carolers get free admission. **ALL AGES ARE WELCOME!** Get in the holiday spirit at Segra Stadium and enjoy tens of thousands of holiday lights around the stadium, with displays on the concourse and a path of walk-through lights on the dirt track of the field. Carolers are invited to stay for a 7 p.m. viewing of "Elf" on the Woodpecker's jumbo video board. Get your picture taken with Santa and participate in holiday crafts. **Register online by 12/7 to carol or to purchase discounted tickets.** Scan the QR Code or visit [bit.ly/Caroling2023](https://bit.ly/Caroling2023)  
For more info, email [marcia@firstprez.com](mailto:marcia@firstprez.com)



THE BEST WAY TO SPREAD CHRISTMAS CHEER, IS SINGING LOUD FOR ALL TO HEAR! -BUDDY



# Advent & Christmas

Join us this Advent as we join with Christians around the globe in this season of anticipation as we reflect on the hope, joy, peace, and love we find in Christ Jesus. This season remembers and celebrates the birth of Jesus, but also looks forward to the time when He will return to reunite Heaven and Earth forever. As a church, we invite you to enter a time of intentional meditation and prayer to prepare our hearts to celebrate His birth.

Our December Worship Services will include messages and music to prepare your hearts for the joyous celebration of Christmas. A familiar Advent hymn, “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” will provide a unifying theme for our worship. This hymn focuses on the titles of the coming Christ. These titles appeared in daily Vesper antiphons sung during the week before Christmas; their roots date to at least the reign of the Roman Emperor, Charlemagne (768- 814).

## **Advent 1 - Sunday, December 3 - “O Come, Thou Dayspring”**

9 a.m. Worship in the Chapel  
10 a.m. Sanctuary Modernization Presentation  
11 a.m. Worship in the Sanctuary

## **Advent 2 - Sunday, December 10 - “O Come, Thou Wisdom”**

10 a.m. Sunday School  
11 a.m. “Walk To Bethlehem” A Unified Advent Pilgrimage with Drama and Music

## **Advent 3 - Sunday, December 17 - “O Come, Thou Key of David”**

9 a.m. Worship in the Chapel  
10 a.m. Sunday School  
11 a.m. Church Christmas Orchestra during Worship Service in the Sanctuary

## **Advent 4 - Sunday, December 24 - “O Come, Desire of Nations”**

10 a.m. Intergenerational Sunday School Class in the Activity Room with Hot Cocoa & Refreshments  
11 a.m. Advent Worship in the Sanctuary  
5:30 p.m. Family Friendly Worship in the Sanctuary with Communion and Candle Lighting  
10 p.m. Devotional Worship in the Chapel with Communion and Candle Lighting

## **Epiphany - Sunday, December 31 - “We Three Kings”**

9 a.m. Worship in the Chapel  
10 a.m. Sunday School  
11 a.m. Worship in the Sanctuary



# A MOMENT OF *Pastoral Care*

For 2023, we are reflecting on the Advent theme “O Come Emmanuel”, which carries the hope that was born in a manger, and echoes the future hope of Christ’s return one day. One can also find themselves in this season reflecting, “Jesus how can I find hope today?”

Advent and Christmas amplify positive and negative emotions as we reflect on the past year’s highs and lows. In helping to cope with loss, it is good to take time to reflect and acknowledge the losses. Losses can range from the simplest loss of a favorite item, loss of a relationship, physical loss, emotional loss, and to the toughest of all, the loss of a loved one. It is helpful to reflect upon such moments so they do not become all we hang on to. That is the purpose of this year’s December 20th Longest Night’s Eve Service.

The Stephen Ministry will be working with me on this simple and short service where one can find acknowledgment, peace, and begin the transition to move forward somehow by the grace of Christ. If you are feeling a loss that impacts you, please come and invite a friend. Together, we will find a way to begin the New Year in a healthy manner.

In closing, I wish that everyone will spiritually find Emmanuel (God with us) and connect with family and friends this Advent season. It is an honor to walk alongside you to share how His sacred story weaves into our stories.

God bless us everyone, Pastor Mitch (and Tiny Tim, too)

*Wednesday Night Adult Christian Education Opportunity*

## **Christmas with Matthew and Luke:**

Reflecting on Scripture with Tim Keller

Join us in the Activity Room for a three week Advent series on Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. We’ll watch a short video reflection from Tim Keller and together we’ll study and discuss some key Christmas scriptures from the Gospels.

December 6<sup>th</sup> – Fully God, Fully Human Matthew 1:18-23

December 13<sup>th</sup> – The Fruit of Submission Luke 1:26-38

### **FIRST PREZ MOVIE OUTING**

## **CHRISTMAS WITH THE CHOSEN: HOLY NIGHT**

**THURSDAY,  
DECEMBER 14<sup>TH</sup>  
AT 7:30 P.M.**



***A young mother  
labeled impure.  
A shepherd  
boy considered ‘unclean.’***

***Experience Jesus’ birth  
through their eyes.***

Meet at FPC at 6:30 p.m. to ride the bus to the theater or meet us at AMC Fayetteville 14, 4761 Lake Valley Drive for the 7:30 p.m. showing. Cost is \$10 per person.

Contact Bud Lafferty at [bud.lafferty@outlook.com](mailto:bud.lafferty@outlook.com) or (910) 728-2909 for more info or to sign up. Please register by Wednesday, December 13<sup>th</sup>.



# H<sup>3</sup>F

Home & Hearth  
Holiday Fellowship

## **Christmas Potluck Dinner**

**December 25<sup>th</sup> at 1 p.m.**

***Your family looks forward to having you  
join them on Christmas Day!!  
Feel free to bring a friend!***

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.



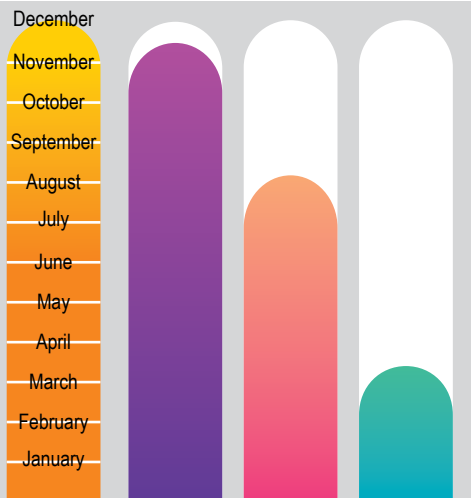
SCAN ME

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

Visit [bit.ly/H3FChristmas23](http://bit.ly/H3FChristmas23) or scan the QR code to sign up for the Christmas Potluck Dinner. For planning purposes, please sign up December 20<sup>th</sup>, at 3 p.m.

Contact Kellie Pfaff-Perkins for more info at [kperk16@gmail.com](mailto:kperk16@gmail.com).





## 2023 Giving Figures To Date: November

YTD Non-Pledge Gifts - \$325,838.32

YTD Pledge Gifts - \$786,396.92

YTD Total Gifts - \$1,112,235.24

2023 Total Pledged Amount - \$1,169,868.00

## Stewardship Strides Towards 2024

### Number of Pledging Members

Goal:  
175



Current:  
91

### Total Amount Pledged

Goal:  
\$1,250,000



Current:  
\$766,305

Ready to submit your  
2024 Stewardship Pledge?

Visit [www.firstprez.com/2024pledge](http://www.firstprez.com/2024pledge)  
Let's reach our goals together!

## All In Fellowship Wednesday Meals

Enjoy a meal with potluck sides,  
family & friends at 5:30 p.m., followed by an  
Adult Education Class with Dr. Garrett  
at 6:30 p.m. "Christmas with Matthew and Luke"  
or join the Celebration Choir Rehearsal.

The church will provide the main entree. You can bring  
a salad, side, dessert or bread that will serve 8 to 10  
people or pay \$8 per adult (age 13+) and \$3 per child (age  
5-12). The meal cap is \$20 per family. Childcare upon  
request by the prior Monday. Email [britany@firstprez.com](mailto:britany@firstprez.com)

**December 13<sup>th</sup> – Lasagna**

Join us January 10<sup>th</sup> when All In Fellowship Resumes!

## SAVE THE DATE

2024 Mexico Mission Trip  
June 1-8, 2024

Take part in this impactful experience, as we  
mix fun and fellowship with mission work that  
changes lives one family at a time.



For more information, contact  
Debra Chestnutt at  
(910) 818-9006 or  
[debra@chestnutt.com](mailto:debra@chestnutt.com)  
as soon as possible.  
**¡Viva el México!**

## Angel Tree



Angel Tree Gifts  
are due Monday,  
December 11th.

If you'd like to help sort  
or deliver gifts, please  
let Britany know.





Kingdom Kidz & Youth  
have had a fantastic year.



Thank you to all of the  
parents & volunteers!



We will see you all on  
January 7th when Kingdom  
Kidz & Youth resumes!



## SAVE THE DATE! Youth Ski Trip

February 16 - 19, 2024

Middle & High Schoolers

Ski, learn to ski, and enjoy fellowship!



If you are interested in being an adult volunteer,  
please notify Kimberhly Hopkins at  
[youth@firstprez.com](mailto:youth@firstprez.com) as soon as possible.



## Winter Coat Drive

for Walker Spivey Elementary School

**Sizes needed - 5T to XL.**

Donated coats can be dropped off in Eller Hall.

# s.a.l.t.

Seasoned Adults Learning Together

*Monthly Fellowship Breakfast & Excursions*

**January 16th, 2024**

Tour the Airborne & Special Operations Museum. Admission is free, donations are appreciated. The Pritzker Motion Simulator is available for \$10. We will have lunch at MiCasita. Meet at 11a.m. at ASOM 100 Bragg Blvd. Contact Nancy Billman for a reservation (910) 916-5994

**S.A.L.T.'s Christmas Luncheon  
is Saturday, December 9th at Luigi's Restaurant.**

**Don't miss the fun!**

**Call Ann Eller to make your reservation:**

**910-323-4684**



**to First Presbyterian Church's  
newest members!**



Patrick & Dorothy Armstrong



Jacquelyn Ringrose



Nina McLaughlin



Nichole Russ



Sue  
Cartee



Dalice  
Birk



Maria Fallon-Hale &  
Maria Teresa Fallon





# December BIRTHDAYS

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



## Memorials

*Doris Pearce*  
Ann Rowell

*Hilda Kirby*

Martha's Circle

Ann Eller

Patsy Markham

Margaret & Gerald Teele  
Debbie & Lamar Williams

Carol & Sammy Short

Una & Daniel Horstman

Robert Bleecker

K.W. Harris

Eliza & Fred Williams

*Margaret Coker*

Patsy Markham

*Sandra Herndon*

Kathleen & Karl Rouse

*Fancis, Vera  
& Kyra Bulla*

Cathy Clayton

## A LOOK AHEAD...

Dec. 9	• S.A.L.T. Luncheon at Luigi's
Dec. 10	• Walk to Bethlehem Service
	• Caroling at Segra Stadium
Dec. 11	• Finance Committee Meeting
	• David's Mighty Men
Dec. 12	• Martha Circle
	• Joint Meeting of Officers
Dec. 14	• Hannah Circle
Dec. 16	• Christmas Orchestra Rehearsal
Dec. 17	• Christmas Orchestra Service
	• Music Ministry Christmas Party
Dec. 18	• Personnel Committee
Dec. 20	• Longest Night's Eve Service
Dec. 24	• Christmas Eve Worship Services
Dec. 25	• H3 F Christmas Potluck
Jan 7	• Kingdom Kidz & Youth Resume
	• Installation of Officers
Jan 10	• All In Fellowship Meals Resume
	• Adult Christian Education
	Class Resumes
Jan 16	• S.A.L.T. Airborne Museum Trip
Feb 16-19	• Youth Ski Trip

# Service Saturday - November 18th

Our Missions Committee and volunteers from the congregation spent the day providing all the ingredients for a Thanksgiving meal for some of the families with children at Walker Spivey Elementary and client families from Connections of Cumberland County.

A special shout out has to go to Mountaire Farms and their "Meals for Thousands" program. Mountaire provided 60 frozen chickens, canned goods, stuffing mix, and dessert mix. Thanks to the generosity of some special friends here at First Presbyterian, we were able to provide additional canned goods, gravy mix, and bags of potatoes. To keep the chickens frozen, a freezer was loaned to us for the event by a member of our congregation. All of the ingredients were packaged into boxes, each intended to feed a family of four.

Mountaire Farms gave away 38,000 meal boxes to churches and nonprofits for distribution to those struggling in poverty. As we sat in the long line of trucks at their pickup site, every 100 feet or so we were greeted by a Mountaire employee. Each employee thanked us for helping Mountaire share their blessings. One employee in particular asked us to share that they would be praying for our church, and for the families that we served. The Mountaire creed is printed on the side of each box that we shared Saturday - "To be good stewards of all the assets that God has entrusted to us".

On Saturday afternoon we had volunteers stationed at our Fellowship Hall and in front of Walker Spivey Elementary. Joining our crew at Walker Spivey were Principal Rachael Robinson, Vice Principal. Latonica McDonald, and the school social worker, Ms. Rebecca Carthens. Our Fellowship Hall volunteers met with 7 of the 10 families that were referred to us by Connections of Cumberland County, and each family was provided one or two of the boxes depending on the family size. Our Walker Spivey volunteers met with families referred by the school social worker, providing one or two boxes to each of those families. Deliveries were made to 6 families that did not have access to transportation. The few remaining boxes were given out by the Missions Committee out before Thanksgiving.





# Thank you

to everyone who helped make the Family Advent Workshop such a huge success!



## "A SALUTE TO OUR VETERANS" CONCERT MOMENTS



Adam Farnham, Timothy Lloyd  
Ralph Huff & Don Perkins



Colton Barber



Dr. Larry Wells, Roger Holmes  
& Dr. Marcia Mervin



Celebration Choir & FSAGO

On behalf of Kingdom Youth, I would like to thank everyone who participated in FPC's first youth car wash! Whether you drove your youth there, brought your vehicle to be cleaned, or made a donation, its success would have been impossible without YOU. Every donation will go toward our mission trip this summer. Your support of our youth is invaluable and greatly appreciated!

~ Kimberhly

# Thank you!





## FIRST PRESS

### First Presbyterian Church

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PERIODICALS

FPC

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.

# Advent Devotional Recommendations



## Today

This is a daily devotional First Presbyterian Church makes available for the congregation. You can pick up your regular or large print copy in Eller Hall or at various entrances to the worship spaces or you can also go online to view devotions daily at <https://todaydevotional.com>



## Preparing the Way

This Family Devotional includes calendars, reflections, discussion and coloring pages.

Pick up a copy of this Family Devotional in Eller Hall or download it at [bit.ly/FamilyAdvent2023](http://bit.ly/FamilyAdvent2023)



## Keeping Watch

If you are looking to spend more time in prayer and meditation through the Advent season "Keeping Watch" may be a way to go. Keeping Watch is what we do when we anticipate goodness. It's what we do when we're on guard against evil. We focus our senses so we can be prepared for what is coming.

The book can be purchased through Amazon or download the digital version at [bit.ly/KeepWatch23](http://bit.ly/KeepWatch23)