



The Newsletter

First Presbyterian Church
Tullahoma, Tennessee

December 2025/January 2026
Volume 54, Issue 10

Plans for Advent, Christmas, and Beyond

Hanging of the Greens will occur during the worship service on **November 30, the First Sunday of Advent.**

Presbyterian Women's Christmas Luncheon is on **December 1 at noon** in Fellowship Hall. There will be a typical holiday meal with fun entertainment that has been planned just for you. (More details on page 9)

A Nativity Scene in the Front Courtyard - Beginning December 2, large figures depicting Jesus' birth; the shepherds and angels; and the magi's visit will help FPC's courtyard become a scene out of the nativity story. The figures will remain up through the Christmas season. A brochure about Advent, FPC, and the associated Bible passages will be available for those who are interested in learning more. This project could not have been completed without the very generous labor of Clay and Thelma Bearden. Thanks, Clay and Thelma!

Christmas Parade – Friday, December 5, at 7:00 p.m. – First Presbyterian Church will have a float in the Tullahoma Christmas parade.

Kingdom Kids Christmas Program – December 10 at 5:30 p.m. Get ready for a joyful evening as our children present "Hope for Everyone" (More details on page 7)

Bell Ringing for Salvation Army Kettle Drive – Saturday, December 13, at Walmart from 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. See Don Jones for details; sign-up to help on the list in the narthex.

Holiday Tasting and Alternative Giving on December 14 – The Mission Committee and Family Activities Committees invite the congregation to a time of food and fellowship following the worship service on December 14. Bring your favorite holiday dish to share – appetizers, soups, casseroles, salads, treats – you pick! After lunch there will be an opportunity for **Alternative Giving**. (More information in the Mission Committee Report on page 11)

Christmas Basket food donations - Please plan to donate to our Christmas Food "Basket" Event on **Saturday, December 20**, and volunteer to work with us to meet and assist those in need in our community (More details in the Mission Committee Report on page 11 and on the inserts in the Sunday bulletins).

Christmas Eve Service at 6:00 p.m. – The wonder of God's love remains steadfast during this challenging season. We will celebrate the birth of Jesus with a worship service, including communion, and candle lighting.

Coming in January! This January we will be starting a Bible study aimed at our "in the middle" adults. One of the things we learned from the Holy Cow! survey was that our Gen x and millennial age groups are looking for more of a connection. This study will meet once a month on the 3rd Sunday from 6:45 to 8:00 p.m. We will also be offering child care for this. (more information on p 8)

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First Presbyterian Church (PCUSA)
P. O. Box 847
Tullahoma, TN 37388

Vision statement: Worshipping God, growing together, serving others, welcoming all

Sunday school – 9:00 a.m.

Worship at 10:30 a.m.

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Preschool Email:
learningplace@lighttube.net

Preschool Website:
www.learningplacetullahoma.org

Church Staff

Interim Pastor: Jim Moran

Minister to Children: Katie Prasser

Minister to Youth: Bethany Sterling

Secretary: Martha Bradley

Choir Director: Robert Wright

Parish Associate for Pastoral Care:

Michael Bradley

Learning Place Preschool Director:

Bethany Sterling

Members of Session

Murray Brown

Charlotte Broyles

Alan Harris

Charles Harvey

Karla Haws

Bob Huffines

J. Ray Joellenbeck

Karla Keough

Shirley Levine

Helen McClure

Bethany Sterling, Clerk

Brad Sturgill



Pastor's Message

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year,
My First Presbyterian Tullahoma Friends!

December brings choices, many choices for our busy lives. These choices will require us to muster all the love and strength we have. If we choose to do everything required of us, we will need both patience and endurance to do what the month of December asks of us.

“Patient endurance” are two words that describe the early church and us as we wait for the coming of Jesus. Don’t forget that Advent is so much more than hanging the green at church and home to prepare for the celebration of the birth of Jesus. Advent is the season we celebrate today to remind us of our hope for the coming of Jesus now.

We tend to think of it solely as getting ready for Christmas another year, but every year Advent is the season of preparation for the return of Jesus to set us and the world right with God. Now, I understand everyone will be getting ready for Christmas by shopping for gifts, hosting and attending Christmas office and family parties, preparing gift boxes for people in need, decorating, worshipping, and travelling.

Patient endurance describes getting ready for both the coming of Jesus and the celebration of Christmas, the birth of Jesus marked by his natal star the wise men followed. May we practice patient endurance as we journey once again through the seasons of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany, a time of great joy and hope.

The New Year brings a new, fresh start for many. Our church Session will welcome the new class of 2028 elders, as we give thanks to the class of 2025, which includes Murray Brown, Alan Harris, J. Ray Joellenbeck, and Bethany Sterling, who have served our church in its three-year term so well with love, faithfulness, patience, and endurance. On January 11 the class of 2028, Murray Brown, Claudine Coile, Alan Harris, and Doug Thomas, will be ordained and/or installed to serve on the Session as new active shepherds of our church. They are bringing their gifts to help guide our church’s service of our Lord and the children of God in 2026. May we follow them as sheep of the fold of our Lord Jesus in so far as they follow the Good Shepherd.

There will be a special Session meeting at 10:00ish a.m. that morning in the parlor to form the commission for installation and ordination and to review the service. May Advent, Christmastide, and the New Year bring out the child in us all as we worship and serve God, welcome all in the name of our Lord Jesus, and keep our eyes open wide with hope for coming of Jesus this year.

May the gentle, loving spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, who became a human like us, be our guiding light this Advent/Christmas and into the New Year 2026.

Pastor Jim

Minute with Mike by Michael Bradley, Parish Associate for Pastoral Care

Christmas Stories

One of my personal traditions of this season is to write a story about Christmas. Among my favorites are tales of an occurrence which took place in the church at Clifton in 1864. The sanctuary of that church, where I preached for thirty years, was built in 1854 and was used as a hospital during the War Between The States.

A member there told me how his pro-Confederate grandmother had made soup for the Yankee soldiers who occupied the building in 1864.

Another favorite story is about looking for the perfect Christmas tree in 1952 and the neighborhood "Scrooge" who objected to my cutting a cedar bush on a piece of his uncultivated land.

This year the story is about Christmas shopping at the country store at the crossroads near my boyhood home.

True stories, but all illustrate the spirit of Christmas.

Here is a long line of Christmas story tellers who were more skilled and more famous than I am. Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol*; Clement Moore, *The Night Before Christmas*; O. Henry. *The Gift of the Magi*; Charles Schultz, *A Charlie Brown Christmas* to mention a few.

It is appropriate that we have so many tellers of Christmas stories. The Bible is full of them. In sweeping poetry Isaiah tells the story of how the coming of the Promised One was anticipated for centuries. No writer in all of

scripture, in my opinion, matches the poetry of Isaiah as he tells how the people who walk in great darkness will have a light shine on them and how the name of the Messiah shall "be called Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

There is no match for the narrative of Luke who tells of weary travelers, shadowy stables, shepherds looking at the stars, bands of angels, and heavenly music.

Nor is there any language which can match the Seventeenth Century English of the 1611 King James translation.

We cannot have a Christmas play without including the three kings/wise men whose desire to worship the "new born king" as an integral part our tradition.

Then there is John who writes the most elegant piece of prose found in the gospels—"and the Word became flesh and dwelled among us." John gives us the Christmas story in a nutshell.

We have these stories for a reason. People like to listen to stories, and we Christian people have an obligation to tell this story, to tell it in words and to tell it in actions.

That obligation is found in Matthew 28:19-20 and is sung in the words of one of my favorite carols: "Go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born."

All Aboard the Christmas Story

On a recent train trip, I couldn't help noticing how the conductors' "welcome" speeches were all different. Unlike air travel, where safety instructions sound the same no matter who's speaking, Amtrak conductors each had their own style. One stressed that kids must stay with parents. Another warned that messy restrooms would be locked. A third cautioned that stepping off during a short stop could mean getting left behind. Each conductor emphasized what had caused trouble before.

And in much the same way, the Gospel writers highlighted different details of Jesus' birth. Matthew, writing for Jewish readers, connects Jesus to Moses, Abraham and David. He tells about Joseph's role and the wise men seeking the "king of the Jews." Luke, writing for Gentiles and society's outsiders, focuses on Mary, a humble birth and shepherds — the first unlikely visitors. Both messages tell the same story, but with unique emphases shaped by the audience.

And that's a reminder for us, too: when we share our faith, we can tailor the message. Longtime friends, curious neighbors, kids and the hurting will all hear God's love in different ways.



Offering from the Office by Martha Bradley, Church Secretary

The word "Advent" comes from the Latin word *adventus*, meaning "arrival" or "coming". It is a time of waiting and preparing for the "coming" of Christ. Advent commemorates the birth of Jesus Christ and also looks forward to his second coming.

I am supposed to be waiting for Jesus. "Stand guard. Be on the lookout. Jesus is coming back." It reminds me of the humorous bumper sticker I've seen which says, "Jesus is coming. Look busy!" Oddly enough, that's pretty much the biblical mandate. We are to wait, not idly, but with eager anticipation, acting on behalf of the master until he returns. Matthew warns of weeping and gnashing of teeth for any of us who is unprepared.

During Advent we hear those end-of-time texts like Matthew 24:42 – "Keep awake therefore for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming." These messages seem to say, "Be ready or else. Repent!"

No wonder we would rather stick with the baby Jesus theme. A birth warms the heart and brings us hope. Besides, we all know how to welcome a baby. Why should we spoil the party by mentioning an apocalypse? The apocalypse we are most familiar with is the zombie variety.

But the biblical texts persist. They show up year after year. Few people seriously anticipate Jesus' return. We are too content, too comfortable, too caught up with decorating and shopping to yearn for the risen Christ to come back and take names. We wouldn't exactly be glad to see him. He'd disrupt our plans the perfect Christmas.

Perhaps that is precisely why we need those pesky scenes of God's surprise invasion. We long for life to be more than appearances because we know that appearances are slippery,

fleeting, and deceiving. The perfect tree, the beautifully wrapped presents, the cards representing the goat purchased for some far away impoverished family — none of them tells the whole story because everyone's story has apocalyptic seasons.

"Keep watch!" the Gospel writers warn. The Son of Man comes unannounced, as sudden and unexpected as the flood in Noah's day. So, stay awake!

Thus says the Lord, just as children are getting out of school for Christmas break and the marketing machine of consumerism continues in high gear. People in the pews grow sick of unknown, end-of-times-themed Advent hymns. They want choirs of angels and Mary in blue and Linus-like shepherds and the pageant that conflates all the Gospels and the timeline, too. The Wise Men don't show up until weeks later, but, hey, the kids like the gold-trimmed costumes and Burger King crowns and everyone needs to have a part. Come on, baby Jesus! Silent Night. Holy Night. All is calm. All is bright.

No fear or foreboding here. Cuteness rules, what with the donkey and the sheep hitting each other with their tails and the angels with their halos askew. Right then, what if the Risen Christ decided to swoop down on a cloud of great glory? If Jesus made his second earthly appearance in the middle of the children's Christmas pageant, we might just want to usher him out! We could then be proud that we had handled what could have been a chaotic situation in a "decently and in order" fashion. The pageant could continue. We could all sing "Away in a Manger" and go home, put the kids to bed and play Santa.

So, how am I to wait eagerly, during Advent, and every single day, for the returning, victorious, risen

Christ? None of us really wants to hear this turn-the-world- upside-down message, even if we know all is not as it seems and certainly all is not as it should be. Perhaps we have to be willing to speak a truth no one wants spoken but everyone is relieved to hear because when proclaimed aloud the lies lose some of their power. All is not what it seems and much of what we spend our time and energy on cultivating and maintaining is, in the end, at the end, worthless.

The sweater didn't fit. The expensive gift didn't heal the relationship. Our children grew bored with the new toy by lunchtime. The goat sent round the world didn't alleviate poverty even if it absolved our guilty conscience to send it.

We don't have to pretend anymore. In that is the beginning of freedom. Every life has its apocalyptic seasons. But, unlike the zombie invasion, the risen Christ, like the baby Jesus, comes to bring abundant life, not a living death. Therefore, we can speak the truth and not just look busy, but be busy, devoting ourselves to loving imperfect people, including ourselves, and working for justice no matter how slim justice's chances appear, treasuring in our hearts all the beauty that persists despite and within undeniable suffering.

I am waiting for the risen Christ to return, victorious and filled with righteous indignation. I don't presume he will tell me, "Well done good and faithful servant." I am pretty sure he will be disappointed. There are days and times and actions and words I'd like to strike from my record. But because the risen Lord is also the baby Jesus who grows up and declares that he came for sinners, I think, instead, I will be honest — and wait with my head held high, for redemption to draw near.

The following was provided to FPC by our Holy Cow! Consultant. The document was edited to fit in the newsletter; however, editing did not affect the overall content.

Congregation Assessment Tool (CAT) Executive Summary, Fall 2025

Overview

We had 84 surveys completed, which represented 89% of our average Sunday attendance for the previous year. We more than surpassed the necessary number of responses and are confident that the results reflect our entire congregation.

Our responses are compared to the responses of the last 2,800 congregations (nationally) that have participated in the CAT over the last 36 months. Although every congregation is unique, congregations hold much in common. This information provides a benchmark helping us understand what is typical and what is exceptional about our congregation.

The CAT is designed to measure the experiences, perceptions and aspirations of our congregation through the measures of congregational climate, culture and performance milestones. It is these measures of which this report provides an overview.

Congregational Climate

Research tells us that two characteristics are necessary to create a vital congregation – high levels of member satisfaction and energy. For us, approximately 53% of responders are clearly satisfied with how things are here. Approximately 42% feel that there is a compelling sense of purpose or energy and members are not just going through the motions in their ministry/activity. Notably, in the measures of satisfaction and energy almost one-half of responders are 'on the fence.' This indicates that members may be waiting to see what is going to happen next before affirmatively stating whether they are clearly satisfied or energized. Also, this may represent anxiety or ambiguity in our congregational system, often typical of congregations in clergy transition. Compared to other congregations nationally, our member satisfaction and energy are average.

Overall, these measures indicate that we are a *Transitional/Transformational* climate. Fully transformational climates have discovered ways to be vibrant and healthy in spite of national or local trends. The more tangible expressions include an external focus, a distinctive mission, and an influx of new people; more intangible expressions describe a corporate spiritual zest, inspired worship, healthy/meaningful relationships, purposeful activity in the world and an atmosphere of well-being. Transitional indicates that while we may have several areas of strength related to being transformational, we also have areas of challenge to address. We want our church to grow, to become increasingly transformative, but without making the required change. If we are to attain our goals for the future, we must engage in ongoing conversation around becoming more adaptive/innovative to the needs of those we want to reach and the changing needs of our members.

The survey showed that we are most satisfied when:

1. Our former Pastor made things happen
2. Those who serve as leaders in our church are representative of the membership
3. The whole spirit in our congregation makes people want to get involved
4. The worship services are exceptional in quality and spiritual content
5. Our former Pastor helped us accomplish our mission by bringing out the best in everyone

We are a pastor-centric (clergy-focused) congregation. In other words, in a clergy-focused church where members feel positive about the pastor, almost anything will work, from the standpoint of members feeling positive and energized about the church. And vice versa. This has implications for our pastor search. The next best fit for our congregation is a pastor who is comfortable being center-stage and carrying the responsibility for the life of the congregation.

Congregational Culture

We are theologically conservative with a small portion of our congregation being more theologically progressive. In correlating Theological perspective and Flexibility, we have learned that we are a “Hearth and Home” culture. By age group, all experience a Hearth and Home culture with younger members experiencing more “settledness” than older members. Aspects of this culture include: valuing clearly defined faith, structure and stability. Hearth and Home cultures are the guardians of time-honored traditions; open to differences in faith journeys, yet appreciate the unchangeable nature of the message they proclaim. Yet, when not centered on their mission, hearth and home cultures retreat into cycles of well-intentioned yet unfruitful activity; they work harder at the same things and become frustrated that actions do not create a difference thus manifesting into a lack of tolerance of differences. Focus becomes internal; staying the same. Attempts at change can be the cause for unhealthy conflict. Hearth and Home cultures need strategic focus on slowly incorporating new ideas to current programming and ministries; basing ministries on our Biblical call to action; and systematically addressing the need for healthy conflict skills. Questions we might consider include “At what point does a commitment to our particular tradition become a barrier to new people who cannot understand it?”

Critical Success Factor

Our results indicate two areas require attention to improve members’ level of satisfaction:

1. Improving the excellence of our worship experience.
2. Providing more opportunities for people to serve in ministry.

Future Priorities/Aspirations

Overall as our members look to our future, four major priorities emerged indicating where additional energy should be placed to achieve the future vision for our congregation. They are:

1. Make necessary changes to attract families and young people.
2. Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people.
3. Change or improve the music of the church to deepen our worship experience.
4. Provide more opportunities for Christian education and spiritual formation.

Notably, the majority of these top priorities are internally focused. It appears we have some internal work to do before we expand our interests/ministries outward.

In conclusion, in undertaking the CAT at this time of transition, we commit to what is necessary to become a stronger and more vibrant congregation for the future. In particular, that we better align our culture with our aspirations for the future. There are a number of strengths to celebrate and lean into, and of course, more work to do together to achieve our goals for the future.

Around and About FPC

Pastor Nominating Committee Elected

The congregation elected a Pastor Nominating Committee on Sunday, November 16. These individuals were elected: **Tim Behrendorff, Tommy Dimon, Kristi Fruechtl, Keith Kushman, and Brad Sturgill.**

Please be in prayer for them as they work to find the individual whom God is calling to serve as pastor at FPC, Tullahoma.

Christmas JOY Offering is received in December

When Jesus was born among us, he came as a helpless baby destined to bring joy, peace, and salvation to his people. This child, God's Word made flesh – fully human and fully God – became one of us. One with us. One among us. In all our vulnerabilities, struggles and triumphs, Jesus became one of us – leading us, knowing us, connecting us to himself and to each other, and offering us his gift of eternal life. *The perfect gift.*

Through the Christmas Joy Offering, we reflect God's perfect gift to us, with generous support of church leaders among us — past, present and future — who have pointed us to God. We honor and celebrate leaders like retired pastors, church workers and their families who have faithfully guided and led us but who now find themselves in critical financial need.

We honor and celebrate emerging leaders like students in schools and colleges equipping communities of color, who develop leadership skills as they pursue their education and prepare to bring their gifts in service to the world God loves so much.

Jesus' example as a child born to be among us and lead us to eternal

life provides a pattern for us to follow as we celebrate those who have led us in the past and will lead us into the future. Through the Christmas Joy Offering, we come together to support past, present and future leaders, embodying God's perfect gift to us, Jesus Christ.

We are receiving the Christmas Joy Offering throughout December. Special offering envelopes are available on the table at the back of the sanctuary or you can give online or by check, designating it for "JOY offering."

Kingdom Kids Christmas Program on December 10

You're Invited to the Kingdom Kids Christmas Program on December 10 at 5:30 p.m.

Get ready for a joyful evening as our children present "Hope for Everyone," a delightful poem written in 2025 by Shelly Spiers. This charming, kid-friendly retelling of the birth of Jesus is filled with wonder, laughter, and a cheerful refrain that all the children will recite together—reminding us again and again that because of Jesus, there is hope for us all!

To make the night even more special, we've woven several songs throughout the program. You'll hear beloved Christmas hymns along with some fun new pieces the kids can't wait to share. One of their absolute favorites this year has been "Oh, What a Special Night!" —and they're sure to bring smiles to everyone watching!

We hope you and your family can join us for this magical night of Christmas cheer!

Come celebrate with us as the children sing, tell the Christmas story, and share the joy and love of Jesus with our whole community.

A light reception will follow the program.

Advent Devotional Booklets

Advent devotionals are available in the back of the sanctuary. This year's devotionals, *A Grand Miracle*, are inspired by C.S. Lewis. Each day, Lewis' words point to the saving, life-changing aspects of Christ's birth, which he calls "a Grand Miracle." Lewis scholar Joel Heck provides reflections on the concepts of the incarnation, Immanuel (God with Us), the Christ-figure of Narnia (from *The Lion, Witch and the Wardrobe*), and Jesus' mission to make us his new creation.

Salon: A Rave for the Soul

The Salon will be held on **Wednesday, December 3** and **Wednesday, January 6**. Please prayerfully consider attending one or both of these services, as adult/youth interaction is vitally important. The service is approximately 30 minutes and includes communion.

Learning Place Preschool

The preschool Christmas program will be Thursday, December 18 at 11:00. Church members are always welcome to attend; however, it is also live-streamed.

Registration for the 2026-2027 school year will begin at the end of January. If you know someone with a child who is between the ages of one and five, please share the word about the Learning Place Preschool.

Mission Sunday

Mission Sunday is the Sunday each month during which we bring items for the Good Sam Ministry. Please bring some of the following items with you to worship on **December 14**. There is a recurring list and special requests for particular months. *See next page*

Good Sam Requests for December
Regular food request: canned fruits, canned vegetables, dry spaghetti, pasta sauce, soup, soda crackers, cereal, peanut butter, canned tuna, and canned chicken.

Special food needs: Mac and Cheese, Creamy soups (chicken, tomato, mushroom)

Dignity request: deodorant

Children's Ministry

As 2025 comes to an end, I can't help but think about all that has transpired this past year. We, as a church, had several big changes from replacing our long-time pianist to building upgrades, to starting the search for a new pastor. Change is never easy, yet sometimes it is what is best for growth.

The children's program has also had several changes this year to navigate. For anyone who has had or worked with children, you know how difficult change can be for children. This year the children's program made some adjustments in our Children's Church program, the roles our older elementary students help with in the church service, and what we do during our Children's Church time. The changes though have allowed for the kids to have a better understanding of the worship service, given an active role to some of our older kids, and built relationships with the adults who are guiding them in these roles.

One other big change for us this year was losing Pastor Stephen. We miss Stephen for lots of reasons, but the children's music department has definitely felt the loss of his assistance! As many of you know, music is not my gift. It is actually the point of most family jokes, as I am the only one without musical abilities in the family.

There are frequent reminders for me to not sing. This does make leading a children's choir a unique, although at times humorous

struggle. Thankfully, the children have practiced the fruits of the spirit and had tremendous patience and kindness with me during this rough transition.

We are also very grateful that Christine Wright can take a bucket full of tunes and sort out what songs I accidentally intertwined. I assure you, the struggle is real.

Yet, some of the changes we have had this year have been good. We did lose a few friends this year to moves, but we also gained several new friends. We have had several families that have requested we let them know when we have kids' events, with genuine interest in learning more about the church itself. Change can be hard, but it can also be great.

Mark your calendars:

Dec. 5 – Christmas Parade starts at 7 p.m. The float will be in place by 6 p.m. I will get the float number the week of the parade and will know where we are located by Friday around lunch time. Once I know I will let everyone else know.

Dec. 7 – 9:00 a.m. monthly Sunday School and Kids Play Practice time to be determined.

Dec. 10 – Kids Christmas Program with light reception to follow. Kids arrive by 4:00 p.m. The program starts at 5:30 p.m. The kids will run through the program and eat dinner before the program starts.

Dec. 14 – Kids sing in church; arrive by 9:30 a.m.; 3rd through 5th graders will stay in the sanctuary after singing and younger kids will go to Children's Church. All are invited to attend the Holiday Tasting after the church service.

Dec. 17 – Kingdom Kids Christmas party - details will be available during Kingdom Kids meeting.

Dec. 24 – No Kingdom Kids (Christmas Eve Service)

Dec. 31 – No Kingdom Kids (New Year's Eve)

Jan. 4 – No Monthly Sunday School
Jan. 7 – Kingdom Kids starts again 5:00 to 6:30 P.M.

Katie Prasser
Children's Minister

Coming in January!!!

This January we will be starting a Bible study aimed at our "in the middle" adults. One of the things we learned from the Holy Cow! survey was that our Gen X and millennial age groups are looking for more of a connection. This is a small group in our church, but an important one. We want to meet this need. This Bible study has been in the works for a while, and with so many changes in the church over the last few months, it was put on the back burner. But a new year is a great time to start a new group.

This study will meet once a month on the 3rd Sunday from 6:45 to 8:00 p.m. We wanted to try to start off slow, not compete with kids schedules, and not feel like just one more thing on the calendar. We also wanted to make sure it was at a time when we knew work schedules wouldn't conflict for most people.

We will also be offering child care for this. We will be requesting that those needing child care let us know by the second Sunday of each month. We will be sending flyers to the preschool families, Kingdom Kids/youth families and will also have a bulletin insert with information on the book we will be starting and signing up for the group and childcare.

We are excited to be able to start on this new journey and hope that we can build some great relationships.

Here's what's happening!

Presbyterian Women

Presbyterian Women's annual Christmas luncheon for all women of the church is coming up fast. Join us in the Fellowship Hall, Monday, December 1, at 12:00. There will be a typical holiday meal with fun entertainment that has been planned just for you. Come and share this time of joy and fellowship with your friends. For planning purposes, please make reservations by November 26 with Karla Haws, 931.580.1511. Cost is \$10.00.

Wednesday, January 14, at 10:00 a.m. Women's Circle will meet in the Fellowship Hall. Our Horizon Bible study *Finding Resilience, Joy and Our Identity in Jesus Christ* by Rhashell D. Hunter, will focus on "Finding Our Joy: The Prodigal Child, the Eldest Child and the Devoted Parent." Scripture: Luke 15:11-32. Main Idea: God offers grace and love, not because of what we do, but because of who we are – beloved children of God. After our lesson we share a light meal for \$5.00 and fellowship time.

Men's Breakfast

The next Men's Breakfast will be December 14. Gathering time is 8:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. Breakfast is provided. All men are welcome.

**DEADLINE FOR
NEWSLETTER ARTICLES**

The deadline for the February issue of *The Newsletter* is noon on **Tuesday, January 20**.



Parish Joys/Concerns

Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus. Philippians 2:4-5

Please keep the following in your prayers:

Becky Behrendorff
Elmo Birkhead
Robin Gorman
Mary Harmon
Amy Hinds
Sandy McKinney
Vanessa McKinney
Avery Scheider, a former Learning Place student
Drew Sterling
Don Stuck, Greg Sterling's father

Please remember in your prayers the following people who are unable to attend worship regularly:

Jean Carter (home)
Ted and Beverly Elsasser (home)
Patra Escue (home)
Dot Gilfillan (home)
Sue Harvey (home)
Hilde Joellenbeck (home)

Sympathy –

We express our Christian love and sympathy to the family and friends of Connie Flath, who entered the church triumphant on November 7, 2025. The visitation and service were held on November 15.



Birthdays

December

5 - Audrey Yates
15 - Charlotte Broyles
Joyce Hiebert
David Cox
16 - Mickey Hall
17 - Natalie Keough
20 - Amy Hinds
24 - Hilde Joellenbeck
27 - David Hiebert
Suzy Coe
29 - Chris Coe
Lenyx Fletcher

January

1 - Anna Wood
Joyce Dohrmann
5 - Debbie Brown
8 - John Hawk
17 - Elaine Huffines
Jim Watson
Ron Parker
21 - Sydney Hoehl
23 - Andie Hall
24 - Luke Yates
28 - Arayla Smith
30 - Stephen Yates
31 - Mary Jane Christopher

If you have a birthday in December or January and your name is not on the list, please call the church office and let us know. We would like to add your name to the birthday calendar.



Session Committee Reports

Finance and Personnel Committee – Alan Harris

Our Finance and Personnel Committee couldn't meet in November due to a few members being unavailable. Our agenda remains focused on two issues: (1) maintaining a contingency fund to readily handle un-forecasted expenses such as HVAC repair, appliance replacement, and repairs to our entry doors. Recently, we added security equipment (cameras, new locks/keys) to our list of un-forecasted expenses. (2) The possibility of hiring a financial secretary to manage payroll and assist with other bookkeeping/accounting tasks.

Ministry Works, now called Brotherhood Works, offers a variety of services tailored to church operations. Among the

services offered is payroll management, property and liability insurance. I will continue to monitor our needs and take appropriate action as directed by the Session.

As I mentioned last month, Clark Lawrence is committed to providing our committee with a monthly summary of all accounts activity so we can make an informed decision about a contingency account and provide better strategic planning.

We have, for many months, asked for a couple of folks in our congregation who have good bookkeeping skills (QuickBooks gurus) who can learn the ropes from Clark and Don. Please consider serving in this capacity,

using your time and special talent as Don and Clark have, and other members have before them.

Finally, we need a person to step forward and assume the duties of Ted Elsasser, who is recovering at home from an accident sustained a couple of months ago. Ted, along with two others, manages our investment portfolio and facilitates transfers to our General Fund to handle un-forecasted expenses mentioned above.

From our committee to you, we wish you a safe and happy holiday.

Alan Harris

Property Committee – Bob Huffines, chair

Upon evaluating the Annex for window replacement, we discovered that the playground shed would interfere with the installation process. The shed was moved over which required moving gravel, rebuilding part of the fence and gate, and installing new side panels. We also discovered that the shed roof had numerous leaks. The window installation was complete on 10/28. The roof (shingles decking) repair was completed by 11/11. The new Annex HVAC unit is working well, Martha appreciates coming into a "warm" office in the morning. Our new Custodian,

Crystal Estes, appears to be working out well.

We continue to put together a Security Plan for our church. The Property Committee (Ron and Betty Gault, Bob Huffines, Jim Johnson and Jim Watson) along with the assistance of Murray Brown, Alan Harris and Bethany Sterling, constructed a plan we feel adequate for our needs. The plan will be presented to Session for approval. Upon approval, the plan will be published in our Newsletter.

Ron Gault is working on the installation of an electrical outlet to supply power for our upcoming

manger scene spotlighting. Stroop's performed fall maintenance on our HVAC units, discovering issues with two units, to be addressed. Alan continues to change HVAC unit filters, thanks Alan. Last but not least, our outside spigots were winterized by placing insulated covers on 6 units.

We appreciate your input for improvements to our property. Do not hesitate to bring your suggestions to one of our committee members.

Respectfully,
Bob Huffines, Chairman
931 581-4959

Mission Committee – J. Ray Joellenbeck and Brad Sturgill

Holiday Tasting

The Mission Committee and Family Activities Committee are teaming up to host the annual **Holiday Tasting on December 14**. Join your church family immediately after church in the Williams Family Center for lunch and fellowship. Everyone is invited to prepare and share a

favorite holiday dish. Both sweet and savory are welcome, so plan on bringing your favorite casserole, Christmas cookie, special family dessert, wintertime soup, etc. Please bring food items cooked and plated. Festive holiday drinks will be provided.

The Mission Committee invites you to browse and support

the **Alternative Giving opportunities** that will be displayed. Alternative giving certificates will be provided. You can honor a family member or friend with a gift and help a local charitable organization at the same time by providing a donation in their honor.

2025 Christmas Basket Event

The Mission Committee will be holding our annual Christmas “Basket” Shopping Event on Saturday, December 20. We’ll be inviting individuals from our community to come to our church to “shop” for the food they want and will use. Last year provided lots of information about the types of items that people like and prefer, so pay close attention to this year’s updated list of basket items below. We rely on the congregation to purchase most of the food, and we will also need volunteers on the day of the event to meet folks at the door, assist them in gathering food items, monitor tables of food items, hand out Christmas Hams, and take bags to vehicles.

The Mission Committee requests that food donations be brought to the Williams Family Center during the following times:

Sunday, December 14th: after the Holiday Tasting (2:00pm-6:00pm)

Monday, December 15th: 12:00pm-8:00pm

Tuesday, December 16th: 12:00pm-6:00pm

Place items in reusable grocery bags or boxes.

Please make sure that your donated food items are not expired. Thank you!

Items for Basket

2 cans of corn	1 bottle of cooking oil
2 cans of green beans	1 bag or box of instant potatoes
1 can of baked beans	2-pound box of Bisquick or cornmeal
2 cans of soup	1 box of Easy Mac and Cheese (no milk or butter required)
1 can peaches or pineapples	chocolate or hard candy
1 pack of applesauce cups	cookies, baked goods
1 jar of creamy peanut butter	1 box of Club crackers
1 can of yams	a special treat of your choice
1 box of instant rice	1 bottle of juice (cranberry, apple, grape, etc.)
1 box or packet of stuffing mix	other items appropriate for a festive dinner

Add toiletries such as soap, shampoo, toothpaste, Kleenex, toilet tissue etc. if you wish.

Also, blankets went fast at the “extras” table last year.

Hams and fruit for the 2025 baskets are provided from mission funds.

Laundry detergent is also provided from mission funds with the help of Presbyterian Women.

Important and/or Useful Information based on last year’s data:

- Many shoppers were looking for healthy options, so consider purchasing some low sodium or low sugar items.
- Chicken Noodle Soup is not popular due to its prevalence at Good Sam throughout the year. Chunky soup preferred.
- Individual bags of instant potatoes were preferred over boxed, and flavored potatoes were preferred over plain.
- Motts applesauce cups were preferred.
- Canola oil preferred over vegetable oil
- Oreo cookies were popular. Chocolate was preferred over hard candy.
- Dove Sensitive Skin was the most popular soap last year.

See the bulletin inserts to sign up for basket donations and/or volunteer on the day of the event.

Family Activities and Outreach Committee – Shirley Levine and Helen McClure

Family Activity Committee will meet Monday, December 8, at 1:00 p.m. in the parlor. We will discuss our partnership with the Mission Committee for the December 14 Holiday Tasting Event after the regular worship service. We will need all hands on deck for assistance with set up and clean up afterward.

Family Activity Committee meeting in January - To be announced.

Men's Breakfast will be on December 14 at 8:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall and on January 11 at 8:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. All men of the church are invited and encouraged to attend.

The November 30 Fellowship Time following Hanging of the Greens service will be hosted by Debbie Brown, Claudine Coile, Helen McClure, Sherry Ray, and Jo Ward in Fellowship Hall.

Sign-up sheet for hosting Fellowship Time is on the podium

in the narthex. We encourage members to participate. Please consider partnering with other members to furnish light items for this get-together time. It can be anything you wish; simple is appreciated. The committee will provide drinks, plates, napkins, utensils. This is a special time to visit and mingle with people we don't see during the week.

We sincerely thank all who have provided for fellowship time and hope they will do so again.