FIR S Church Offices: (704) 982-2722

The Weekly Bulletin FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Albemarle, North Carolina

Website: www.fpcalbemarle.org

December 12, 2021 Third Sunday of Advent

GATHERING BEFORE GOD

MORNING MEDITATION

She struck the angel Gabriel as hardly old enough to have a child at all, let alone this child, but he'd been entrusted with a message to give her and he gave it. He told her what the child was to be named, and who he was to be, and something about the mystery that was to come upon her. 'You mustn't be afraid, Mary,' he said. And, as he said it, he only hoped she wouldn't notice that beneath the great, golden wings, he himself was trembling with fear to think that the whole future of creation hung now on the answer of a girl.

~Frederick Buechner

PRELUDE

In the Bleak Midwinter

David Lasky

(Light three candles.)

Nathaniel Eudy

PEALING OF THE CHIMES

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

We light the third candle as a sign of the coming light of Christ. As the Lord has promised, in days to come, the wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom;

Like crocus, it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing.

CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH

Laura McLeod

Please sign and pass the Register of Friendship during this time.

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Give thanks to the Lord and call upon the holy name of the most high God.

The Lord is our strength and our salvation.

Proclaim the mercy of the One who comes as one of us.

The Lord is our strength and our salvation.

Trust and do not be afraid.

The Lord is our strength and our salvation.

With joy, you will draw water from the wells of peace.

The Lord is our strength and our salvation. Hallelujah! Amen.

*PRAYER OF THE DAY

Merciful God, you come into our midst, longing for communion with us, becoming one of us. Break our resistance to life with you, show us the path toward just relations and bring us into your peace; in Jesus' name. Amen.

*HYMN 82

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

Hyfrydol

Isaiah 12

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Silence

The Lord is near.

In your presence, Holy God, we confess we need repentance. We have broken your commands against idolatry. We do not live in peace with your creation or your people. We have not trusted your word, and we are afraid. Forgive us, restore us, and turn our shame into praise, for the One who proclaims the good news and for the sake of all the world. Amen.

*ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Friends, believe the good news of the gospel.

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

*RESPONSE TO ASSURANCE

hymnal 132, stanza 3

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

In dulci jubilo

(The response will be sung by choir and congregation.)

Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice; Now ye need not fear the grave: Jesus Christ was born to save! Calls you one and calls you all to gain the everlasting hall. Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

FAITH SHARING WITH CHILDREN

Kristie Bryson

Children will be invited to come forward. At the conclusion of the Faith Sharing with Children, parents may take preschool children to the nursery.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

God of mercy, you promised never to break covenant with us. Amid the changing words of our generation, speak your eternal word that does not change. Then, may we respond to your gracious promises with faithful and obedient lives; through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

Luke 2:26-35

Pew Bible, page 55

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

CHRISTMAS JOY PROGRAM

O Come, Let Us Adore Him

Youth Club Choir

(see bulletin insert)

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

The congregation is encouraged to participate in the prayer with the children.

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

RECEIVING OF THE OFFERING

Offertory Come Ye Shepherds, Ye Children of Earth Doxology

Wilbur Held

What Child is This

hymnal 145, stanza 3

(The response will be sung by choir and congregation.)

Greensleeves

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh; come one and all, to own him.

The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone him.

Raise, raise the song on high. The virgin sings her lullaby.

Joy, joy; for Christ is born, the babe, the Son of Mary.

*Prayer of Dedication

Gracious God, in gratitude for all that you have given us, we bring our tithes, offerings, and labor to help feed a world hungry for healing and hope; for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

*HYMN 79

Light Dawns on a Weary World

Temple of Peace

*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

*CHORAL RESPONSE

A Christmas Blessing

Philip W.J. Stopford

And the blessing of God the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you and remain with you always.

Amen.

*POSTLUDE

Prepare the Way, O Zion

Traditional Swedish Melody

Thank you to the Chancel Choir, Frank Poolos, Stan Scheer, the Youth Club Children and Leaders, Kristie Bryson, and Laura McLeod for their leadership in worship today.

The acolyte today is Nathaniel Eudy.

Ushers for December: Jim Hesley (captain), Al Andrew, Emily Andrew, Jim Ivey, and Lee Snuggs

Outside Ushers for December 12: Jim Marshall; Chris Whitley

There is no Children's Church today. School-age children are encouraged to remain in worship.

Elder Greeters: Debbie Bennett; Jim Sawyer **Sound:** Evan Sanges; Ken Knight **Film:** Andy McLeod

Kids Care Crew: Melissa Eudy; Cidney Eudy No Children's Church **Nursery:** Kate White

We ask that you keep these people in your prayers: Terry Morgan, Sandy Saunders, Lindsey Clark (wife of Mark Clark, friend of Debbie Hahn; metastic breast cancer), Robin Howell, Don Abernathy (multiple myeloma), Jean Rabe, Anita Gower, Gloria Bryson, Nancy Jolly (Trinity Place), Claude Harwood, Jane Scheer, Don Joines, Jane Pickler. See newsletter for complete list.



NAME TAG ALERT!

Upon entering the sanctuary, we are requesting that everyone make a name tag. Stick-on name tags are available at both entrances to the sanctuary. Thank you!

^{*}All that are able may stand.

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The Christmas Joy Offering will be received today. By giving to the Christmas Joy Offering, you provide assistance to current and retired church workers in time of need and help develop future leaders at Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges.

Today (Sunday, December 12) is the last Sunday to purchase Alternative Christmas Gifts. For each purchase, you will receive one of several holiday-themed acknowledgement cards. The charities are: John P. Murray Community Care Clinic, Mwandi Milk Formula, OASIS, and Will's Place.



Angel Tree 2021



Advent Congregational Devotions...Night Watch

Published by *Presbyterian Outlook* and written by editor, Teri McDowell Ott Advent devotionals are emailed each week. Devotionals include a reflection, daily Scripture readings, suggestions for living out the Bible and a short prayer for each day. **Printed copies are available at both entrances to the church for visitors or upon request (contact Pam Knighten; 704-982-2722 or pknighten@fpcalbemarle.org).**

!!! Hurray For Breakfast Bunch for K-5th Graders !!!

Who can come? K, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th & 5th graders

What?

Gathering as friends to enjoy breakfast!

When and Where? Sunday, December 12 at 9:00 a.m. in the Gym

Why?

To pray together & build strong community of faith.

Please let Rebekah Ayscue (rebekah.ayscue@gmail.com) or Katherine Jolly (<u>kat6420@gmail.com</u>) know if you are able to join us. *Muffins, yogurt and fruit provided.



Check Out the Christmas Kitchen Today For Your Christmas Goodies and to Support the Youth Sunday, December 12 Before & After Worship

On December 12, Christmas Kitchen will fill the Pit Stop before and after worship. There you'll find everything you need for your holiday season or just for general freezer filing.

Plan to shop this delicious sale on December 12. For more information, contact Rebekah Ayscue (704-985-2944) or Jane Boone (704-604-3836).

POINSETTIAS

SANCTUARY POINSETTIAS

If you would like to contribute to the purchase of 8 ten-inch poinsettias as a Christmas memorial/honorarium, please make a check for \$10.00 payable to First Presbyterian Church and designate for poinsettias. Please return the check along with the form below to the church office by Monday, December 13. A complete list will appear in the bulletin on Sunday, December 19. Following the

Christmas Eve service on December 24, all 8 poinsettias will be delivered to the hospital and local nursing homes.

SANCTUARY POINSETTIAS & HOLIDAY GREENERY

Please print below the information exactly as it is to appear in the bulletin. In memory of:

Given by:

In honor of: _____

Given by: _____



COMMUNITY ADVENT WORSHIP AT CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH ON WEDNESDAYS, DECEMBER 15 & 22 AT NOON

Join in worship with others from the downtown churches during Advent at Christ Episcopal Church (428 Pee Dee Avenue). We will gather there on the following Wednesdays at noon in Advent: December 8, 15, and 22. No lunch will be served. On Wednesday, December 15, Rev. Murdoch Smith of First Lutheran Church will be preaching. Rev. George will be preaching on Wednesday, December 22. Advent Worship will be streamed on the YouTube channel for Christ Episcopal Church.



THIRD WEDNESDAY DRIVE-THRU MEAL WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15 FROM 5:00 P.M.- 6:00 P.M. RSVP BY 2:00 P.M. ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 13 PICK-UP OR DELIVERY OF THE MEAL

Third Wednesday Drive-Thru Meal Pick-up or Delivery is on Wednesday, December 15! If you would like a Third Wednesday meal, please RSVP by Monday, December 13 at 2:00 p.m., and we will have your meal ready for pick-up or delivery on Wednesday, December 15 between 5:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m. For your safety, the kitchen staff will wear masks and gloves while preparing your plates.

Menu:

Chicken and Wild Rice, Green Beans, Copper Pennies (Marinated Carrots) and Apple Crumb Suggested Donation: \$5 per person....Maximum of \$15 per family.

Please come with correct change or a check written to First Presbyterian Church.

All we need you to do is:

call Anne Montgomery at 704-796 5841 or email Anne at johnandannemontgomery@yahoo.com and let her know how many plates you need and

if it will be a pickup or delivery (include address and any special instructions).

AT FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH (230 SOUTH 2ND ST, ALBEMARLE) SATURDAY, DECEMBER 25 FROM 11:00 A.M.-2:00 P.M. OR UNTIL PLATES RUN OUT

The Annual Community Christmas Dinner is still ON for this year. It will again be a DRIVE-THRU on Christmas Day (Saturday, December 25). The food will be prepared and packaged by Tiffany's. All of the desserts are being provided by the Albemarle Sweet Shop, and all of the volunteers will be from First Lutheran. The only things we are being asked to provide are 100 Christmas Cards (Youth Club is coloring the cards!) and the monetary donation to help cover the cost of the meals (\$700.00) from First Presbyterian Church. Please help us meet this goal by:

- 1. Giving Generously to the Community Christmas Dinner (in the memo of your check designate "Community Christmas Dinner").
- 2. Gina Martin, our Interim Director of Christian Education, will have the children color the Christmas cards this year.

CONTACT MARTHA SUE HALL FOR MORE INFORMATION (704-985-5821 OR HALLMSH@HOTMAIL.COM)



Christmas Choral Presentation featuring the Chancel Choir of First Presbyterian Church and Piedmont Triad String Quartet Sunday, December 19 at 11:00 a.m.

The 2021 Advent Choral Service will continue our tradition of celebrating the Biblical account of the birth of Christ using scripture and choral music appropriate for the season. The chancel choir will be accompanied by organ, and the Piedmont Triad String Quartet. Considering how busy professional musicians are at this time of the year, and the fact that the best performers have long-time standing agreements with churches for annual appearances, we are extremely pleased that the Piedmont Triad String Quartet includes First Presbyterian amongst their favorite venues. This year marks the fifth anniversary of our performing together.

Artist Reception John Williams, Jack Williams, & Eli Williams Sunday, December 19 following worship

Please plan to stay after worship on Sunday, December 19 to meet and greet the featured artists in the fall Art Gallery Exhibit. John, Jack, and Eli Williams have tremendous artistic talent and each a unique style. We are delighted to welcome them to First Presbyterian Church and pay tribute to them for sharing their works of art with our congregation this fall. Light refreshments will be served.





CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24 AT 5:30 P.M. AND 11:00 P.M.

Carols and candlelight will mark the evening as we celebrate the birth of Christ.

Christmas Candlelighting Service

The musical prelude begins at 5:15 p.m. Highlights will include organ, vocal, and instrumental music. The traditional candlelight service begins at 5:30 p.m. Worship includes a story for the children, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, music by the adult choir, sharing the light of Christ, and traditional carol singing.

Worship at 11:00 p.m.

This service includes leadership by older youth and college students, traditional carol singing, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper and sharing the light of Christ. This service is full of expectation as we move toward midnight and the birth of Christ. Dress is informal. Following worship, youth and their families are invited to enjoy a light breakfast and fellowship.

SCCM UPDATED PANTRY NEEDS

Food Items:

Jelly, Cereal, Salt/Pepper, Canned Cranberry Sauce, Canned Lima Beans, Mayonnaise, Cooking Oil (small), Pickles/Relish, Ketchup/Mustard

Items Not Needed:

Canned Whole Kernel Corn, Canned Cut Green Beans, Chickpeas/Garbanzo Beans, Baked Beans, Spaghetti Noodles, Canned Pasta, Soup, Green Peas, Mac & Cheese, Toilet Paper



O Come, Let Us Adore Him by Marie Pooler

O Come, Let Us Adore Him

Who Comes to Bethlehem This Night?

Away in a Manger

Glory to God

We Have Seen a Babe, a Holy Child

Shining Star

Gifts of Love

O Come, All Ye Faithful (The congregation is invited to sing hymn 133, stanza 1 & 3.)

Mary:

Carter Gibson

Joseph:

Eston West

Wise People:

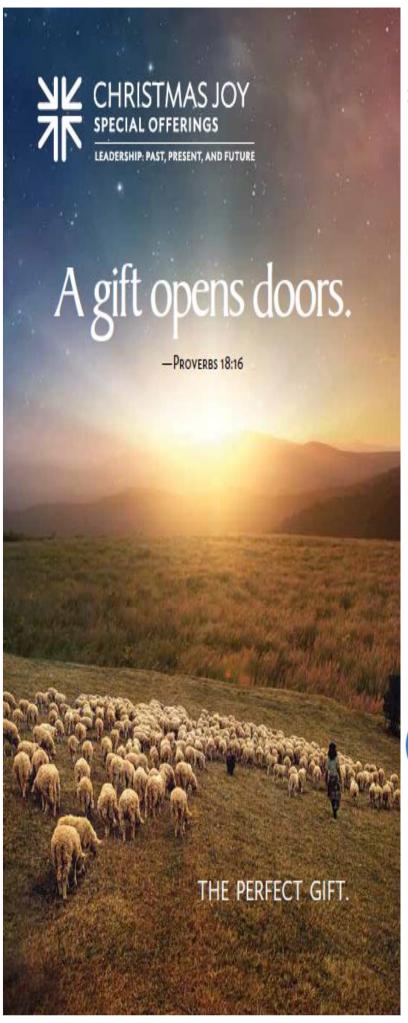
Russ Carpenter Melanie Hendrix Leni Henkenjohann

Shepherds:

Kennady Atwater Julian Eudy Will Lentz

Angels:

Ella Averette Emma Gibson Ayla Hahn Madelyn Taylor







The Christmas Joy Offering reflects that God is with us, through the generous gifts that support church leaders among us, retired, present and future, who have pointed us to God. Even as we support our current and former church leaders through the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions, God is calling new leaders for our Church and world, through the ministry of Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color — offering students the means for a brighter future and enhanced opportunities to use their talents and skills to serve God, the Church and the world for years to come.



Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Presbyterian Mission

The Christmas Joy Offering is one of four annual special offerings. The church-wide Special Offerings of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) play an important role in defining what it means to be a connectional church in the 21st century, bringing together the diversity of the PC (USA) to focus and take faith-based action on shared concerns. The Special Offerings offer opportunities for partnership, learning, and witness and they profoundly affect the life of the church as a collective witness to Jesus Christ's love for the whole church.



WAYS TO GIVE



Through your congregation



Donate by credit card online at pcusa.org/christmasjoy

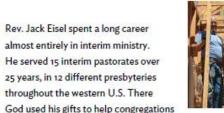


Text
CHRISTMASJOY
to 91999
to give or visit
pcusa.org/christmasjoy



When we give to the Christmas Joy Offering, we share our love with the leaders of our Church past, present and future.

50% of your gifts assists current and retired church workers and their families with critical financial needs.



navigate through challenging and often difficult times. Then a time came when Jack and his wife Kate experienced their own difficult times because of circumstances beyond their control. The Income Supplement that the Eisel's receive from the Board of Pensions is making the difference between uncertainty and stability.

> "Stability in retirement can be a weight lifted, and one that allows for retirees like Jack and Kate to live with emotional and financial flexibility."

- Lucas McCool, Assistance Program Operations Manager, PC(USA) Board of Pensions



of your gifts make it possible for students to learn and grow in faith at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

Stillman College, situated on a 105-acre campus in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. It was founded in 1876 by a group of Presbyterians led by the Rev. Dr. Charles Allen Stillman, pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Tuscaloosa, to become a training school for African-American ministers. Gifts to the Christmas Joy Offering help Stillman provide scholarships to gifted and promising students like Johnykqua Bevans and Rayondre Roberts, both from the Bahamas. Both students' dreams are now more than possible thanks to the gifts of generous Presbyterians.

> "I think a lot of people may not realize how many lives they [Presbyterians] can affect just by their support. It's a simple fact when they give students a scholarship, especially those students who are really in need, it's the best thing that could happen to them. It changes their lives."

- Rayondre Roberts





IMPORTANT COVID UPDATED INFORMATION UPDATED ON DECEMBER 8, 2021

For the health and welfare of our members and our community, the COVID Task Force Committee has set the following guidelines with the following updates:

The COVID Task Force continues to monitor the positivity rate in Stanly County. Unfortunately, this rate has increased and Stanly County has a high transmission rate. Your best protection is vaccination, booster, masking, and social distancing.

- **UPDATE:** Masks are **REQUIRED** for ALL FPC <u>indoor</u> functions/activities/SS/Worship, etc.
- **Masks** will always be provided at the church for adults and children in case they are needed.
- ❖ Hand sanitizer is available. Please use it.
- **!** If you are sick, please stay at home.
- **UPDATE:** Singing will continue. Congregation encouraged to wear masks. Choir members may remove masks for singing and are socially distanced from congregation.
- **Communion** will be given with prepackaged elements.
- **All volunteers and paid employees involved in any children's program(s) are required to be vaccinated.**
- **UPDATE:** Church building and GYM may be used for outside groups that are already using the facility but no more outside groups may reserve the facility until positivity rate improves.
- **UPDATE:** Any small groups having meals/snacks (SNL, Youth Club, Men's Prayer Breakfast) may continue but should social distance while eating and wear masks when not eating.
- **All toys, chairs, tables and bathrooms, (used that day) are to be wiped clean with a Clorox wipe or sprayed and wiped clean.**
- **First Family meals will be drive-thru.**
- All surfaces (chairs and tables and bathrooms if used) have to be wiped clean (with spray or wipes) after any committee/group meets.

Your patience and flexibility are appreciated as we continue to deal with the pandemic. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact the church office (704-982-2722).

COVID TASK FORCE: Ellen Snyder, Debbie Bennett, Ben Jolly, Bob Johnston

OPPORTUNITIES THIS WEEK

Sunday, December 12 Third Sunday of Advent/JOY Gift Program/

JOY Offering/Alternative Gifts/Christmas Kitchen before & after worship

8:45 am Diaconate Meeting In-Person

9:00 am Breakfast Bunch (K-5th Graders – Gym)

9:45 am *Sunday School

11:00 am *Worship

12:00 pm-3:30 pm Faith Explorers The Joy of Sharing

6:30 pm-8:00 pm SNL Christmas Party (Location: TBA)

Monday, December 13

10:00 am Morning Prayer via Zoom

10:00 am Staff Meeting

2:00 pm RSVP for 3rd Wednesday Drive-Thru Meal

8:30 pm-9:30 pm High School Faith Conversations at the home

of Debby Johnston (1212 Heritage Dr., Albemarle)

Tuesday, December 14

12:00 pm January Newsletter Deadline

Wednesday, December 15

6:45 am Men's Prayer Breakfast

10:00 am Morning Prayer via Zoom

12:00 pm Community Advent Service at Christ Episcopal (428 Pee Dee Ave., Albemarle)

3:30 pm-5:00 pm Youth Club Christmas Party

6:15 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary)

Friday, December 17

10:00 am-12:00 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal with the Piedmont Triad String Quartet

Sunday, December 19 Fourth Sunday of Advent/Choral Christmas Presentation

8:30 am Session Meeting In-Person

9:45 am *Sunday School

11:00 am *Worship

6:30 pm SNL Christmas Lights Scavenger Hunt (meet at the church)

*childcare provided

Your on-going support of First Presbyterian Church is essential to the mission and ministry of the church and to the well-being of our ministry partners, locally and globally. Thank you for your generosity.

Tithes and offerings may be mailed to: First Presbyterian Church P.O. Box 1578 Albemarle, NC 28002

Online giving can be done through the church's website (www.fpcalbemarle.org).

Click on the GIVE button.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY! DECEMBER

13-Tom Norwood

14-Greg Jones

16-Alison Whisnant

17-Rob McIntyre

18-Katie Carpenter

Mary Green

Katie Saltzman

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY! DECEMBER

13-Tammy & Randy Eudy

15-Ronnie & Sarah Michael Chris & Barbara Whitley