

THE PRESBYTERIAN NEWS



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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Dear friends,

We are coming to that time of year that is often so full, so busy, and for some of you – it is downright hectic. We are also coming to that time of year that is so joyful, but can also be so dreary, so painful. The Christmas season is always a mixture of excitement and grief – for it reminds us of God’s greatest gift of all, and it also reminds us of loved ones we have lost along the way, of friends and family who are not at the table this year, of lives that are not the way we imagined them to be.

And yet it is into the midst of this sea of human experience that Christ is born. In Jesus, God entered into the thick of human life. Even the first Christmas was a mixture of excitement, grief, fear, and peace: an unplanned pregnancy for a young woman, life under King Herod’s ruthless reign, singing angels on the night of the baby’s birth, peace and goodwill for all.

In the birth of Jesus, we find out that God is always meeting us right where we are: in songs of celebration, in nights of grief and longing, in the busy, messy, commotion of life on earth. It is into this life – right here – that God comes.

Make time this season to honor the magnitude of God’s gift.

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)

In peace,

Melissa McNair-King

NEWS FROM PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

From Day Circle by Phyllis Vice:

Day Circle will meet on Monday, December 12th, at 11 a.m. in the Manse. We will be on lesson four, *According to John*. Scripture for this lesson is the Gospel of John, key scripture is John 9:1-7. Bring a sack lunch and stay for fellowship after the meeting.

On Tuesday, December 13th, Day Circle will be at Daily Bread with supplies to help the clients make Christmas ornaments. We will set up our table at 10:30 a.m.

Night Circle will not meet in December.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND HAPPENINGS

THE COMMUNITY CHORUS Christmas program will be held in the sanctuary on Sunday, December 11th at 3 p.m.

WE ARE NOW TAKING orders for poinsettias in memory or in honor of someone to be placed in the sanctuary for Christmas. Poinsettias will be \$12.50 each. Please fill out the order form in the church bulletin and give it to the office with your check made out to the church. The deadline to order is December 11th.



CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING: A cherished Presbyterian tradition since the 1930's, the Christmas Joy Offering is one of the four special offerings designated by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Each year during the Advent and Christmas season, we turn our eyes to Bethlehem and celebrate the wondrous gift of Jesus Christ, our Savior. By giving to the Christmas Joy Offering, you honor this gift by providing assistance to current and retired church workers in their time of need and developing our future leaders at Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges. This church will receive the offering on December 18th.

PLEASE SUBMIT ITEMS to the church office for the January newsletter no later than Monday, December 19th.

YOUTH GROUP: On Monday, December 19th, we will go Christmas Caroling to the homes of our home-bound or elderly friends. Meet at the church at 4 p.m.! We will return by 6 p.m. for dinner together. Family members of all ages are welcome to join us for caroling.

LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE: On Wednesday, December 21st, you are invited to join with our neighbors from the downtown Pulaski churches for a special worship service. December 21st is the "longest night" of the year, and we know that even this holiday season can feel dark and dreary for many people. If you are living in the midst of broken relationships, if you are grieving for loved ones who have passed away, if you are weary or anxious, if you are longing for a message of hope, then this service is for you. This service is also for you who can lend your prayers and support to neighbors

along the way. The service is at 6 p.m. in the First United Methodist Church sanctuary, and will be led by Pastors Terrie Sternberg, Melissa Smith, and Melissa McNair-King. It is open to the entire community. Join us for a night of healing and hope, as we look toward the birth of Christ.

DAILY BREAD will have their annual Christmas Party on Thursday, December 22nd.

CHURCH OFFICE will be closed on December 22nd, 23rd and 26th during Christmas.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE will be at 7 p.m. and Communion will be served.



Do you have a favorite story you like to read over and over again, particularly at Christmas? Try reading one of the books below from our church library. Maybe you will add other favorites to the season. Check it out!

232.9 HIS His Story: A Chronological Account of the Life of Jesus from Good News for Modern Man.

814 VAN Even Unto Bethlehem: The Story of Christmas by Henry Van Dyke.

CH FIC MAR Pablo's Christmas by Hugo C. Martin - Young Pablo has become the "man of the house" since his father has gone to America for work. How can he make Christmas a happy time for his family?

CH FIC MER The Christmas Box by Eve Merriam - It was very early on Christmas morning. The whole family was awake and eager to see all the presents Santa left under the tree. But under the tree was a long, thin box. That was all. What was Santa thinking?

FIC KAR Shepherds Abiding: A Mitford Christmas Story by Jan Karon - Father Tim finds a derelict nativity scene that has suffered the indignities of time and neglect. Can he give the small assembly new life? In trying he begins a small journey of faith that touches everyone around him.

FIC VAN The Story of the Other Wise Man by Henry Van Dyke.

YA 232.9 HE He Lived Among Us - Story of Jesus told in graphic novel form along with scriptures.

If there is a book you would like to read from our church library but are unable to get it, give Phyllis Vice a call (980-3106) and she will be happy to get the book to you. To check out a book write your name and the date you are taking the book on the card that is in the pocket in the back of the book. Place the card on the black and white spotted box (the card catalog) on the shelf nearest to the windows.

Join us for Wonderful Wednesdays!

6:00-7:30 PM, Fellowship Hall

Each Wednesday night, we enjoy a home-cooked meal and Bible study or activity together. We rely on donations to cover the cost of the meal – please give as you are able, but do not let it be a barrier to participation. A suggested amount is \$4 per person, or no more than \$15 per family.

Thank you to those who are serving in December:

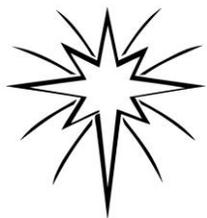
Date	Cooking Team	Clean-Up Team	Program
December 7	Barry & Melissa	Larry/Ashley/Phyllis	Missionaries: Chase & Audrey Arndt (Kenya)
December 14	Christmas Dinner	Fellowship Committee	Bells & Brass

Wonderful Wednesdays will NOT meet on December 21, December 28, or January 4. We will resume our regular schedule on Wednesday, January 11.

Christmas Dinner

Our Christmas Dinner is always a special evening. We will gather in the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 for a meal. Meat is provided – please bring a side dish or dessert to share. Following dinner, we will go to the sanctuary for a time of Music, featuring the Hand Bell and Chimes Choirs, and a Brass Ensemble. Come celebrate the birth of Christ and enjoy the talents of our congregation!





DATE:

12/4/16

12/11/16

12/18/16

12/25/16

LAY READERS:

Gene Holt

Allison Hunter

Larry Latimer

lessons and carols

CHILDREN IN WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS:

Mary Catherine Williams

Jessie Woods

Bernice Brown