



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
 100 W. Church Circle
 Kingsport, TN 37660
 (423) 245-0104



First Presbyterian Church

The First Press

Seeking to see the Face of Christ...Striving to be the Hands of Christ

Vol. 540, Issue 12

December 2023

Mark Your Calendar

- 12-3** *Advent Coffee*
- 12-3** *Church Circle Nativity and Advent Service*
- 12-15** *Newsletter Deadline*
- 12-24** *Christmas Eve Services*
Chapel Worship at 8:45am
Children's Pageant at 11am
Candlelight Service at 5pm
- 12-31** *Combined Worship at 10am*

Weekly

- Tuesdays**
Knuckleheads Men's Bible Study
 12:15-1:15 p.m.
History Room
- Thursdays**
Balance Class
 1:15 p.m.
Fellowship Center



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The Reason for the Season

A man walked into a ballroom, where a loud wedding reception was taking place. He noticed a woman sitting off to one side who appeared upset. He walked up to her, only to discover that it was the bride, who was watching all the festivities, and wondering if anyone would know that she was there. I wonder if Jesus feels ignored in our Christmas activities. He is the reason for the season, but you'd never know it by the way many of his people live. Isaiah predicted his coming, using titles like Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting father, Prince of Peace to describe him. It was originally a hymn written for King Hezekiah's coronation but notice how Isaiah prefaces his words...

PEOPLE WHO WALKED IN DARKNESS HAVE SEEN A GREAT LIGHT.

We know more about darkness than we do about light. We are living in stressful times. If ever a generation needed comfort, it is ours. Isaiah tells of a day when God's promise to David would come to pass: a stump from David's family tree who would be great. He wouldn't be just another King. He would be the Messiah, the Savior of the world. From the start, it was clear that Jesus didn't fit the narrow image of what they wanted in a Messiah. He didn't offer solutions to the world's problems or make any false promises that things would get better just because he was there. Jesus was a disappointment, not because he did not do anything, but because he didn't do what they expected. He still doesn't meet our expectations; he exceeds them. To all who received him long ago, to all who grasp **WHO HE IS** and **WHY HE CAME**, he gives us power to become God's children, born not of the flesh, but born of God. Millions of people, across the ages, have found him worthy of their trust. He is **OUR FAITH**, and not a **PART OF FAITH**. Jesus **WAS** and **IS EVERYTHING**.

In our darkest moments, we wonder if placing our trust in him is enough. When we see how some Christians live, how mean they act, how joyless and lifeless they seem, we wonder if faith is real. In every person's life, there is a **"gotcha moment"** when Jesus gets you, when he really gets you, and you are hooked. Christianity is like **FALLING IN LOVE**, saying yes or no with our lives to a **PERSON**, and not a multiple-choice test where we pick out certain beliefs. This year don't leave Christ out of your Christmas. His Christmas card to you might read...

Let go the illusion that you are in control of life! Nothing in this world, except for God's faithfulness, is ever secure. All that you hold dear can be taken away. In the end, it will be okay. If it is not okay, it is not the end.

Miko

Sunday Worship

8:45 a.m.
Chapel

11:00 a.m.
Sanctuary

Cold Weather Worship

The Sanctuary worship services will move to the Fellowship Center beginning **Sunday, December 3**, continuing through February, due to heating issues.



Youth News

Our Confirmation Class begins on December 3. Please keep our youth in your prayers as they prepare to join our church. Look for more updates in the new year!

For more information, contact Russ at rpearson@firstpreskingsport.org.



Remind 101

Sign up for our church texts! Text the number 81010 and include @fpc100 in the text to opt in.

Advent Coffee

Sunday, December 3rd

9:45 a.m.
Fellowship Center

Please bring a savory or sweet dish
Hope to see you there!



Church Circle Nativity Celebration

Sunday, December 3, 2023
12:30 p.m.
Church Circle

Join the Downtown Churches
for the Rededication and
57th Anniversary Celebration
of the recently restored church
circle nativity!

For more information:
Debbie Waggoner 423-676-2419



1st: Linda Buckles, Mike Babb, John Kunysz
2nd: Frank Gibson, McClure Mink
3rd: Al Dryden
4th: Gary Hallen, Margaret Callcott
5th: Gillian Brents, Camden Argabrite
6th: Aidan Smith, Cliff Marchion
8th: Chris Raines, Elizabeth Booher
9th: Orris Harker
10th: Rebecca Combs
11th: Karen Bunch, Ella Deakins
13th: Marcia Porter, Sam Barbour, Sue Wells
14th: Dottye Gray, Braylee Williams, Nafisa Banda
15th: Wes Combs, Lee McConnell, Mack Gale
17th: Liz Stothart
19th: Barbara Maston, Mike Bunch
21st: Julia West
23rd: Ruth Adams
27th: Carolyn Collins, Johnnie Stubblefield
29th: Mary Easley, Grace Plemmons
30th: Natalie Robertson
31st: Kim Plemmons, Anson Hagan, Charlie Lively

*Happy
Birthday!*

Pledge Update - Year to Date

(as of November 27, 2023)

Pledges Budgeted to Date: \$686,033.37
Pledges Received to Date: \$644,982.04
Difference: (\$ -41,051.33)

Loose Offerings
Budgeted to Date: \$ 27,041.63
Received to Date: \$ 35,505.69
Difference: \$ 8,464.06

Special Offerings -

5 Cents a Meal - November \$570.88
(a portion went to Family Promise)

Reminder for Pledges

The new year is just around the corner. Here are just a few reminders as you consider your year-end contributions to the church.

- If possible, please consider fulfilling your **'2023' Pledge**. I will be mailing a contribution report, to those of you who currently pledge, on December 6.
- To those who have made your **2024 Pledge, thank you for supporting the church and its mission.**
- If you are planning on giving a contribution of **stock**, I must have a broker statement in my office no later than **Friday, December 29, 2023**, for the gift to be included as a '2023' contribution. Please let me know **in writing** if you are giving stock.
- All donations must be **delivered or post-marked** on or before December 31, 2023 in order to receive a charitable tax donation for '2023'. Checks that are placed in the church offering during the first worship service in 2024 **will not qualify** for a charitable tax contribution deduction in 2023. However, checks that are written, mailed and **postmarked** in '2023' will be deductible in 2023 even if not received by the church until '2024'.

Thank you for your generous gifts to this church.

Wishing you and your family a Very Blessed Holiday Season!

Bev Johnson
Financial Administrator

Stock Contributions

The end of 2023 is rapidly approaching. If you are planning to give stock to the church, please notify Bev Johnson, Financial Administrator, in writing prior to your donation. Thanking you in advance.

Mystery Pledges

We have received two pledges in the amount of \$3,000.00 each with no signature on the pledge card for 2024. If you pledged that amount, please contact Bev Johnson and let her know. Thank you very much. We appreciate each and every pledge we have received.



Striving to be the Hands of Christ...

FPC Clothes Closet – Clothing donations are accepted at the church on Monday mornings and at the drop box on other days. Because cold weather is here, we have a need for the following items: especially larger size hooded sweatshirts, warm jackets and winter coats, beanie (toboggan), winter grade gloves, long underwear, blankets and large throws. Anything that is clean and in good repair will be greatly appreciated. Monetary donations can also be made to Beverly Johnson.

Grab-N-Go Breakfast Ministry – Our Breakfast Bag ministry continues to thrive! We have invited our neighbors back inside for dining and fellowship during the colder months, as well as offering coffee inside and outside. With the opening of the Fellowship Hall, our need for volunteers has increased. If you are interested in serving and engaging with our neighbors on Sunday mornings, please email sar4680@gmail.com or abwright@chartertn.net; also, be on the lookout for Spring 2024 volunteer sign ups! As the weather changes, we have many requests for hats, gloves, socks, and blankets (these items sometimes get wet or dirty and need to be replaced more frequently), as well as our continuing need for individual toiletries--any and all donations are welcome. Thank you for your continuing support of this ministry!

Caring for our Ukrainian Friends, Oksana Lypska and children –

- ◆ Thanksgiving Dinner was donated and delivered to them by members on Nov. 22
- ◆ Individual Christmas Gifts will be presented by Dec. 22.

Presbyterian Gift Catalog – Small Gifts with Big Impact Around the World

- ◆ Pick up a catalog in the Church Foyer and make you orders directly.

White Gift Food Offering – Waverly Road Presbyterian Church Food Pantry, Dec. 11

- ◆ Distribute bags with food menu attached for White Gift, Dec. 3
- ◆ Receive return of White Gift food bags and/or monetary donations, Dec. 10

Minute for Mission/Five-Cents-A-Meal Offering –

- ◆ 25% to Second Harvest Food Bank, Dec. 17
- ◆ Rhonda Chafin, Executive Director will be guest speaker.

Christmas Joy Offering – 100% to PCUSA, Dec. 17

- ◆ 50% Presbyterian Program of the Board of Pensions
- ◆ 50% Leadership & Education at Presbyterian-related schools & colleges

Second Harvest Food Bank –

- ◆ FPC Volunteers in Service grocery sorting and packing, Dec. 20
- ◆ Sign-up to volunteer by contacting Bob Stoots at 423-782-6280

Christmas Holiday Break Food Assistance for KCS Children with High Needs, Dec. 22

- ◆ FPC Endowment grants to Family Resource Center and Homeless Education Program.
- ◆ Supplements much of students diets during holidays while not getting free school meals

Christmas Eve Offering – 100% to KCS Homeless Education Program, Dec. 24

Niches Available in the Columbarium

There are niches available in the First Presbyterian columbarium located in the Memorial Garden at the rear of the church. They are designed to accommodate two urns and feature an engraved cover for both decedents. They are reasonably priced and represent a cost-effective ecological approach and appropriate alternative to a traditional cemetery. Details are available through the church office.

Advent & Christmas at First Presbyterian

December 3

- ◆ Advent Coffee, Fellowship Center, 9:45 a.m.
- ◆ Church Circle Nativity and Advent Service, 12:30 p.m.

December 24

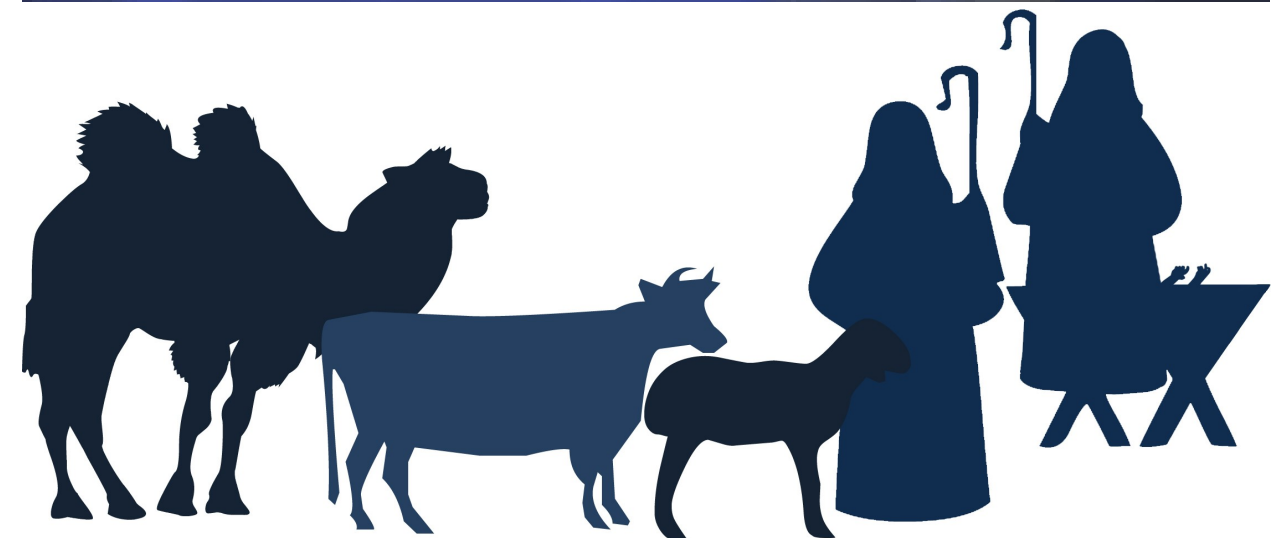
Christmas Eve Services ~

- ◆ Chapel Worship at 8:45 a.m.
- ◆ Children's Pageant at 11 a.m.
- ◆ Candlelight Communion Service at 5 p.m.

December 31

Combined Worship at 10 a.m.
Fellowship Center

*An informal service on New Year's Eve with
hymn singing and scripture reading.*



The History of Our Church

Over the next several months the History Committee is sharing a bit of information about various furnishings and features of our church. You probably walk by or see them often; but don't know how they came to be a part of FPC. In the earlier days of FPC, families made memorial contributions to provide things we needed. We no longer encourage donation of things to the church, but do encourage donations to the Memorial Fund or the Legacy Program when you want to remember someone or provide funds for future church needs. These funds enable the church to direct resources where they are most needed.

(Below)

The Presbyterian Logo Stain Glass Window was possible due to memorial donations by William P. Haynes and Sam and DeLois Anderson. The Haynes gift was in memory of: Mary Wilson Coley, Hattie Belle Wilson, and Minnie Ruth Haynes. The Anderson gift was in memory of: Sam Anderson Sr., Mary Anderson, and Mary Jane Anderson Vaughn. This art was installed in 1997.



Welcome Stubblefields!



Johnnie and Lewis Stubblefield

Lewis and Johnnie Stubblefield joined the church by reaffirmation of faith during the 10/22 Session meeting. They moved to this area four months or so ago, from Douglas GA and bought a home in the Preston Woods subdivision. Lewis and Johnnie are newlyweds as of February, and are enjoying every minute of sharing their lives and similar marital experiences. They said that they feel very welcomed by First Presbyterian Church, and our community, and they want to share with us their prior congregational nurturing experiences. We are very much grateful for your choice, we welcome you with open arms, and we look forward to serving the Lord with you!

Friends in Faith Class Begins New Series on December 3 *Stewardship of Creation*

The *Friends in Faith* Sunday School Class will begin a new 6-week series on December 3rd entitled **Stewardship of Creation**. How do we as Christians and Presbyterians look at our environment? **Stewardship of Creation** helps us to biblically think about how we can care for creation by offering us practical suggestions. Yes, we are all concerned about the environment so join our class for 6 weeks where we will discuss how we can enact our concerns as Christians-at home, in the church, and in the world. Join our class as we explore the following 6 sessions (lesson #1 will be on December 3rd):

The 6 sessions (discussions) are:

- Creation Care
- Caring for the Environment and Caring for People
- Being Green at Home
- Being Green at Church
- Being Green in the World
- Reconciling Humans and Creation

Each session (6-8 pages) is a stand-alone discussion so do not worry if you have to miss a Sunday. Books may be picked up in room #103.

So, whether you attend the 8:45 service or the 11:00 service the *Friends in Faith* class encourages and invites you to join us in room #103 at 9:45 a.m.



Flowers Needed for Church in 2024

May 19
June 30
July 14

*Please call Vickie in the church office
(423-245-0104) to sign up for a date.*

