

FIRST PRESS

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First Presbyterian Church, Fayetteville N.C.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- | | | | |
|--------|--|-----------|---|
| Dec 7 | • Children sing during 11 a.m. worship | Jan 1 | • Church office closed |
| | • Kingdom Kidz & S.U.R.G.E. | Jan 4 | • Kingdom Kidz & S.U.R.G.E. resume |
| | Christmas Party | | • The Gathering: Foundations |
| | • MomCo Meeting | Jan 5 | • Engagement Committee |
| Dec 8 | • Children's Ministry Committee | | • Mission Committee |
| Dec 9 | • Martha Circle | Jan 7 | • All In Fellowship Meals resume |
| | • Joint Session/Deacons Meeting | | • Adult Christian Education Class resumes |
| Dec 11 | • Hannah Circle | Jan 8 | • S.A.L.T. Breakfast at JK's Deli |
| Dec 12 | • S.A.L.T. Christmas Lights Tour | | • Tapestry resumes |
| Dec 13 | • Vivaldi Gloria Rehearsal | | • Hannah Circle |
| Dec 14 | • Angel Tree gifts are due | | • Upwards Pickleball Youth League begins |
| | • Music Ministry Christmas Party | Jan 11 | • Congregational Enrichment Event |
| | • Caroling at Segra Stadium | | • MomCo Meeting |
| Dec 15 | • Personnel Committee | Jan 13 | • Martha Circle |
| Dec 16 | • Joint Session/Diaconate Meeting | | • Stated Deacons Meeting |
| | • Finance Meeting | Jan 16-18 | • Youth Ski Trip |
| Dec 17 | • Darkness to Light dinner & service | Jan 19 | • Personnel Committee |
| | • Best Christmas Pageant Ever outing | Jan 20 | • S.A.L.T. Lunch at Sammios |
| Dec 20 | • Church Orchestra Rehearsal | | • Stated Session Meeting |
| Dec 22 | • David's Mighty Men | Jan 25 | • MomCo Meeting |
| Dec 24 | • Christmas Eve Services | Jan 26 | • David's Mighty Men |
| Dec 25 | • Church office closed | Jan 27 | • COAP Meeting (Zoom) |
| | • H3F Christmas Potluck Dinner | | |

The Best
Christmas
Pageant
Ever!

Wednesday, December 17th

Join us for a night at the theater and support
several of our church members performing in
The Best Christmas Pageant Ever!

Cape Fear Regional Theatre | Tickets \$15
Social Hour 6:30pm | Show 7:30pm

For more information or to reserve your spot, contact Ella Wrenn wrenn.ella@gmail.com or 303.915.4034



A PASTORAL MESSAGE

from Dr. Mike Garrett

Where is Jesus?

It's a simple question to which the church has always given a not so simple answer. Jesus is the one "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." (Rev. 1:8)

Christmas is when the question of "where is Jesus?" is deeply felt. Can Jesus only come to me in memories of Christmas long past? Is Jesus only available in the seasonal distractions of this year's holiday celebration? Is Jesus only a wish, a hope I have for time that seems far off?

Don't we need to seek him in all three places? Focusing on the promised Christ "yet to return" gives us hope when we struggle with hard times. Focusing on the Christ who "is" opens our eyes to the signs of his presence in the ordinary moments and with the ordinary people who share our lives. Focusing on the Christ who "was" anchors our faith in the eternal God who "became flesh and made his dwelling among us."

Where do you most need to look for Jesus this Christmas? As we preach and worship our way through Advent this year we'll look back, around, and ahead. We'll allow Christmas past, present, and future to speak to our souls. I hope you will join us for joyful worship, quiet meditation, and hopeful expectation. As you make plans for the season of Advent and Christmas take time to answer the question for yourself: Where is Jesus?

In this edition of the newsletter, you'll find plenty of information about Christmas at First Presbyterian Church. There is truly something for everybody. Please come and join with our family of faith at this time of year.

Each year I make it habit to reread Charles Dickens, [A Christmas Carol](#). Few books have more to say about the significance of living in the past, present, and future. Matt Rawles in his book, [The Redemption of Scrooge](#), leaves us with this thought:

"A God who is means that we are not abandoned. A God who was means are we are forgiven. A God who is to come means that God can be trusted."

May you find Jesus Christ, the Son of God, exactly where you need to him to be this Christmas. See you in church!

Sincerely,



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.

Advent 1 - Sunday, November 30 - "Wake Up!"

9 a.m. Worship in the Chapel | 10 a.m. Sunday School

11 a.m. Worship in the Chapel

Advent 2 - Sunday, December 7 - "Turn Toward The Light"

9 a.m. Worship in the Chapel | 10 a.m. Sunday School

11 a.m. Worship in the Sanctuary

Advent 3 - Sunday, December 14 - "Vivaldi Gloria"

10 a.m. Sunday School

11 a.m. Musical Service of Worship with guest orchestra,
Celebration Choir and Community Friends

Advent 4 - Sunday, December 21 - "Welcome The Child"

9 a.m. Worship in the Chapel | 10 a.m. Sunday School

11 a.m. Church Christmas Orchestra during Worship in the Sanctuary

Christmas Eve Services - "God Is With Us"

12 p.m. Christmas Eve Worship with Communion in the Chapel

5 p.m. Lessons and Carols with Nativity in the Sanctuary

8 p.m. Intimate Chapel Worship Service with Communion

First Sunday of Christmas - December 28

"The God Who Knows Us"

9 a.m. Worship in the Chapel

10 a.m. Sunday School

11 a.m. Worship in the Sanctuary

*Rejoice
with us!*



A MOMENT OF PASTORAL CARE

with Rev. Chris Carson

When I was serving as an Army Chaplain deployed to Iraq in 2007, our command outpost was located in a large empty building. We had no electricity for several months except for generated power reserved for mission essential needs. This meant that when I held chapel services, there were no lights to read the Scripture or sing the songs. I had to borrow a soldier's head lamp so that I could read from the Bible.

Last year thousands of our western North Carolina neighbors experienced darkness from power outages. Many of us know what it's like to be in the dark temporarily, but there's another kind of darkness we can feel during times of loss. A sense of loss that can seem to be magnified during the holidays when we keenly feel the absence of our loved ones.

I remember preaching in the darkness, but thanks to battery supplied light, I could read from Psalm 139:11-12 to encourage the listeners. God knows those times when we may feel "the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me." Those moments or extended periods of darkness can even seem as if they surround us.

But the Psalmist looks to a God who transcends darkness. He confidently declares "even the darkness will not be dark to you: the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you." As we draw closer to celebrating the coming of our Savior, may we look to God who penetrated the darkness with the Light of the world. In the midst of our grief may we lean upon the One to whom "even the darkness will not be dark." To whom the "darkness is as light."

Be sure to walk this journey with someone. Do this with a trusted friend or perhaps a counselor. Our church has people who are trained to come alongside those who are hurting - Stephen's Ministers. Contact Lorene McBryde or Steve Horosko to learn more details.

We are having a service for those grieving during the holidays called "Darkness to Light" Wednesday, 17 Dec in the Fellowship Hall at 5:30. There are other resources for those dealing with grief. The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association offers a free guide entitled "Courage in Grief."

There are also numerous grief support groups in Fayetteville that can be helpful, including GriefShare. Most of all, the church family invites you to join your brothers and sisters in Christ as you navigate the challenging days ahead.

Darkness to Light

A SERVICE OF COMFORT & HOPE

Wednesday, December 17 at 5:30 p.m.
in Fellowship Hall



Scan Me

Join us for a meal followed by a service of comfort and hope led by Rev. Chris Carson.

Please register online if you plan to attend at bit.ly/FPCD2L or scan the QR Code.



Thursday, December 25th at 12 p.m.

Your family looks forward to having you join them on Christmas Day!!

Join us for a warm and festive Christmas Day meal! Invite a friend and bring a side, salad, bread, or dessert to serve 8–10. The main entrée and drinks will be provided by the Congregational Care Committee.

Please RSVP by December 21 at 3 p.m.

Scan the QR code or visit bit.ly/H3FChristmas25
to let us know what you'll bring.



Scan Me

Adult Advent Resources

Advent Meditations



Preparing for the King

Advent Meditations - Preparing for the King

Preparing for the King is an Advent resource from the creators of Practicing the Way, guiding your community through the themes of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love as you prepare your hearts for Christ's coming. Each week offers conversation prompts, curated reflections, and optional spiritual practices to help you grow in patient hope, steadfast peace, deep joy, and courageous love.



Draw Near: Lighting the Advent Path with Hope, Peace, Joy & Love

This Presbytery Outlook devotional by Teri McDowell Ott invites you to slow down, pay attention, and notice Christ's presence in daily life. Centered on the themes of hope, peace, joy, and love, it offers Scripture, reflections, prayers, simple practices, and children's artwork that bring the Advent story to life with fresh insight.

Stop by the volunteer desk in Eller Hall to pick up your Adult or Family Advent devotional resource

THE
Angel Tree

*Let us come together as
the body of Christ to share
His love, light, and generosity
this Christmas season.*

Please return gifts by Sunday, December 14 under the tree in Eller Hall or outside Britany Spivey's office. Gifts may be wrapped—just attach the gift receipt and Angel Tag securely.

To give financially, contact Britany at britany@firstprez.com





Roller Skating Fun!





**STARTS
JANUARY 2026
REGISTER
TODAY!**

**PICKLEBALL
YOUTH LEAGUES
ARE COMING
TO FIRST PREZ!**



Grades 4-12. Register online.
Visit bit.ly/FPCPickleball
or scan the QR Code.



VIVALDI'S *Gloria*

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14
AT 11 A.M.
IN THE SANCTUARY

The Celebration Choir, joined by community friends, will present Vivaldi's *Gloria* on the second Sunday of Advent, accompanied by a string ensemble with trumpet, oboe, and bassoon.

Vivaldi's joyful work celebrates the angels' proclamation from Luke: "Glory to God in the highest..." Originally written for the orphaned girl's chorus of the Ospedale della Pietà in Venice, the twelve-movement piece features SATB choir and several soloists. Lost after Vivaldi's death and rediscovered in the 1920s, it has become a beloved Christmas classic.

All are welcome to join us
for this beautiful "Angel's Song."

Caroling at Segra Stadium

Sunday, December 14



Come out to Holiday Lights, join us in caroling, and bring your four-legged friend!

We will meet at Segra Stadium at 5:45 p.m. and begin caroling at 6 p.m. Admission is free for carolers. Dogs

do not require tickets. Dog owners will need to provide proof of updated vaccinations & to sign a waiver.



Scan Me



To register online, scan the QR Code
or visit bit.ly/SegraCaroling
Please register by December 11.

Join us!
**Register
today**

FAMILY ADVENT DEVOTIONAL RESOURCES

Available at the volunteer desk
in Eller Hall and online at
bit.ly/FPCAdvent25



TWO SIMPLE, MEANINGFUL WAYS TO CELEBRATE ADVENT AT HOME!

This year, we're offering two easy-to-use tools to help your family slow down, pray together, and prepare for the coming of Christ.

ADVENT TABLE TENT DEVOTIONAL (WEEKLY)

Place the table tent in a central spot at home and use it once a week to guide a short family prayer and conversation. Each tent includes a simple prayer, wondering questions, and a visual reminder to stay centered during Advent.

SCRATCH-OFF ADVENT CALENDAR (DAILY)

Enjoy a fun, interactive daily prayer practice! Scratch off one circle each day to reveal a short prompt that invites reflection, prayer, or simple action.

WHY THESE RESOURCES MATTER

They make faith at home simple, creative, and meaningful—helping families build prayer habits, spark conversation, and focus on Jesus during this busy season.

WE HOPE THESE TOOLS BLESS YOUR HOME WITH HOPE, JOY, AND WONDER THIS ADVENT!

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

Toddlers (Birth to 2): Room 128 (Downstairs in the Nursery Area)

Ages 3 to 5: Room 104 (Downstairs in the Nursery Area)

Kindergarten – 2nd Grade: Room 207

3rd - 5th Grade: Room 208

Join us as we learn about worshiping God with the following stories:

Dec. 7- Prepare a Road (Isaiah 40:3–11)

Dec 14 - Jesus' Family Tree (Matthew 1:1–17)

Dec 21- Joseph's Dream (Matthew 1:18–24)

Dec 28 - Grace in a Manger (Luke 2:1–7)

Jan 4 - Epiphany Gifts for the Baby King
(Matthew 2:1–11)



**KINGDOM KIDZ & S.U.R.G.E. WILL RESUME
ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 4 - 4:30 TO 6:30 P.M.
AND BEGIN THE BIBLELYMPICS!**

Christmas Eve Worship Services

12 p.m. Noon in the Chapel
Christmas Eve Worship with Communion

5 p.m. in the Sanctuary
Family Friendly Lessons and Carols with Nativity

8 p.m. in the Chapel
Intimate Worship Service with Communion




Christmas Nativity Pageant 5 p.m. on Christmas Eve

We're excited to host a no-rehearsal Christmas Nativity Pageant on Christmas Eve at 5 p.m.! All children are welcome to dress up and join the Christmas Story by helping bring the nativity scene to life. Our volunteers will gently guide them when it's time to come forward.

If your family will be attending and your child would like to dress up as a shepherd, wise person, sheep, or angel, please let Britany or Jess know as soon as possible. We would love to include them!





DECEMBER Birthdays

| | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Jean Coffman | 11 Melissa Smith | 23 Sharon Perry |
| 2 Kimberly Allison | 11 Laura Dunn | 23 Terry Andrews |
| 2 Dixon Soffe | 11 David Alderman | 24 Ben McCoy |
| 3 Lorene McBryde | 12 Travis Hibler | 24 Kelley McCauley |
| 4 Jeannie Plummer | 13 Alex Barkman | 24 Charles Cox |
| 4 Elyse Brown | 13 Colbie Moore | 24 Kirby Cox |
| 4 Tatum Pritchett | 13 Dannie Moore | 25 Sydney Darden |
| 5 Don Perkins | 14 Herb Bryan | 25 Natalie Wright |
| 5 Noah Hall | 14 Rachel Rocker | 25 Jacob Regensburger |
| 5 Bryson Hall | 14 Kelly Taylor | 25 Charles Smith |
| 6 Success Pitakwa | 15 Pat Crenshaw | 26 David Johnson |
| 6 William Yates | 15 Janet Holt | 26 Dorothy Kusa |
| 7 Kathy Rouse | 15 Lynda Deaton | 28 Joann Barnes |
| 7 Kris Johnson | 15 Zaida Montero | 28 Mary Reese Barkman |
| 7 Tommy Hall | 15 Hoyt Kramer | 29 Winnie Grannis |
| 8 Sybil Russ | 17 Eric Walworth | 29 Donna Young |
| 8 Isabella O'Keefe | 18 Jennifer Spinosa | 29 Lori Davidson |
| 8 Cam Kirby | 19 Kirby Tyson | 29 Paul Viverette |
| 9 Renee Beringer | 19 Melissa O'Toole | 29 Finley Helmke |
| 9 Mary Gill | 19 Carol Lyn Wauford | 29 Peyton Hale |
| 9 Berkley Canady | 20 Rhett Johnson | 30 Sue Godwin-Baker |
| 10 Leigh Bleecker | 20 Michael Jolly | 30 Hillary Stiles |
| 10 Nancy Kaminska | 21 Jim Herrick | 30 Madelyn Kelly |
| 10 Amelia Midgett | 21 Clark Dunn | 31 David Canady |
| 10 Blake Yates | 21 Daniel Midgett | 31 Carolyn Barnette |
| 11 Grace Hall | 22 Dot Cromartie | |

Memorials

Melanie Strickland
Linda Baker Huff

Phil Anderson
Barbara E. Hoeft
Fred & Eliza Williams

Judith Ker's son
Linda Baker Huff

Rev. Billy Herring
Richard & Vicki Marx
Beverly Stewart
Fred & Eliza Williams
Ann Eller
Martha's Circle
Linda Baker Huff
Steve & Andrea Horosko
Godwin Presbyterian Church

John Harvey Oliver
Linda Baker Huff

Ted Lepper
Ann Rowell
Beverly Stewart
Deborah Murphy Williams
Linda Baker Huff

Rev. Earl Vaughn Sr.
Linda Baker Huff