

A Voice in the Pines

Presbyterian Kirk in the Pines Newsletter

Volume 61

December 2025

November at the Kirk: A Month of MUSIC



November 2025 set a new high-water mark for music at the Kirk in the Pines. The musical feast began with a performance by the Village Big Band (above) on Sunday the 9th aptly named "A Sunday Kind'a Jazz". Led by maestro Jim Kelly, the 20 professional instrumentalists and 2 vocalists served up an assortment of classic jazz numbers by the best and brightest of jazz composers. In keeping with their usual practice, all the musicians had their time in the limelight performing solo improvisations.

continued on page 2

Look What's Coming up at the Kirk in December!

Kirk Choir Concert, "Ceremony of Candles,"

December 6, 2:00 p.m. (page 3)

Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols Service,

December 24th, 5:00 p.m. (page 6)

When We Meet

Sunday Traditional Worship 10 a.m.- Sanctuary Saturday Informal Worship 4 p.m. CST, 5 p.m. CDT- Bailey Hall



(continued from page 1)



Robert Sonnen photos



the program was the gospel favorite *Praise His Holy* Name and, for comic relief, Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer, with the unfortunate Grandma being played by tenor Ben Hecker (above). The group performed an acapella encore, Fairest Lord Jesus.

The "Month of Music" at the Kirk climaxed with a performance by Chamber Music of the Ozarks artists Jeremy Crosmer, cello, and Tomoko Kashiwagi, piano (right). Crosmer is a Detroit Symphony Orchestra member and, as a native Arkansan, he returned to participate in the Chamber Music of the Ozarks concert. In a program entitled "Address to the Moon" the duo performed a brilliant collection which included a Debussy Sonata for Cello and Piano, L135, Alice Hong's composition Address to the Moon, based on Nathaniel Hawthorne's poem by the same name, a moving melodic elegiac composition for piano and cello, Threnody, by cellist Jeremy Crosmer, and the dramatic Sonata for Cello and Piano in e minor, Op. 35 by turn of the century Croatian composer Dora Pejacevic'. The virtuosity of these consummate professionals is surely unmatched and was a perfect capstone on the Kirk's "Month of Music." A very special thank you goes to Chip Johnson and Robert Sonnen for their hard work making these programs a success.

A highlight of the performance were vocalists Maureen Morgan and Jamie Stewart who sang well known tunes from the jazz era.

The band rehearses at the Kirk on Tuesday mornings and have done for many years. You could say our facility is their home base. This was the first performance by the band at the Kirk in many years although certainly not the last. A Love Offering at the event raised \$822 for Project Hope Food Bank.

The Cedar Mountain Singers concert on November 16th in their new home at the Kirk was literally standing room only. The 49-person choir (below) was led by Dr. Keith Hearnsberger assisted by collaborative pianist Fran Stroud. The choir thrilled their audience with a variety of choral works including favorites like With a Voice of Singing, Carol of the Bells, and the title work What Sweeter Music by John Rutter. Adding to the variety of





Contributed by Bob Morrow, Communications Committee Moderator 2

DON'T FORGET

The Kirk in the Pines Choir Tina Kneisler, Director

> The Village Carillons Shelley Martin, Flute & Donna Toney, Piano

"Ceremony of Candles"

December 6th, 2:00 p.m. Kirk Sanctuary

PW Gathering to be held December 8th

All Kirk women are invited to our **December 8 Gathering at 12:00 in Bailey Hall.** A delicious luncheon will be cooked by the Greenhorns. The cost is \$15, taken at the door. We will have a devotional speaker. It will be an old-fashioned Christmas celebration with singing, led by choir members.

For our outreach project, we will assemble 34 baking bags for the children at Vera Lloyd. BRING 3 OR MORE BAKING ITEMS. Each child will get to bake a treat during their 2-week Christmas holiday from school. The 34 bags will be provided. Baking items needed are cake mix, brownie mix, icing, sprinkles and other decorations, cupcake liners, cookie mix, cookie cutters, small bag of nuts, small vegetable oil, etc. Ouestions? Call Becky W. at 214-455-2921.



Come and celebrate a Christ centered Christmas with other Presbyterian Women.

Submitted by Becky Wakefield, PW Moderator

Big results from "Socks, Shoes, Soup" campaign

210 cans of soup, 187 pairs of socks, and 127 pairs of shoes were collected for Jackson House, a charity that serves the needy in Hot Springs. Judith Rosenthal, Moderator of the Mission Committee, said the staff of Jackson House were "ecstatic" because their grocery shelves were almost empty.

Daryl Henry loaded his car "to the gills" and delivered all the gifts in one trip.

Altogether, over the three years of the Socks, Shoes, and Soup campaign 366 pairs of shoes, 1000 pairs of socks and 557 cans of soup have been donated.

Judith was especially thankful for the congregation's enthusiasm for the project this year, and she hopes that it will continue for years to come. *Contributed by Dotty Rector, Communications Committee member*



Judith Rosenthal photo

The Kirk Finance Committee thanks you!

The Kirk thanks you for your generous support. The number of 2026 estimates of giving that have been received are on par with the number of 2025 estimates of giving!

With your gifts the Kirk community will be able to continue the mission of being a presence of Christ in the Village.

Because of your generosity monthly meals to homebound members will continue every month. The Kirk music program will continue to speak to our spirits through worship in song. Pastoral leadership will continue to offer challenging words for spiritual growth. Mission outreach to aid the least and the last will continue to fill empty dinner plates, offer a safe place to stay for the homeless and put a Christmas gift under the tree for many children.

If you have not had a chance to fill out a 2026 pledge card, there is still an opportunity to do so. 2026 pledge cards are available in the Kirk Office.

Thank you again for supporting the Kirk's mission of love and faith. Your Finance Committee

This Christmas, in lieu of the purchase of a poinsettias, your donation will help share the gift of hope with Project Hope Food Bank. Name of Donor: In Memory of:
In Honor of:
#Poinsettia(s) @\$25.00 Total \$
Make check payable to Presbyterian Kirk in the Pines. Write "Poinsettia" on the notes line on your check.
Place form and check in the offering plate or return to the Kirk office.
Deadline for your offering: Sunday, Dec. 14th
Your heartfelt donation will be acknowledged in the worship bulletin on the weekend before Christmas.



Thank You! from Bob & Judy Corwin

We are truly blessed to have such a caring family of our friends in the Kirk. Both Bob and I appreciate the cards and calls of concern since Bob was diagnosed with Age Related Dementia. It is truly a blessing.

On a personal note, I know how important it is to visit or call the people who are isolated by loss of a family member or failing health themselves. With our trained "therapy dog", Havana, as a Hospice volunteer, I visited nursing homes and private residences to bring a bit of distraction

from their loneliness. Many years, spent alone, is not a healthy existence, so it was important to let them know they have not been forgotten.

Somehow, in some unique way, I believe this attention now being paid to Bob by the employees of Mt. Carmel and our many friends is an unexpected "gift". 1 Peter 5:2 –" Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them - not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be."

Judy

"Everyone's Advent" Kirk Advent Reflections for 2025



Everyone's Advent is a uniquely Kirk in the Pines advent resource provided by the Christian Education Committee. Many of you made contributions to this booklet which follows the weekly Advent candle lighting themes of Hope, Love, Joy and Peace.

The booklets are for your daily use during the 24 days of Advent beginning November 30 and ending on Christmas Eve. Included is a scripture passage along with a brief daily reflection on the advent theme of the week and ending with a short prayer. You will even find some featured recipes for the Christmas holidays!

In addition to your contributions additional reflections are from published material by Kate Bowler, a well-known Christian author. Beverly Carpenter has graciously provided the beautiful artwork in the booklet. *Everyone's Advent* booklets are available at Informal Worship and in the Narthex. Pick one up and enjoy!

Contact Susan Morrow for more information.at susu2morrow@gmail.com or kirkinthepinesvoice@gmail.com for more information.

What makes "Presbyterians" presbyterian?

Traditionally, the governing body of a Presbyterian Church is made up of "elders." The word elder is derived from the Greek word "presbuteros", meaning "old person," to imply maturity and wisdom. From this we derive the name Presbyterian.

There are two types of Presbyterian elders, the teaching elder and the ruling elder. The names indicate the areas of responsibility and training. The teaching elder identifies those with the insight and training to lead the church in the understanding and interpretation of the Bible, the Word of God. They are also versed in the history and traditions of Presbyterian beliefs and its doctrines. These are typically individuals with advanced training, such as ministers.

Ruling elders are those who guide the church in all other aspects of its mission or ministries. This can cover caring for the sick and elderly, maintaining its properties, hiring and guiding staff, supporting various missionary endeavors, and production of a newsletter, to name a few. At the Kirk, these are individuals nominated and elected from the local membership.

All elders are ordained, that is, set apart by the Spirit of God to do God's work. The teaching elders are ordained by the Presbytery. The ruling elders are ordained by the local church.

Presbyterian Kirk in the Pines is governed by 12 elders, including the Clerk of Session. Elders are elected to the Session and each elder is assigned an area of responsibility and are called "moderators" of that area. They meet monthly as a body referred to as a Session.

You will find below articles introducing you to two candidates who have been previously ordained who are nominated for installation to the Session. In addition, David Hamilton, is being nominated to serve a second term in the Class of 2028. Our Nominating Committee members are Ruth Hamilton, David Rosenquist, Martha Nielsen, Blair Stroud, and Gary Rector. We appreciate their service and dedication to identifying leaders for the Kirk. A congregational meeting will follow Sunday morning worship on December 7 for the purpose of electing these candidates. *Modified from an article by Lowell Gardner, Late Former Moderator of the Communications Committee*

Donna Toney nominated to lead Christian Education

Nominee for the Session, Donna Toney, is especially suited to be Moderator of the Education Committee. She has a bachelor's degree in music education and a Master of Music degree. She taught music in the public schools and led children's choirs for years.

Donna will be returning to the session after an abbreviated term she began in 2015. To explain that ten- year lapse, she reminds us that she was moderator of the Education Committee for a year in 2015 but resigned when she became our pianist/organist. She felt that being on staff and session at the same time wouldn't be good. During her year as Christian Education Moderator she and Paul Stivits, a professional musician, and our former sexton, taught a class on general music and reading notations in hymnals.

Donna's vision is to follow the excellent programs already in place and space them out over the year, so we have things of interest to the Kirk members and the community. She hopes to continue and to promote the Lunch and Learn program, Bible study and book study as well. Lunch and Listen is also a possibility. She is open to other suggestions, as well

"It's a pleasure to be of service ", Donna says.

Contributed by Dotty Rector, Communications Committee member

Richard McPheters nominated to lead Missions

Richard McPheters is the nominee for the Session and will assume the role of Moderator of the Missions Committee. Having served on this committee previously, Richard is not new to the work of this important committee. He has some new ideas and is looking forward to presenting them for consideration.

A native of a small town in Idaho, Richard graduated from Montana State University with a degree in Civil Engineering. He lived in Naperville, Illinois, for many years where he served as an Elder on the Session of the local Presbyterian Church and was Moderator of the Finance Committee.

Richard and his late wife, Pat, joined the Kirk in 2013. Richard has had many committee assignments since becoming a member, including the Finance Committee and the Missions Committee. He also served as Kirk Treasurer in the past. He and Pat have also been Shepherd Group leaders.

Contributed by Barbara Worthley, Communications Committee member

David Hamilton nominated for second term

Dave Hamilton is being nominated for a second term on the Session. He serves as Moderator of the Administration Committee. Dave's service to this and other Presbyterian congregations has been extensive and he is very well qualified to lead. Owing to a career with ExxonMobil the Hamilton's spent considerable time in Houston, Tx, where he served as a Deacon, was head of the Personnel Committee and Head of the Board of Deacons at the Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church which at the time had close to 4500 members. For about 10 years he and Ruth served on a non-profit formed from the Missions Committee where they served for about 10 years as leaders, logisticians, and then translators for 1-week medical mission trips to Guatemala as part of Faith in Practice which provides free medical care throughout a large part of the country.

Closer to home Dave served the Kirk as Elder and Moderator of the then Evangelism Committee. He has also served on the Stewardship Committee in the past. And we can't forget to mention his service, now completing a second term, on the Ferncliff Board of Directors where he is on the Finance and Personnel committee. The list goes on but one important duty he is quick to point out is his proud service as "first husband" during Ruth's tenure as Moderator of the Arkansas Presbytery.

On a personal note, Dave and Ruth have been married 61 years and have three adopted sons, all in Texas.

Contributed by Bob Morrow, Communications Committee Moderator

Note: Susan Morrow, currently a member of the Class of 2027 serving as Christian Education Moderator, will complete the remaining two years of her term in the role of Finance Moderator.

Remember to sign-up for your Shepherd Group. Contact Jean Fisher, Head Shepherd with your choice of Shepherd Group.

Phone: 501-922-9344 E-mail: jeanf39@att.net



Pastor's Corner

The theme for this year's Advent and Christmas season is *Expectations*. Remember when, as a child, this was a magical time? You anticipated the gifts you would be receiving, and gloried in the sounds and sights that surrounded you. The Sears Roebuck catalog was dog-eared from your use, and you couldn't wait until that coming day when gifts were opened and your expectations were finally fulfilled.

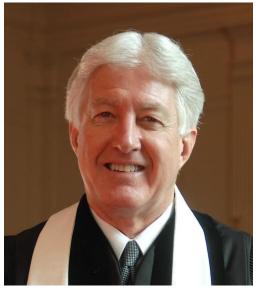
Now, however, the season brings expectations of a different sort. I've been reflecting on this theme for some time now, thinking about the difference between hope and expectation. It seems to me that the latter is hope coupled with a dose of confidence that the promises of God – God's gift to us – will come to fruition. We do not know how, nor do we know when, but that adds to the anticipation of God making things right here on earth as they are in the kingdom of heaven.

We live in the meantime, however, when the word *expectation* is another way of saying *faith*... the faith that despite all the wrong that is in our world, we worship and believe in a God whose vision, from an eternal perspective, is always focused on that which is right.



Japanese Maples grace our Memorial Garden with dramatic fall color.

Priscilla Hayek photo



Pastor Randy Hyde

That, my friends, is the essence of the Advent season. It is not simply a four-week run-up to Christmas. It is the journey that takes us to the place of Jesus' birth and beyond – yes – but it also demands of us an expectation that God has a plan, and that plan is framed by Jesus' way of life and what he calls his followers to do and be.

My hope is that, together as church family, our expectations of the season will find their fullness in our desire to follow the One whose very name, Emmanuel, means that God indeed is with us.

Appreciatively, Pastor Randy

November 30	First Sunday in Advent: Hope Not Interested in Christmas
	NOL II ILEI ESLEU II I CI II ISUITAS
	Matthew 24:36-44
December 7	Second Sunday in Advent: Love
	That'll Be the Day
	Isaiah 11:1-10; Matthew 3:1-12
December 14	Third Sunday in Advent: Joy
	What You Hear and See
	Matthew 11:2-11
December 21	Fourth Sunday in Advent: Peace
	Promised Beforehand
	Isaiah 6:10-16; Matthew 1:18-25;
	Romans 1:1-7

Looking ahead one month, we can see 2026 fast approaching. What that means for your Session, among other things, is that it's the time of year when we put together and approve the budget for next year. So let me talk money with you from a planning point of view. In October you were asked to consider your future financial commitment to the Kirk, and many of you sent in your pledge commitment for 2026. (If you haven't yet, I encourage you to prayerfully do so.) We can't make our expenditure plans without an estimate of income, and 2026 will be a budgeting challenge. (as was 2025). Let me explain the challenge. Right now, we are blessed to have Rev. Hyde, our wonderful retired Transitional Pastor who works part time at a set salary. But, when we call a new minister, we will be paying his/her salary, as well as an additional benefit package that will include things like pension plan, insurance, social security, etc. This extra money can be as much as an additional 40% of the effective salary depending on who is called. Also, at this point we don't know when he/she will be called. Will it be in 1 month, 5 months, 10 months? Do you see the challenge? When will these added expenses kick in? As you can see we are having to make a number of assumptions and estimates as we build our budget.

I am telling you about this first, so you are informed and understand the business of the Kirk, and second, to ask for your prayers as we plan and budget for this next year.

The Clerk's
Corner
Ruth
Hamilton



And on a very positive note, I want you to know that with the same kind of budgetary challenges, 2025 is coming to a close with a positive year-end balance. Thank you for your very generous giving.

Highlights of the November Stated Session Reports—November 14, 2025 Deaths since October 10, 2025: none Church Statistics: Members—162

Households—115

Motion from the Nominating Committee: Move to hold a Called Congregational Meeting on December 7, 2025 for the purpose of electing Elders for the class of 2028. The motion passed.

The Nominating Committee members are Ruth Hamilton, David Rosenquist, Martha Nielsen, Blair Stroud, and Gary Rector



November 30-December 21

Supporting our leaders, past, present and future.

Click here to give and learn more!

Joy Gift

Don't forget to pull your Giving Tree tag!



2024 Giving Tree Robert Sonnen photo

The Christmas Giving Trees are set up in the Narthex and Bailey Hall. Again, this year, the tags will represent children from Vera Lloyd Children's Home, Ouachita Children's Center, and Mountain Pine Head Start.

Tags are available on the trees and we encourage you to take one, or more, to purchase gifts for these children of God.

We are asking for the gifts to be returned by Saturday, December 13 or Sunday, December 14, so they can be delivered in time for Christmas.

We ask that you sign your name in the participation book, when you take a tag from the tree.

Thank you for sharing your love for boys and girls in our community and making their Christmas a little brighter.

Questions?

Contact Mary Ann Reynolds 870-842-0004 or Vicki Rosenquist 706-371-2877.

Contributed by Vicki Rosenquist



Lo, how a rose e'er blooming From tender stem hath sprung! Of Jesse's lineage coming, As men of old have sung. It came, a floweret bright, Amid the cold of winter, When half spent was the night. This flower, whose fragrance tender With sweetness fills the air, Dispels with glorious splendor The darkness everywhere; True man, yet very God, From sin and death He saves us, And lightens every load.

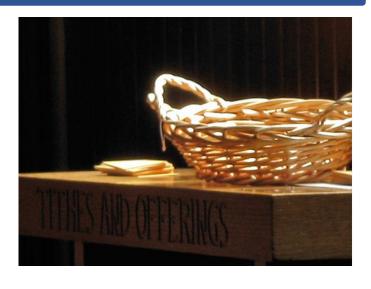
O Savior, child of Mary, Who felt our human woe, O Savior, King of glory, Who dost our weakness know; Bring us at length we pray, To the bright courts of Heaven, And to the endless day!

Financial Report- Year to Date Oct. 30, 2025

Kirk Business Checking Balance Kirk Business Money Market Balance		Total Cash \$18,702 <u>\$50,183</u> \$68,885		
	Oct-25	Actual YTD	Annual Budget	
Receipts				
General Fund Receipts	\$25,249	\$307,518	\$340,811	
TPF Distributions/Gifts	<u>\$1,316</u>	<u>\$5,105</u>	<u>\$98,901</u>	
Total Receipts	\$26,565	\$312,623	\$439,712	
Disbursements				
General Fund Disbursements	\$23,765	\$287,965	\$409,074	
TPF Distributions/Gifts	\$2,125	\$6,766	\$30,638	
Total Disbursements	\$25,890	\$294,731	\$439,712	
Total Net Income (Deficit)	\$676	\$17,892	\$0	
\$1 Missions	\$215	\$2,124	\$3,500	
Kirk Endowment Fund (Sept. 30, 2025)		\$1,130,055		
Kirk Restricted Funds				
Library Memorials		\$3,267		
Maack-Ormsbee Scholarship Fund		\$57,859		
Memorial Garden	\$121,641			
Choir Fund	\$12,701			
Luke 12:48		<u>\$350,206</u>		
Total Restricted Funds (Sept. 30, 2025)		\$545,674		

REMEMBER OUR "DOLLARS FOR MISSIONS" COLLECTION

You can support missions by placing your dollar bill contributions in the collection plates at worship each Saturday and Sunday.



Thanksgiving meal is a "hit" again at the Kirk

The Fellowship Committee pulled off another wonderful Thanksgiving feast, catered by Home Plate, for about 50 attendees. 9 meals were taken home to those who couldn't attend in person. There was plenty of food to go around complimented by delicious pumpkin and pecan pie all seasoned with good spirits and fellowship. Special thanks go to Chip Johnson for helping so much with set up and clean up.

Contributed by Bob Morrow



From the left Sue Mayer, Susan Morrow, Darell Fisher, Rev. Dick Mayer, and son Dave Mayer enjoyed visiting after the meal.



Bob, son Greg, and Judy Corwin enjoyed the meal together.



Bob Morrow photos



Kathy Martin and Woody White are obviously ready for Christmas.



Jeff and Cathy Crandall, friends of Mel and Pat Kuntz who helped out with serving. That's true friendship!



December Birthdays

1	Gary Rector	9	Carolyn Kane	22	Peggy Sowers
	Ruth Hamilton	14	Jack Bullard	28	Robert Sonnen
7	Daryl Henry	15	Della Reimers	28	Becky Wakefield
8	Wendy Gage	18	Arnie Holtberg	30	Susan Morrow

December Anniversaries

1	Sissy & David Wilson	41yrs	19	Jan & Arnie Holtberg	55yrs
5	Gail & David Salmen	55yrs	23	Susan & Bob Morrow	50yrs
17	Debra & Jim Cordell	42yrs	29	Becky & Harry Wakefield	53yrs
			31	Barbara & Jerry McAnarney	14yrs



The 2026 Coffee Calendar is BLANK

.... and ready for you to sign up to make coffee hour happen all year long.

Look for the Coffee Calendar in Bailey Hall and please volunteer to help.

Thanks Vicki Rosenquist



(Changes may occur – check with Kirk office) **Office closed Dec. 25-26.**

Kirk Choir Cantata Dec. 6, 2:00pm

Congregational Meeting Dec. 7 following Sunday worship.

Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols Service, Dec.24, 5:00 pm, Sanctuary Ageless Grace/Tai Chi- Dec. 2, 9, 16, 23 - 3:30 Bailey Hall Pilgrimage Renewal-Dec.13, 10:00, Smallman Parlor Helping Hands-Dec 9- 9:00 Choir Rehearsal- Wed. 3:00, Dec. 3, 17

Committee Meetings

Session- Dec. 12, 10:00

Administration- Dec. 9, 10:00

Communications- Dec. 3, 1:45

Congregational Care-Dec. 11,

1:00

Finance- Dec.11, 10:00

Member Outreach- Dec. 3, 12:45

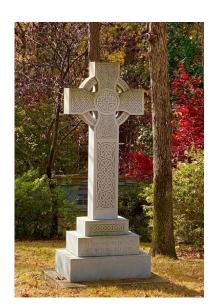
Mission Committee- Dec. 11, 3:00

Kirk Staff

Randy Hyde- Pastor
Tina Kneisler- Music Director
Kathleen Kinney- Organist/Pianist
Ruth Manweiler- Pianist (Informal Worship)
Chris Taylor-Wilmoth- Secretary
Arthur "Chip" Johnson- Sexton

A Voice in the Pines is a monthly publication of Presbyterian Kirk in the Pines. It is produced and edited by the Kirk's Communication Committee, Bob Morrow, Moderator.

Its email address is: kirkinthepinesvoice@gmail.com



Session

Clerk of the Session: Ruth Hamilton
Dave Hamilton- Administration
Robert Sonnen- Building
Susan Morrow- Christian Education
Bob Morrow- Communications (Trustee)
Susan Pendergrass- Congregational Care
Pat Kuntz- Fellowship (Trustee)
Sharon Gardner- Finance
Priscilla Hayek- Grounds/Memorial Garden
Wendy Gage- Member Outreach
Judith Rosenthal- Missions
Jane Moore- Worship (Trustee)
PW Moderator- Becky Wakefield

Presbyterian Kirk in the Pines 275 Asturias Drive Hot Springs Village, AR 71909

Phone: 501-922-1333

Email: kirkoffice1@gmail.com

Website: www.kirkinthepines.org