**Sunday Parking Reminder**

Please do not block the ATM lane at Palmetto Citizens Federal Credit Union; towing is enforced 24/7. Please park only in their marked parking spaces.

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**Women of the Church Christmas Coffee**

Tuesday, December 4, at 11:00 a.m. in Jackson Hall Fellowship, refreshments, Golden Angel Awards, and White Cross Offering

Childcare to K5 is available with reservation on the church app and website.

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**First Fridays Organ Concert**

Friday, December 7, enjoy lunch and an organ concert at First Presbyterian Church. Lunch will be at 12:00 p.m. in The Bridge followed by an organ concert at 12:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Lunch is $5.00.

Music for December 7: “Christmas”—Music by Bach, Brahms, and Andrew Carter

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**New Christmas Ornaments**

Our new brass Christmas ornament depicting the church is available for $10.00 in the Library on the second floor of The Bridge and also in Barbara Shealy’s office. Please use the envelopes provided at each location for your payment; if you pay with a check, please make the check out to First Presbyterian Church with “ornament” on the memo line. Merry Christmas!

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**Advent is Here**

I once began an exploration of my family tree, spending a day in the National Archives building in central London. I learned some interesting things: that my mother’s family had a news-agents business (stores selling newspapers, books, stationery, and other related items) in London during the nineteenth century that rivaled what is today the most successful in Britain. Also, the business evidently tanked since there was no evidence of its existence at the turn of the century. What I learned most was that tracing ancestors is not an easy task. There were too many loose ends and far too many conclusions based on the flimsiest evidence. I have not pursued the matter any further, which disappoints me.

Advent begins by tracing a family tree, one based on rock-solid evidence. The opening sentence of Matthew’s Gospel reads as if he were sitting in the National Archives building. “(Literally) The book of the genesis of Jesus Christ” (Matthew 1:1), translated in the ESV as “The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ.” And, fascinatingly, Matthew goes all the way back to the book of Genesis. The first book of the Bible is called “Genesis” because the Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint) rendered “In the beginning...” as “γένεσις,” “genesis.” The genesis of Jesus (his humanity) goes back to Genesis.

In fact, Matthew traces Jesus’ lineage back to the patriarch, Abraham, one of the principal characters of the book of Genesis (Matthew 1:2). Why stop at Abraham? Luke goes even further back—to Adam (Luke 3:27). The answer has to do with how Matthew ends his Gospel—with the Great Commission, Jesus’ command to go and make disciples of “all nations” (Matthew 28:16-20), a clear reference to something God said when we first encounter Abraham (then known as Abram):

And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. (Genesis 12:2-3)

Abraham, in a way, bookends the Gospel of Matthew. And Matthew wants us to see that the way God will bless the nations—the promise that he made to Abram (later Abraham) was by sending his Son, Jesus Christ, into the world. The story of Christmas begins in the book of Genesis. And, in that sense, the whole Bible is about Jesus.

Derek W.H. Thomas
Senior Minister

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**Kids Program Schedule**

Centerpoint Kids Programs: December 5 – Children’s Christmas Program Rehearsal, K5-5th grade children, in the Family Life Center from 6:00 - 6:45 p.m. There will be nursery and K4 Catechism Class. Children can be picked up from rehearsal at 6:45 p.m. For parents who would like to stay for Centerpoint adult Bible studies, we will have children’s activities until 7:00 p.m.

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**Church Family**

Congratulations to:

Nola and Mike Burnette on the birth of their grandson, Joseph William Taylor, on November 16. Grateful parents are Nola and Will Taylor.

Mildred and Joe Tabor celebrating their 65th wedding anniversary on November 26.

Christian sympathy is extended to:

Timothy (Tim) Huebel on the death of his father, Jared M. Huebel, on November 26.

**Items for Church Family or People for Prayer?**

Contact Lisa Eargle at leargle@firstprescolumbia.org or 799-9062, Ext. 244.

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**In Memoriam**

W. Thomas (Tom) Wood
August 24, 1932 - November 26, 2018
December Events at First

Committee meetings this week:
3 Deacon Chairs - 5:00 p.m. in BR001
3 Diaconate Meeting - 5:30 p.m. in BR201
4 Pastoral Care Committee - 4:30 p.m. in P402A

2 Angel Tree Gift Deadline - Please return your gift-wrapped presents by December 2 at either of the Angel Tree tables in the Atrium or the Palmer entry.

4 WOC Board Meeting - 10:00 a.m. in BR201
4 WOC Christmas Coffee - 11:00 a.m. in Jackson Hall. Childcare to K5 is available with reservation on the church app and website.

6 Encouragers’ Christmas Reception - 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. in Jackson Hall Robin McNair will play her concert harp for us. Open to anyone over 50. Reservation deadline is noon on December 3 with Lisa Eargle: leargle@firstprescolumbia.org or 799-9062, Ext. 455.

6 College Christmas Party - 6:00 p.m. at the Ridgeways’ home
7 First Fridays Organ Concert - 12:00 p.m. - lunch in BR125; concert at 12:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary
9 USC Concert Choir Christmas Concert - during the 6:00 p.m. evening service in the Sanctuary.

10-12 WOC Circles Meeting
14 Young Professionals’ Christmas Party - 6:30 p.m. at the Thomases’ home
24 Christmas Eve Services - 3:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary
25 Christmas Holiday - Church office closed
26 No Wednesday church activities
27 Lord of the Rings Movie Marathon - 8:30 a.m. in the Wardlaw Auditorium

For more information on any upcoming events, please visit our website at firstprescolumbia.org or download our church app.