

December 2019 Newsletter

First Presbyterian Church, 721 Church St., Jefferson City, TN 37760, Phone: 865-475-2761

E-mail: fpcjctn@gmail.com Website: www.fpcjeffcity.org Rev. Dave Strickler, Pastor

Dear Church Family,

In the blink of an eye December (and with it, the season of Advent) is suddenly upon us! The unexpected, suddenly appearing in our midst, is a theme this season as we wait for our Lord's coming. "About that day and hour no one knows," Jesus says to his disciples, "Keep awake, therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming...the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour" (Matthew 24:36, 42, 44). As we look forward to the Christ who was born in a manger, attended by shepherds and born of a woman who faced both poverty and scandal, we await the coming of a Savior who arrives in unexpected places, who is heralded by unexpected people, and who enters our world in unexpected ways. How do we prepare ourselves to expect the unexpected?

With an eye to the unexpected, I'm proposing a change of schedule. We keep time during this season by lighting the Advent wreath, one candle each week to mark our progress toward the night Christ is born. We ordinarily begin the season with the Hope candle, make our way through the Peace, Joy, and Love candles, and then greet our Savior on Christmas Eve with the Christ Candle. This year I'm proposing we begin with the Love candle, and wait on the Hope candle until the fourth Sunday of Advent. Beginning with Love means that Love becomes our cornerstone in building toward Peace and Joy, and perhaps this gives us the greatest foundation for Hope. Love teaches us how to Hope, what to Hope for, in whom to place our Hope. Is there a better way to prepare for the unexpected—to learn how to Hope—than to begin with Love?

Jesus teaches us in a parable about the final judgment, "As you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me" (see Matthew 25:31-46). Is there anything more unexpected than discovering the face of God in the faces of the hungry, the thirsty, the foreigner, the homeless, the sick, and the prisoner? Jesus teaches that the greatest commandments—to love God and to love neighbor—become one in the same when we show love to the "least of these." Love among the "least of these" is the key to a spirituality that opens our eyes to the Savior who appears among us in unexpected people. Love among the "least of these" loosens our feet to keep in step with the Spirit, who blows where it wills, taking us to unexpected places and transforming us in unexpected ways along the journey.

This Advent season, I invite you into a journey with Matthew 25. As a congregation, we will be using a devotional built around these themes entitled *Straw for the Manger: Creating a Matthew 25 Advent Season*, written by Rev. Sherry Blackman. She writes in

her introduction,

Let us actively prepare the manger for the Christ child by each day adding a piece of "straw" to his bed—an act of love carried out in his name. Let us offer a sip of water to the thirsty, swaddle the naked with holy arms, care for the sick and the sick at heart, and set the captives free from prisons of isolation, loneliness, addiction and guilt. We can do all of these things with grace and truth and the tender gestures of our bare hands. And as we do, we become kingdom people, birthing love in the world.

The devotional offers readings, prayers, and invitations to action for each day, as well as space to journal each week. There is no cost, so please pick up your copy of the Advent devotional in the church narthex or main hallway at your convenience.

Let's take this journey together—as individuals, as families, and as a congregation—and see where it leads us as a people built up in love. In the name of our unexpected Savior Jesus, who is himself our Love, our Peace, our Joy, and our Hope, I sincerely wish you a Happy Christmas

In Christ,
Dave



Announcements



AO COATS FOR THE COLD

Members of FPC will be helping to set up for the event on Wednesday, December 4th, at 6:30 p.m. If you are interested in helping, please contact Kay Gowan.

CHILDREN GINGERBREAD HOUSE PARTY

Mark your calendars for Saturday, December 7th, at 11:00 a.m. for the annual Christmas gingerbread house party and a light lunch in the Church Fellowship Hall. Pre-K to Grade 5 are welcome to join us. Please bring your gingerbread kit. RSVP to Kathy at jkjuoff@gmail.com or 475-8634.

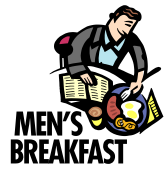


First Presbyterian Church
721 Church St.
Jefferson City, TN 37760



Christmas can be a painful time for some. The constant refrain on the radio and television, in shopping malls and churches, about the happiness of the season, about getting together with family and friends, reminds many people of what they have lost or never have had. It may be the first Christmas without a loved one who has recently died; it may be a time that has always been difficult. The anguish of broken relationships, the insecurity of unemployment, the weariness of ill health, the pain of isolation—all these can make us feel very alone in the midst of the celebrating and spending. We need the space and time to acknowledge our sadness and concern; we need to know that we are

not alone. For these reasons, we will offer a "Blue Christmas" Service, a service to acknowledge sorrow and sadness during this season of joy. Recognizing that grief does not respect differences of denomination, but afflicts us all, this year's service will be a joint endeavor, led by the pastors of First Presbyterian Church, First United Methodist Church, and First Baptist Church. **The service will be hosted on Tuesday, December 17th at 6:30 p.m. in the sanctuary of First Presbyterian Church.** Come out and join us in sharing and hearing prayers, scripture, and music, affirming that God's presence is with those who mourn and those who struggle—and that God's Word comes to shine light in our darkness. Even if you are not mourning a loss this season, please be encouraged to attend out of solidarity with others, for, as the apostle Paul put it, we as the community of faith are called to "weep with those who weep." Everyone, regardless of religious background (or lack of it), is welcome. (This is a revised version of an article provided by the Northwest Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and is used with permission.)



MEN'S PRAYER BREAKFAST

The next Men's Breakfast is scheduled for Tuesday, December 10th, at 8:00 a.m. at Owen's Family Restaurant in Dandridge for a time of study and fellowship. We hope to see you here!

CSC DELIVERY

The next delivery for our Church Street Café supplies from Mid-west Food Bank will be on Wednesday, December 11th, at 11:30 a.m. We are always in need of volunteers to help unload, put items away, and pack give away bags. If you have any questions, please contact Linda Noonkesser (865-216-0715).

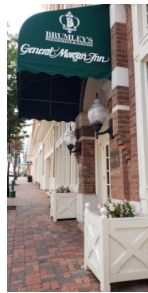


CHILDRENS MUSIC PROGRAM

First Presbyterian, First Methodist, and First Baptist of Jefferson City will be combining children's choirs for a Christmas program. The program will be Wednesday, December 11th at 6:00 p.m., at First United Methodist Church.

DECEMBER GOING-ON GROUP

On Wednesday, December 11th, we will be having lunch at The General Morgan Inn in Greeneville, TN. After lunch, you may want to visit Andrew Johnson's homestead, the Museum and the Taylor Shop in the Downtown Historic area. Reservations are required for lunch so please contact Barbara Wilson at 475-8585 or e-mail bjwilson221@gmail.com no later than **Sunday, December 1st**. We will meet at the church at 10:30 to carpool.



SAMARITAN HOUSE CHRISTMAS DINNER

The annual Samaritan House Christmas Dinner will be held on Thursday, December 12th, at 6:30 p.m. We are in need of food donations and servers. If you would like to make a monetary donation, please note Samaritan House Dinner in the memo line. If you have any questions or would like to sign up, please call JoAnne Vest at 865-680-4416.



WOMEN'S PRAYER BREAKFAST

The December Women's Prayer Breakfast will be in the church Fellowship Hall on Saturday, December 14th, from 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. We ask that every one bring a dish to share. If you have any questions, please contact Debby Rinehart.



CHRISTMAS PROGRAM AND SPECIAL FELLOWSHIP

The youth and children's Christmas program will be on Sunday, December 15th, during our worship service. Immediately following Worship, everyone is invited to the Fellowship Hall for a special Christmas Fellowship time. We are asking everyone to bring a finger foods to share with the congregation. Beverages will be provided. If you have any questions, please see JoAnne Vest.

SIT 'N KNIT GROUP

The Sit 'n Knit group will be meeting on Friday, December 20th, at 7:00 p.m. at the home of Kathy Juroff (1250 Groseclose Rd., Jefferson City). If you have any questions, please see Debby Rinehart.



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

Our Annual Christmas Eve Candlelight Service is scheduled for **5:00 p.m.** on Monday, December 24th. Be sure to be here for this special service!

OFFICE CLOSED/STAFF OUT OF OFFICE

Please note the Church Office will be closed Monday, December 23rd and reopening Monday, December 30th. Please note that Dave will be out of the office beginning Monday, December 30th and returning on Monday, January 6th. Rev. Rich Fifield will be our guest speaker on Sunday, January 5th.

Did You Know?



- Our new website is live! Our web address is still the same (www.fpcjeffcity.org), but the look will be different, so please head over to our new page, have a look around, and let us know what you think!
- We have several special worship services in our calendar this month. In particular, pay close attention to our ecumenical Children's Christmas program (12/11), Blue Christmas Service (12/17), and Christmas Eve Service of Lessons, Carols, and Candlelight (12/24).



A PERFECT GIFT THIS ADVENT SEASON

In the lead up to Christmas, many of us spend time in search of the *perfect gift* — the gift that communicates to friends and family how much we know and love them. We search our memories for indications of what gift might cause the faces of our loved ones to light up. We scour the stores and shops, hoping to come across the thing that will communicate a depth of love that our words cannot.

As important as gifts to loved ones are, we have an opportunity to give gifts that help many people we do not know through the Christmas Joy Offering. These gifts in particular

draw us back to the manger and God's perfect gift to us — Jesus Christ.

Jesus came to live among us, bringing light into darkness, and reconciliation to God and to one another. A perfect gift from a gracious God.

During this Christmas and Advent Season, we celebrate leadership; past, present and future through support of the Christmas Joy Offering. We do so because church leaders greatly impact our lives of faith, walking with us down the path to be more like Jesus. We want those church leaders and their families who find themselves grappling with a critical financial need to have the resources they need which are provided through the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions. We also support the offering to help our future leaders in the church and world, like those educated at our Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. Supporting these students helps the whole church develop leaders who reflect the wideness of God's intended diversity.

For those supported through the Christmas Joy Offering, this help is truly a gift from above. May our gifts, and the leaders who receive them, point us always to the truth of the one whose birth we celebrate, Jesus Christ — the truly perfect gift.

We will collect the Christmas Joy offering on Sunday, December 22nd. Offering envelopes will be in the pews beginning on Sunday, December 8th.

PRAYER CONCERNS

SPECIAL CONCERNS:

Lynn and Judy Watkins	Judy Finley	Sara Piper	John Rinehart
Kenneth Winslow	Arlene Peck	The Washam Family	

Sherry, co-worker of Katie Porter, whose mother has been diagnosed with cancer and brother Joe, who passed away
All members of the military and their families, especially those stationed overseas.

ILL AND RECOVERING:

Faye Wheeler, friend of Debby Rinehart, who is recovering from colon cancer surgery
David Johnson, Debby Rinehart's brother, who is recovering from back surgery
Emma Daniels, student at Joppa Elementary School, who was diagnosed with leukemia
Bobbi Johnson, sister-in-law of Debby Rinehart, who is recovering from surgery
Frank Rogers, father of Roxanne Moser, who continues to battle infection
B.J., friend of Martha Sanders, who is undergoing treatment for breast cancer
Elaine G., friend of Martha Sanders, who is undergoing chemo & radiation treatments for breast cancer
Cindy B., friend of Martha Sanders, who has been diagnosed with Stage 4 B-Cell Lymphoma
Juanita Dykstra, who is undergoing cancer treatments
Heather Andrews, cousin of Andy Acuff, who is undergoing treatment for breast cancer

IN RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES:

CHANDLER HOUSE: C.R. Vest, Frank Woodard
SIGNATURE HEALTHCARE of JEFF CITY: Paulette Bozeman, Pat Patton (Rm 117)
LIFECARE MORRISTOWN: Elsie Sorey (Rm 209)

"More light than we can learn, more wealth than we can treasure, more love than we can earn, more peace than we can measure, because one Child is born."

—Author unknown



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Communion Sunday School 9:30-10:30 a.m. Worship Service 10:45-11:45 a.m. HANGING OF THE GREENS SERVICE Jarret Moser	2	3 Presbytery Meeting Building & Grounds 6:30 p.m.	4 Mission Committee 4:00 p.m. COATS FOR THE COLD SETUP 6:30 p.m.	5	6	7 Gingerbread Making 11:00 a.m.
8 Sunday School 9:30-10:30 a.m. Worship Service 10:45-11:45 a.m. SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT	9 Stewardship & Finance Committee 5:30 p.m.	10 Men's Breakfast 8:00 a.m. Church Street Café 5:00-6:30 p.m.	11 Church Street Café Truck Delivery 11:30 a.m. Children's Christmas Program 6:00 p.m. At FUMC	12 Samaritan House 6:30 p.m. Marianne Reese Terry Jaros	13 John Neal & Deborah Scarlett	14 Women's Breakfast 9:00 a.m. Bill Vest, Sr.
15 Sunday School 9:30-10:30 a.m. Worship Service 10:45-11:45 a.m. THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT Children's Christmas Sunday & Fellowship Lunch	16	17 Blue Christmas Service 6:30 p.m.	18 Session Christmas Dinner 6:30 p.m. Libby Moser Doug & Juanita Dykstra	19	20 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE Sit 'n Knit 7:00 p.m. Larry Musick George & Gail Twine	21 Rich & Connie Harlan
22 Sunday School 9:30-10:30 a.m. Worship Service 10:45-11:45 a.m. FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT	23	24 Christmas Eve Service 5:00 p.m. -----	25  CHRISTMAS DAY OFFICE CLOSED ----- HEATHER OUT	26	27	28
29 Sunday School 9:30-10:30 a.m. Worship Service 10:45-11:45 a.m. Debby Rinehart	30 ----- DAYE OUT	31 Vicki Garbacik	 December 2019			



FPC ANNUAL FAMILY RETREAT
JANUARY 24-26, 2020

In the cold and dark of winter, step into the light of God's love with your family of faith for our annual congregational retreat. From Friday evening through Sunday morning, we will spend time worshiping the living God, resting in God's goodness, and finding time to experience the warm fire, working puzzles, and eating popcorn.

For more information, please call the church office at (865) 475-2761.

Return this sign up sheet with payment by Sunday, December 15th. WE NEED 25 PEOPLE SIGNED UP BY DECEMBER 15th OR WE WILL NEED TO CANCEL THE RETREAT FOR 2020.

Retreat cost includes 2 nights lodging and 4 meals. (Saturday breakfast, lunch, and dinner and Sunday breakfast)

If you will need childcare during group times, please check the box below.

1 ST PERSON:	\$115
2 ND PERSON:	\$90
3 RD PERSON:	\$60
4 TH PERSON:	\$60

YOUR TOTAL \$ _____

_____ I WILL NEED CHILDCARE

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

(November 13, 2019)

- Session approved the December calendar and received reports from the Worship and Fellowship and Evangelism Committees.
- Session also initiated a process of reviewing the structure and procedures of the Personnel Committee.
- Two letters were sent out from the Session to the congregation over the last couple months: one letter directly inviting you into a congregation-wide conversation about discerning our future as a church, and another letter regarding our stewardship season. Accordingly, the bulk of our meeting as a Session was dedicated to discernment, exploring where we are as a community as well as how our budget is looking for next year. At this stage in our discernment, we are asking more questions than we have answers to, but we trust that we are moving forward together in a spirit of charity and responsibility. Discernment remains an ongoing process that will continue into the new year, and, in the meantime, we are grateful to all who have shared with us their reflections, concerns, and encouragements over that last few weeks.

FINANCE REPORT

MONTHLY INCOME

NOVEMBER 3	\$5,151.00
NOVEMBER 10	\$2,598.75
NOVEMBER 17	\$2,044.00
NOVEMBER 24	\$5,715.00

TOTAL	\$15,508.75
--------------	--------------------

(\$16,780 is needed monthly to meet budget)

YEAR-TO-DATE (YTD) INCOME/EXPENSES

	YTD ACTUAL	YTD PRORATED	YTD BUDGET
INCOME	\$180,794.60	\$174,607.60**	\$184,573.59
EXPENSES	\$180,341.75		\$197,933.66

YTD ACTUAL INCOME OVER EXPENSES: 452.85

YTD PRORATED INCOME OVER EXPENSES: -\$5,724.15

***** Some members pay their entire yearly pledges in January.
This number has been adjusted to reflect what actual giving
through November would be, if completed yearly pledges, were
divided out monthly. If you have questions, please see Heather.***