

December Newsletter 2025

“I waited patiently for the Lord . . . ” (Psalm 40:1)

“Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.” (Luke 2:25)

The Gift of Waiting

Dear Church Family,

Welcome to another Advent Season! On the heels of a day called Thanksgiving, when we express our gratitude for the gifts God has given and is giving, these days leading up to Christmas tend to be about the anticipation of gifts. We plan, purchase, wrap, gaze under the tree and – eventually – open gifts of all sizes and shapes. Some gifts will be treasured for years to come and some forgotten in mere weeks.

But there is a present we can all receive every day. Advent accentuates this gift for those who worship and follow Jesus in the days leading up to the announcement that a “Savior has been born in the city of David.” (Luke 2:11) It’s a gift that nobody asks for or enjoys initially; one that we don’t naturally gravitate towards or request. But it comes, nevertheless. The Psalmist knew it well, as did old Simeon. It is the gift of waiting.

In an age that tells us waiting is the last thing anyone needs or should desire – that we ought to have it our way as quickly, conveniently and ‘pain-freely’ as possible – Advent is woefully out-of-touch. Who wants to wait? Why wait? What good is waiting, anyways?

We have no problem giving our kids and grandkids answers to these questions. Waiting builds anticipation, which leads to more joy and appreciation. Waiting builds resilience, character, and patience. Waiting keeps us humble. For the people of God, waiting also keeps us in the posture of prayerful attentiveness. Finally, waiting deepens our faith as we celebrate the first Advent (Arrival) of Christ and wait for His return.

Let’s wait together this Advent. Let’s journey together in “The Wilderness of Waiting” – the title of our Advent sermon series. At least we won’t have to wait any longer for our Associate Pastor! Josh Mikelson (and Heather and Cameron) will have just arrived as we begin these four weeks leading up to Christmas and I am excited to share this sermon series with him . . . and all of you.

Merry Christmas!

Faithfully yours,



Advent Series

This coming Advent, our **worship and teaching will center on the theme of Waiting**—honoring both the anticipation of Jesus' first arrival and the faithful longing for His return. Each week we will explore moments of waiting from Zechariah and Elizabeth's long-awaited hope, to Mary and Joseph's quiet trust, to Simeon's patient expectation for the “consolation of Israel”. This series will invite us to reflect on how waiting is woven into the story of Christ's coming and how we too, are called to be people who wait with hope.

Poinsettias

Poinsettias may be purchased at either sign-up location through **Sunday, December 14**. The cost is \$25. You may designate whom you would like to honor or memorialize with your purchase. The poinsettias will be displayed in the Sanctuary and the Multi-Purpose Room throughout the season and will be available to take home after the 4:30 pm and 6:00 pm Christmas Eve services (or they can be donated to our homebound individuals and families).

SAM Game Day

Please note that SAM Game Day will not meet in December. If you are interested in attending game day, we would enjoy your feedback about the best day of the week, time of day, and games you are interested in playing. Contact Charity Finnigsmier at sam@firstpresj.org or 970-242-1923.

Operation Christmas Child

Thank you to everyone who filled a shoebox this year for Operation Christmas Child. First Pres filled 131 boxes, did 40 boxes online, and gave \$2,270 to help fill additional boxes and cover postage costs.

2025 Giving Trees

The Salvation Army Giving Tree and the Nursing Home Giving Tree are up with gift tags. For the Salvation Army Tree, please choose a child (or two) you would enjoy shopping for and record your name and phone number next to the appropriate **green dot** number in the book near the trees. Your **unwrapped** gifts should be brought to the church by **Sunday, December 14, 2025**. Please make sure you attach your gift tag to the unwrapped gift so that we get that gift to the right child. If you would like to include wrapping paper with the gift so that the parents of children receiving the gifts can wrap the gifts, please feel free to do so. If you decide that you would like to do a gift certificate for the child you have picked, please give it directly to Debe Colby so that it doesn't get lost in the boxes and bags.

For the Nursing Home Giving Tree, please choose a tag and record your name and phone number next to the number in the book near the tree. Your **wrapped** gift should be brought to the church by **Sunday, December 14, 2025**. Please attach the tag to the gift.

The gifts for both trees will be dedicated in church at each service on Sunday, December 14. We will be delivering the Salvation Army gifts on Monday, December 15 and the Nursing Home gifts on Tuesday, December 16.

Senior Adult Luncheon

Please join us for the next **Senior Adult Luncheon** on Monday, December 8th from 11:30am-1:15pm in Fellowship Hall. This month we welcome Chaplain Thomas Noble with Mesa County Jail Ministry to learn about what is provided for inmates and how you can support the ministry. If you would like to sing along with some Christmas Carols, please join us from 11-11:30 am. Our meal will be catered by The Ribber, providing pork tenderloin, roasted potatoes, and vegetables. Please bring a side dish to share. Sign up at the Information Desk to attend.

GriefShare

If you have lost a loved one and are feeling uncertain about how to navigate the holiday season, please visit www.griefshare.org and join Victory Life Church for a one day event, ***Surviving the Holidays***, on Friday, December 12th. Several churches in the valley will also be starting 13-week support groups. By entering your zip code on the website, you can find a group that best fits your schedule. First Presbyterian Church will be providing a take-away postcard with some tips on Surviving the Holidays. Postcards will be found at the Information Desk or in Fellowship Hall. If you have questions, please contact Charity Finnigsmier by calling the church office 970-242-1923.

2026 Mission Fair - Save the Date

The 2026 Mission Fair is coming up on **February 15**. This is the 21st year for the fair. The fair will be in the Multi-Purpose Room, and coffee and refreshments will be available. We have several new organizations joining us this year as well as many of the organizations you have seen in past years. Some are mission organizations that we support with Mission and Outreach funding and others are local organizations that, although we don't financially support them, we have many church members who volunteer with these groups. A list of the organizations will be available on Sunday morning, February 15. The fair will run from 8:00 am to 11:30 am. Coffee hour will run until 11:30. If you are interested in helping the Mission Team with the fair, we would appreciate your help. Helping involves welcoming the different organizations on that Sunday morning, visiting with their representatives before and after each service, and helping with coffee hour as we provide a large assortment of food on that Sunday morning.

Joy Offering & Local Joy Offering

As we have been doing for several years, we will be taking a **Christmas Joy Offering at the Christmas Eve services**. The offering will be for either the Joy Offering or to our local mission organizations. The PCUSA Joy Offering has been a cherished Presbyterian tradition since the 1930s. The Offering distributes gifts equally to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. The Assistance Program provides critical financial support to church workers and their families. Presbyterian-related schools and colleges provide education and leadership development while nurturing racial and ethnic heritage. This has been a Presbyterian commitment for nearly 140 years. The Joy offering designated for local mission will go to support the various organizations and local missionaries that First Pres supports. If you use the Joy Offering envelope, it will go to the PC (USA) Joy Offering. If you choose to support our local mission organizations, make your check out to FPC with "local mission support" on the memo line.

Health Ministry Team

The Health Ministry Team is sponsoring a **6-week Healthy Living group starting in 2026**. This group will be based on The Daniel Plan by Pastor Rick Warren, Dr Daniel Amen, and Dr Mark Hyman. Two introductory, informational meetings will be held – one during the day and one in the evening. Date and time to be determined. If you are interested in learning more and want to attend one of the meetings, please contact Charity Finnigsmier at sam@firstpresgj.org or by calling the church office at (970) 242-1923.

Light Born of Light Christmas Festival 2025

Saturday, December 6
3:00 & 5:00 pm - Sanctuary

Join us for a joyful celebration of the season at First Presbyterian Church on **Saturday, December 6** at **3:00 pm** or **5:00 pm** as we present “Light Born of Light” — a festival of music and worship proclaiming the wonder of Christ’s birth. Featuring the Chancel Choir, Handbell Choir, Orchestra, and Congregation, this uplifting program will fill your heart with the beauty and hope of Christmas. Arrive early to secure a seat and enjoy the music. Bring family and friends as we lift our voices in celebration of the Light that shines in the darkness!

Carol & Chili Cook-Off

It's time for our annual **Carol & Chili Cook-Off Party!** Caroling will begin at 4 pm on Sunday, December 7. Then at 6 pm, the chili cook-off kicks off! Warm up your voice and fire up your best chili recipe and come join the fun! Prizes will be awarded in a variety of categories. Sign up at the Info Desk and come join us for a great time of fun and fellowship!

Christmas Eve Services

Wednesday, December 24

We invite you to join us for one of our Christmas Eve services as we celebrate the birth of our Savior together. Please note that things will look a little different this year—services will be slightly shorter, and the Children’s Program will run concurrently with a Traditional service.

Service Times:

- ◆ 3:00 PM – Traditional Christmas Eve Service in the Sanctuary
- ◆ 3:30 PM – Children’s Program (held during the 3:00 service) in the MPR
- ◆ 4:30 PM – Traditional Christmas Eve Service in the Sanctuary
- ◆ 6:00 PM – Contemporary Christmas Eve Service in the MPR

We'll gather to hear the timeless story of Christ's birth, sing beloved carols, and remember that the story of Jesus' birth invites us not only to celebrate His arrival, but to enter into the waiting and expectation of His coming again.

Blue Christmas Service

Sunday, December 14
3:00 pm - Multi-Purpose Room (MPR)

For many, the Christmas season carries grief, loneliness, or quiet pain. Our Blue Christmas service offers a gentle, contemplative space to acknowledge those feelings together. Through candles, music, silence, and prayer, we'll remember the One who shares our burdens and brings light into darkness. Whether you come seeking comfort or simply to hold space for others, all are welcome. Come alone or invite a friend—this is a time for the church to be present for one another.