

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF DURHAM

"Downtown by history and by choice"

December 5, 2017

From the Pastor . . .

Dear friends,

Years ago, in an article in *The Christian Century*, I found a story that left me wrapped in the awe and wonder of the season of Advent. The story is by Kathleen Hirsch and it is titled "Advent with a Toddler." I share it with you this week so that as you enter into the season of Advent, with its candles, preparation, waiting, minor keys, and hopeful anticipation of the coming of the Christ child and Christ's coming again to earth, you might think about the moments of wonder in your own life and the way God touches you with simple, honest acts of love and brings you a glimpse of the holy. Enjoy.

I was potting the last of the jam when my son disappeared from the kitchen. I heard rummaging in the living room, then the metallic tinkle of ornaments on the lower boughs. Minutes later he was standing beside me, a solemn three-year-old holding a stuffed red heart that he'd taken from the tree.

"Mommy," he announced. "Pretend that I am Gabriel."

I looked at the chocolate around his lips, the sleeves of his Henley rolled up for wings, and his utterly sincere and serious eyes.

"Kneel down, Mommy," he instructed me.

I obliged. Gabriel and I were face-to-face, inches apart, in front of the stove.

"Mary," he addressed me. "You shall have a son. And this," he extended the plush red heart toward my face. "This is your holy."

Here, he paused for emphasis. "You must carry your holy with you always, Mommy—even around your neck—so that Jesus will know that he is holy too."

I looked at the heart offering, velvet and gold, resting in my hand. What to do with the hot coals of a prophet?

Then, perhaps overcome by the force of his own inspiration, my Gabriel turned and fled back to the crèche to distribute more of the "holy" to the creatures assembled there.

Slowly I got to my feet. For a moment my son had seen heaven and had offered me a glimpse. Not long out of diapers, he had lanced the literal with the intuition of a sage. Truth's vital core, the beckoning center of everything, is its holiness. Without the holy, life—even simplified, even with terrific gingerbread and jam—is dust.

I looked at the heart again. My world doesn't involve a lot of angel sightings, but as I reflected on what had just transpired, I realized that my world didn't leave much room for wonder either. My son was far better attuned to the ways in which the sacred speaks. It comes to us on the wing; it grazes the heart. Only after long contemplation does it coalesce into something that we can put words to.

"Lest you become like children, you won't enter the kingdom of heaven," the words rang in my ears.

Keep alert, friends, watch and wait with wonder, and may you find your own holy this Advent season.

With love,
Mindy

OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS



CONGRATULATIONS . . .

. . . to **Arthur and Mary Clark** who recently celebrated their 75th wedding anniversary (and Mary's birthday). Not many couples can make this claim! Check out this photo that captured the celebration with a few friends!

. . . to **John and Betsy Robinson** on the birth of a granddaughter. **Lyla Josephine Olimpo** was born December 4 to **Emma and Michael**.

We extend sympathies to:

Melinda Ruley, Stewart Fisher and family on the death of Melinda's mom; and to **Mercy Ndambiri-Curlett and family** on the death of three relatives in Kenya last week: **Faith Nginy'i** (first cousin), **Benjamin Bachoki** (nephew, age 17), **Asneth Gacibi** (aunt).

Added this week:

Jean Cary, home recovering from outpatient surgery
Marc Crawford, friend of Brianna and Ricky Bennett
Kristin Meade, home recovering from outpatient surgery
Rosemary Seve, in Kenya visiting family for the holidays
Wagner family and **Wintermute/Littles families**, friends of Kerry Holbrook

Bill Lorimer

Julie Maxwell

Ruth and Russell Roberson

Atria Senior Living: Peggy Mordecai, mother of Beth Eisenson

Brookdale Senior Living (Durham): Julian Boswell

Croasdaile Village: Bette Conroy, Bob Kever, Bob Rankin, Florence Shackelford

Pruitt Health at Carolina Point (Durham): Helen Garrison

The Forest at Duke: Fran Bryant, Peaches McPherson

Family of Church and Staff:

George Bernhardt III, son of George and Jo Bernhardt

Claiborne Clark, son of Arthur and Mary Clark

Kim Cummings, father of Drew Cummings

Lindsay Efland, friend of Cherrie Henry

Rev. Ben Johnston-Krase, pastor of Durham's Farm Church

Vickie Tobey, niece of Mickey Velkey and cousin of Beth Brockman

Jerry Walter, friend of Brian and Jeanette Castle

Christina Z., mother of Franzi Rokoske

PARISH NOTES

Why do Presbyterians love parades? Because they are decent and orderly? No, because they are a beautiful exhibition of The Beloved Community here in Durham. Where else are you going to be part of a moving stream of humanity, all races, creeds, and formations, 93 units strong, marching down Main Street USA to the beat of the Divine Drummer. Kudos to those who joined the FPC unit to march and represent our church last Saturday morning. Those who showed up as shepherds and friendly beasts included: **Sarah and Sadie Finbow, Katharine Higgins and Sara Beth Brantly, Torrell, Laura, Vanessa and David Armstrong, Amy and Alex Sanchez, Lenore Champion, Susan Buck, Kayla Champion** (and friend, and dog), **Isaiah and Adam** (our Urban Ministry friends), **Bob Yoder, Kate Busa, Cherrie and Andy Henry, Abi Warmack** (and dog), and **Marilyn Hedgpeth**. Special thanks to **Kate Busa** for driving her truck in the parade, and to our many members who were cheering from the sidelines. FPC was the only church represented in the parade!

Kudos to **Lenore Champion** and **Caroline Rourk** for a wonderfully engaging **Advent Festival and Alternative Giving Fair** this past Sunday in Watts-Hill Hall. **Katharine Whitmore** was the brains behind all of the wonderful crafts for children and adults to make. **Phyllis Supple** supplied the wassail. **Sigfried Fullenkamp** did a wonderful job of decorating the refreshments table. All of the **Christian Education Committee** chipped in to make this a wonderful celebration and inter-generational bonding experience for both our church members and for our non-profit friends from the greater Durham community.

We also celebrated the **Sacrament of Baptism** for **Ezekiel Boone Castle**, son of **Jeanette and Brian Castle** during worship this past Sunday. His name, Ezekiel, means God strengthens, and Boone, means good, a blessing. **Christyn Klinck** was the ruling elder standing as witness to Ezekiel's baptism.

The Friday morning Bible Study will NOT meet again until January 5, 2018! Enjoy the holy days! Everyone is invited to join us in January on Fridays from 10:30 – noon at the church, when we will continue our study of *Cultivating Christian Character: the Gifts of the Spirit*. **Marilyn Hedgpeth** leads the class.

Many thanks to our young children, who assembled 40 hygiene kits and education kits to send to the people of Puerto Rico following this year's devastating hurricane. **Caroline Rourk** was especially helpful in this service project which was sponsored by the Christian Education Committee. The kits were mailed last week to Church World Service for distribution to Puerto Rico.

The **First Presbyterian Day School Holiday Pageant and Auction** will take place on **Friday, December 15 at 3 p.m. in the sanctuary and Watts-Hill Hall**, respectively. All are invited to attend and participate in the auction, where two play-houses built by Habitat for Humanity will be among the items to be auctioned.

SPECIAL THANKS to **Maxie Honeycutt** for arranging the **Daytimers** Luncheon at Bennett Pointe Grill on November 28. The 24 people attending had a wonderful time of fellowship.

The **Pastoral Care Committee** wishes to thank everyone for their generous donation of items for the college student care packages. The packages were mailed last week and we have already received a gracious "thank you" from **Almira Mbah** who received her package the very next day.

SESSION BRIEFS

At its November stated meeting, the FPC Session took action on several motions:

- 1) **From the Property Committee:** Adopting an **Emergency Operations Plan** (contact church office for a copy) and approving a Core Emergency Management Team, to assist the church to respond appropriately if emergencies occur at any time--during secular or sacred events, during the day or in the evening, during the work week or on the weekend.
- 2) **From the Service and Mission Committee:** Approving the establishment of a Refugee Resettlement Account and guidelines for how the money will be distributed; and partnering with the Church of Reconciliation in Chapel Hill to support their offer of sanctuary to immigrants facing immediate deportation.

The Session is grateful to these committees for drafting these plans and helping to move our community forward in these areas.

- *Christyn Klinck*, Clerk of Session

NEW SECURITY PROCEDURES FOR SUNDAY MORNINGS

For a variety of reasons we have put a new process in place to **lock** the Lobby (from the parking lot) and Sanctuary Basement Hallway doors fifteen (15) minutes after worship begins. All of the Sanctuary restrooms will still be accessible.

If you arrive for Worship after 11:15 a.m., please proceed to the Main Street Sanctuary Doors to enter for worship. Locked doors are only locked from the outside and will always open from the inside.

If you have any questions or feedback on this change, please direct them to our Property Chair, **Chris Brown** (jamesbro@gmail.com).

Our Emergency Management Team members are: **Mindy Douglas** (Pastor), **Tom Bloom** (Safety Officer), **Chris Brown** (Property Committee Chair).

On behalf of the FPC Staff and Property Committee we thank you for your understanding while we implement and review this new procedure.

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE



*Seek the welfare of the city . . .
for in its welfare you will find your welfare.*

- Jeremiah 29:7

Stewardship 2018

Love in the Heart of Durham

Thank you, thank you, thank you to all those who submitted your pledge! We have received 189 pledges so far and have reached **96.6%** of our goal! The Stewardship Committee is grateful to those who have heard our excitement about all we are and can be at First Presbyterian Church and have responded with generous support for our mission and ministries.

If you have not yet had a chance to submit your pledge, we hope you will be able to do so by mail or online (www.firstpres-durham.org) as soon as you are able. Your timely submission allows the session to put together a budget for 2018 that reflects the goals we shared with you in our stewardship brochure this year. If you need a pledge card, please contact the church office to have one sent to you.

Again, thank you all so much for the support you give to FPC so that we might continue to be the

light of love in the heart of Durham!

With gratitude,

Miriam Morey, Chair

George Bernhardt, Co-Chair

YEAR-END GIVING

Contributions statements are being mailed this week to all those who had pledge balances as of November 30. Timely payment of pledges by December 31 will allow First Presbyterian to pay its end-of-year bills promptly and to meet its benevolence obligations for 2017.

Please remember that the church must receive your charitable contributions by the end of the day (4:30 p.m.) on Friday, December 22, 2017, or the gift must be postmarked by December 31, 2017, if mailed, to be deductible on your 2017 taxes.

If you wish to make a contribution by credit card, this may be done through the parish's website (www.firstpres-durham.org) at any time. To be deductible on your 2017 taxes, please initiate the gift by Friday, December 29.

If you wish to make a donation through a gift of stock, please notify Tom Bloom, Business Administrator (t.bloom@firstpres-durham.org) **as soon as possible.**

Members aged 70 ½ + who own an IRA may be able to make a tax-excludable gift directly to First Presbyterian and have that gift satisfy any required minimum distribution for this year. Please contact your IRA administrator ASAP if you wish to consider this giving option for tax year 2017.

FLOWERS FOR WORSHIP

The flower ministry of FPC offers a meaningful way to donate flowers for the sanctuary in memory or in honor of a loved one, or in celebration of a special occasion. Each Sunday the flower arrangements bring the colors and beauty of nature to our worship service. Following worship, our deacons divide the flowers and deliver smaller arrangements to members who are ill, grieving, or unable to attend church, as a way of sharing with them a part of our worship service. Ninth Street Flowers provides the beautiful arrangements each Sunday.

If you would like to reserve an upcoming Sunday to give flowers for worship, please sign up on the calendar in the foyer.

Ruth Roberson (RuthHRoberson@gmail.com, 919-949-2106) or

Jean Wilson (JeanJWilson@gmail.com, 919 403-7333)

will be glad to provide more details. Thank you! – Worship and the Arts Committee



ADVENT MIDWEEK CAROLING AND WORSHIP WITH COMMUNION

Wednesday, December 6

Meditation by **Cherrie Henry**

Wednesday, December 13

Meditation by **Alex Stayer-Brewington**

Wednesday, December 20

Meditation by **Mary Berry**

All are welcome to gather on the Main Street steps for candlelight caroling at **5:45 p.m.**

followed by a procession of light into the sanctuary where worship with Holy Communion will begin at **6:00 p.m.** A light supper will be provided at **6:30 p.m.** in Watts-Hill Hall. Donations will be received to offset meal costs.



Our 2017 Christmas Concerns

During Advent, share Christmas wishes with friends in the FPC congregation by making a donation to Christmas Concerns. Proceeds will be given to **Meals on Wheels and Partners for Youth Opportunity.**

To participate in Christmas Concerns, write a check to FPC, earmarked "Christmas Concerns," and put it in the offering plate. Then sign an ornament and hang it on the Christmas Concerns "Giving Tree" located in the foyer. The names of those who send greetings and participate in this project will be listed in the December 19th newsletter.



A CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

It is time to nominate persons to serve as ruling elders and deacons for the Class of 2021. The form for submitting nominations will be available on Sunday mornings through January 7th. Call the church office and one can be mailed to you. You may also use this same form to nominate persons to serve in the at-large positions on next year's Nominating Committee.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10 - Second Sunday of Advent



9:45 a.m. Sunday School

9:45 a.m. Dress rehearsal and face painting for the Christmas pageant

11:00 a.m. Worship and Children's Christmas Pageant

The Children's Choir will be singing during the Christmas Pageant.

Sermon: "A Compassionate Herald"

Marilyn Hedgpeth, preaching

Acolytes: **Webb Cummings, Jack Williamson**

Crucifer: **Sophie Wilkins**

Liturgist: **Torrell Armstrong**

Narthex Greeter: **Maxie Honeycutt**

After Worship Greeters: **Caroline Rourk** (narthex/rear);

Eric Wiebe (side/font)

Ushers: **Emily Wilkins** (head), **Christy Gudaitis, Dale Gaddis, Amy Sanchez, need two more ushers**

The **Prayer Shawl Group** will meet after church on Sunday in the Chapel. Anyone who knits and/or crochets is welcome to join the group to learn more about what we do. For more information, please contact **Barbara Fish** at barb2fish@yahoo.com.



THIS Sunday, December 10

5:30 p.m. - Christmas Potluck and Carols Sing-Along

Families are asked to bring their favorite seasonal dish (vegetable, casserole, or dessert). The church will provide a main meat and beverages. We will enjoy a fellowship meal in Watts-Hill Hall. After we eat, everyone is invited to gather around the Christmas tree to sing carols. If you play a musical instrument, bring it (and music stand) to play along with the improvised orchestra. If you will need sheet music for your instrument, please contact **Kathy Parkins** as soon as possible.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17 - Third Sunday of Advent



9:45 a.m. Sunday School

11:00 a.m. Worship

A Service of Lessons and Carols

“Lessons and Carols” is a service patterned after the service held annually on Christmas Eve at King’s College Chapel in Cambridge, England, using Scripture readings that recount the loving purposes of God for Christ’s Incarnation, with corresponding Christmas carols.

The **PCUSA Joy Gift Offering** is also received during worship. This offering provides assistance to current and retired church workers in their time of need and helps support our future leaders at Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges.

Acolytes: **Noah Rokoske, Matt Brockman**

Crucifer: **Graham Curtis**

Liturgist: **Cris Rivera**

Narthex Greeter: **Alice Raney**

After Worship Greeters: **Andy Henry** (narthex/rear);

Brent Curtis (side/font)

Ushers: **Emily Wilkins** (head), **Amy Sanchez**, **need four more ushers**

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24 - Christmas Eve/ Advent 4



No Sunday School

11:00 a.m. - Worship (Advent 4)

The **Hunger for Change Offering** will be received.

5:00 p.m. - Candlelight Worship with Communion

The **Christmas Eve offering** will be given to the following organizations: Welcome Baby, the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina, and Senior PharmAssist. Please give generously.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31



First Sunday After Christmas
Happy 146th Birthday to FPC!

No Sunday School
11:00 a.m. – Worship
Robert Brawley, preaching

SUNDAY SCHOOL (all ages welcome)

All classes begin at 9:45, and parents are asked to walk your children to their classrooms, and to come back and get them for worship. Thank you!

All Children's Sunday School

It's Christmas Pageant Sunday, so we will use the Sunday School hour to prepare for the pageant, which takes place at 11:00 at the beginning of worship. The Junior Choir will meet in the sanctuary at 9:30 to go over their music for the pageant. Children with speaking parts (***Mary Ellis, Noah, Sheya, Sean, Gretchen, David and Vanessa***) will meet in the sanctuary at 9:45 to practice their parts. The rest of the children will meet upstairs in the education building to put on costumes, to have faces painted, and to rehearse how we will come in and stand during the pageant. If you have costumes already, please wear them on Sunday. If you need a costume, you may pick one up on Sunday. And you may keep your costumes through Christmas Eve, if you plan to be in worship that day. Otherwise, be sure and return all costumes to the church after Christmas Eve. Thank you!

Middle and high school youth meet in their designated classrooms in the basement (below the sanctuary) at 9:45.

Sunday School will return to normal for children and youth on Sunday, December 17.

Faith and Community Class:

For the next two Sundays, we welcome our New Testament scholar-in-residence, ***Robert Brawley***, who will lead the class in a discussion about the two seemingly opposite titles attributed to Jesus in the Bible: Son of God and Son of Man. How could Jesus be both, at the same time? What are the referents in Hebrew Scripture to both titles? Where else are they used in the New Testament? Robert has a wealth of wisdom and insight, so we are honored to have him teaching for Advent on December 10 and December 17. Bringing a Bible with you might be helpful.

Lectionary Class: Join us for discussion at 9:45 in the East Parlor.

December 10: Who is proclaiming God's message today? The preacher in the pulpit? The celebrity in the commercial? The talk show host, or the politician, or the homeless person on the corner? Or maybe you?

December 17: "There was a man sent from God...." How did John know that? "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me...." How did Isaiah know that? "The one who calls you is faithful...." Are you listening?

Journeys and Scratch/Young Adults Class

Journeys and Scratch will discuss the fifth and sixth chapter of the "The Story of Christianity" by Justo Gonzalez. We'll discuss how the Swiss Reformation and Anabaptists help shape Christianity. All are welcome to join the discussion. We meet in room 205 of the 2nd floor of the education building.

Spiritual Formation This year-round class for women is led by **Susan Dunlap** and explores the topic of spiritual formation. Join us at 9:45 in **basement classroom B-16**.



This **Sunday, December 10**, we will join with the congregation for the annual Christmas Potluck and Carols sing-a-long at 5:30 p.m. Bring your instrument (and a music stand) and play along with the improvised orchestra.

On **Sunday, December 17**, all youth will meet together for our annual Christmas dinner and Christmas party, 5:30 - 8:00 p.m. at the church.

DON'T FORGET: December 17 is also the **deadline** for the 2018 Youth Fun Night (January 7) and MLK Service Project (January 14) registration forms. Check your email for details.



PRIMETIMERS

Covered Dish Supper
Friday, December 8
6:30 p.m. at the
McCorkle home
4811 Montvale Dr
Bring a dish to share
Please respond
to the EVITE

FIRST FRIENDS

Advent Gathering
Saturday, December 9
6:30 p.m. at the
Ruley/ Fisher home
Adults only. Bring a side dish
or dessert to share.
Please respond
to the EVITE

DAYTIMERS

at Croasdaile Village
Tuesday, December 12
Gather at 11:30 a.m.
in the Great room.
Meal cost: \$12/person
RSVP to **Maxie Honeycutt**
(919-286-4680) or the church:
919-682-5511.

SONAM presents A Winter Concert

"Music of gifts and light for Epiphany"

Saturday, January 6, 2018 at 7:00 pm in the sanctuary of FPC

Singers of New and Ancient Music (SONAM) is a chorus committed to creating high-quality sacred and secular music and giving back to the community. SONAM was founded in 2012 with two primary missions: to make excellent choral music, focusing primarily on the Renaissance and modern eras, and to support local non-profits through benefit concerts. SONAM consists of about 20 talented singers from central North Carolina and is led by conductor **Allan Friedman** and accompanist **Jane Lynch**.

Book Group - January 9

The **Things That Matter Book Group** will discuss "*Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*" by Isabel Wilkerson on **Tuesday, January 9 at 7:00 p.m.** at the home of **Ellen Bacon. Mary Jo Schlecht** will lead the discussion. New faces are welcome to join this faithful group of readers.

Service & Mission Opportunities

Café Justo - Taking Orders This Week

We have plenty of regular whole bean coffee (medium and dark roast), but no decaf, and only a few bags of ground coffee. Let **John Fricks** know your needs. He'll order again on **Thursday, December 7. Specify three things:** beans or ground, decaf or regular, medium or dark roast. Ten dollars per one-pound bag. Grown in Chiapas, roasted in Agua Prieta, Sonora, and shipped direct to FPC from Douglas, AZ, at the Mexican Border.

Café Justo (coffee with justice) is a partner in one of the Presbyterian World Missions border ministries.

Community Invitation from Senior PharmAssist Medicare Open Enrollment "After Party"

Thursday, December 7 from 6-9 p.m. at Morgan Imports

Please join Senior PharmAssist in celebrating Durham's support for its seniors. There will be refreshments, music & door prizes. Morgan Imports will donate 10% of all sales to Senior PharmAssist. Hope to see you there. See [*flyer*](#) for more information.

Next Families Moving Forward Dinner - December 14

Thursday, December 14, is our next turn to serve at Families Moving Forward. In rotation with over thirty other faith communities in Durham, volunteers from First Presbyterian provide dinner and childcare for a small number of families participating in evening programming. We'd love for you to join us! Here's the sign-up: www.SignUpGenius.com/go/10C054AACAE2FA31-families3. We especially need childcare volunteers this time, since the college kids who usually help will be gone for the semester break. Volunteers working with children must first complete Families Moving Forward's online training: <https://fmfnc.org/registration>.

Supporting "Sanctuary"

Recently, the Church of Reconciliation in Chapel Hill made a decision to become a sanctuary church. They have asked us to be a partner in this effort along with local Mennonite, Episcopal, Quaker, Baptist, and Catholic churches. They envision their ministry to be ecumenical and involve an interfaith network of volunteers. Our Session has approved this effort and individuals who are interested in volunteering can sign up at: <http://eepurl.com/c77iRn>. Volunteer activities include everything from prayer support to providing a meal, paying a visit, doing laundry, advocating to change inhumane immigration laws, or providing medical care.