

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF DURHAM

"Downtown by history and by choice"

Bi-Weekly Newsletter

December 11 - 19, 2018

From the Pastor . . .

Dear friends,

Wow. What a pre-winter, snowy, blowy weekend we have had! I hope you have all managed to stay safe and warm for the last few days when life has slowed down in way we don't usually experience during Advent! I am reminded of the Christmas carol, "In the Bleak Midwinter," and the words, "In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan; earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone; snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow, in the bleak midwinter, long ago." Of course, we know that Jesus wasn't born in weather such as this. The writer of this text, Christina Rossetti, describes the weather in England, as opposed to that of Palestine, as such weather is what she typically knew during the season of celebration of Christ's birth. But for many of us born and raised in the northern hemisphere (with a few exceptions), this weather reminds us of Christmas and always will.

One thing many of you noticed about the snowy pre-winter of the past days was the silence. Especially on Sunday morning, when we woke to a winter wonderland, the typical noises of cars zooming past on the interstate, the roar of the train, the sound of sirens had disappeared. We were instead greeted by the sound of silence. And it was an Advent gift.

By the time you read this, much of the rhythm of our lives will have returned to normal (unless you have kids still home from school!) and the expected hustle and bustle of Advent and December will continue. We will get back into our routines and make our to-do lists once again. We will prepare for upcoming parties. We will wrap our presents and hang our stockings. We will sing our carols and pray our prayers and hope our hopes and dream our dreams. How wonderful that will be, too. But let us not forget the silence of that first moment we awoke that snowy Sunday. May that memory be a peace that we carry with us – into the days ahead of Lessons and Carols, of celebration, community, prayer, and song.

May the peace of Christ be with you in all your days ahead – Advent, Christmas, winter, and beyond. Emmanuel – God is with us. Thanks be to God.

With love,
Mindy

SYMPATHIES: The love and concern of the congregation are extended to **Wendy and Mac McCorkle, Chip and Lewis** on the death of Wendy's father on December 7.



Added this week:

Ann Prospero, a patient at Duke Regional
Shirla Hudson, mother of Tyler Momsen-Hudson,
recovering from surgery
Jerry and TJ England, Mary-Jo Keenan's brother-in law
and his wife

Nellie Van Ewyk, sister of Hendricka Vande Kemp

Joseph Ngumi, a patient at Duke Hospital

Jake Frost, husband of Erica Shirts (friends of FPC)

Doug Hervey, son of Jeanne Hervey and a patient at Duke Hospital

Jim Mau, father of Shirley Frederick's daughter-in-law, Sharon

Jim Vacca, father of Jamie Chambliss

Home

Lee Courtland

Barbara Gerwe

Franzi Rokoske

Carolyn Wolfe

Care Communities

Brookdale Senior Living, **Durham: Julian Boswell**

Croasdaile Pavilion: **Bette Conroy, Bob Rankin, Jim Wolfe**

Durham Regent: **John Kerr**

Pruitt Health at Carolina Point, Durham: **Helen Garrison**

The Forest at Duke: **Fran Bryant**

Family and Friends of Church Members and Staff

Catherine Gitia, friend of Mary Gitata

Heath Huberg, friend of Kathy Parkins

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

Paul Martin, brother of Beth Neece



Please update your address book for the Brawleys who moved last week to Croasdaile Village retirement community:

Robert and Jane Brawley

2 Aldersgate Court

Durham NC 27705

Jane's cell: 919-724-6619

Robert's cell: 773-726-2383

Landline: 919-384-2137 (no voicemail)

PARISH NOTES . . .



Fortunately, the weather held for FPC to make its second appearance in the Holiday Parade on Saturday. It was brisk, but no precipitation! Kate Busa had her truck spotlessly detailed for the event, decked her cab with lights, a Christmas tree, and a giant teddy bear, and attached signs to the sides

announcing FPC's upcoming Christmas Eve services, and our mission to be "light to the world." We were near the end of the parade, sandwiched between the Riverside High School marching band, and Santa close on our tail. Those who marched on behalf of FPC this year included: **David and Marie Sappenfield, Mary-Jo Keenan, Lenore and Kayla Champion, (their dog and a friend), John and Tate Weicher, Lucy and Eloise House, Andy and Cherie Henry, Kate Busa and Marilyn Hedgpeth, and some of our most cherished visitors, Marcella (and her daughter and friend), and Isaiah.** Mindy stopped by earlier to wish us a merry parade.

We had a great time waving and wishing parade watchers along the two-mile course Merry Christmas. But the best thing about the parade was this: when we came to the viewing station where the parade was being live-streamed on CBS, the announcer read the script that I have submitted earlier, about FPC being founded in 1871; being downtown by history and by-see, being a place of welcome to everyone. But then the announcer came down off the stand with his microphone and interviewed Isaiah, who happened to be carrying our FPC sign. And the announcer asked Isaiah, "Can you tell me a little more about First Presbyterian Church?" And we all held our breath, just for a second, as Isaiah inhaled and replied, "Yes, it's a wonderful church; it's my church, it's where they always welcome me; I'm going to church there tomorrow." And we exhaled in thanksgiving to God, that one of our frequent visitors would speak so highly of our church and its ministry. Thanks be to God for living parables like this, and for our weekly volunteers who answer the door and extend the love of Christ to our many guests. (Submitted by **Marilyn Hedgpeth**)

KUDOS to **Signe and Eugene Brown** AND **Stewart Fisher and Melinda Ruley** for hosting Primetimers and First Friends (respectively) this past weekend. A warm and friendly atmosphere was much appreciated before the BIG FREEZE on Sunday morning.

Special thanks to **Carol and Wes Carson** who led a time of Advent worship on Sunday afternoon, December 9 at The Forest at Duke. Plan A was to have a regular worship and communion service with music by Phyllis Supple. When the bad weather loomed, a Plan B was conceived by the Carsons to sing carols using pre-recorded music and pre-printed song sheets. In attendance at Sunday's gathering were **Fran Bryant, the Harvards and Kellers**, and **Diane Goff** (mother of Leslie McDow) along with other residents of The Forest. No one had to risk being on the roads which was great!

Congratulations to **Chuck and Jean Wilson** who celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on November 23rd.

These Days devotional books for January - March 2019 have arrived. Pick up a copy (regular or large print) from the tables in the foyer and narthex while supplies last.

WELCOME HOME CARE PACKAGES

Over 700 individuals return to Durham from state prison every year. Many

struggle to find work, housing, and even basic items necessary to start their lives anew. The City of Durham and the Local Reentry Council have developed a project that involves Welcome Home care packages for the returning residents. These packages include items such as toiletries, groceries, a list of community resources, a gift card, and a letter from the mayor. Local churches are being asked to fill a box with many of these items.



First Presbyterian Church has agreed to be the drop-off and pick-up point for the care packages. In addition, we recently completed filling a package. Thanks to Scratch (Young Adults) and the Service and Mission Committee for their donations!



Hearing Assistance Devices: Advent Season

Encourage guests to consider using one of our Sennheiser Hearing Assistance devices. Also, help us keep the devices available, charged, and ready for use. Please don't remove them from the sanctuary. Return the device either to the sound desk or to one of the marked bins near the baptism font, so they can be counted and readied for the next worship service.

FPC Session Briefs

At its **November Stated Meeting**, the Session heard a summary of the Listening Sessions conducted by the **Strategic Planning Team** and had a chance to ask questions of the representatives. **Chris Brown**, as chair of the Property Committee, led two productive discussions--about potential **uses of the apartment** and about **security during worship services**. The Session also heard an **update from the Stewardship Committee** and a report on the **October Presbytery Meeting**. Finally, members approved three motions: to form an **Associate Pastor Nominating Committee** to search for a permanent Associate Pastor for Youth and Their Families; to **contract with Signal 88 Security** to provide random nightly security checks of the church grounds, and to ask any trespassers to leave; and to set several **dates for communion** to be served at the Forest at Duke.

Respectfully submitted,
Christyn Klinck, Clerk of Session

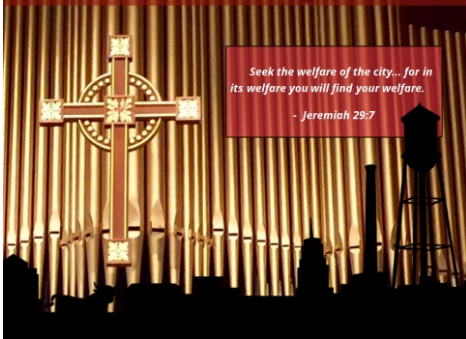
STEWARDSHIP CORNER

Thank you to all of you who have turned in your pledge for 2019. This information allows us to plan our budget for the coming year in a way that is faithful and reflective of your commitment to First Presbyterian Church.

If you have not yet had the opportunity to turn in your pledge, you can do so **online** or mail it

Love in the Heart of Durham:

*Doing Justice, Loving Kindness,
Walking Humbly*



in to the church office. Please also take the opportunity to complete the ***Time and Talent Questionnaire***. Contact **Tom Bloom** (t.bloom@firstpres-durham.org) if you have questions about the pledging process or need copies of pledge materials including the questionnaire.

Again, thank you for being the heart of this community and for being witnesses of Christ's love in the city.

Cris Rivera and **George Bernhardt**
Co-Chairs, Stewardship Committee

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 2018.

Please remember that the church must receive your charitable contributions by 12:00 p.m. on Monday, December 24, 2018; or placed in the offering plate at a service through Sunday, December 30, 2018; or the gift must be postmarked by December 31, 2018, if mailed, to be deductible on your 2018 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 2018 taxes, please initiate the gift by Friday, December 28.

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 1/2 + 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 2018.



“Christmas Concerns”

During Advent, share Christmas wishes with friends in the congregation by making a donation to Christmas Concerns. This year's proceeds will be given to support two people who are in sanctuary in the area: Rosa at the Church of Reconciliation and Jose at the School for Conversion in Durham. Both Rosa and Jose are parents trying to support their children who are staying with friends and family in the area. To participate, write a check to FPC earmarked “Christmas Concerns” and put it in the offering plate on Sunday. Then, visit the Giving Tree in the foyer, write a greeting and/or sign your name on the paper ornament provided and hang the ornament there for all to see. The names of those who shared greetings will be listed in the “Christmas” edition of the church's newsletter. **The deadline to participate is this Sunday, December 16.**

Click [here](#) to view



FPC's Events Schedule for Advent and Christmas 2018

Sunday, December 16

Third Sunday of Advent

9:45 a.m. Sunday School for all ages

11:00 a.m. A Service of Lessons and Carols - patterned after the King's College Lessons and Carols service held annually in Cambridge, England

ATTENTION PARENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN: After worship **this Sunday**, the Children's Choir should will rehearse in the choir room in preparation to sing during worship on the following Sunday, December 23.

Liturgist: *Jennie Alwood*

Narthex Greeter: *Alice Raney*

After Worship Greeters: *Dewey Lawson* (side/font);

Leah Graves (rear/narthex)

Ushers: *Emily Wilkins* (head), *Christy Gudaitis*, *John Mozart* (counting),
Laurie Williamson, *Elinor Hess*, *Amy Sanchez*



6:00 p.m. - Potluck Supper and Carols Sing-Along Sunday, December 16

Bring a dish to share. A main meat and beverages provided by the church. If you play an instrument, bring it along (with a music stand) and join the improvised orchestra that accompanies singing of carols around our Christian symbols tree.

Sunday, December 23

Fourth Sunday of Advent

9:45 a.m. - Sunday School

11:00 a.m. Worship

Marilyn Hedgpeth, preaching

Come prepare for a silent night/holy night. The Children's Choir will be singing. The **Hunger for Change Offering** will be received during worship. The PC(USA) *Joy Gift Offering* will be received, supporting financial assistance programs of the Board of Pensions and Presbyterian racial ethnic schools and colleges.

Liturgist: **Bob Yoder**

Narthex Greeters: **Chris Williams**

After Worship Greeters: **Andy Henry** (side/font); **Alice Raney** (rear/narthex)

Ushers: **Emily Wilkins** (head) - Click [here](#) to sign up to usher.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

(Click [here](#) to see full list of class offerings)

Children's Sunday School (grades 3-6)

It's Advent, and we will spend time on the next two Sundays talking about what Advent means to us as Christians, before we step into the Christmas season. We will pray about things that concern us, and prepare our hearts for Christmas. **There will not be Sunday School on December 30**, but we will reconvene on January 6 to get ready for the Children's Pageant (presented during the 11:00 worship service). Everyone is invited to wear a costume and participate.

Most of the adult options for learning on Sunday morning will be offered this week (December 16) and next (December 23). **There is no Sunday School for adults on Sunday, December 30.**

Adult "Faith & Community" -

This class is beginning a new unit of study this week using the PCUSA resource by Chris Iosso, *Five Risks Presbyterians Must Take for Peace*. Because we missed a Sunday, we will jump in on this Sunday, December 16, with our guest presenter, **Tim Verhey**, looking at chapter 2, "Confessing Our Complicity". Tim, the son of *Phyllis Verhey*, is Assistant Professor of Religious Studies and Dean of Students at St. Andrews University in Laurinburg. On December 23, **Robert Brawley** will lead us in looking at chapter 3, *Reclaim Christ the Peacemaker*. We will not have Sunday School on December 30. But when we return on January 6, 2019, **Sue Fricks** will give us an overview of the book as we continue our study. Faith and Community meets at 9:45 in **Watts-Hill Hall**, and all are welcome.

Lectionary -

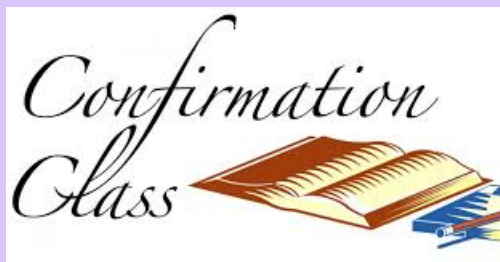
December 16: Is it good news or bad news that God is coming soon? According to John the Baptist, that depends on whether you are wheat or chaff. Join us for discussion at 9:45 in the **East Parlor**.

December 23: The good news of Christmas is that God chose to come to us in human form. Blessed are those who believe that there was, and will be, a fulfillment of what was spoken by the Lord.

Journeys & Scratch – We will attend **Tim Verhey's** presentation to Faith and Community this Sunday December 16 in Watts-Hill Hall at 9:45.

Women's Spiritual Formation – **Susan Dunlap** leads this class for women in the basement parlor at 9:45. Contact Susan (sjd4@duke.edu) for class schedule and topics under discussion.

The Pleasures of Parenting – a time of discussion and support for parents who find raising children in today’s world to be an exciting and daunting task. The class will meet in the **apartment classroom**, upstairs in the church house at 9:45, using *The Thoughtful Christian’s* Advent Study: “Repentance, Faith, Holiness and Love.” Parents of any age are welcome.



for 7th, 8th, 9th graders and up

(plus youth from Covenant PC who are joining us)

Thank you for being flexible as our schedule continues to shift with the weather. We (confirmands and mentors) will meet in the youth room on this Sunday, **December 16**

and next Sunday, **December 23** to reflect on our last few visits, to project forward as to what’s coming up in the new year, and to celebrate our time together as confirmands and mentors. **We will not have class on December 30**, but will return on **January 6** to help with the children’s pageant and to forge ahead into our study of where we as Presbyterians stand on issues of faith. Contact **Marilyn Hedgpeth** if you have any questions.



Click [view](#) to see the Youth Groups calendar for Fall 2018.

Click [here](#) to view the Middle School calendar for Winter/Spring 2019

Click [here](#) to view the High School calendar for Winter/Spring 2019



COMING IN JANUARY . . .

Our next segment of Membership Inquiry Classes will be offered **January 13, 20 and 27** in the **Wilson Parlor**. If you are curious about what membership entails at FPC, please join us for these classes, which meet from 9:45 – 10:45 on three

Sundays in January.

Friday Bible Study: Isaiah

We are done for 2018. We will resume our study of Isaiah in January, 2019.

Happenings around FPC

Advent Midweek Caroling and Child-friendly Worship

Wednesday, December 12
Meditation by Cheryl Henry

Wednesday, December 19



Meditation by Mary Berry

Join us at 5:45 p.m. on the Main Street steps for caroling, followed by worship and communion at 6:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. The evening worship will be followed by a light supper at 6:30 p.m. in Watts-Hill Hall. Donations will be received to offset the cost of the meal.

The rescheduled Racial Equity Task Force meeting will be right after worship this Sunday, December 16 in the Wilson Parlor.



Also:

ORGANIZING AGAINST RACISM / RACIAL EQUITY INSTITUTE
Register now and return as an alum in 2019! Phase I Trainings in Durham and Raleigh, led by the talented team at the Racial Equity Institute, are now posted for January through August 2019 on REI'S [website](#). As a reminder: All individuals who have already attended Phase I are invited to return to the training, for a minimal cost of food only - around \$35. If you prefer to bring your own meals, please indicate so on your registration and there will be no fee. You are also welcome to attend for part of the day or only one day, as your schedule allows. Please register in advance to ensure we have sufficient seating and food; on-site registration may be available. As alumni, you will be asked to sit outside of the main circle and listen only, unless prompted to participate by the trainers. Contact us with any questions: oaralliance.org



Monday, December 24

The livestream radio broadcast of the King's College Lessons and Carols event at FPC has been **canceled**.

3:00 p.m. - Worship with communion and candles (in the sanctuary)
A simple 45-minute service featuring carols from around the world.

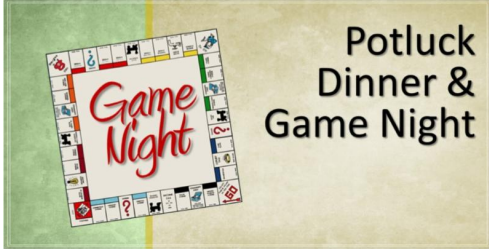
5:00 p.m. - Communion and Candlelight Service (in the sanctuary)
The birth of the Christ Child is celebrated in word and song with Communion by candlelight. Childcare provided for younger children. An offering will be received to support Welcome Baby and the Food Bank of Central and Eastern NC.

First Friends and Families

SAVE THE DATE: Friday January 4

FPC - Watts-Hill Hall

Time to be announced



Potluck Dinner & Game Night

Kids welcome!
Hosted by *Emily, Kennedy, and Sophie Wilkins*



SONAM presents Winter Concert **Saturday, January 5 at 7:30 p.m.** **in the FPC sanctuary**

Singers of New and Ancient Music (SONAM) will present a concert of lullabies and dreams music from composers of the Baltic Basin. They will sing works by Byrd, Pärt, Bach Rautavaara, and more. All proceeds will benefit **Book Harvest**, a nonprofit organization that provides books to children in central North Carolina and works with families and communities to promote children's literacy and academic success.

Children's Christmas Pageant Rescheduled for January 6

Because the weather outside was frightful on Sunday, we have rescheduled our children's Christmas pageant for the last Sunday of the Christmas season, January 6, which happens to be Epiphany this year, a celebration of the manifestation of God in Christ. We were able to squeeze in a practice after the Holiday Parade on Saturday, and the speakers as well as the bell choir should be ready to go at the beginning of worship on Epiphany Sunday. **ALL CHILDREN AND YOUTH** are welcome to be in the pageant. Wear your costumes to church that Sunday, and we will run through it once during the Sunday School hour, and do a little face painting before we perform at 11 a.m. Following the pageant, children can either sit with their parents in the pew, or go upstairs to the playroom for the remainder of the service.



The Things That Matter Book Group will discuss *The Tortilla Curtain* by T. C. Boyle on **Tuesday, January 19**. We will meet at the home of *Valerie von Isenburg* at 7:00 p.m. and *Marila Cordeiro-Stone* will lead the discussion.



Sign up to Donate Flowers for Worship in 2019

Please click [*here*](#) for information on *how* to donate flowers for worship.

You can sign up on the **FLOWER CHART** which is posted in the foyer near the elevator

December Birthdays

"Christmas" edition of the church's newsletter will be issued next week. It will cover news through New Year's Day, January 1, 2019.

**Please submit your articles / news to Valerie in the church office
by this Sunday, December 16.**

Online Church Calendar



Visit our website