

The Presby Record

A community beacon of faith, love and hope.

Volume ILVIV, Issue 12

December 2024

Mark's Message

The Season of Advent, the four weeks prior to Christmas, is perhaps the busiest, most hectic time of the year both ecclesiastically and societally. In the gasping rush to make the most of the season, it is easy to forget that this sacred season is less about “Christmas cheer” (sorry Buddy the elf) and more about a “holy child.” Advent is our opportunity—a gift from God in itself—to re-orient ourselves to receive the gift of Jesus.

There is no distinct time in Christian history yet discovered to mark the “beginning” of the celebration of Advent, but we do know it existed as a church season as early as 480 CE and had specific instructions for the monastic orders to fast during Advent as early as 587 CE at the Council of Tours. Suffice it to say, this is one of the oldest practiced traditions of Christianity and for good reason.

Advent is a time for the Church to simultaneously look historically to the first season of God’s people waiting—prior to the birth of the Christ child—and also to look forward to the second coming of Christ—the Parousia or Christ’s triumphal return. This is the tension with which we celebrate Advent every year. It represents a time of darkness prior to the Light of the World bursting forth into the world, but also reminds us of Christ’s ascension and promise to come again.

It is necessary and appropriate for Christians to solemnly wait with anticipation the bursting forth into the world of our Savior Christ the Lord. But it isn’t simply a remembering of Christ’s birth in Bethlehem. We are waiting, we are praying, and we are getting ready for the feast. It is not yet time to shout and celebrate, that time will come, and we anticipate it. ^[1]_[SEP]

During Advent, we dwell with the prophets of old who yearned for God’s coming. While we recognize that Emmanuel, literally God with us, we take the

time to reflect on what it means to wait for the fullness of God’s coming. The kingdom of God is among us—but not yet fully realized. We wait for Jesus coming historically. We wait for Jesus coming to us as we assemble and pray. We wait for Jesus coming to us in the proclamation of the scriptures. We wait for Jesus coming to us in the sacraments. We wait for Jesus coming for each of us at the end of our lives. We wait for Jesus coming in glory at the end of time. ^[1]_[SEP] After four weeks of quiet, reflective waiting, we are ready to proclaim: “Joy to the world! O come, all ye faithful! Hark, the herald angels sing!” Until then, we anticipate with delight what we know will come on December 24, in the middle of that Silent Night, Holy Night.

You will notice a change in our worship as well. We will return to the more traditional Gloria Patri rather than the more upbeat Glory Be during our time of solemnity. Most if not all of the hymns sung during worship will be in a minor key and they will focus on hope, symbolism of light, anticipation, and expectation.

So this Advent, position yourself to contritely await the celebration of the Christ child. With prayer, thanksgiving, devotion, fellowship, and dedication to the apostle’s teaching, let us embrace this time of waiting, while also imagining with reverence a time when others waited as well.

Mark



Communion Set Up and Servers

Christmas Eve, December 24

Laurie Turley, set up

Dave Harvey, serve

Buck Ivey, serve

Liturgists

Dec 8 Kathryn Maddy

Dec 15 Mark Curtis

Dec 22 Buck Ivey

Christmas Eve, December 24 Kathleen Jordan

Dec 29 Holly Greathouse

December Birthdays

1 – Eva Louise Greathouse

3 – Julie Hartman, Sadie Ashworth

7 – Bill Hoyle

8 – Jack Wiles, Landon Hamler

9 – Mary Jo Swartz, Linda Slappe

10 – Grace Peyton

12 – Jeff Maddy

13 – Kris Dunlap, Braxton Hoylman

14 – Robert Maddy

17 – Michael Duvall

18 – Kirk King

19 – Allie Curtis

21 – Donna Merguc, Katie Lee Holstein

25 – Jason Manley

27 – Holly Turley, Patrick Jones, Brucie Kessler,
Beth Dunlap

29 – Dewitt Bowman

30 – Cathy Holstein

31 – Jackson Jones

November Anniversaries

23 -- Sally and Randy Noble

20 -- Tricia and Bill Holstein

Prayer Concerns

Congregation Members:

Mike Clark

Mark Curtis

Sara Kell, recovering from a broken collarbone

Kathy Harrah, recovering from back surgery

Care Facilities:

Ann McCormick, Apt. 213, English Meadows, 5 Bexley Dr,
Scott Depot, WV 25560

Sadie Ashworth, 5 Rolling Meadows Dr., Room 118, Scott
Depot, WV 25560

Cel Jones, Meadowbrook Acres Rehab, Room A-13

2149 Greenbrier Street, Charleston, WV 25311

Phone 304 344-4268

Prayer Concerns - Family and Friends

Ashley Nestman, Lymphoma/stroke (Connie Ivey)

Kathi Curtis' mother, Shirley Ware, Florida

Dr. Cynthia Rigby, Parkinson's (Kathryn Maddy)

William Wallace (Traletta Wallace's son) kidney

Roger Schomburg (Kathryn Maddy's uncle)

Victoria Reynolds (Wanda Bowman)

Joshua Higgins (Ron & Sharon Peterson's nephew)

Jeff Maddy (Kathryn Maddy's husband)

Michael Murphy (Mark Boyd's friend) cancer

Eloise Waugh, Florida

Clyde Ellis (Valerie Wade's high school classmate)

Brucie Kessler (recovering from surgery)

Harry Speidel (Connie Ivey's brother)

Darrin Grass, stomach cancer (Laurie Turley)

Keith Machado, diabetes complications (Laurie Turley)

Debbie Speidel, broken shoulder (Connie's sister-in-law)

Flo Rogers (Jack's wife) recovering from surgery

Prayer Box Concerns

C. Fields ask for prayer for his mom Patty and for
him and his wife.

Military

Captain Allie Curtis, U.S. Army (United States)

Hunter Parsons U.S. Navy (Virginia)

Mickey Swartz, Aircrew Flight Equipment

Technician, U.S. Air Force (Eugene, Oregon)

Lieutenant Jack Wiles, U.S. Air Force

Memorial

Memorial for Kitchen Fund- given in memory of
Eleanor Reeves by Kris Dunlap.



The Christmas 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.

Spiritual Life Committee

Our Thanksgiving supper was wonderful. Many thanks to all of the cooks and kitchen help. We also appreciate the set-up and decorations which always brighten our Fellowship Hall. The meal was enjoyed by quite a few of our members and their guests as well as a few newcomers who came and shared a dish as well.

Raven Lanham has had two Winter Markets so far this year in the Fellowship Hall. The vendors and the shoppers have all been very happy. On November 16th we had Nellita's Cocina outside making her empanadas and tres leches cake. She was a real delight to meet.

The next two Markets will be December 7 and 14th. Kathy Harrah will be selling BBQs. Please come out and enjoy meeting all of the craft people and bakers!

Christmas Basket time is upon us. We give a big shout out to Jennifer Burgess for organizing this for our church and all of the people who come out and volunteer to help put these baskets together. It is such a blessing to so many people at Christmastime. Donations are still accepted to help cover the costs.

Abbie Burch continues to put together the Blessing Bags with generous donations from our members. She is still collecting heavy winter gloves. The basket is in the Fellowship Hall.

On December 14th First Presbyterian Church will be part of the St. Albans Historical Tour of churches. Let us know if you would like to be here.

Please be sure to join us in worship on Sunday December 15th as we will hear the youth talk to us about the birth of Christ and what the Christ child means to people of different cultures. Immediately following the service we will have a brunch to say farewell to our members Mark and Kathi Curtis who will be heading to Florida to reside. Kathi has been residing near her mother there for a while as Mark continued his reporting until retirement which has finally come. We wish them much health and happiness! Please join us and bring a dish to share if you like. Several of us will be making a few special

dishes to go along with the different countries that the youth will be talking about during the service. Be sure and attend and see what they are!!

In these busy days before Christmas, we look forward to the Season of Advent which brings light, hope, and love. If you aren't able to come and worship with us or share in the life and activities of the church, please know that we love and pray for all of our members and our community. May peace be with you all. -- Laurie Turley, chair

Blessing Bags Once again, First Presby members gave generously in supporting our Blessing Bags initiative. We received many pairs of gloves to give to those who need them most. Thanks to your kindness and compassion, we were able to assemble and distribute ten bags filled with essential items to those in need within our community. Your contributions, whether through donations of supplies or your financial support, have made a tangible difference in the lives of many. Together, we've been able to provide practical help and offer a reminder of God's love to those who are often overlooked. Your acts of kindness reflect the true spirit of our church, and we are blessed to have such a caring and committed congregation. -- Abbie Burch

COUNT DOWN TO CHRISTMAS BASKET DISTRIBUTION!

Most of us are well aware of the shortened time between Thanksgiving and Christmas this year so it's also "crunch time" for collecting the needed funds for the annual Christmas Food Basket program. Please consider a donation of any amount to help. There were over 500 applications for the baskets this year. First Presby is delighted and grateful that we can accommodate 50 of those families!

SAMA recommended a standardized food list which they estimate to cost \$70 for small families and \$90 for larger ones. Seventy-five of the families assigned to us have 2-3 family members. Donations toward the baskets can be dropped off in the Church office, mailed to the Church or placed in the offering plate. Please make the check payable to First Presbyterian Church with a notation that it is for the Christmas Food Basket Program. You can also send a donation through the donation portal on the Church's website (please make note that it is for the Food Basket Program).

This year's date for pickup/delivery is Saturday, December 21st. Thank you in advance for your help and support in this very important program. If you have questions or wish to volunteer, please contact Jennifer Burgess at 304-421-3780 or Swell your heart with the love of giving nourishment and joy! – Jennifer Burgess

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

Opened with prayer by Moderator.
Treasurer reported on Income and Expenses.
Rev. Boyd reported on Presbytery news.
Committee members were submitted for file.
Rev. Boyd and family will spend Thanksgiving with family in Florida.
Approved youth to present a Christmas program on Sunday, December 15.
Approved annual Thanksgiving Offering for Davis-Stuart.
Approved Girl Scouts in building on Tuesday nights.
Approved Love Gift Offerings.
Approved sale of poinsettias during Advent.
Approved participating in the St. Albans Historical Society Historic Homes Tour.
Approved a fund for nursery renovations.

A Memorial

Memorial for Kitchen Fund- given in memory of Eleanor Reeves by Kris Dunlap



In 1957, Francis Kipps Spencer, a devout Lutheran, created the first Chrismon tree. She coined the term *Chrismon* as a combination of Christ plus monogram to reflect her desire to create decorations for Christmas trees that "proclaim the name, the life, and the saving acts of Jesus the Christ." The letters in Greek, "Chi Rho," became one of the earliest Chrismons because they are monograms for Christos, the Greek word for Christ. Chrismons are traditionally white and gold to reflect the liturgical colors of the Christmas season. The symbols include historic symbols of the faith. Often seen are a variety of crosses and Trinitarian symbols, as well as symbols for the sacraments of baptism and communion. Chrismon trees are one way the church can refocus the commercial aspects of the Christmas holiday to the message of hope we have in Christ Jesus.

Little's TEAM by Donna Merguc

Dec 6 Tara Malcom(B) Andi Pease(C) Abbie Burch(S)
Dec 13 John Jones(B) Sara Kell(C) K. Jordan(S)
Dec 20 NO Littles – Christmas Holiday
Dec 27 NO Littles – Christmas Holiday

B – Reading the Book
C – Preparing the Craft or Science
S – Preparing the Snack

At the November 9th Work Party, Holly Greathouse, Jack Rogers, Mel Burch, Sara Kell, and Donna Merguc removed the old wallpaper in the Crib Room; this even made the Nursery look bigger.

The Nursery Carpet will be cleaned on December 17th at 12:15pm. Can't wait!

LITTLES continues to enjoy our BIG room! We had room to do the Turkey Dance last week. to greet our visitors or bring refreshments to share.

Love Gifts

The Session is delighted to announce two special love offerings for this season of gratitude and giving:

- **McGrogan Family Love Gift**
 - Join us in celebrating the birth of Pastor Mark's grandson by blessing the child and parents with a special gift.
- **Christmas Staff Love Gift**
 - Let us honor and thank our dedicated staff with our annual love offering, showing appreciation for their faithful service throughout the year.

These offerings invite us to share God's abundant love and grace, reminding us of the profound joy that comes from giving and the blessings we experience as a community of faith. If you feel led to contribute, please be sure to designate your gift for either the McGrogan Family Love Gift or the Staff Love Gift, so it can be directed accordingly.

Please prayerfully consider how you can participate in these expressions of love and thanksgiving. Together, we can make this season even brighter for those who serve and lead among us.



**PRESBYTERIAN
WOMEN**

Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to:

- nurture our faith through prayer and Bible study,
- support the mission of the church worldwide, work for justice and peace, and build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and witnesses to the promise of God's kingdom.

Presbyterian Women Christmas Mission

Project! Presbyterian Women are again collecting feminine hygiene products for St. Albans High School this holiday season. Join us now through Epiphany Sunday, January 5, 2025, collecting sanitary napkins, under pants, and sweat pants (in all adult sizes) for the school nurse at St. Albans High School. Please place your donations in the box on the stage in the fellowship hall.

Let Justice Roll Down: God's Call to Care for Neighbors and All Creation

The 2024–2025 Horizons Bible study

by author Patricia K. Tull

Presbyterian Women meet each month, September through May, on the second Tuesday and Wednesday for Bible study and fellowship. This year's study is a call to care for neighbors and God's creation with all our hearts.

This month we wrestle with issues of water justice. We will explore the three ways which water impacts our lives both in the scriptures and through human history. West Virginia makes two cameo appearances in our lesson! Join us as we seek ways "to answer Jesus' call to give drink to the thirsty."

Daytime Circle meets Wednesday, December 11 at 12:00 noon in person fellowship meal. Bring your own brown bag lunch. At 12:35 pm we begin the Bible study and conclude promptly at 1:30 pm.

Evening Zoom Circle meets on Tuesday, December 10 at 7:00 pm. The zoom will open at 6:45 for early birds to fellowship.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85861031680?pwd=Nw4SR3>

Clr969qxLdwY9avWaru3wiai.1

Meeting ID: 858 6103 1680

Passcode: 406332

The SAMA Community Christmas

Celebration will also be at Highlawn Baptist Church this year on **December 13, at 7:00 pm**. Please join with other St. Albans churches in making the upcoming worship celebration of Jesus Christ's birth a glorious event.

Wednesday Nights

December 4, 11, 18

December 4 Dinner Menu 5:45 pm

chicken breasts, scalloped potatoes, broccoli, cookies and brownies.

Adult Bible Study 6:30 pm

Rev. Boyd is leading an adult class on the book of Revelation.

Children and Youth 6:30 pm

Bible Study and Activities

December 25, Jan 1 Christmas Break

January 8

Dinner 5:45 pm

Adult Bible Study 6:30 pm

Children and Youth

Contact Laurie Turley at 304 610-4076 for more information. Donations for the meal are appreciated.

Anyone desiring to have articles, information, or announcements included in the December Presby Record will need to submit that information by December 27. Thank you.

Facilities and Worship Committee

- Girl Scouts are meeting in the building.
- An infant changing table will be donated and installed in the first-floor ladies' restroom.
- Keeping track of church keys.
- A new handrail at rear 3rd Street entrance will be addressed in the spring.
- Surveying old audio/visual equipment.
- Window repairs were completed by St. Albans Window Company at no charge.
- Review 2025 budget and made changes as needed.
- Carpet repairs were made in nursery by Lawsons Floor Covering.
- Carpet will be cleaned in December.
- Pianos will be tuned on a regular schedule.



Order Your Poinsettias

If you would like to provide a poinsettia, complete the form below, and return it with your check to the church office at least five days before your chosen Sunday. You may name as many people as you wish and you may purchase more than one plant. Those who provide plants for December 22 are asked to leave their plants in the sanctuary through the Christmas Eve Service. You may take the plant home after the service.

Your Name _____

December 8 # _____ plants x \$13.00 = _____

December 15 # _____ plants x \$13.00 = _____

December 22 # _____ plants x \$13.00 = _____

Total Number of Plants x \$13 = _____

In Memory of

In Honor of

The first Sunday in Advent we didn't have any poinsettias so if you would like to place one in the sanctuary on a date above, please do asap. Thank you.



First Presbyterian Church



December 4
5:45 Wed. Night Dinner
6:30 Bible Study
Youth

Sunday, December 8
10:00 Worship

December 11
5:45 Wed. Night Dinner
6:30 Bible Study
Youth

Saturday, December 14
4:00 - 7:00 pm Tour of Churches

Sunday, December 15
10:00 Worship - Children's Program
11:15 Brunch Reception for
Mark & Kathi Curtis

Wednesday, December 18
5:45 Wed. Night Dinner
6:30 Bible Study
Youth

Sunday, December 22
10:00 Worship

7:00 December 24
Christmas Eve
Candlelight Service



Church Staff

Ministers..... Every Member of the Congregation
 Pastor Rev. Mark Boyd
 Custodian Mike Merguc
 Musician..... N. David Stern
 Treasurer.....Buck Ivey
 Tech Team Dave/Wendy Harvey, Betty King, Michael Clark

Trustees

Class of 2024: John Jones
 Class of 2025: Buck Ivey
 Class of 2026: Mark Curtis

Officers

Class of 2024

Jack Rogers (1)
 Laurie Turley (1)
 Holly Greathouse (2)

Class of 2025

Dave Harvey (1)
 Adam Greathouse (1)
 Buck Ivey (1)

Class of 2026

Kathleen Jordan (2)
 Valerie Wade (2)
 Kristi Sutphin (1)

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