

CHURCH CURRENTS

DECEMBER 2025

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in-person or on Facebook Live



MORE LIGHT
PRESBYTERIANS

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
210 SOUTH WAYNE STREET
MILLEDGEVILLE, GA 31061



First Presbyterian Church

Issue No. 352 December 2025

Pastor:
Rev. Mari Turner

Coord. of Children &
Youth Ministries:
Vacant

Admin. Asst.:
Vacant

Director of Music:
Dr. Jennifer Flory

Organist:
Kate Phillips

Child Care Providers:
Volunteers

Greetings,

I can't believe December is already here! The holiday season always seems to sneak up on us! I am so grateful for the warmth and energy I've felt since arriving here in Milledgeville.

I'm thrilled to report that our Session has organized and is actively working on plans for our shared future; I'm truly enjoying partnering with them as we actively move the work of the church forward.

The theme of December is Advent—a hopeful and active waiting. This year, I encourage everyone to slow down and focus on the coming light by using our Church Advent Devotional. It's the perfect daily guide to pause the holiday rush and deepen your faith journey during this special season.

We have so much happening this season! Please check the calendar for our special Advent and Christmas worship services and other events this month. It's the perfect time to pause and remember the quiet miracle at the heart of our faith. May your Advent be filled with peace, and may the Light of the World shine brightly for you this Christmas.

With gratitude and hope,

Mari





'TIS THE SEASON



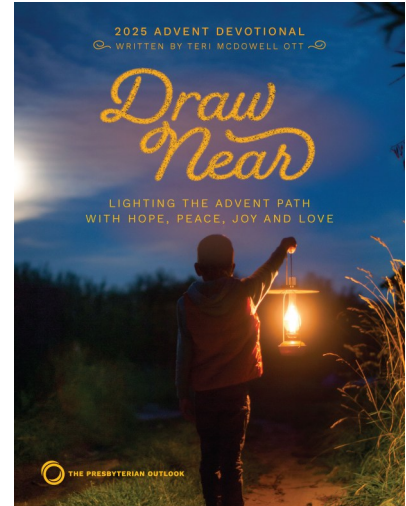
Advent Devotionals

This Advent season, we invite you to enrich your spiritual journey with our Church Advent Devotional.

The devotionals are available in two convenient formats:

- Printed Copies: You can pick up a physical copy at the church after worship this Sunday, or anytime during office hours.
- Online Version: You can download the devotional instantly at https://bit.ly/Advent_Devotional_2025.

We hope this daily guide will deepen your experience of Advent and prepare your heart for the Light of Christmas.



The Christmas Joy Gift: Reflecting God's Perfect Love

When Jesus was born among us, the perfect gift of God became flesh—fully human and fully God. He became one with us in all our struggles and triumphs, connecting us to eternal life and to each other.



CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Through the Christmas Joy Offering, we reflect this gift by supporting those who embody Christ's leadership—past, present, and future.

Your generosity honors and celebrates:

- Retired church leaders (pastors, workers, and their families) who faithfully guided us but now face critical financial need.
- Emerging leaders (students in colleges equipping communities of color) who are developing their gifts to serve the world God loves so much.

By supporting the past leaders who pointed us to Christ and the future leaders preparing to carry the light forward, we embody God's perfect, self-giving love.

We will receive the Christmas Joy Gift Offering on Sunday, December 7th, during worship, when our Youth will present the Christmas Program.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

We invite you and your family to join us for our special Christmas Eve Service on December 24th at 5:30 PM.

Our service will feature the beautiful elements we cherish:

- Lessons and Carols: Scripture readings will guide us through the unfolding story of hope and redemption, punctuated by the familiar Christmas carols you love to sing, along with special music from our choir.
- Holy Communion: We will gather at the Lord's Table to share in the sacred meal, remembering Christ's presence among us.
- Candlelight Service: The evening will conclude with our poignant candlelight ceremony, as we fill the sanctuary with light while singing "Silent Night."

Whether you seek comfort, hope, or simply a moment of reflection, all are welcome share in this holy night. Come and let the light of Christ shine for you.



CONGREGATIONAL FELLOWSHIP



Welcome the Christmas season with several of our choir members (Ruby Werts, Donna Gautier, Gini Wilkerson, Will Humphrey, Cissy Lane, and Kathy Carroll) as they perform in the

Milledgeville Singers Guild

Christmas Concert

Featuring John Rutter's
Brother Heinrich's Christmas

*A Musical Fable for choir, oboe,
bassoon, and piano.*

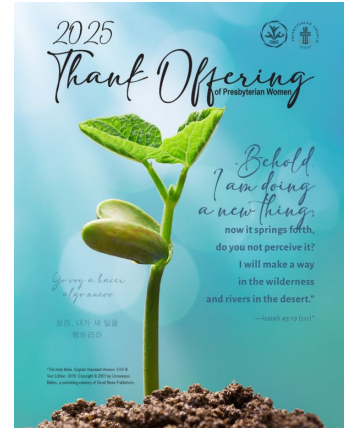
7 p.m. Sunday, December 7th
First Presbyterian Church

Presbyterian Women—Thank offering

Hello friends,

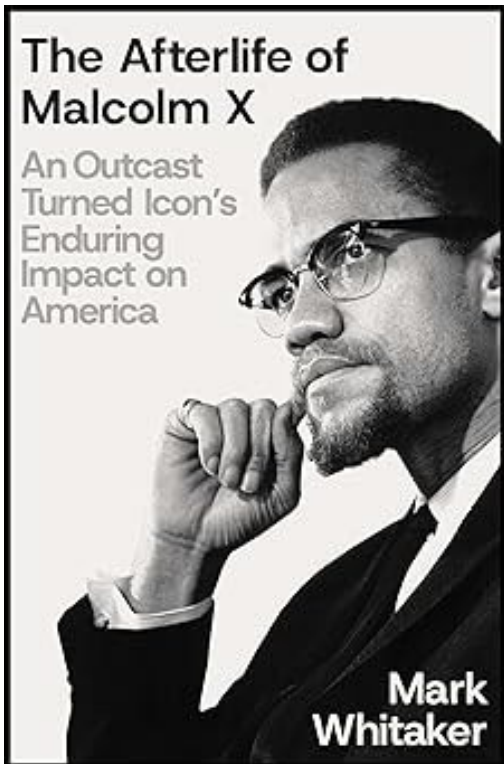
The FPC Presbyterian Women want to thank you for your generous gifts for the Thank Offering. We received \$281 which will be passed on to support the grants that are given out each year to deserving groups.

~Nancy Miller



First Presbyterian Book Club

The First Presbyterian Book Club will hold the December meeting on Thursday December 11th at 2:00 pm. We will be meeting at Dick and Arlene Mueller's house for the book discussion and our annual holiday get together. Please bring some holiday goodies along with your book and Christmas spirit. It is always fun and a great way to start the holidays.



Our book for this month is *The Afterlife of Malcolm X: An Outcast Turned Icon's Enduring Impact on America* by Mark Whitaker. Published to coincide with the hundredth anniversary of his birth, this book is the first major study of Malcolm's influence in the sixty years since his assassination. The author writes less about Malcolm's life and more about his enduring impact on culture, politics, and civil rights. The author also retraces the long road to exoneration for the two men who were wrongfully convicted of Malcolm's murder.

Our book selection for January is *The Women* by Kristin Hannah. A #1 best seller on the New York Times best seller list, *The Women* is the story of one woman who joined the military to serve as a nurse in the Viet Nam war, but it also shines a light on all women who put themselves in harm's way and whose sacrifice and commitment to their country is often forgotten. A novel about deep friendships and bold patriotism, *The Women* is a story with a memorable heroine whose courage under fire will come to define an era. This book comes highly recommended by people who have read it.

Please join us in December as we bring in the holidays at Dick and Arlene's house. It is always a fun time sitting around the tree, eating Christmas goodies and discussing our book of the month.

~Millie Murphy

The church
has left
the building.

The church
has left
the building.

MISSION AND MINISTRY

Gone
Outreaching!

Gone
Outreaching!



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The Milly Free Fridge continues to help those families and individuals who experience food insecurity in our community. With such hot weather, consider filling the fridge with bottled water.

Make plans to join us Sunday, December 28th to help feed our neighbors by making sandwiches for the Milly Free Fridge .

Please bring any of the following: Sliced bread, lunch meat, jelly, fresh fruit, prepackaged snacks, bottled drinks.

We will provide condiments and labeling materials.

Samaritan Ministry

We helped eight families this month through Samaritan Ministry. We hear so many stories of lost jobs, lowered wages and illness that have negatively impacted these families searching for help.

Please contact Pat Henry or Bill Werts if you are interested in supporting this ministry. Thank you for your continued help.

The next disbursement of funds will be on Tuesday, December 16 at 9:00 AM.



FPC FOOD PANTRY Tuesday's 9:30am—10:30am!!

Our food pantry has been extra busy in November as we served 60 households, 10 of which were new to us. Thanks to your generosity, we could offer an optional Thanksgiving dinner bag on the last 2 Tuesdays

before the holiday. We hope to do the same for Christmas.

Please make a practice of looking at special buys which match our list of staples when you are shopping: BOGO at Publix and Ingles, "buy 2, get 3 free" on cereals - any such will stretch dollars (BOGO can mean "Buy One, Give One). Remember the first Sunday of the month is food offering Sunday however donations are always welcome!

May you and yours have a blessed Christmas season as you bless others.










~Donna Gautier

Food Pantry staples list:













Canned soups; canned pasta; canned ham; tuna; salmon; and chicken; boxed mac & cheese; grits; oatmeal; and/or cereal; peanut butter & jelly; canned fruit and vegetables



DECEMBER

	<p>1 7:00 Oconee Recovery Commission</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">All Recovery Meeting</p>	<p>2 9:30-10:30 Food Pantry 12:00 Kiwanis 7:30 NA</p>
<p>7 9:30 Sunday School 10:15 Children's School 11:00 Worship Service—Joy Gift Program and Offering, Food Pantry Offering 12:00 Reception 7:00 Milledgeville Singers Guild Christmas Program</p>	<p>8 7:00 Oconee Recovery Commission</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">All Recovery Meeting</p>	<p>9 9:30-10:30 Food Pantry 12:00 Kiwanis 6:30 SESSION Meeting 7:30 NA</p> 
<p>14 9:30 Sunday School 10:15 Children's School 11:00 Worship Service 12:00 Youth Reception 5:00 Presbyterian Women Study and Dinner</p>	<p>15 7:00 Oconee Recovery Commission</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">All Recovery Meeting</p>	<p>16 9:00 Samaritan Ministry 9:30-10:30 Food Pantry 12:00 Kiwanis 7:30 NA</p> 
<p>21 9:30 Sunday School 10:15 Children's School 11:00 Worship Service</p>	<p>22 7:00 Oconee Recovery Commission</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">All Recovery Meeting</p>	<p>23 9:30-10:30 Food Pantry 12:00 Kiwanis 7:30 NA</p> 
<p>28 9:30 Sunday School 10:15 Children's School 11:00 Worship Service 12:00 Milly Sandwich Squad</p>	<p>29 7:00 Oconee Recovery Commission</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">All Recovery Meeting</p>	<p>30 9:30-10:30 Food Pantry 12:00 Kiwanis 7:30 NA</p> 

2025

<p>3 6:30 Wednesday Potluck and Study</p> 	<p>4 7:30 NA</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6 10:00 Youth Practice 7:30 NA</p>  <p style="text-align: right;">Narcotics Anonymous</p>
<p>10 6:30 Wednesday Potluck and Study</p> 	<p>11 2:00 FPC Book Club 6:00 Solicitor General/IOBI program 7:30 NA</p>  <p style="text-align: right;">Narcotics Anonymous</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13 6:30-7:30 PFLAG (youth room) 7:30 NA</p>  <p style="text-align: right;">Narcotics Anonymous</p>
<p>17 6:30 Wednesday Potluck and Study</p> 	<p>18 7:30 NA</p>  <p style="text-align: right;">Narcotics Anonymous</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20 7:30 NA</p>  <p style="text-align: right;">Narcotics Anonymous</p>
<p>24 5:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Service</p> 	<p>25 Christmas Day</p> 	<p>26</p>	<p>27 7:30 NA</p>  <p style="text-align: right;">Narcotics Anonymous</p>
<p>31</p> 			

Operations: The church office is open Mon - Thurs. 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Please call the office for an appointment (478) 443-5203



YOUTH MINISTRY



CHRISTMAS JOY SPECIAL OFFERINGS

LEADERSHIP: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Youth Group News: Final Prep for the Christmas Program!

The holiday season is here, and our Youth Group is already deep into the final stages of organizing and rehearsing for the Annual Christmas Program!

We meet every Sunday right after worship, but please note these critical dates for rehearsals and celebration:

Saturday, December 6th (10:00 AM): Program Rehearsal. We need everyone here on Saturday morning for a focused rehearsal to make sure all parts are ready.

Sunday, December 7th (9:30 AM): Final Program Preparation. Please join us before Sunday morning worship for last-minute preparation and a run-through.

Sunday, December 7th (11:00 AM): Christmas Joy Gift Service & Program Presentation!

Sunday, December 14th (After Worship): Youth Christmas Party! Join us right after worship for a festive party to celebrate all of our hard work and the start of the holiday season!

We are so proud of the talent and dedication of our young people! Whether they are using their voices, their musical gifts, or their technical skills behind the scenes, their commitment is what makes our Christmas Program truly special.

We encourage the entire congregation to come and support them by attending the Christmas Joy Gift Service on Sunday, December 7th, at 11:00 AM, where the program will be presented. Immediately following the service, everyone is invited to join the Youth for a special Reception in the Fellowship Hall—please bring your favorite Christmas treats to share!



Youth assisting with the Hanging of the Greens on Saturday, November 29th.



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

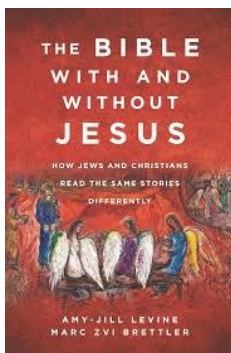


The Bible Sunday School class continues its study of The Bible With and Without Jesus by Amy Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler. This book helps us start to see the Jewish perspective on many of the best known stories in the holy scriptures we call the Old Testament.

Our class is meeting in person (in the church parlor) and via ZOOM, allowing us to chose whether to come to class to interact or study from the comfort of our home computer, on a tablet or on our smartphones. We join in lively conversations every Sunday at 9:45 AM.

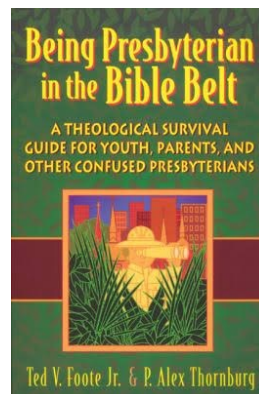
I hope a number of you will join us. If you wish to join by ZOOM, call me at (478) 414-6516 and I will forward the link.

~Joel D. Burns



FELLOWSHIP SUNDAY SCHOOL

We are studying *Being a Presbyterian in the Bible Belt* by Ted V. Foote Jr. & P. Alex Thornburg. This group meets in person **every Sunday morning at 9:45.** We would love to have you join us.
~Bill Werts



d365

d365 is a daily devotion written for youth and adults. The devotion follows a five-step format – **Pause, Listen, Think, Pray, Go.** The **Pause** step remains the same all week and is designed as a centering tool as you begin the devotion.

The **Listen** step is the scripture passage for the day, using the

Common English Bible translation.

The **Think** step is the devotional thought by the week's writer.

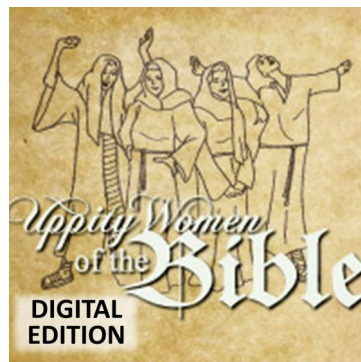
The **Pray** step is the start of a prayer that you can expand into your own conversation with God.

The **Go** step is a call to action – launching you from this moment toward acting on what you have heard.

As you read the thoughts of the writers, think about your own response to the scripture for the day. Let the writer's words serve as background for your own conversation with God.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT STUDY

The Wednesday night group meets in person for a great pot luck supper and lively discussion every week. We are beginning *Uppity Women of the Bible* by Hebrew Bible professor Dr. Lisa Wolfe. This video series takes a fresh look at the books of Ruth, The Song of Songs, Esther and Judith. With humor and fresh insights the professor makes the study a joy.



The pot luck begins at 6:30 P.M.

If you do not wish to participate in the pot luck, the discussions begin about 7:00 P.M. Please join us!



SESSION NEWS



The Session has been busy preparing for our solo launch next month with many behind the scenes activities. Front and center was the recently completed Stewardship Campaign, while Congregational Care continues to chug along quietly providing meals for receptions and individuals, and Missions supports the less fortunate with the Milly Free Fridge, Food Pantry and Samaritan ministries.

The Worship Committee has been in full swing! Many enthusiastic church members swung into action to decorate the building for Advent, and schedules are being formulated for those wishing to assist in the services on Sundays!

John, Becky and I are continuing our steep learning curve as a combined administrative assistant team, so please be patient with us.

If you haven't yet completed your Times/Talents Survey and Pledge cards, please do so as soon as possible; these are essential in our planning and budgeting for next year.

~Susan McGill, Clerk of Session

Nursery Volunteer Schedule

December 7: Sherry Henry/Nancy Miller
December 14: Anne Smart/Joel Burns
December 21: Charles Burrell/Gloria Burns
December 28: S. McGill/Margaret Ivester

BE THE CHURCH

THE CHURCH SERVES

Liturgist Schedule

December 7 & 14: Andrew Allen
December 21 & 28: Ruby Werts
December 24: Andrew Allen

TREASURER'S CORNER

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Thank you for your dedication to First Presbyterian. Our wonderful church is about to celebrate its bicentennial and is still going strong. We must continue the current level of giving to pay for the repairs our building requires and keep our mission intact.

Please support the general fund, the Samaritan's Ministry and the Food Pantry. We try to follow the example of Jesus in all we do.

*Joel D. Burns
Acting Treasurer*

<u>OPERATING BUDGET</u>	<u>September</u>	<u>October</u>	<u>2025 YTD</u>
Contributions	\$13,335	\$15,133	\$172,951
Other Income	\$688	\$688	\$6,884
Total Operating Income	\$14,023	\$15,821	\$179,836
Total Operating Expenses	18,242	\$15,693	\$199,619
Net Operating	(\$4,219)	\$128	(\$19,784)
<u>DESIGNATED FUNDS</u>			
Contributions	\$2,318	\$6,678	\$38,700
Expenses	\$1,674	\$2,005	\$23,858
Net Designated	\$644	\$4,673	\$14,842



ET CETERA

BICENTENNIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Christmas ornaments arrived on schedule in November and are absolutely lovely. Ornaments are \$15 each or two for \$25 and will be on sale before worship on Sundays (10:30 in the Fellowship Hall) or in the office. Right now, we are accepting cash or check only, but we hope to add a digital payment option in the near future. **Remember, ALL proceeds from this fundraiser will be used to support our planned program activities during the Bicentennial Celebration next year.**



Secondly, we are looking for volunteers to help with gathering the Historical Tidbits which will start in early January. Please share with Ruby your nostalgic stories of former church members and activities, and let her know if you are willing to volunteer these during worship service.

Lastly, the committee is firming up commitments from invited guests and musicians and we hope to have a final schedule of activities printed and posted by the end of 2025. We will have a kickoff celebration on January 4, 2026 to start the Bicentennial celebration; more details will be forthcoming.

~Susan McGill, Chair



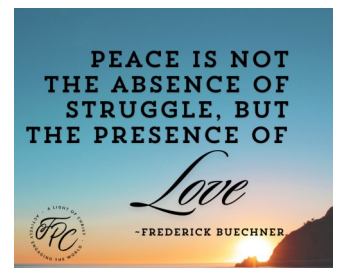
A Call for Creative Expression: Mari's Office Wall Project

I'm looking forward to transforming the large, blank wall in my office into a living tribute to our church family!

I invite all members and friends to share artwork, photos, poems, or any creative expressions that capture what Milledgeville First Presbyterian Church means to you. We will be taking these unique pieces and printing them on beautiful canvases, turning the space into a shared gallery that constantly reminds us of our journey and connection.

Please prayerfully consider sharing your gift. I can't wait to see your expression of our church family celebrated on the wall!

Thank you! Mari





PRAYER REQUESTS



CHURCH FAMILY:

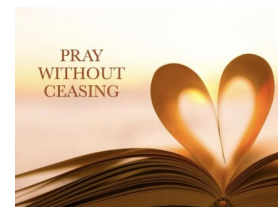
Harry Beck, ongoing health concerns
 Nan Carpenter, ongoing health concerns
 Sunda Coleman, recovering from surgery after a fall
 Louise Sallstrom, recovering from a fall
 Ellen Thompson, recovering from a broken hip at home

Military Service

Will Deason
 Rebecca Elangwe
 (Both are Reservists)

EXTENDED FAMILY:

Darryl Allen, Andrew Allen's father, ongoing health concerns
 Nannette Green Allen, childhood friend of Margaret Ivester with serious health issues
 Mark Archer, Sunda Coleman's brother-in-law, hip replacement, recovering at home
 Michael Bledsoe, Mary Lucik's grandson, multiple health concerns
 Taylor Croghan, Craig Callender's niece, EDS diagnosis
 Don Goggans, Elaine Goggans' son, stage four cancer
 Alonzo Kelley, Craig Callender's father, Stage 4 Melanoma
 Velma Kelley, Craig Callender's grandmother, ongoing health concerns
 Elizabeth Knobel, Carolyn Morgan's daughter, ongoing health concerns
 Charles Morgan, Jennifer Flory's father, ongoing health concerns
 Joanne Murphy, Kathy Carroll's mother, ongoing health issues- at Carlyle House in Macon
 John J. Murphy, Kathy Carroll's father, recovering from kidney operation
 Paul Orman, Barbara Orman's husband, ongoing health concerns
 Chris Pearson, Sunda Coleman's son, recovering at home; dialysis
 Renee Pearson, Sunda Coleman's daughter-in-law, diagnosed with congestive heart failure, at home
 Runette Pounds, Sunda Coleman's mother, ongoing health concerns
 Bob Smart, Anne Smart's husband, ankylosing spondylitis
 Windy Spaide, Craig Callender's sister, ongoing health concerns
 Randy Stewart, Haywood Edwards' son-in-law, ongoing health concerns
 Ike Thomas, ongoing cancer treatments
 Dudley Weathers, Anne Weathers' husband, at home in hospice care
 Wayne Woodard, Ruby Werts' brother, diagnosed with Parkinson's



IN ASSISTED LIVING

Nan Carpenter, PO Box 527, Jefferson, GA 30549
 Laura King, The Cottages of Milledgeville, 1010 Fernwood Drive
 Jude Hirsch, Fellowship Home at Meriwether, 10 Meriwether Place
 Maryanne Morris, Fellowship Home at Meriwether, 10 Meriwether Place
 Runette Pounds, The Cottages, 1010 Fernwood Dr, Rm 206, Milledgeville, GA 31061
 Suzy Smith, The Oaks Peake, 400 Foster Rd., A2, Macon, GA 31210

Anniversaries

December 4~ Carl & Nancy Miller
December 11~ Catherine & Joseph Dean
December 20~ Anne & Bob Smart
 December 22 ~ Cindy Phillips & Sam Downer
December 27~ Lee Gillis & Jude Hirsch

Birthdays

December 3~ Cissy Lane
December 3~ Susan McGill
December 10~ Ben Smart
December 12~ Emily Bradley
December 13~ Cecilia Odihe
December 14~ Kathy Carroll
December 19~ Monica Garcia
December 20~ Janet Hoffman

