

CHURCH CURRENTS

DECEMBER 2023

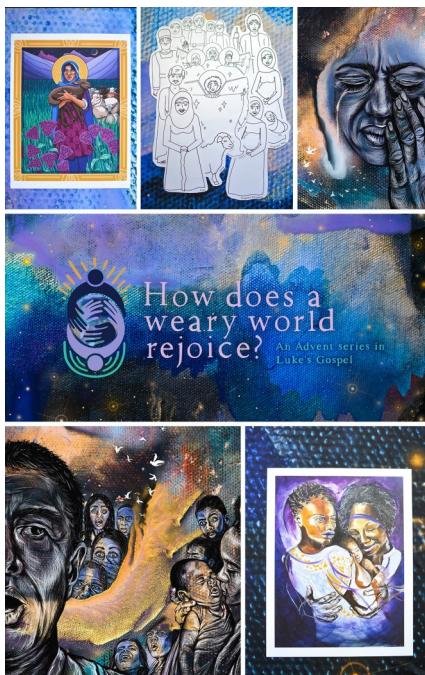
210 S. Wayne Street, Milledgeville, Georgia 31061

478-452-9394; fpchurch@windstream.net; www.fpcmilledgeville.org



Join us on Sunday mornings on WKZR
102.3 FM or via Facebook Live

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
210 SOUTH WAYNE STREET
MILLEDGEVILLE, GA 31061





First Presbyterian Church

Issue No. 329 December 2023



Pastor:
Rev. Susan Balfour

Coord. of Children &
Youth Ministries:
Vacant

Admin. Asst.:
Lois Callender

Director of Music:
Dr. Jennifer Flory

Organist:
Kate Phillips

Child Care Providers:
Childcare is
temporarily
unavailable

Beloved,

I remember you each day in my prayers, and I give thanks. I am grateful for your love and dedication to sharing in God's work in this time and place. You are a witness that this world sorely needs, and a servant to those in want.

"You are what I always wanted the church to be." This comes from a note sent from outside our congregation, along with a generous financial contribution to our ministry. We are living into life in the servant-King Christ, and proclaiming a counter-narrative to the exclusivity so many other churches exhibit in the name of piety. We are inspiring people well beyond our immediate sphere.

As we enter the Season of Advent, we are reminded of our priorities: to feed the hungry, quench the thirsty, clothe the naked, and see Jesus in everyone we meet—especially those in need. On December 10, we will celebrate St. Nicholas with an evening of fun and learning; the original St. Nick is the patron saint of the poor. We will bring gifts to St. Nick (who will be here in person!) in the form of canned goods and non-perishables.

It's poetic that the end of the secular year coincides with the beginning of the liturgical year—it reminds us that at the end of all things is Christ. We welcome Jesus almost in the same breath as we bid the year goodbye. We begin where everything else ends.

May this season of waiting and anticipation be full of hope and love.

In Christ,

Rev. Susan

Christmas Eve falls on Sunday this year; while many churches are holding *either* a morning or candlelight service, we will hold both. The morning service will be fashioned after the Longest Night (or Blue Christmas) tradition; this is a service that acknowledges that the "happiest season" is often difficult for those who have experienced loss, struggle to provide for their families, wrestle with disease, or are estranged from loved ones. The service will move from woundedness to the healing we experience in hope. Please join us, especially if you are in need of a little solidarity and comfort.

Service of Healing

**A Service of
remembrance and hope.**

This time of year can be a mix
of emotions that make it a
challenge. We invite you for a
service of reflection, comfort
and hope for hurting hearts.
Sunday, December 24, 2023
@ 11:00 AM





The chili cook off is back again this year! We'll hold it during the St. Nicholas Day Festival, so come prepared to have fun and vote on your favorite chili creation. This event is always fun with so many different types of chili from the congregation. We'll see you Sunday, December 10 starting at 4:00 PM!

St. Nicholas Day is December 6th and celebrates the Saint that Santa Claus is based on, Saint Nicholas of Myra. This year, we'll celebrate St. Nicholas with fun activities for both children and adults. We will also have our annual chili cook off. New this year is an ugly sweater contest. And depending on the weather, we'll have s'mores for dessert. Make plans to join us in this festival of fun for all ages on Sunday, December 10 at 4:00 PM!



VIEW OUR CHURCH DIRECTORY ON YOUR MOBILE DEVICE!

FREE App for iPhone, iPad & Android



Our church directory is a great resource tool to get to know our church family better!

Simply go to the App Store, search for **Instant Church Directory** and download the FREE app to begin.

You will use your email address listed in the directory to CREATE A LOGIN the first time you use the directory app.

If you're not listed in the directory, OR if you have trouble logging into the app, please contact the church



If you haven't already checked out the new directory and updated your information and picture, please do so as soon as possible. Call the office if you are having a difficult time getting in. This online version can be downloaded and printed for those who prefer not to use a digital version. But we can't do that until people put in their information. You can also add yourself to the groups listed.

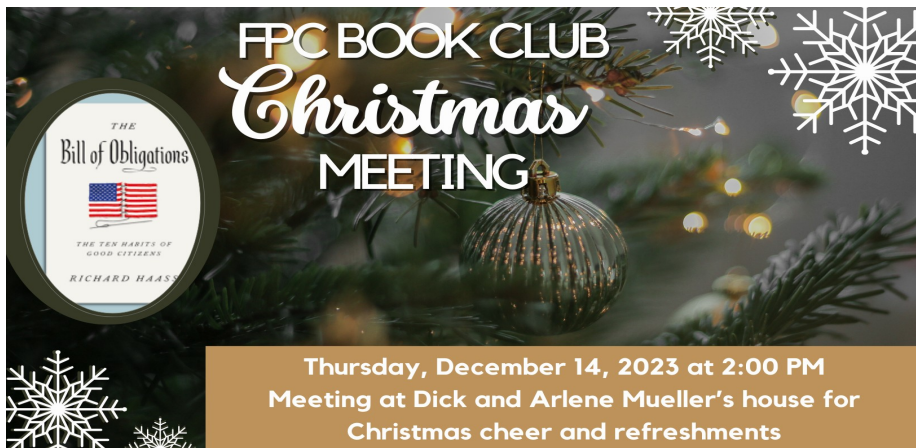


CONGREGATIONAL FELLOWSHIP



Join the Christmas PW Bible Study at Mary Baker's place at **4:00 PM on Sunday, December 17**. This is a combined meeting, so we look forward to seeing everyone there. For information, please contact the office.

We're going on another family hike at Lockerly, this time to look at the lights. Remember that you have to buy tickets ahead of time—they will not allow you to buy them the day of if you are walking. Make plans to join us in this festive outing on **Saturday, December 16 at 6:00PM**



The First Presbyterian Church book club will meet on the second **Thursday, December 14th, at 2:00 pm**. We will be meeting at Dick and Arlene Mueller's house for our usual holiday get together to

indulge in holiday goodies as we discuss our book selection for the month. If you need directions, contact Millie Murphy at 478-456-4465.

Our book for discussion is *The Bill of Obligations: The Ten Habits of Good Citizens* by Richard Haass. Most people view the Bill of Rights as the guide to what our rights as citizens ought to be. The author argues that we have other obligations as citizens that should be placed on the same footing as the Bill of Rights. These are commitments that we make to our fellow citizens and to the government to uphold democracy and counter the growing apathy, anger, disinformation and violence that threaten us all. The book illuminates how we can rediscover and recover the attitudes and behaviors that have contributed so much to this country's success as a great nation.

Please join us for a thought-provoking discussion, great fellowship and good food. We also need your suggestions for books to be considered for the upcoming months.

~Millie Murphy



MISSION AND MINISTRY



Milly Free Fridge is in need of regular volunteers to clean the fridge and the area around it. The last time we went, it needed cleaning. So please join us Sunday, December 31st to help feed our neighbors and ourselves by making sandwiches for the Milly Free Fridge and cleaning out the fridge when we deliver our donations.



Please bring any of the following:

Sliced bread, lunch meat, jelly, fresh fruit, prepackaged snacks, bottled drinks. We will provide condiments and labeling materials.

The need is great in our community. **Thank you!**

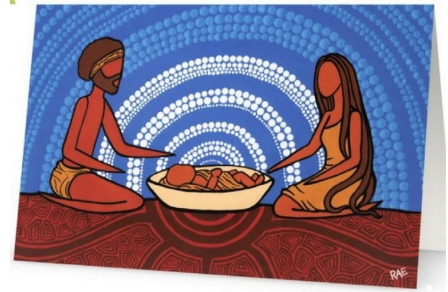
Food Pantry staples list:

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

Samaritan Ministry

This past month, we were unable to help people with their utilities because we did not have any funds available. The Samaritan Ministry is meant to assist those in need once a month. We thank you so much for your consistent and generous giving to this special outreach. It is very needed, especially as the temperatures drop and people need to keep the heat on to stay warm.

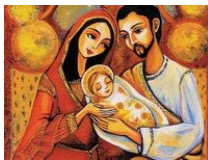
Please consider helping Bill out on the third Tuesday of the month as he tries to help all those who come to the church looking for assistance. The next disbursement of funds will be on **Tuesday, December 19 at 9:30 AM.**



Food Pantry has been busier than ever during the past month. Because downtown Halloween activities used up our parking on the final Tuesday in October, people were delayed in accessing our distribution. Hence, we had 25 families on the first Tuesday in November, then 15 each of the remaining weeks for a total of 70 with 13 coming for the first time. One new woman came at the end of the last day, apologizing for coming at all, not feeling "entitled" but doing what she had to do. I was so glad we had one bag left for her!

I have been glad, as well, to have a faithful group of college students for the past several weeks who have come to help pack bags on Mondays and distribute on Tuesdays. Our own Masoma has begun helping when she can and is a great asset to the team. In December the calendars, Christmas cards, notepaper, etc. that you have provided will be made available for folks to choose. We are still accepting these items if you have some to share.

Thank you for continuing to contribute food items and funds to this ministry. You can tell from the numbers above that we are providing important support in the community. Keep up the good work and the prayers!~Donna



December



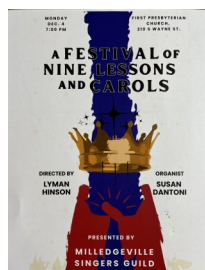
**CHRISTMAS JOY
SPECIAL OFFERINGS**
LEADERSHIP, PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE
DECEMBER 3 - DECEMBER 24

Jesus is the
perfect gift —
destined to lead us
and bring joy,
peace and salvation
to his people.



3 9:30 Sunday School
10:15 Children's School
11:00 Worship Service
FBLive & WKZR102.3FM
12:00 Youth Group
4:00 MSG Dress Rehearsal

**4 7:00 MSG
Concert**



5 9:30-10:30 Food Pantry
12:00 Kiwanis Luncheon
5:30 Session
Meeting



10 9:30 Sunday School
10:15 Children's School
11:00 Worship Service
FBLive & WKZR102.3FM
12:00 Youth Group
4:00 St. Nicholas Festival

11 6:30 PFLAG



12 9:30-10:30 Food Pantry
12:00 Kiwanis Luncheon



17 9:30 Sunday School
10:15 Children's School
11:00 Worship Service
FBLive & WKZR102.3FM
12:00 Youth Group
1:30 Homeless Awareness
Club
4:00 PW Bible Study

18

19 9:30-10:30 Food Pantry
and **Samaritan Ministry**
12:00 Kiwanis
Luncheon



24 9:30 Sunday School
10:15 Children's School
11:00 Worship Service
FBLive & WKZR102.3FM
5:30 Christmas Eve
Worship Service

25



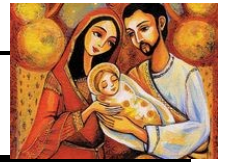
26 9:30-10:30 Food Pantry
12:00 Kiwanis Luncheon



31 9:30 Sunday School
10:15 Children's School
11:00 Worship Service
FBLive & WKZR102.3FM
12:00 Youth Group
12:00 Milly Free Fridge



2023



| | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | 1 | 2 10:00 Hanging of the Greens  |
| 6 11:00 Midweek Contemplation & Coffee 6:30 Wednesday Potluck and Study | 7 6:00 IOBI | 8 | 9 |
| 13 11:00 Midweek Contemplation & Coffee 6:30 Wednesday Potluck and Study | 14 2:00 FPC Book Club  | 15 | 16 6:00 Winter Wonder Family Hike at Lockerly  |
| 20 11:00 Midweek Contemplation & Coffee 6:30 Wednesday Potluck and Study | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 27 6:30 Wednesday Potluck and Study | 28 | 29 | 30 |

Elders on Session

Class of 2024 ~ Wesley Applebury (At Large) Jennifer Flory (Worship)
Nancy Miller (Clerk of Session) Laurie Peebles (Personnel) Joel Respass (Property)
Anne Smart (Christian Education) Bill Werts (Missions and Outreach)

Operations: The church office is now open Monday - Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Pastor Office Hours: Tuesday - Friday 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Please call the office for an appointment.



YOUTH MINISTRY



YOUTH GROUP

Sundays, 12:00pm



The Youth continue to meet weekly after the worship service for a time of reflection, fun and fellowship. Often, food is involved in the process. We will start our fundraising to go to Montreat soon, so be on the look out for those opportunities.

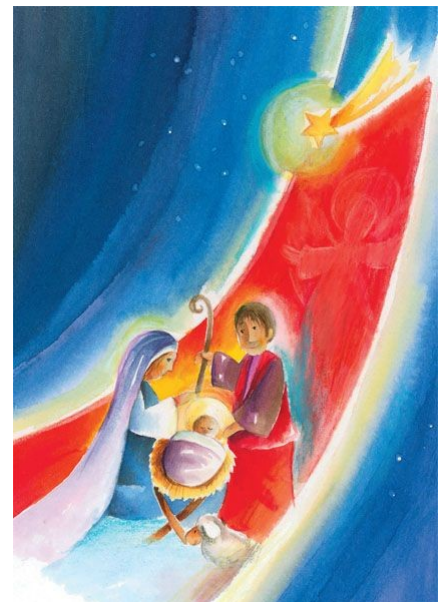
Meanwhile, there are a ton of teen and family friendly events at the church this month. From a St. Nicholas Day Festival and Chili cook off, to a Winter Wonder Family Walk, we are hoping that everyone takes part in the Advent activities.



CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sundays, 10:15am, in the Fellowship Hall

We have been having a blast with the Children's Sunday School Class each Sunday morning. There is always an interesting story with fun activities to engage the children in. And parents can even get supplemental materials offered on our website under 'Children's Sunday School.' Take advantage of all the materials available to round out our young saints' religious and spiritual education.



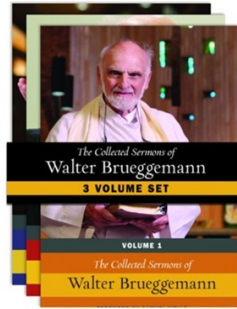


CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Bible Sunday School class continues to meet via ZOOM. This conveniently allows us to study and learn in an informal manner from the comfort of our homes or on our smartphones. We meet for thoughtful conversations **every Sunday at 9:30 AM**. We are studying the first volume of *The Collected Sermons of Walter Brueggemann* and each of the sermons has been thought provoking. The sermons we are now studying were written in the early part of this century but they are as fresh today as when originally delivered as we heard when I read his sermon "Neighbor Religion that Let's a City Work" in a recent worship. If you have never encountered Dr. Brueggemann's work you are in for a treat. Not only is he incredibly knowledgeable, he also has a great sense of humor. If you wish to join by ZOOM, call me at (478) 414-6516 and I will forward the link. ~Joel D. Burns

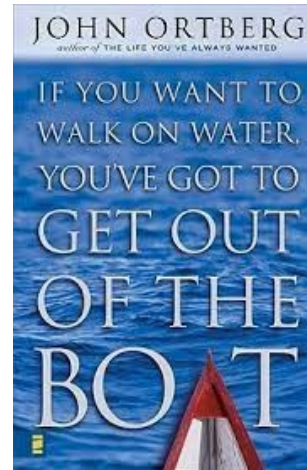


Crochet Sunday School Class

We're trying something new! A Crochet Sunday School Class started the last week in October. The class has been focused on learning to crochet but we are now delving into meditation and explorations of faith. Join us in this new adventure on **Sunday mornings at 10:15 AM** in the library.



FELLOWSHIP SUNDAY SCHOOL



We are studying *If You Want to Walk on Water, You've Got to Get Out of the Boat* by John Ortberg. This group meets in person in the

parlor room **every Sunday morning at 9:45 AM**. We would love to have you join us. ~Bill Werts

WEDNESDAY NIGHT STUDY

The Wednesday night study group meets in person for a pot luck supper and lively discussion. We are glad to say a few folks have joined since last month, but there is room for a lot more. We are reading and discussing *The Other Evangelicals, A Story of Liberal, Black Progressive, Feminist and Gay Christians and the Movement That Pushed Them Out*. John Lamsma has led the study and is doing a great job. This is an interesting history of the gradual effort by the conservative evangelicals to usurp the term "evangelical." **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 whether you have the book or not! The book is available on Amazon. ~Joel Burns





Because of your generosity to the Peace & Global Witness Offering, **the church was able to donate \$358.11** to the Presbyterian Mission in Cheryl Barnes' name for her ministry. As the education facilitator for the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP), Cheryl Barnes collaborates with the CCAP Education Department and the education departments of the five CCAP Synods — three in Malawi, one in Zambia, and one in Zimbabwe — to improve the quality of primary school education in the many schools under the CCAP umbrella. In her role as an education advisor, Cheryl strives to assist the CCAP in improving the quality of teaching and implementing best practices in educating children, including those with special needs. A focus of Cheryl's ministry is working with the CCAP to safeguard the rights of children by developing child protection policies and implementing them in schools. Of particular emphasis is protecting young girls against violence and empowering them to continue their schooling.



TREASURER'S CORNER

On November 19th we gathered to consider the finances and mission of our church. We know the potential we have to be a force for God's work in Milledgeville. Now we need to put our time, talents and resources to work. We need people to step up to the challenge of managing our finances more thoughtfully. We need everyone to be on the same page in giving the best we can to the work. We have a lot to do to make sure we continue to be the best force for holy transformation.

God bless everyone ~Joel D. Burns

| | September | October | 2023 YTD |
|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Contributions | \$13,176 | \$15,691 | \$178,783 |
| Other Income | \$1,035 | \$685 | \$10,216 |
| Total Income | \$14,211 | \$16,376 | \$188,999 |
| Budgeted Expenses | \$25,968 | \$13,711 | \$190,531 |
| Net (Loss) | (\$11,757) | \$2,665 | (\$1,532) |

The perfect gift.

Through the Christmas Joy Offering, we come together to support past, present and future leaders, embodying God's perfect gift to us, Jesus Christ.



CHRISTMAS JOY
SPECIAL OFFERINGS

LEADERSHIP: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

DECEMBER 3 - DECEMBER 24

The Perfect Gift

When Jesus was born among us, he came as a helpless baby destined to bring joy, peace and salvation to his people. This child, God's Word made flesh- fully human and fully God- became one of us. One with us. One among us. In all of our vulnerabilities, struggles and triumphs, Jesus became one of us- leading us, knowing us, connecting us to himself and to each other, and offering us his gift of eternal life.

The perfect gift.

Through the Christmas Joy Offering, we reflect God's perfect gift to us, with generous support of church leaders among us- past, present and future- who have pointed us to God.

We honor and celebrate leaders like retired pastors, church workers and their families who have faithfully guided and led us but who now find themselves in critical financial need. We honor and celebrate emerging leaders like students in schools and colleges equipping communities of color, who develop leadership skills as they pursue their education and prepare to bring their gifts in service to the world God loves so much.

Jesus' example as a child born to be among us and lead us to eternal life provides a pattern for us to follow as we celebrate those who have led us in the past and will lead us into the future. Through the Christmas Joy Offering, we come together to support past, present and future leaders, embodying God's perfect gift to us, Jesus Christ.





Prayer Requests

Church Family:

Wesley Applebury, attending seminary in Atlanta, **Columbia Theological Seminary, D. Wesley Applebury, Box 289, 701 S. Columbia Dr., Decatur, GA 30030**
 Beth Baarda, in home hospice in La Grange, GA
 Nan Carpenter, recovering from a fall
 John Sallstrom, recovering from heart valve surgery
 Gini Wilkerson, recovering from brain surgery

Extended Family:

Etta Bentley, Jennifer Flory's step-mother, ongoing health concerns
 Michael Bledsoe, Mary Lucik's grandson, multiple health concerns
 Brittany Caruthers, Sunda Coleman's niece, chemo treatment
 Margaret Ellen (Meg) Clark, Margaret Ivester's daughter, ongoing health concerns
 Susan Eilers, Mary Lucik's friend, cancer surgery
 Don Goggans, Elaine Goggans' son, stage four cancer
 Dee Hartmann, Susan Balfour's aunt, health issues
 John Howard, Joe Bennett's brother-in-law, ongoing health concerns and surgery
 Alonzo Kelly, Craig Callender's father, Stage 4 Melenoma
 Elizabeth Knobel, Carolyn Morgan's daughter, cancer stable
 PJ Malagisi, former elementary student of Jennifer Flory, traumatic brain injury
 Julie Montemayor, Becky Henderson's mother, ongoing health concerns
 Ben Morgan, Jenifer Flory's brother, ongoing health concerns
 Janie Mullis, Bill Wert's son-in-law's mother, ongoing health concerns
 Joanne Murphy, Kathy Carroll's mother, mass on her colon- at Carlyle House in Macon
 Paul Orman, Barbra Orman's husband, undergoing prostate cancer treatment
 Chris Pearson, Sunda Coleman's son, recovering at home; dialysis
 Runette Pounds, Sunda Coleman's mother, ongoing health concerns
 Willy Sanders, Sunda Coleman's cousin, ongoing health concerns
 Bob Smart, Anne Smart's husband, ankylosing spondylitis
 Windy Spaide, Craig Callender's sister, in rehab
 Randy Stewart, Haywood Edwards son-in-law, ongoing health concerns
 Addie VanOrsdale, family friend of Cissy Lane, kidney failure
 Dudley Weathers, Anne Weathers' husband, ongoing health concerns

Limited Mobility

Martha Chappell
 Helen Danuser

Military Service

Will Deason
 Rebecca Elangwe
 (Both are Reservists)



In Assisted Living:

George and Nan Carpenter, PO Box 527, Jefferson, GA 30549
 Jude Hirsch, Fellowship Home at Meriwether, 10 Meriwether Place
 Nancy Holbrook, The Dublin Place, 504 Fire Tower Rd, Dublin, GA 31021
 Eloise Lamb, Fellowship Home at Meriwether, 10 Meriwether Place
 Maryann Morris, Fellowship Home at Meriwether, 10 Meriwether Place
 Jackie Northington, Fellowship Home at Meriwether, 10 Meriwether Place, Ste 3303
 Suzy Smith, Savannah Court, 1061 Willow Run Rd, Unit 4, Greensboro GA 30642

Anniversaries

December 4~ Carl & Nancy Miller
December 11~ Catherine & Joseph Dean
December 20~ Anne & Bob Smart
December 21~ Jude Hirsch & Lee Gillis



Birthdays

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

