

CHURCH CURRENTS

JANUARY 2026

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MORE LIGHT
PRESBYTERIANS

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

210 SOUTH WAYNE STREET

MILLEDGEVILLE, GA 31061



First Presbyterian Church

Issue No. 353 January 2026

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,

Can you believe we have been together for three months now? In many ways it seems much longer, as you have opened your arms and hearts to me, and we have already accomplished so much together. The Session is fully up and running, and the Administrative Commission is ready to return "Original Jurisdiction" as soon as the Presbytery meets to approve it in February. Our committees are formed and functioning, and while we are still learning the ropes, we appreciate your grace as we continue to figure things out together.

HAVE A MUG WITH MARI

Starting in January, everyone is invited to "Have a Mug with Mari" every Wednesday morning at 10:00 am. Our pastor Mari will have the coffee and tea ready and her office door open for anyone who would like to drop in for a visit. This is a wonderful, informal opportunity to get better acquainted, ask questions, share your story, or simply enjoy a conversation as she settles into her ministry with us. Whether you have a specific topic on your mind or just want to say hello, please feel free to stop by and pull up a chair.



As we close out 2025, we look back on a season of significant transition, but our eyes are now firmly set on 2026—a year we expect to be a time of healing and growth. One of my priorities for this year is to get to know as many of you as possible and to listen to your stories, your concerns, and your hopes and dreams for this church. As we build and strengthen our relationships, we can face the challenges before us and empower this congregation for the ministry ahead.

With the new year come new ideas and possibilities. As we get better acquainted, I want to emphasize that my door is almost always open when I am on-site. In addition to Sundays, I will be in the office every Wednesday, as well as either Tuesday or Thursday of each week. To help us connect, I am inviting everyone to "Have a Mug with Mari" every Wednesday morning at 10:00 am. The Keurig will be plugged in and my door will be open—so grab a mug and come on by!

I look forward to all that we will build together in this new chapter. Let's step into this year with expectant hearts, trusting that God is already at work among us, making all things new.

~~ Rev. Mari



BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION



200 YEARS OF FAITH IN ACTION

BICENTENNIAL KICKOFF - JAN. 4, 2026

Join us as we begin 2026 and mark 200 years of faith, fellowship, and service. Reception at 10:15 a.m. • Worship at 11:00 a.m. Celebrate Epiphany and communion, with our Youth leading the Time with Young Disciples. All are welcome!

KIRKIN' O' THE TARTANS SERVICE - APRIL 12, 2026

Wear your tartan and join us at 11:00 a.m. for a festive celebration of our Scottish heritage—bagpipes, hymns, and a Blessing of the Tartans. Refreshments will follow. Come in plaid or just as you are—all clans and friends welcome!

OUR JOURNEY BEGINS - MAY 3, 2026

Step into our story at 11:00 a.m. with a frontier worship experience featuring Libby Lounsbury's 2001 playlet, "From These Beginnings." Celebrate communion and the moments that shaped our faith community. Reception to follow. Pioneer attire is encouraged—or come just as you are!

MILLEDGEVILLE SINGERS IN CONCERT - MAY 3, 2026

Join us for a 4:00 p.m. concert on the same day as Our Journey Begins. The Milledgeville Singers Guild presents selections from Clyde Tipton's "Let Justice Roll"— voices united in mercy and righteousness. Free and open to all.

MUSICAL HERITAGE SERVICE - MAY 10, 2026

Experience two centuries of sacred music at 11:00 a.m.—from responses and anthems to a joyful hymn-sing. Special guest musicians will join our choir and organist. Post-service reception to follow.

FAITH IN ACTION SERVICE - MAY 17, 2026

Celebrate service to our community at 11:00 a.m.—stories of impact, prayers of gratitude, and voices lifted together. Fellowship with snacks and shared experiences—help us honor the faith that moves us to serve.

MUSIC OF CLYDE TIPTON SERVICE - MAY 24, 2026

Join us at 11:00 a.m. for Pentecost as we celebrate the music and legacy of Clyde Tipton—composer, conductor, and champion of sacred song, known for its "simplicity and grace." Visit with the Tipton family at the fellowship reception after worship.

LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE - MAY 31, 2026

On Trinity Sunday at 11:00 a.m., our young disciples take center stage. Our youth will lead us in worship, guiding hearts and voices. Afterward, linger in Fellowship Hall for refreshments, laughter, and conversation.

HONORING THE JOURNEY - JUNE 7, 2026

At 11:00 a.m., we trace our congregation's story, celebrate communion and give thanks for God's faithfulness in every season—milestone moments, choir anthems, and prayers of gratitude and hope.

BICENTENNIAL OPEN HOUSE - JUNE 11, 2026

Join us for an evening of community, discovery, and refreshments. 6:30 p.m.: Monticello Presbyterian Church Bell Choir. 7:30 p.m.: Conversation with historian Bob Wilson. Whether you're a longtime neighbor or visiting for the first time, all are welcome.

BICENTENNIAL SERVICE - JUNE 14, 2026

Join us at 11:00 a.m. as we commemorate two centuries of faith, fellowship, and community service. Special guests will participate in worship, and a catered lunch will follow. We look forward to celebrating 200 years of vision—together!



CONGREGATIONAL FELLOWSHIP

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN AT WORK

The Presbyterian Women are busy with a new project.....planning and assisting in the upkeep of the inside and the outside of our lovely, historic place of worship.

- Many have noticed the tidied up library, nursery, fellowship hall and kitchen.
- The outside has pansies blooming and some new shrubs, cleaned out flower beds, newly mulched beds and trimmed shrubs .
- This past week the back parking area was cleared of the acorn debris and the final leaves were raked and hauled off.
- The broken concrete on the steps to narthex on Greene Street side was repaired.

Many hands have been at work in the past few months in order to accomplish a neater look for our building and grounds.

The Properties Committee has a very time-consuming task of repairing the building . In order to help take some work off of the Property Committee, the PW volunteered to be

responsible for overseeing the routine clean up and maintenance of our building and grounds for the next year. Some of the work that is being done and needs to be done, exceeds the physical ability of many of the members of our church and in order to get this work done we are paying outside help by contributing to the P W Clean Up Fund. If you want to help keep the work going by contributing to the fund please see Melba Burrell. Thank you to all who have helped already, by showing up to work or giving money. But there is more to be done in order to keep our church building and grounds looking nice. So watch for announcements about clean up days.

If you are not attending PW already, you don't know what you are missing. Come join in the lively and inspirational study time and join in the fulfilling work that the women at FPC are doing.

~Rosemary Begemann, Teacher and Leader

~Melba Burrell, Project Leader

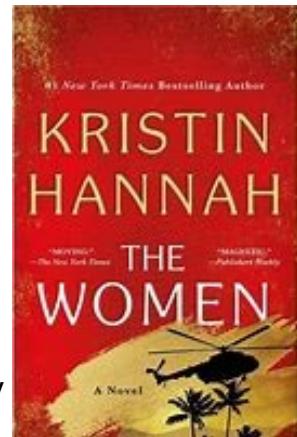
First Presbyterian Book Club

The First Presbyterian Book Club will hold its January meeting on Thursday January 8th at 2:00 pm in the Betty Newton Campbell parlor.

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.

There has not been a book chosen for February, so bring your recommendations to the January meeting.

~Millie Murphy



Thank you, Presbyterian Women!

The Max Noah Singers presented their Homecoming Concert, the last in their Fall semester tour, in our sanctuary on December 16. If you did not attend, you missed a treat. Because the college dining hall was already closed by then, soup and sandwich supper was needed prior to the program.

Thanks to PW for defraying the cost of 26 meals, and especially to Carrie Cook for ably assisting in the kitchen before, during and after the meal. The young people were most appreciative and I am, too!

~Donna Gautier

The church
has left
the building.

The church
has left
the building.



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MISSION AND MINISTRY

The Milly Free Fridge continues to help those families and individuals who experience food insecurity in our community.

Make plans to join us Sunday, January 25th 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, and additional space for sandwich makers.

Samaritan Ministry

We helped seven 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, January 20 at 9:00 AM.



FPC FOOD PANTRY

Tuesday's 9:30am—10:30am!!



December was as busy at Food Pantry as everywhere else. We had as many folks as we could serve each week and had to turn some away on Samaritan's Fund day.

Because there were 5 Tuesdays, we saw more than in average months with a total of 51 households served, including 11 new ones.

Before Thanksgiving, we had offered optional special bags for that holiday and decided to repeat for the 2 distributions just before Christmas. These contained items we do not ordinarily provide and people were given the choice to take a holiday meal or the regular staples. Many were pleased to thus be able to put a more festive meal on the table.

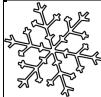
In January, we will experiment with offering a frozen meat option instead of the canned chicken regularly included. It may go a bit farther or be preferred, or it may not. Updates to come! Meanwhile, know that your contributions in kind and in funds are needed and appreciated. One regular donor from the congregation asked those celebrating at her birthday to bring gift cards for the Food Pantry - what a great idea!

~Donna

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



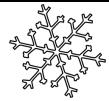


JANUARY



4 9:30 Sunday School 10:15 Children's School & Bicentennial Kickoff Reception 11:00 Worship Service—Food Pantry Offering	5 7:00 Oconee Recovery Commission 	6 9:30-10:30 Food Pantry 12:00 Kiwanis 7:30 NA 
11 9:30 Sunday School 10:15 Children's School 11:00 Worship Service 5:00 PW Bible Study	12 7:00 Oconee Recovery Commission 	13 9:30-10:30 Food Pantry 11:00 PW Bible Study 12:00 Kiwanis 6:30 Session Meeting 7:30 NA 
18 9:30 Sunday School 10:15 Children's School 11:00 Worship Service	19 7:00 Oconee Recovery Commission 	20 9:00 Samaritan Ministry 9:30-10:30 Food Pantry 12:00 Kiwanis 7:30 NA 
25 9:30 Sunday School 10:15 Children's School 11:00 Worship Service 12:00 Milli Sandwich Squad	26 7:00 Oconee Recovery Commission 	27 9:30-10:30 Food Pantry 12:00 Kiwanis 7:30 NA 

2026



	1 7:30 NA 	2	3 7:30 NA  Narcotics Anonymous
7 6:30 Wednesday Potluck and Study 	8 2:00 FPC Book Club 7:30 NA  Narcotics Anonymous	9	10 7:30 NA  Narcotics Anonymous
14 6:30 Wednesday Potluck and Study 	15 7:30 NA  Narcotics Anonymous	16	17 7:30 NA  Narcotics Anonymous
21 6:30 Wednesday Potluck and Study 	22 7:30 NA  Narcotics Anonymous	23	24 7:30 NA  Narcotics Anonymous
28 6:30 Wednesday Potluck and Study 	29 7:30 NA  Narcotics Anonymous	30	31 7:30 NA  Narcotics Anonymous

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



A Heartfelt Thank You: A huge thank you goes out to our incredibly talented youth for their wonderful presentation of the Joy Gift program on December 7th. It was a beautiful celebration, and we are so grateful for the hard work of everyone involved. Special thanks to Laurie Peebles, Jennifer Flory, Kate Phillips, Kim Booth, Jennifer King, and Jasper for their leadership and dedication in making the program such a success!



Epiphany Sunday: January 4th The youth will be reprising their roles from the Joy Gift program on Sunday, January 4th, during the "Time with the Young Disciples" to help tell the story of Epiphany. All youth involved should meet at the church at 9:30 am that morning to help set up and prepare.

Youth Group Meetings Resume: We are excited to kick off the new year together! Regular youth group meetings will resume on Sunday, January 4th, immediately following worship until 1:30 pm. We will spend some time during this first meeting looking ahead and planning our activities and fellowship events for the spring semester. We want to hear your ideas, so come ready to help shape the months to come!

Supporting Our Youth: Meal Sign-Ups We provide a meal for the youth group at each meeting, and we invite the congregation to be a part of this hospitality. If you would like to volunteer to provide lunch for the group, please sign up at: <https://bit.ly/FeedYouth>. Your support in feeding our young people is deeply appreciated.

TREASURER'S CORNER

Thank you to all the folks who have been so generous in November and December. Due to the gifts we have received, some of the repairs we need to our facilities may be accomplished sooner. The generosity also means that God's work in helping our community will continue uninterrupted while our repairs are made.

Remember that your continued support of the general fund, the Samaritan's Ministry and the Food Pantry is the only way these ministries are possible. All of our work follows the example of Jesus.

~ Joel Burns

OPERATING BUDGET	October	November	2025 YTD
Contributions	\$15,133	\$27,926	\$200,877
Other Income	\$688	\$3,713	\$10,597
Total Operating Income	\$15,821	\$31,369	\$211,474
Total Operating Expenses	\$15,693	\$14,546	\$214,113
Net Operating	\$128	\$16,468	(\$2,639)

DESIGNATED FUNDS

Contributions	\$6,678	\$4,708	\$43,408
Expenses	\$2,005	\$3,670	\$27,528
Net Designated	\$4,673	\$1,038	\$15,826



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

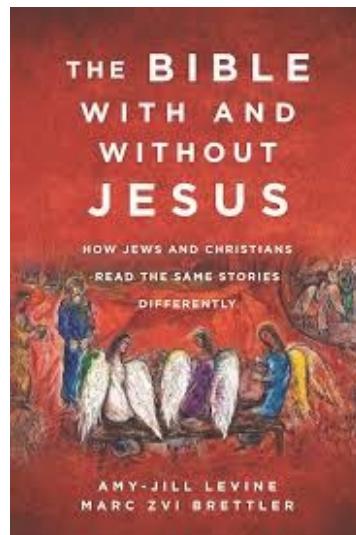


The Bible Sunday School class continues its study of The Bible With and Without Jesus by Amy Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler. This book helps us start to see the Jewish perspective on many of the best known stories in the holy scriptures we call the Old Testament.

Our class is meeting in person (in the Betty Newton Campbell parlor) at 9:45 AM .

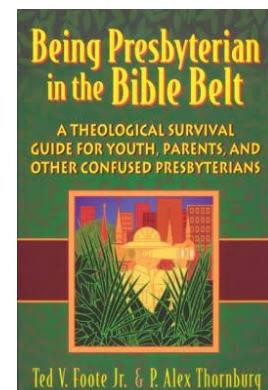
I hope a number of you will join us. If you wish to join by ZOOM, call me at (478) 414-6516 and I will forward the link.

~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.

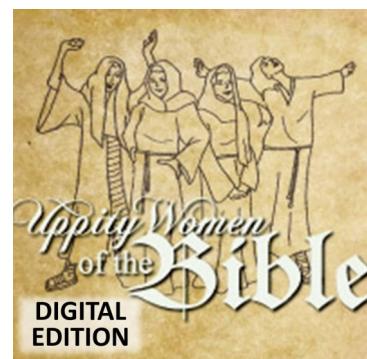
The **Pray** step is the start of a prayer that you can expand into your own conversation with God.

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



Highlights from the December Session Meetings:

- First and foremost, the Session approved a motion to request the return of original jurisdiction from the Administrative Commission back to the Session.
- Joel Burns was elected treasurer through 2026.
- Times and Talents Survey information was distributed to committee chairs; be on the lookout for contact by committee chairs. If you still have not completed your pledge or times and talents survey for 2026, additional forms are still available in the narthex. You will be contacted shortly by committee chairs.
- Two books approved for the Fellowship Sunday School Class: **Biggest Lie in History of Christianity by Matthew Kelley and God Said It, Don't Sweat It by Neil Clark Warren.**
- Session reviewed goals for the rest of 2025 and early 2026.
- The annual Congregational Meeting has been scheduled for February, 15, 2026, following worship.
- Accepted a new member, Emily Carson, by profession of faith. Emily has been actively engaged with our youth for the last year; please give her a warm welcome.
- Approved the baptism of Emma Taylor Phillips, daughter of Amanda and Michael Phillips, and granddaughter of Kate and Roy Phillips.

~ Respectfully submitted, Susan McGill, Clerk



COMMITTEE REPORTS



The Care & Fellowship Team

- The Holiday Treat Reception was delightful! Thanks to everyone for sharing your favorite holiday foods. Thanks to Kathy Carroll for providing lovely music and a fun surprise. The "six geese a-laying" won the prize!! Thanks to Melba and Charles Burrell, Jane Tipton, Sherry Henry, and Becky Humphrey for the festive decor.
- Christmas greetings were mailed to our Homebound members and others thanks to Margaret Ivester.
- The Care & Fellowship Team will assist the Bicentennial Committee with the kick-off celebration for our 200th Anniversary on January 4th. A light brunch is planned between Sunday School and church. Make plans to attend!! January 4th - 10:15-11:00. More info will be available soon.
- Collaborating with the Bicentennial Committee, The Care & Fellowship Team will be coordinating many events for our anniversary celebration. You may have already noticed new tablecloths and coming soon will be new dishes. This is made possible through a generous designated gift that is greatly appreciated. Carrying on the tradition of using "real" dishes will be a joy.
- The Care & Fellowship Team members are Becky Humphrey, chair person; Donna Gautier, Harry Beck, Jane Tipton, Margaret Ivester, Melba Burrell, Millie Murphy, Ruby Werts, Sherry Henry, and Will Humphrey.

The team will meet on January 11th at 2:00 pm to form sub-committees, to do some brainstorming, and to set goals for 2026. Please share care needs and\or fellowship ideas with the team. Your input will be appreciated and considered.

From Worship Committee:

- » A new flower schedule calendar will be on the fridge in the kitchen in January. Please consider placing flowers in the sanctuary to honor or remember a special person or event (birthdays, anniversaries, etc.). Contact the church office to have info published in the bulletin. Contact Becky Humphrey, if you have questions - (478)457-5349.
- » Thanks to Marion Robinson and Becky Humphrey for preparing the Advent Wreath and for keeping it lovely for the Season.
- » With a new year comes new beginnings! Join us as we de-green the church and spruce up for 2026 on Saturday, January 10th, starting at 10am!"
- » Want to be involved in the worship life of the church? Contact Andrew Allen to inquire about joining the Worship Committee!"



COMMITTEE REPORTS (Cont)



Stewardship Campaign

Thanks to all for your generosity in 2025 in giving to church of your time, talents and finances.

Thank you also for your response to the Stewardship Campaign. If you not yet been contacted by a Session member in response to your Time and Talents survey, please follow up with one of the below Session Members:

Clerk of Session – Susan McGill

Worship – Andrew Allen

Christian Education – Frida Ituka, Josefa Tchamna (Youth)

Congregational Life – Becky Humphrey

Missions – Bill Werts

Administrative Committee (Personnel, Building and Property, Finance, Stewardship, Office) – John Bradley



To date, the financial pledges for 2026 total \$166,780 broken down as follows: Undesignated \$141,680; Samaritan's Ministry \$13,000; Food Pantry \$12,100. If you still want to make a pledge for 2026, please go ahead and turn it in the church office; this will aid in preparing the church budget for next year.

Joel Burns and John Bradley are the current members of the Stewardship Committee.



Liturgist Schedule

January 4 & 11 ~ Joel Burns
January 18 & 25 ~ Melba Burrell



Nursery Volunteer Schedule

January 4 ~ Anne Smart/Sherry Henry
January 11 ~ Nancy Miller/Susan McGill
January 18 ~ Joel Burns/Laurie Peebles
January 25 ~ Margaret Ivester/Gloria Burns

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE:

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee members include Holley Cowan, Pat Henry, Melba Burrell, John Bradley and Joel Burns. Our immediate tasks will include familiarizing all committee members with the finances of the church and proposing a budget for 2026. In the next few months an internal audit of the church's finances will be conducted. This internal audit will be conducted annually.

Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee is composed of Lee Gillis, Carrie Cook and John Bradley. One of the responsibilities involves preparing position descriptions, screening applications, conducting the interviewing process, and making recommendations to the Session regarding hiring selected applicants. The committee will be working to fill the currently open Administrative Assistant position.

Building and Property Committee

Charles Burrell, Bob Carroll, Bill Werts and John Bradley are serving on the Property Committee. Due to the age of our church building there are many issues for the committee to address. The committee will be working to prioritize the building's needs. The first priority is to resolve the building's water leaks. We will provide updates on our progress. Thanks to the PW for their assistance in providing regular assistance with the church grounds.

~ John Bradley



PRAYER Requests

CHURCH FAMILY:

Harry Beck, ongoing health concerns

Nan Carpenter, ongoing health concerns

Louise Sallstrom, recovering at Lynn Haven Health and Rehabilitation in Gray

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

Military Service
Will Deason
Rebecca Elangwe
(Both are Reservists)



IN ASSISTED LIVING

Nan Carpenter, PO Box 527, Jefferson, GA 30549

Jude Hirsch, Fellowship Home at Meriwether, 10 Meriwether Place

Laura King, The Cottages of Milledgeville, 1010 Fernwood Drive

Maryanne Morris, Fellowship Home at Meriwether, 10 Meriwether Place

Runette Pounds, in hospital, moving soon to Fellowship Home

Suzy Smith, The Oaks Peake, 400 Foster Rd., A2, Macon, GA 31210

Anniversaries

January 29 ~ Anne and Dudley Weathers



Birthdays

January 2 ~ Haywood Edwards

January 7 ~ Grace Anne Azahar

January 11 ~ Harry Beck

January 21 ~ Frida Ituka

January 24 ~ Ruby Werts

January 31 ~ Rosemary Begemann

