

CHURCH CURRENTS

JANUARY 2023

210 S. Wayne Street, Milledgeville, Georgia 31061

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



MORE LIGHT
PRESBYTERIANS

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. 318 January 2023



Pastor:
Rev. Susan Balfour

Coord. of Children &
Youth Ministries:
Gloria Burns

Admin. Asst.:
Lois Callender

Director of Music:
Dr. Jennifer Flory

Organist:
Kate Phillips

Child Care Providers:
Childcare is
temporarily
unavailable

Beloved,

Grace and peace to you as we begin this New Year! As always, I am grateful for you, and remember you in my prayers.

Oscar Romeo wrote: “A church that doesn’t provoke crises, a gospel that doesn’t unsettle, a word of God that doesn’t get under anyone’s skin...what gospel is that? Very nice, pious considerations that don’t bother anyone, do not light up the world they live in.”

An old saying admonishes Christians to “comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.” This saying has lent a lot of bravery to preachers like me. We Christians—especially North American Christians—have gotten very comfortable. The founders of our nation were very deliberate about not establishing a state religion, and yet the Christian church has “manspread” all over the culture, assuming its place as the national religion. We’re the religious bedhogs of American culture. We have found comfort in the gospel for millennia. But we’ve gotten so comfortable we’ve forgotten how controversial Jesus was. We’ve forgotten the ways in which he disrupted cultural norms—particularly around poverty, racism, and vitality. We’re comfortable, but we need to allow ourselves to be afflicted, at least a little bit now and then. When our comfort is disrupted and we get a burr under our saddles, we rebel. We don’t want to hear it! And boy do we get mad when we’re confronted with something that challenges us.

Last year, Session voted to sign our church up as a Matthew 25 Church, based on Jesus’ words: As you do to the least of these, you do to me. This initiative aims to explore issues of systemic poverty, institutional racism, and church vitality. These are not comfortable subjects. But they are important ones. As Christ’s light in the world, we are called to explore ways in which we can illumine our culture and bring us closer to a Christlike understanding of the world. It might be uncomfortable, but it will be edifying, and I believe it will nurture our faith in new and wonderful ways.

For the month of January, our two Sunday School classes will use some introductory material to provide a basis for this initiative. If you aren’t into Sunday School, Lois will lead a Matthew 25 Bible study on Thursdays at 5:30 at Metropolis Café. If you have any further questions, let Lois or me know. I hope every one of you will participate.

May God bless you deeply in the coming year.

In Christ,

Rev. Susan

Alternative Giving - It does not have to end at Christmas! Nine of my immediate family's birthdays fall before April 16, so gifting will remain in my mind for a while. Maybe you have a similar situation, so here is a suggestion: Take a look at the items, and especially the catalogs, displayed in the corner entry to the church.

There are a few SERRV items from the initial order still for sale there, as well. Anything you spend on these goes directly into our local missions, so make your check to the church with SERRV on the memo line.

Did you know we can order all year from SERRV? I will be glad to facilitate later purchases. These do need to go through the church account rather than as individual orders, but it would not be difficult to consolidate your orders into the minimum \$150.00 they accept. You would just need to plan ahead a little. Let me know!

~Donna Gautier



Food Pantry

Thank you to all who have made a special effort to keep this ministry going as the need for food in our community has grown. We served 64 households in just the weeks of December, running out of prepared bags both the first two Tuesdays.

As you are no doubt aware, the funds available for this food have been dwindling. Your response to the special appeals made recently is vital to our continuing, and our continuing is vital to the folks who rely upon our contribution to their families. Please keep all our charitable work in mind and in your prayers as the year ends and the new, no less demanding one for these folks, soon begins.

If you are willing to give some time to the Food Pantry, that would be most appreciated. The afternoon before our Dec. 20 distribution, one volunteer gave 3 hours helping fill 24 bags. That was so very helpful! Contact me at gautierdonna@gmail.com or let the Office know if you would be willing to assist with packing bags (it usually does not take 3 hours!) or with shopping.

Again, thank you for your support, in kind and funding and prayer. Keep it going!
~Donna Gautier

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



CONGREGATIONAL FELLOWSHIP



We are back to our after-service fellowship. Join us in the Fellowship Hall for light refreshments directly after worship. **If you would like to help by hosting one week, please sign up in the kitchen.** If you have questions, please contact the church office for suggestions and information. We look forward to meeting you again!

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP

Join us!



IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE WORSHIP SERVICE
Make yourself at home!

FPC BOOK CLUB

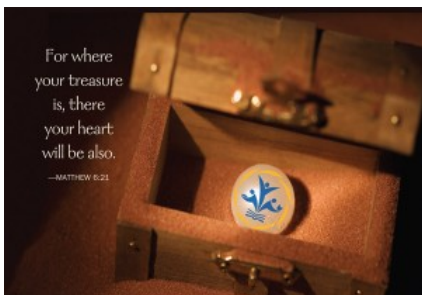


The FPC Book Club will hold its regular monthly meeting on January 12th in the church parlor. The book we are reading is *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates and is our acknowledgement of Martin Luther King's birthday. Through his book, *Between the World and Me*, Coates writes a letter to his adolescent son attempting to share his story of living in a black body and growing up in a racist world. He tells the story of his awaking to the truth about his place in the world by sharing a series of revelatory experiences in his life.

February being Abraham Lincoln's birthday, our book selection for the month of February is Jon Meacham's new book *And There Was Light: Abraham Lincoln and the American Struggle*. In his book, Meacham gives a new portrait of a very human Lincoln. It tells the story of Lincoln from his birth on the Kentucky frontier in 1809 to his leadership during the Civil War to his tragic assassination in 1865.

And continuing this trend, our book selection for March will be a book about women, but we have not decided which one at this point. We have a great start for the new year. We are on a roll. Come join the fun. ~Millie Murphy

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN



The Presbyterian Women's Bible Study continues to meet on the second Sunday at 4:00 pm and the second Tuesday at 11:00 am. Please note the change in time for the Sunday group. Both groups meet in the Parlor Room.

This year's book, *Celebrating Sabbath* by Carol Bechtel has proven interesting from the very start.

The Thank Offering collected by the Presbyterian Women during the Thank Service totaled \$350. These funds will go to support the missions of the Presbyterian Women.

The church
has left
the building.



The church
has left
the building.



MISSION AND MINISTRY

Thanks to your generosity of time and money, we continue to make sandwiches for the Milly Free Fridge each month. Join us Sunday, January 29th to help feed our neighbors and ourselves.



Please bring any of the following:
Sliced bread, lunch meat, jelly, fresh fruit, prepackaged snacks, bottled drinks. We will provide condiments and labeling materials. Thank you!

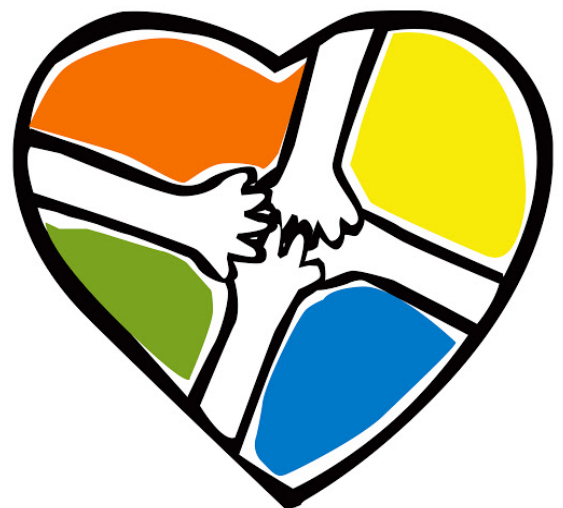


Angel Tree Success!

Thanks to your generosity this year, our Angel Tree gave 15 unwrapped gifts to Toys for Tots. But that's not all! You replenished the funds for three vital ministries in the church. The Food Pantry received \$1,630, Samaritan's Ministry \$1,690 and Pastor's Discretionary \$575. Each of these ministries helps our community in different ways and is so needed. Thank you for your continued support of all three, but especially for your generosity this Christmas Season.






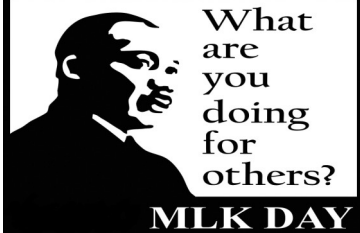



Samaritan Ministry

The Samaritan Ministry will be assisting with utilities again this January 17 at 9:30am. Please consider giving regularly to this mission as we often have many people who are in need each month. Also please consider giving of your time once a month for this mission. This past month, we were able to help someone turn their heat back on just as the cold weather rolled in. Thank you for helping to make that happen.





January

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| <p>1 9:30 Sunday School 10:00 Puppets 11:00 Worship Service  FBLive & WKZR102.3FM</p> | <p>2</p> | <p>3 9:30-10:30 Food Pantry 12:00 Kiwanis Luncheon </p> |
| <p>8 9:30 Sunday School 10:00 Puppets 11:00 Worship Service 12:00 Congregational Meeting 4:00 PW Bible Study 2:00 S.T.A.R.S 3:00 Youth Choir/Group</p> | <p>9 6:30 PFLAG  </p> | <p>10 9:30-10:30 Food Pantry 11:00 PW Bible Study 12:00 Kiwanis Luncheon </p> |
| <p>15 9:30 Sunday School 10:00 Puppets 11:00 Worship Service FBLive & WKZR102.3FM 2:00 S.T.A.R.S 3:00 Youth Choir/Group</p> | <p>16 Life's most persistent and urgent question is: </p> | <p>17 9:30-10:30 Food Pantry and Samaritan Ministry 12:00 Kiwanis Luncheon </p> |
| <p>22 9:30 Sunday School 10:00 Puppets 11:00 Worship Service FBLive & WKZR102.3FM 2:00 S.T.A.R.S 3:00 Youth Choir/Group</p> | <p>23</p> | <p>24 9:30-10:30 Food Pantry 12:00 Kiwanis Luncheon </p> |
| <p>29 9:30 Sunday School 10:00 Puppets 11:00 Worship Service FBLive & WKZR102.3FM 12:00 Milly Free Fridge 2:00 S.T.A.R.S 3:00 Youth Choir/Group</p> | <p>30</p> | <p>31 9:30-10:30 Food Pantry 12:00 Kiwanis Luncheon </p> |














WE ARE A
MATTHEW 25 PRESBYTERY

Actively Engaged in the World



2023



| | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| <p>4</p> <p>6:30PM</p> <p>Wednesday</p> <p>Study</p>  <p>POTLUCK DINNER</p> | <p>5 5:00PM Session</p> <p>5:30 Matthew 25</p> <p>Study at</p> <p>Metropolis Cafe</p>  | 6 | 7 |
| <p>11 5:00PM Youth</p> <p>Group</p> <p>6:30PM</p> <p>Wednesday</p> <p>Study</p>  <p>POTLUCK DINNER</p> | <p>12 2PM FPC Book</p> <p>Club</p>  <p>5:30 Matthew 25</p> <p>Study at</p> <p>Metropolis Cafe</p>  | 13 | <p>14 10am Removal</p> <p>of the Greens</p>  |
| <p>18 5:00PM Youth</p> <p>Group</p> <p>6:30PM</p> <p>Wednesday</p> <p>Study</p>  <p>POTLUCK DINNER</p> | <p>19</p> <p>5:30 Matthew 25</p> <p>Study at</p> <p>Metropolis Cafe</p>  | 20 | 21 |
| <p>25 5:00PM Youth</p> <p>Group</p> <p>6:30PM</p> <p>Wednesday</p> <p>Study</p>  <p>POTLUCK DINNER</p> | <p>26</p> <p>5:30 Matthew 25</p> <p>Study at</p> <p>Metropolis Cafe</p>  | <p>27</p>  <p>Holocaust</p> <p>REMEMBRANCE DAY</p> | 28 |
| | | | |

Elders on Session

Class of 2024 ~ Jennifer Flory (Worship) Nancy Miller (Clerk of Session) Laurie Peebles (Personnel) 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



After a short break, the youth ministry is back each week starting January 8, 2023. Please join us!

We continue to meet those Youth who can on Wednesday from 5:00-6:30 so that we can complete the Rock Garden that Ms. Marion and Buddy are helping us with.

Our schedule is:

Puppets (1-12) Sunday 10am to perform at 11 am worship

S.T.A.R.S.(K-5th) Sunday 2:00-3:00

Youth Choir (K-12th) Sunday 3:00 – 3:30

Sunday Youth Group (6th -12th) including prep for Montreat (9th - 12th) Sunday 3:30 – 4:30



TREASURER'S CORNER

Our financial reports for November show an improvement in contributions from the previous month and from the same time last year. We appreciate the generosity. Please review the summary attached. Our Samaritan's Fund and Food Pantry need our contributions too. Our church depends on our giving. As God's workers at the corner of Wayne and Greene, we can continue to make a difference in the lives of others.~ Joel Burns



| | October | November | 2022 YTD |
|-------------------|----------|----------|------------|
| Contributions | \$19,026 | \$37,049 | \$197,294 |
| Other Income | \$684 | \$685 | \$10,167 |
| Total Income | \$19,710 | \$37,734 | \$177,461 |
| Budgeted Expenses | \$15,424 | \$14,928 | \$196,209 |
| Net (Loss) | \$4,286 | \$22,806 | (\$18,748) |

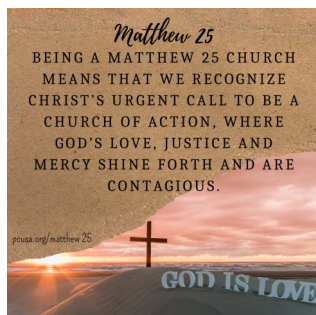


CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



MATTHEW 25 EXPLORATION

We are a Matthew 25 Church, but what does that mean? This month, we will be exploring what the writer of Matthew was telling us about Jesus and his message to the world. We will also be looking at how we as individuals, and as a church community, can live out this call. Please join us in your regular Sunday School class or Thursdays at Metropolis at 5:30PM starting on January 5.



FELLOWSHIP SUNDAY SCHOOL



We are pausing our study of *A Call to Die* by David Nasser to study Matthew

25. We will return to *A Call to Die* in February. 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
Come Join Us
Potluck Dinner at 6:30
Bible Study at 7:15

All are Welcome!

POTLUCK DINNER & BIBLE STUDY

WEDNESDAY NIGHT STUDY

The Wednesday night study group meets for a pot luck supper and lively discussion. We have started and enjoyed the book, *Bullies and Saints* by John Dickson. This book is a fascinating review of the history of the good and evil Christianity has caused. 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

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Bible Sunday School class continues to meet via ZOOM. This permits us to study and learn without risk of COVID exposure in an informal manner from the comfort of our homes or on our smartphones. Every Sunday at 9:30 AM we meet for our conversations and study. We have been studying *The Collected Sermons of Walter Brueggemann*. We will resume that study in February, but in January we will use the Matthew 25 curriculum to try to understand what it means to be a Matthew 25 church. 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





EPIPHANY



(RNS) You thought the holidays were over. Technically, no — not until Jan. 6, when Christians all over the world celebrate Epiphany. In some places, the day is known as “Three Kings Day” after the wise men, or Magi, who, the Bible says, brought the infant gifts and proclaimed him the Son of God. In other places, the day is known for giving gifts, for extremely cold baths and for biting into babies. Let us ’splain ...

What do you mean, the holidays are not over?

Maybe you’ve heard of “The Twelve Days of Christmas?” Besides being a catchy or crucifying little ditty, depending on your point of view, the title refers to the period between Christmas Day, when Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus, to Epiphany, when they mark his manifestation — “incarnation,” in some Christian traditions. In fact, the word “epiphany” is drawn from the Greek and means “manifestation.”

The period refers to the story in Matthew that tells of some kings who followed a star in the East to find the baby in the manger. They brought him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Ten points to you if you can name the kings (Melchior, Caspar and Balthazar) and 10 more points if you know what myrrh is (a scented oil).

But didn’t the wise men visit Jesus on the night of his birth? Like in the church Christmas pageants?

Who knows? The Bible isn’t exactly a timetable. In fact, the Bible says nothing about the number of kings, their robes, turbans or crowns they wear in every Christmas pageant in the world, nor does it say they rode on camels or how they learned the star would lead them to a baby in Bethlehem. People have just filled in all those blanks since Epiphany became a church feast in the second century, making it one of the oldest of Christian celebrations.

How is Epiphany celebrated?

That depends on where you are and what kind of Christian you are. Most U.S. Protestants mark the day on the Sunday closest to Jan. 6 and it is usually limited to that day’s church service and sermon. But it opens the church’s “season of Epiphany,” a time when sermons and lessons focus on the miracles of Jesus; the season ends on the Sunday before Ash Wednesday (this year on March 1), the start of the Lenten season.

Catholics also celebrate Epiphany on the actual day, and Pope Francis will deliver his annual Epiphany homily during Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome. The following Sunday, many Catholic priests will deliver homilies that focus on Jesus’ baptism. Eastern Orthodox churches, too, focus heavily on Jesus’ baptism at Epiphany, with priests in places such as Russia, Bulgaria and Greece tossing crucifixes or crosses into the water, which devotees then dive for. Some Orthodox churches, which use a different calendar to mark their liturgical year, celebrate Epiphany on Jan. 19 and won’t take the dive until then.



That sounds bracing. Are there any Epiphany traditions that don't involve becoming a polar bear?

You bet. First, some Christians give gifts all over again on Jan. 6. In Spain, children leave their shoes outside in the hope they will be filled with candy and presents if the youngsters have been good. Naughty ones are told they'll get only clumps of coal.

In Italy, children receive gifts on the Epiphany morning from a witch known as "[La Befana](#)." The story goes that the wise men visited an old woman when they were looking for Jesus and invited her to come along. She was too busy. Then the shepherds stopped at her shack and extended their invitation. "Sorry, too busy!" Since then, she flies through the air in search of the Christ child, leaving gifts for other good children in her search. Meanwhile, Venetian gondoliers mark the day by dressing in drag and cruising down the Grand Canal.

In Spain, Mexico and other Latino countries, Jan. 6 is "Dia de los Tres Reyes Magos," or Day of the Three Wise Kings. To celebrate, people make a "[roscon de reyes](#)," or king's ring cake, a pastry with a tiny figurine of a baby baked into the dough. The idea is that the baby will be revealed in a slice or a bite of bread, just as Jesus was revealed as the Son of God to the kings.

Catholics in New Orleans have taken the king cake to a new level. Bakeries all over the city offer elaborate, frosted, fruit-filled confections, all baked with a plastic baby on the inside. Customers eat them throughout the season of Epiphany, indulging right up to Ash Wednesday. Like plastic beads, hurricane glasses and "golden" doubloons tossed from parade floats, king cakes have become [an emblem of that city's Mardi Gras festivities](#).

So laissez les bon temps rouler and Happy Epiphany!

by Kimberly Winston, Religion News Service

(<https://pres-outlook.org/2017/01/what-is-epiphany/#:~:text=In%20fact%2C%20the%20word%20%E2%80%9Cepiphany%E2%80%9D%20is%20drawn%20from,brought%20him%20gifts%20of%20gold%2C%20frankincense%20and%20myrrh.>)



Prayer Request

Church Family:

Beth Baarda, rehabilitating at a family home
 Harry Beck, ongoing medical concerns
 Nan Carpenter, recovering from fall at home
 Helen Danuser, recovering from a fall
 Jenny Moore, recovering at home
 Jackie Northington, recovering at home
 John Sallstrom, ongoing health concerns

tended Family:

Brittany Caruthers, Sunda Coleman's niece, chemo treatment
 Susan Eilers, Mary Lucik's friend, cancer surgery
 Dee Hartmann, Susan Balfour's aunt, health issues
 Alonzo Kelly, Craig Callender's father, Stage 4 Melenoma
 Elizabeth Knobel, Carolyn Morgan's daughter, cancer stable
 Joanne Lambertson, family friend of Jennifer Flory, fighting cancer
 Julie Montemayor, Becky Henderson's mother, ongoing health concerns
 Joanne Murphy, Kathy Carroll's mother, mass on her colon- at Carlyle House in Macon
 Chris Pearson, Sunda Coleman's son, recovering at home; dialysis
 Runette Pounds, Sunda Coleman's mother, ongoing health concerns, recovering from a fall
 Willy Sanders, Sunda Coleman's cousin, ongoing health concerns
 Bob Smart, Anne Smart's husband, ankylosing spondylitis
 Suzy Smith, Lois Callender's mother, knee replacement surgery
 Windy Spaide, Craig Callender's sister, ongoing health concerns
 Randy Stewart, Haywood Edwards son-in-law, ongoing health concerns

Limited Mobility

Martha Chappell
 Helen Danuser

Ex-

Military Service

Will Deason
 Rebecca Elangwe

*When you can't put
 your prayer into
 words, God hears
 your heart.*

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In Assisted Living:

Bryan Dempster, Green Acres, 313 Allen Memorial Drive, Milledgeville 31061
 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
 Gloria Smith, Fellowship Home at Meriwether, 10 Meriwether Place, Ste 1110
 Suzy Smith, Savannah Court, 1061 Willow Run Rd, Unit 4, Greensboro GA 30642

Anniversaries

January 29~ Anne & Dudley Weathers



Birthdays

January 1~ Nan Rogers
January 2~ Haywood Edwards
January 7~ Grace Anne Azahar
January 9~ Nancy Holbrook
January 11~ Harry Beck
January 15~ Noah Smith
January 21~ Frida Ituka
January 24~ Ruby Werts
January 31~ Rosemary Begemann

