

FOCUS



The weekly newsletter of
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Sumter, South Carolina

December 13, 2022

Sunday, December 18

The Christmas Story presented by the
Children of FPC.

Children's Choir will sing *Christ the Lord Is Coming* by Michael Burkhardt. Solo violinist, Lauren Decker, will provide special music.

Elders: Bonnie Disney, Ann Geddings

Assisting in Worship: Bonnie Disney

Deacons: Matthew Berger, Kathy Lyons

Youth Liturgist: Grayson Alexander

Jr. Usher: Lucas DuBose, Adelaide McElveen

JOY OFFERING TO BE RECEIVED

The Christmas Joy Offering, received during the Advent season, is in gratitude for God's gift of Jesus Christ and supports assistance programs to meet identified and emerging needs for professional church workers and spouses through the Board of Pensions and racial ethnic education and leadership development through Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries.

SERVICE OF COMFORT & HOPE

5:30 p.m. in the Chapel

Vocalist John Michael Osteen will lead hymns and anthems.

Sunday, December 25

Elders: Linda Hogon, John Jackson

Assisting in Worship: Linda Hogon

Deacons: Harold Nixon, Susan W. Osteen

Youth Liturgist: Madison White

Jr. Usher: Charlie Thames, Caroline Thames

Sunday, January 1

Elders: John James, Jack Osteen

Assisting in Worship: John James

Deacons: Lark Haynie, Valerie James

Youth Liturgist: Caroline Moorman

Jr. Usher: Mary Taylor Moorman, Murrell Smith

Sunday, January 8

Elders: Bill Richardson, Dan Spencer

Assisting in Worship: Bill Richardson

Deacons: John Michael Osteen, Colin Davis

Youth Liturgist: Madelynn Davis

Jr. Usher: Millie Davis, Richard Dwight

From Bob's Desk . . .



I know that it is more blessed to give than to receive, but it is also a grace-filled moment when you receive a beautiful Christmas gift. That is what happened this past Sunday whether you were in the sanctuary for worship or watching the livestream broadcast at home. The chancel choir, under the direction of Joni Brown and accompanied by organist Denise Lynch and many talented musicians, led us in a wonderful service of Lessons and Carols. On behalf of all of us, I want to thank the many people who helped plan such a joyful service, including those who prepared the sanctuary in its Advent splendor, produced the bulletins, and participated in the worship service.

Linda Hogon, Chair of our Worship and Music Committee, works tirelessly on all the details, and Joni Brown is just fantastic in directing us to beautiful music and inspiring worship. Of course, Shirley Wood catches hold of all the information swirling around this busy season and communicates it to us in such a faithful and helpful manner. And Neil Ross, our business administrator, receives our generosity and pays our bills! Barry Gholson makes sure that our building recovers from every event and is clean, safe, and ready for the next happening. And Debbie Jackson has joined the team this fall to assist with all the details of our educational program and our fellowship gatherings, and her positive spirit is contagious.

Thanksgiving leads us to worship, and worship leads us to thanksgiving. This Christmas I am thankful for the congregation of First Presbyterian Church, our elders who lead us, our deacons who minister with us, and a church staff who knows the faith and works with tremendous dedication. It is a privilege to be your pastor. Merry Christmas to you!

Love,

Bob

*Focus will not be published the week of December 27.
The next Focus will be published January 10.
Please submit any information to be included
no later than noon Friday, January 6,*

ADVENT WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Sunday, December 18

10:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary
The Christmas Story presented by the
Children of FPC.

Sunday, December 18

5:30 p.m. in the Chapel
Service of Comfort & Hope
For those experiencing grief and discomfort
during the holidays.

Saturday, December 24

5:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary
Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service
Prelude and service music will be provided by the FPC
Brass Ensemble. The Chancel Choir, with soloist Sarah
Alexander, will sing *All is Well*, arr. by Ronn Huff.
Soprano, Bella Land, will provide special music.

Sunday, December 25

10:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary
Christmas morning worship service.

NOTE OF THANKS

Thank you for supporting our music ministry in the presentation of our 47th annual Service of Lessons and Carols. Numerous people worked tirelessly to plan and present intentional and meaningful worship elements.

Thanks to:

- Our talented accompanist, Denise Lynch, for weeks of intense rehearsal.
- Our choir, soloists, and instrumentalists for offering their musical talents to the glory of God.
- Our readers who presented the Christmas story so well.
- Ike Jenkins for his expertise as our sound technician.
- John Michael Osteen for cover art and publicity.
- Our church staff for tireless work behind the scenes.
- The members of the Worship and Music Committee for the beautiful decorations.

Love in Christ,
Joni



ATTENTION MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH

FPC Middle School Youth will be baking cookies Sunday, December 18, at 4:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall kitchen. All Middle School youth are invited to come bake with us!



In observance of Christmas and New Years, please note our holiday office hours:

December 23, 26 and 27 ~ Closed

December 28, 29 & 30 ~ Open 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

January 2 ~ Closed

Please remember all end-of-year pledges and gifts must be turned in or postmarked by December 31, 2022, in order to be counted as a 2022 contribution.

YOUR PLEDGE COUNTS

Your pledge commitment is a covenant between you and the Lord. Please take a moment to consider how your investment in His work at First Presbyterian impacts our community and the world with the life changing message of our Lord. Your dollars not only contribute to meeting spiritual needs of our own church family but also the community in which we live. Your dollars also help by reaching out to the hungry and needy of our community through your support of United Ministries, Habitat, Backpack Blessings and other ministries. We truly can be the hands and feet of Jesus. So that these works and this ministry of First Presbyterian can thrive and grow in the new year, would you complete your pledge of whatever amount the Lord puts on your heart to give? Many of you have already answered by returning your pledge commitment. If you would like to submit a pledge, you may do so by turning in a pledge card. Or if you prefer, we can take your pledge over the phone or by email. Simply contact our business manager @ (803) 773-3814 or neilross@fpcsumter.org. All responses are kept strictly confidential. Thanks be to God for your generous financial support that has enabled First Presbyterian to impact our community and world for Christ.

Council of Presbyterian Women will meet
Monday, January 2, at 10:00 a.m. in the
McLaurin Room.

Circles will meet as follows:

- #1 - Tuesday, January 3, at 12:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Contact: Linda Brown
- #4 - Tuesday, January 3, at 10:30 a.m. in the McLaurin Room. Contact: Norma Abbott
- #6 - Tuesday, January 3, at 6:30 p.m. in the West Building. Contact: Ashley Blum
- #8 - Wednesday, January 4, at 3:00 p.m. at Covenant Place. Contact: Pam George



UPCOMING EVENTS

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18

9:30 a.m. Sunday School
 10:30 a.m. Worship..... Sanctuary
 5:30 p.m. Service of Comfort & Hope..... Chapel

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21

6:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Brass & Soloists..... Sanctuary
 7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir Sanctuary

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23 ~ Office Closed

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24

3:45 p.m. Brass Ensemble Rehearsal Sanctuary
 4:00 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal..... Sanctuary
 5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service Sanctuary

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25

10:30 a.m. Worship..... Sanctuary

MONDAY, DECEMBER 26 ~ Office Closed

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 27 ~ Office Closed

SUNDAY, JANUARY 1

9:50 a.m. Chancel ChoirSanctuary
 10:30 a.m. WorshipSanctuary

MONDAY, JANUARY 2 ~ Office Closed

10:00 a.m. Council of Pres. WomenMcLaurin Room

TUESDAY, JANUARY 3

10:30 a.m. Circle #4.....McLaurin Room
 12:30 p.m. Circle #1.....Fellowship Hall
 6:30 p.m. Circle #6..... West Building

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 4

7:00 p.m. Chancel ChoirSanctuary

SUNDAY, JANUARY 8

9:30 a.m. Sunday School
 9:30 a.m. Chancel ChoirSanctuary
 10:30 a.m. WorshipSanctuary
 3:00 p.m. Joy RingersSession Room

MONDAY, JANUARY 9

6:00 p.m. Diaconate MeetingMcLaurin Room

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11

7:00 p.m. Chancel ChoirSanctuary

PASTORAL CARE

Session has approved the formation of a new "Pastoral Care" group. This will be an informal group of members that will assist the pastor and Prayer and Care by providing extra care to our members in need. Care may be in the form of visits, letters, delivering casseroles, etc, and will be on a volunteer basis only. No formal meetings will be held. Please contact Missy Coulter if interested at coultervm@aol.com.

CHILI COOK-OFF

Sunday, January 22

5:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall

Cooks and chili connoisseurs are needed! Please contact Linda Hogen or Debbie Jackson to enter your chili in the Cook-Off. Everyone is encouraged to come enjoy conversation and friendly competition. Also, please Linda or Debbie know if you would prefer to bring cornbread or a dessert. A small donation of \$1 for tasting and \$3/bowl will guarantee a tasty meal as well as good fellowship!



SESSION MEETING REPORT

From the November Stated Meeting

At the stated November 28, 2022 meeting, the Session acted on the following items:

- To donate \$200 to Wilder Elementary for a book fundraiser for pleasure-reading books for students at Christmas.
- To donate \$200 to Law Enforcement Chaplaincy of SC.
- To collect Angel Tree gifts for Sumter United Ministries.
- To donate the Christmas Eve loose offering to Backpack Ministry.
- To approve the placement of 200th Anniversary banners in the sanctuary as well as the purchase/ placement of an Historical Site Plaque on church grounds.
- The formation of a pastoral care group of volunteers to assist the Care and Prayer committee.
- To support the Habitat for Humanity "Spring Break Collegiate Challenge" by providing shelter, meals and fellowship for students over spring break.
- To update the FPC website.
- Move forward on nominating a slate for the Pastor Nominating Committee.
- To renew the terms of call for interim pastor, Bob Brearley.

We continue our work at First Presbyterian to serve the Lord, the community and the world. If you have any questions or comments email me at dfordwilliams@yahoo.com or call me at (803) 491-5103.

Debby Williams, Clerk of Session

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Woodbridge, Va: Melissa Boord

(Joni Brown's Sister)

Home: Milo Abbott (grandson of Norma Abbott),
 Robert Stage II (Son of Marta Stage)



CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY is extended to the family of Carolyn McDowell, who died November 29.

FOCUS ON FINANCES

Two Weeks Beginning Nov. 27 & Dec. 4, 2022

	Received		2022 Budgeted
	Two Weeks	YTD	YTD
Revenue			
Contributions	\$ 34,668.	\$ 669,233.	\$ 669,000.
*Other Sources	<u>\$(15,000.)</u>	<u>\$ 80,369</u>	<u>\$ 122,971.</u>
	\$ 19,668.	\$ 749,602.	\$ 791,971.

*Other Sources YTD includes \$77,458 from endowment funds distributions and \$15,000 from remaining PPP funds held in reserve.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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