

First Presbyterian Church

December 2017

Whiteville, NC

First News

"To be a light in our community reflecting Christ's love and compassion"

From the Pastor's Desk...

"Behold, the Virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which translated means, "God with us." Matthew 1:23

Growing up there were three signs that Christmas was coming: first was the Norelco commercials, where Santa was sledding through the forest on top of a Norelco electric razor; second, was the arrival of the Sear's Christmas Wish Book; and third, stores were decorated for the holidays, which usually occurred around Thanksgiving. Once these three items were checked off we knew it was time to begin preparing for Christmas. Sometimes it is difficult today to tell when it is Christmas and when it is only Halloween—Christmas decorations in the stores have almost become a year-around spectacle.

With the stores pushing Christmas earlier and earlier it is becoming easier and easier to lose sight of what Christmas is all about. While exchanging Christmas presents and visiting with family and friends is important, they do not speak to the true meaning of the season, which is to celebrate the birth of God's Son, our savior. The above text from the Gospel of Matthew contains the words spoken to Joseph as he was contemplating quietly dismissing Mary after learning she was expecting a child. In this brief exchange the angel announces to Joseph that the child Mary is carrying is no ordinary child, but is in fact God present in the world with us. This seemingly simply statement reminds us that God loves us so much that He is not content to love us from a distance, but longs to be with us in order to teach us and share in our lives.

Recently I attended a workshop where the presenter read one of my favorite passages, John 3:16 & 17. John 3:16 begins in a very familiar way... "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son..." For God so loved the world! Those are amazing words. Why did Jesus set aside his place in heaven in order to come to earth? Because God so loved the world.

Christmas is a celebration of the birth of God's Son. It is the celebration of God reaching out to all of humanity with good news of love and grace. As we celebrate Christmas let us not only keep its true meaning in our hearts and minds, but may we proclaim it to everyone we meet. Why believe in a god? Because He loves us enough to send His Son into the world to be "the way, the truth and the life."

Each One Bring One...together we CAN grow God's Church!

- Pastor Joe

December 2017 Worship Schedule

Head Usher, December: Fuller Royal

December 3

First Sunday of Advent, Communion

Matthew 24:36-44 "God So Loved the World: In the Midst of Uncertainty"

Nursery Attendant: Susan Smith

Sound Team: Justin Smith

Communion Servers: Sara Cartrette, Coke Gray III, Kaye Pope

Lighting of the Advent Candle: Judy & Robert Nelson

December 10

Second Sunday of Advent

Matthew 3:1-12 "God So Loved the World: The Kingdom Has Come"

Nursery Attendant: Mandy Horne

Sound Team: Jonathan Medford

Lighting of the Advent Candle: Charlene & Bob High

December 17

Third Sunday of Advent

Matthew 11:1-10 "God So Loved the World: A Divine Promise"

Nursery Attendant: Joan Dorsett

Lighting of the Advent Candle: Annette Powell

December 24 11:00 am

Fourth Sunday of Advent, Christmas Eve

Matthew 1:18-25 "God So Loved the World: Emmanuel"

Nursery Attendant: Ben & Sydney Kilpatrick

December 24 5:00 pm Christmas Eve Service

Matthew 2:1-14 "God So Loved the World: Good News of Great Joy!"

Nursery Attendant: Janet Royal

December 31 – Carol singing; Guest Minister Bob Hankins

First Sunday after Christmas Day, New Year's Eve

Nursery Attendant: Kaye Pope

Sound Team: Josh Horne

Worship Committee:

Volunteers Needed:

Tree and garlands will be delivered Saturday morning, December 2. Time to be announced!

Please help if you are able. We will be decorating after Worship on December 3!

.....**NEEDED**.....

Livestreaming

OPERATORS

In search of livestreaming operators!

Training will be provided for all who will serve in our church's ministry to take our light into the world through our Livestreaming Ministry. At least two people are needed each Sunday to work on a rotating basis. Older youth are encouraged to volunteer to assist the adult in charge. Please notify Karen in the church office if you would be willing to commit to this ministry of our church



Dedications and memorials
for Christmas flowers and greenery
may be made through Wednesday,
December 13th. Each dedication is \$5.

Make checks payable to First Presbyterian Church,
"Christmas Dedications" in the memo line.



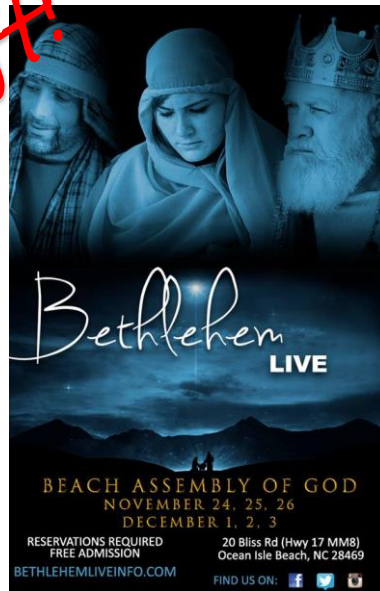
Youth Ministry:



We have 12 children for our Angel Tree from Families First Domestic Violence Shelter. The tree will be up on Sunday with the tags. Please turn in UNWRAPPED gifts in one gift bag per child with the child's tag number securely fastened to the church office by **Dec. 18th**. If you would like for the youth to shop for you, please choose a tag and turn in your money w/tag to the office or give to Janet Royal.

Thank you!

5 Spots Left!



Bethlehem Live

Beach Assembly of God

Please contact the FPC office, by noon Friday to secure a spot for this outing!

We have reserved 25 spots at Beach Assembly of God for Bethlehem Live on Saturday, Dec 2, 2017 at 8:30 PM.

Meet at FPC at 6:00 pm.

Beach Assembly of God

20 Bliss Rd. Ocean Isle Beach, NC 28469

Nursery: As we have visitors in worship we want you to be prepared to help them with the needs of their children. We offer a nursery, located in the education building behind the sanctuary, for children up to 3 years of age.

Children in Worship: We currently ask that children over 3 stay in worship with their parents. This is a great opportunity to begin teaching them how to worship. We encourage you to help them turn to the hymn in the hymnbooks when we sing as well as to the appropriate scripture verse for the reading of scripture prior to the sermon. Encourage them to bring their own Bible with them to worship so they can read along in THEIR Bible. We are currently in the process of updating our worship/activity bags that are in the Narthex...these should be available soon!

Congregational Life Committee:



Spiritual Development/Outreach Committee:



Cents-Ability was kicked off on Sunday, October 15th. The Cents-ability Offering will be taken on the *last* Sunday of each month. A goal of \$500 is set for December. Banks are available in the Narthex.

25% raised remains at our congregation (percentage decided upon by our presbytery), 70% is used for international mission, 25% used for local area grants within the presbytery, and 5% used for administrative expenses.

Next offering collected on Sunday, December 31st!

Chicks with Sticks:

Our hen house needs more hens! Please join us on Thursday mornings from 10:30-11:30am. If you can't join us at this time but can knit or crochet at home, contact Judy Nelson to get yarn and patterns. Our ministry is growing faster than we can produce!

Dolls are being made for children and adults in the county who need comfort. Blankets are being made for babies in our church, chemotherapy patients, nursing home residents, Guardian Ad Litem children, and Families First. We continue to make wash cloths to give where needed.

"Knockers" are available when requested.



P.U.S.H. Week (Presbyterians Utilizing Servant Hands)



From the Coastal Carolina Presbytery:

Folks from over 30 congregations participated. Over 100 Presbyterians showed up to be Presbyterians Utilizing Servant Hands. Thank you David Trogon, Larry Thomas, Kaye and Paul Pope, and all of the volunteers!

Southeastern Oratorio Society:

On Monday, December 11, the Southeastern Oratorio Society will present Camille Saint-Saens' "Christmas Oratorio" and K. Lee Scott's "Christmas Cantata: The Incarnation" under the direction of Dr. Timothy Koch of Coastal Carolina University.

The pieces are based on Scripture passages and on carols and hymns from the 16th through twentieth centuries. Several local and outside soloists will be featured.



The free concert is at 7:30 pm at First Presbyterian Church.

For more information, contact any of FPC's Oratorio singers: Anne Branch, Jenny Meekins, Judy Nelson, Paul Pope, Annette Powell & Steve Smith.

Church Calendar

Saturday, December 2:	Hanging of the Greens, Sanctuary - Morning Bethlehem Live, Beach Assembly of God - 8:30 pm
Sunday, December 3:	Hot Dogs & Caroling, Meet in Fellowship Hall - 5:00 pm
Monday, December 4:	MVE Committee Meeting - 5:30 pm Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall - 6:00 pm Oratorio Rehearsal, Sanctuary - 6:30 pm Nuts & Bolts Committee Meeting, Conference Room - 6:30 pm Alcoholics Anonymous, Community Room - 8:00 pm
Tuesday, December 5:	Morning Circle, Conference Room - 11:00 am Service of Lights, Arts Council S. Madison St. - 6:00 pm Evening Circle, J. Lee - 7:00 pm
Wednesday, December 6:	Choir Rehearsal, Choir Room - 6:00 pm Wednesdays Together: Fear Free Evangelism, Fellowship Hall - 6:30 pm Alcoholics Anonymous, Community Room - 8:00 pm
Thursday, December 7:	Chicks with Sticks, Parlor - 10:30 am Alcoholics Anonymous, Community Room - 8:00 pm
Saturday, December 9:	Oratorio Rehearsal, Sanctuary - 9:30 am
Sunday, December 10:	Oratorio Rehearsal, Sanctuary - 3:00 pm Handbell Rehearsal, Sanctuary - 5:30 pm Love Feast Rehearsal, Sanctuary - 6:00 pm Moravian Love Feast, Sanctuary - 7:00 pm
Monday, December 11:	Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall - 6:00 pm Southeastern Oratorio Society Christmas Concert- 7:30 pm Alcoholics Anonymous, Community Room - 8:00 pm
Tuesday, December 12:	Session Meeting, Conference Room - 6:30 pm
Wednesday, December 13:	Choir Rehearsal, Choir Room - 6:00 pm Wednesdays Together: Fear Free Evangelism, Fellowship Hall - 6:30 pm Alcoholics Anonymous, Community Room - 8:00 pm
Thursday, December 14:	Chicks with Sticks, Parlor - 10:30 am Alcoholics Anonymous, Community Room - 8:00 pm
Sunday, December 17:	New Officer Training, Conference Room - 3:30 pm Youth Meeting - 6:30 pm
Monday, December 18:	Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall - 6:00 pm Spiritual Development/Outreach Committee Meeting, Conference Room - 6:30 pm Alcoholics Anonymous, Community Room - 8:00 pm
Tuesday, December 19:	Cape Fear Council Organizational Meeting, Boy Scouts, Conference Room - 6:00 pm
Wednesday, December 20:	Choir Rehearsal, Choir Room - 6:00 pm Alcoholics Anonymous, Community Room - 8:00 pm
Thursday, December 21:	Chicks with Sticks, Parlor - 10:30 am Scout Roundtable Meeting, Fellowship Hall - 6:30 pm Alcoholics Anonymous, Community Room - 8:00 pm
Sunday, December 24:	Worship, Sanctuary - 11:00 am Christmas Eve Service, Sanctuary - 5:00 pm
Monday, December 25:	Christmas Day - Office Closed Alcoholics Anonymous, Community Room - 8:00 pm
Tuesday, December 26:	Office Closed
Wednesday, December 27:	Choir Rehearsal, Choir Room - 6:00 pm Alcoholics Anonymous, Community Room - 8:00 pm
Thursday, December 28:	Karen Out of Office Chicks with Sticks, Parlor - 10:30 am Alcoholics Anonymous, Community Room - 8:00 pm
Friday, December 29:	Karen Out of Office
Sunday, December 31:	New Year's Eve
Monday, January 1, 2018:	New Year's Day - Office Closed Alcoholics Anonymous, Community Room - 8:00 pm



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511 North Thompson Street
Whiteville NC 28472