

The First Edition

First Presbyterian Church, Ellerbe, NC

December 2024

www.pcanet.org
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From the Pastor:

“There’s a Song in the Air”

There is no time of year, quite like the Christmas season. Christmas is a glorious time because two thousand plus years ago the most amazing thing happened. Of all the “miracles” this to me is the most amazing – the Son of God became man; the eternal logos was born in a manger in Bethlehem. The apostle John puts it this way, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). The apostle Paul puts it this way, “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons” (Gal. 4:4-5). Two thousand years ago the Kings and Lord of Lords was born in the little town of Bethlehem. The eternal Son of God made his descent into this world to bring salvation to mankind and the world has not been the same since.

As we look forward to Christmas, we look forward to being encouraged by our adult and youth choirs as they sing familiar and not-so-familiar carols in a couple of medleys on the 22nd. As the special on December 1st the choir will be singing an advent hymn, which you have probably heard - “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” (If it sounds familiar, we sang it last year.) We don’t know for sure who wrote it, but it was translated into our current English version of seven stanzas by Anglican priest J.M. Neale in 1851. It draws on the Old Testament longing for the coming Messiah expressed in various ways. Stanza one pictures Israel mourning in lonely exile. Stanza two looks forward to Christ as the Wisdom of God. Stanza three looks forward to Christ as the “Great Lawgiver in Zion.” Stanza 4 uses the metaphor of the branch which issues from Jesse’s stem. Stanza five sees the coming Messiah as the “Key of David” who will unlock heaven’s doors. Stanza six sees the Christ as “the Bright and Morning Star.” And finally, stanza seven looks forward to the King of Kings who would rule the nations. I know of no hymn, ancient or modern, which more beautifully anticipates the Messiah’s coming.

On December 8th the congregation will be learning a “new” advent hymn. Last year we introduced “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus” and will sing it again this year. As a former Methodist I grew up singing this hymn which was written by Charles Wesley in 1744. We will sing it to the familiar tune Hyfrydol (think “Jesus What a Friend for Sinners”). The hymn is based upon Haggai 2:7 which reads: “‘I will also shake up all the nations, and they will offer their treasures; then I will fill this temple with glory.’ So, the LORD of Heaven’s Armies has said.” As Wesley meditated on Haggai 2:7 he looked around him and saw the situation of orphans in the areas around him and noted the class divide in Great Britain. So, he was moved to pen these words in the form of a prayer: “Born Your people to deliver, born a child and yet a King, born to reign in us forever, now Your gracious kingdom bring. By Your own eternal Spirit, rule in all our hearts alone; by Your all-sufficient merit, raise us to Your glorious throne. Amen. (Wikipedia)”. May we look forward to learning this beautiful advent hymn.

Finally, I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has volunteered to help out with accompaniment during Donna’s absence. We pray that the Lord speeds her healing. And while we will certainly miss her presence on the piano, we give thanks that the Lord is raising others to serve.

Grace & Peace,
Pastor Stan

On behalf of my family, I want to express our sincerest thanks to our session and congregation for your generosity and kindness to us during Pastor Appreciation Month. We are truly blessed to be serving you. May the Lord show you his favor during this Christmas season and throughout the new year.
Sincerely, Pastor Stan

From the Session

Mr. Layton called the meeting to order on Wednesday, November 13, 2024 and declared a quorum. Jimmy Wagers had the opening prayer. The reading of the Scripture came from Hebrews 12:5-6. Usual perfunctory Session business was held and then proceeded to our ongoing and new business.

The Session received the following reports: 1) Church Treasurer's monthly report; 2) Mr. Layton's monthly report.

The prayer list was reviewed and Richard Smith led in a season of prayer for our church members and also those of the community.

Items of discussion and approval:

- End of year congregational meeting to be held Sunday, December 15th immediately following the worship service.
- Monetary donation made to "New Shoes for Christmas" which is administered by First Presbyterian Church, Rockingham, NC.
- Purchase of Accordance Bible Software.
- Approval of the Women's Ministry 2025 (which is the Circle, WIC officers, programs, and all events). Also, a request to present First Grade Bibles at the annual back-to-school breakfast held the Sunday before school starts.
- Approval to change the upcoming election of Elders in the First Presbyterian Church PCA of Ellerbe to the election of three new elders as this will put our Session back to the original number of Ruling Elders. The election will be held at the conclusion of officer training and examination.

The next stated meeting is December 11th. Rickie DeWitt offered the closing prayer.

Jimmy Wagers, *Clerk of Session*



WIC Update

The Women in the Church (WIC) Administrative meeting was held Tuesday, November 12th at 7:00 pm. The WIC voted to change the name to Christian Discipleship Women's Ministry which follows the name now used by the PCA. The Circle meetings and officers will be combined with the WIC to become the Women's Ministry and will be one united group in 2025. In 2025, the Women's Ministry will meet the last Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm in the fellowship hall, except December which is to be determined. So, mark your calendars now! Depending upon the month, there will either be a program or a Bible Study. Specifics will be included in the annual plan which the Session has approved. The final review of the plan will occur at the WIC annual meeting on December 10 at 7:00 pm and all ladies are invited to attend. The installation of new officers for 2025 will occur during this meeting.

Thank you to the men for cooking the Ingathering meal, and to the ladies for providing dessert. It was a good time of food, worship and fellowship.

O Holy Night Around the World Reminders:

The O Holy Night Around the World nativity displays- crèches, designed and crafted by artisans from countries around the globe, is a wonderful opportunity to welcome the community to our church to see these depictions of the birth of Christ. There are over 100 crèches that will be open to the public on Friday, December 6th, 5:00-8:00 pm during the Ellerbe Hometown Christmas (the hayride will stop at the church). The display will also be open on Sunday, December 8th, 1:00 – 5:00 pm. Groups may view the displays by appointment.

Important Dates:

- **Decorating will begin Sunday, December 1 after the church service. Volunteers are needed to help with getting the nativities and tables ready during this time.**
- **If you have a nativity, or several nativities, to display, please have them placed in the Fellowship Hall between Monday, December 2nd through Thursday night, December 5th.**
- **All nativities must be taken down by Friday, December 13th.**

Beth Meacham, *WIC President*



Circle ladies met on Tuesday night, November 26th, in the fellowship hall. Hostess Jane Smith provided pizzas for all in attendance and Richard Smith opened with prayer. After our meal, we enjoyed fellowship as we decorated the church for the Advent season. We would like to say a special thank you to the men who came to help us with the heavy lifting and putting up the tree – you are so appreciated!

We would like to invite all ladies and their spouse/guest to our Christmas Party that will be held on Friday, December 13th, at 6 pm in the fellowship hall. You will need to bring your own meat for grilling and sides will be provided along with desserts and appetizers. This is always a wonderful time to fellowship with each other and enjoy a wonderful meal. We will be exchanging ornaments and if you wish to participate, simply bring an ornament. If you wish to attend, please RSVP to Patricia McCormick by calling or texting (910) 995-3490. We need a headcount to ensure we have enough sides prepared for everyone – hope to see you there!

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, January 28th at 6:30 pm in the fellowship hall. The new year will be a little different as we will be combining Circle with WIC creating the new Women’s Ministries. We do send out reminders of our meetings via text and if any lady in our church wishes to be added to this group for texts, please contact Patricia McCormick at (919) 995-3490 – we will be happy to get you added so you may stay up-to-date with our women’s ministry.

Patricia McCormick, *Secretary*

Announcements

WIC/WM BUSINESS MEETING: The Women in the Church (WIC) business meeting is Tuesday, December 10th at 7:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall. The 2025 Women’s Ministry (WM) annual plan will be reviewed for finalization and new officers will be installed.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING: A congregational meeting is scheduled for Sunday, December 15th, following the worship service. The purpose of this meeting is as follows: (1) to present the 2025 church budget; (2) vote on a change to the pastor’s call; (3) to elect trustees for the 2025 calendar year; (4) to present the report of the church corporation for 2024.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY: The next edition of the church membership directory will be published in January 2025. If there are any edits that need to be made to your listing, please contact Women's Ministry Secretary Jan Stivers at kevinandjan90@gmail.com or text/call 910-995-3975.

PCA MINISTERIAL RELIEF OFFERING: The annual “Ministerial Relief Offering” is used to fund the PCA Ministerial Relief Fund which provides financial assistance to PCA missionaries, pastors, and widows of pastors who are in financial distress. Brochures explaining how this particular offering benefits those in need are in the vestibule, along with envelopes for those desiring to give to this cause. This offering will be received from December 1st through December 29th.

REPAIRS TO COLUMNS: Aside from the Ingathering offering, anyone wishing to give toward the repair of the columns in the front of the sanctuary should designate their check “church columns.”

AID TO HURRICANE RELIEF: Our denomination’s Mission to North America Disaster Response provides help to those devastated by natural disasters. If you wish to help relieve victims of the recent hurricanes you may designate your check “hurricane relief” and the funds will be used to facilitate the movement of mission critical assets.

Church Officers:

Ruling Elders

- Austin Bryant
- Bill Carter, Elder Emeritus
- Tim Clark
- Rickie DeWitt
- Richard Smith
- Jimmy Wagers
- Tony Yates

Deacons:

- Patrick Bryant
- Tim Grotenhuis
- Chris Meacham
- Jesse McQueen
- Buck Smith
- Kevin Stivers
- Tommy White

WIC Officers

- Beth Meacham, President
- Ginny Layton, Vice-President
- Jan Stivers, Secretary
- Jane Carriker, Treasurer
- Barbara Wagers, Historian
- Chrystal Weatherly, Mission to the World Chair
- Lori Clark, Mission to North America Chair
- Sandra Futrell, Christian Growth Chair



Happy
Birthday
December



RAYER LIST: Hurricane victims, President and other national leaders, the Persecuted Church and Christians worldwide, Samuel Austin, Beverly Sears Barber, Christian Barrett, Daniel Brown, Austin Bryant, Billy Carter, Mary Ellen Carter, Ted Carter, Vera Carter, Vergie Clark, Kevin Conner, Ronald Lee Cook, Kim Covington, Kevin Craven, Tony Craven, Alli Cundy, Cindy Daniels, Sharon DeWitt, Susan DeWitt, Ruby Dunn, Ellerbe First Responders, Carsyn Faile, Fred Fletcher, Mark Futrell, Deborah Greene, Jessica H., Becky Henderson, Pete Herron, Ken Hill, Lowell Hill, Melanie Johnson, Donna McCormick, Bill McFayden, Patsy Dunn McIntyre, Julia McIntosh, Lee McKenzie, Shannon McNeil, Trevor Moss, Morgan North, Leo Poole, Sophia Potterfield, Barbara Sears, Doris Sears, Tina Sellers, Tony Ward, Mica Way, Amanda Watson, Donna White, Hayley White, Jo Wilson, Curtis Wright, Jackie Wright, Tony Yates, unspoken requests.

- 1 Beth Richardson
- 2 Jon Chappell
- 7 Dale DeWitt
- 8 Brandon Smith
- 8 Johnathon DeWitt
- 9 Sharon DeWitt
- 11 Sandra Futrell
- 13 Lisa Dawkins
- 13 Tony Yates
- 16 Garrett Yates
- 17 Amy Schrenker
- 20 Susan DeWitt
- 23 Megan Snead
- 25 Carol Chappell
- 27 Donna White
- 29 Josh Dazey
- 29 Debbie Abbott
- 29 Knox Layton
- 30 Rhonda Stewart

**December
Anniversaries**

24 M/M Jimmy Wagers



December 2024

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 12:00 Prepare fellowship hall for O Holy Night Around the World—volunteers needed	2 7:00 pm Church officer training <i>Bring your nativities to the fellowship hall.</i>	3 <i>Bring your nativities to the fellowship hall.</i>	4 6:00 pm Prayer meeting 7:00 pm Deacon's Meeting <i>Bring your nativities to the fellowship hall.</i>	5 Final day: <i>Bring your nativities to the fellowship hall.</i>	6 5:00—8:00 pm O Holy Night Around the World open to the public	7
8 1:00-5:00 pm O Holy Night Around the World open to the public	9	10 7:00 pm WIC/WM Business Meeting	11 6:00 pm Prayer meeting 7:00 pm Session Meeting	12 7:00 pm Church officer training	13 Final day: Collect your nativities from the fellowship hall. 6:00 pm Women's Ministry Christmas dinner	14
15 12:00 Congregation Meeting following the worship service	16	17	18 6:00 pm Prayer meeting	19 7:00 pm Church officer training	20	21
22 10:00 am Sunday School cancelled 10:30 am worship service	23 	24	25 Merry Christmas!	26	27	28
29	30	31	Sunday School Assembly is in the sanctuary at 10:00 am, classes are at 10:15. Worship service is at 11:00 am Sunday mornings in the sanctuary.			

© Holy Night Around the World

Join us for viewing over 100 displays of nativity sets—crèches, designed and crafted by artisans from countries around the globe. The crèche design will reflect the tradition and culture of the country.

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11).

Friday, December 6th, 5:00 – 8:00 pm

(During Ellerbe's Hometown Christmas)

Also

Sunday, December 8th, 1:00 – 5:00 pm

Groups are invited to attend at other times by appointment. Call or text 910-995-3975 to reserve a time.

This is a free event presented by the Women in the Church – Missions to the World Committee.

First Presbyterian Church PCA Fellowship Hall, 133 Ballard St, Ellerbe

