

First Presbyterian Church
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First Presbyterian Church, Batesville AR

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Advent Candle Prayers

If you are using an Advent wreath at home, add in these prayers as you light the candles. Any order is fine! **HOPE** What do you hope for? Light or color one candle and ask God to bring hope to anyone who feels lost. **LOVE** Whom do you love? Light or color one candle and give God thanks for the people you love and those who love you. **JOY** What brings you joy? Light or color one candle and ask God to help you share joy with people who need it. **PEACE** Where is peace needed? Light or color one candle and pray for people who need God's peace. **CHRISTMAS DAY** Light or all the candles and ask God to use the Christmas Joy Offering to prepare the way of the Lord for those whom it helps. Give thanks for God's perfect gift in Jesus!



Dear Friends,

One of the things I've been told about myself but that I honestly don't remember is that at certain times in my childhood I could be incredibly patient. One of those times, apparently, was Christmas morning. I know I was never one to get up at 3:00AM to see what Santa had left for me. I also seem never to have urged my parents to hurry up and get going so that I could open presents. What I'm left to believe is that I approached Christmas with about the same level of intensity as any other day when it was okay to sleep late.

Incidentally, that is pretty much the way I approach Christmas mornings at this point in my life. I'm excited by the festivities of the day. I enjoy giving presents and receiving them. I love Christmas breakfast and cherish Christmas dinners. But I'm still okay with sleeping a little late and letting the morning unwind without having to rush around in a fervor.

On the other hand, if you were to tell me that the coming reign of God was on the brink of entering our world, that the new heaven and new earth were about to arrive with God's blessing and we all were about to be eternally changed, then I honestly think I would move a good bit more quickly. And frankly, the coming reign of God is very much on the brink of entering our world and our lives. We have no reason to think otherwise. But there are still reasons to live with patience.

God's work in our midst is by far the most exciting thing we can encounter in life. The light of God's love, the joy of God's hope, the day to day promises that we see bearing fruit around us, all of this points to that for which we wait. But it has not yet come in its fullness and we are called on to live our lives attuned to God's time, patiently but actively, faithfully but trustingly. We cannot make the reign of God come more quickly, cannot make it appear more readily. And yet we have work to do, and lives to live, and gifts to share, and hope to offer, and a story to tell, all to the glory of God. There is plenty to do as we wait which means there are plenty of reasons to remain focused on God's will in the here and now. I would guess that I will stay in bed as late as I can on Christmas morning this year. But when I do get up, I will strive to fill the day with joy and praise and to live in such a way that points to the goodness of God and the eternal righteousness of the coming reign.

In the meantime, Paulette and I look forward to our first Christmas season in Batesville and as a part of First Presbyterian Church. May all of you feel the joy of Christmas even as you wait patiently for the coming of God's reign and the fulfillment of God's will.

See you Sunday,

Jim



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

12/2	Erin Richards
12/3	Miriam Moore
12/3	LeAnn Holmes
12/7	Jeff Moore
12/9	Craig Ogilvie
12/10	Tonia Grace
12/11	Emily Cambias
12/12	Lynn Walton
12/12	Jeremy Weaver
12/13	Rufus Bell
12/15	Steve Lange
12/18	Courtney Beal
12/20	Maggie Alsup
12/21	Janet Thomas
12/22	Sandy Qualls
12/25	Laura Geary
12/27	Justin Clark
12/29	Erica Baker
12/29	Parker Holmes

Drink from a can? Pull the tab and bring it to church! Drop your can tabs in the jar in the Narthex to help the local V.F.W. support the Ronald McDonald House! Tabs can also be dropped off in the office.



Poinsettias

If you are interested in providing a poinsettia for the worship services on December 22nd and Christmas Eve, please contact the church office either by phone or email to reserve your plant or plants. Order forms will also be in the bulletin. Plants will be \$15.00 this year. Orders are due no later than December 7th. Your poinsettia can be placed in honor or in memory of someone special.



Christmas Worship Schedule

Lessons and Carols. Tradition tells us that the first ever "Lessons and Carols" service took place on Christmas Eve in 1880. It's a tradition that has been adapted and used by churches all across the earth. This year, on December 14th we will continue that tradition by holding our Lessons and Carols service. Come join us as we hear the Christmas Story told both in word and song.

On **Christmas Eve** at 5:00 p.m. we will celebrate with our annual Christmas Eve candle light service. Make plans to bring your whole family to the Christmas Eve service. The nursery will be open for this service.

Joyful Happenings with SLAM & Youth Group!

As the air grows crisp and the calendar turns to December, our Children's Group is buzzing with excitement for the Christmas season! This time of year is always special, offering us wonderful opportunities to focus on giving, joy, and the true meaning of Christmas: the birth of Jesus Christ.

What We're Doing This Season

Our weekly gatherings will be packed with festive activities that help the children connect with the Christmas story and express their creativity:

- **Sharing the Story:** We will be exploring the Nativity story through interactive lessons, focusing on characters like Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, and the wise men. The children are getting ready to share this story with the congregation in a special way!
- **Creative Crafts:** Little hands will be busy making ornaments, cards, and gifts. We encourage them to share these homemade treasures with family, friends, or neighbors as a tangible way to spread Christmas cheer.
- **Giving Back:** We will be partnering with a local charity to learn about helping others. This is a crucial step in teaching our children that the greatest joy comes from serving those in need.
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Why Christmas Matters to Us

The Christmas season is more than just gifts and decorations; it's a chance to reinforce the core values of our faith. We are so proud to see our children learning to be **kind, generous, and thankful**. Their energy and enthusiasm are a beautiful reminder of the light and hope that the Christ child brought to the world.

We encourage all families to take time this month to reflect on the blessings of the season and continue these conversations about faith and giving at home.

Merry Christmas to all, and thank you for your support of our SLAM & Youth groups!

CURRENT ELDERS:

Class of 2025

Gerri Coleman
Price Holmes III
Carlene Lewis
Ceil Smith

Class of 2026

Wanette Baker
Lenora Baldwin
Deborah Stroud
Janet Thomas

Class of 2027

Steve Lange
Jeffrey Friert
Clint Thomas
Kathy Altom

CURRENT DEACONS:

Class of 2025

Wesley Beal
Melissa Qualls
Sam Smith
Janet Wood

Class Of 2026

Clint Howard
Larry Whipple
Rachel Baker
Payne Moser

Class of 2027

Laura Geary
Mayfan Thomas
Miriam Moore
Sandy James



Angel Tree & Santas for Seniors

Have you selected your child for Angel Tree or picked out your Senior to be a Santa?

If you choose an **Angel**, please do not wrap your gifts, mark through the barcode and put them in plastic bags with the child's name and number clearly marked. Drop off your gifts in the Narthex no later than Sunday, December 14th. On Monday, December 15h at 9:00 a.m. we will sort the gifts and deliver them to the fairgrounds between 10am & 2pm.. All volunteers are appreciated!

Santas for Senior gifts are due back to the church by December 12th. Please make sure these gifts are wrapped and clearly labeled. We will deliver these gifts to the White River Area Agency on Aging that day.

Christmas Eve Kindness Baskets

Once again we will collect snacks and goodies to bless those who serve our community throughout the year, and on holidays when we are enjoying time with our family and friends. If you would like to donate snacks, small games, or notes of thanks to our police/sheriffs officers, fire fighters, EMS and hospital workers, we will have baskets in the Narthex for you to drop off your donations.

Families who have delivered the baskets in the past were truly blessed to be a blessing to these hard working individuals. If you would like to deliver a basket, let Gerri Coleman know. Snacks are due by December 17th.



Presbyterian Day School

Our Breakfast With Santa fundraiser is coming up on Saturday, December 6! With a ticket, which can be purchased in the church office or from a PDS family, you'll enjoy a delicious pancake breakfast and have admission to our bake sale and silent auction, and your littles can get their photo taken with Santa! Please join us for this sweet holiday event. If you would like to be an event sponsor or provide an item or service for inclusion in our silent auction, please contact Alyson Low at alysonlowpds@gmail.com."



Worship Schedule

December 7th –2nd Sunday in Advent

Liturgist– Betty Adams

Acolyte-Alex Pace

December 14th –Lessons & Carols

Acolyte-Isabella Geary

December 21st –4th Sunday in Advent

Liturgist– Steve Lange

Acolyte– Arch Baker

December 24th– Candlelight Service

Liturgist Bob Stroud

Acolyte– Ana Beal

December 28th - 1st Sunday of Christmas

Liturgist– Steve Lange

Acolyte-Mettler Bell



December 14th



BREAKFAST With Santa

DELICIOUS FOOD | SILENT AUCTION | PHOTO WITH SANTA

SATURDAY, 6 DECEMBER 2025 | AT 8 AM

775 E. Boswell St. Batesville ●●● FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



The church office will be closed from December 25th-January 2. It will reopen on January 5th.



Pastoral Care

PLEASE REMEMBER these members and friends of First Presbyterian Church in your prayers.

MEMBERS: Shelly Moser, Amy Howard, Bob and Sandy Qualls; Kathy Whittenton; Trish Boylan.
FAMILY AND FRIENDS: Rose Scales (*friend of Mayfan & Clint Thomas*); Brayden Johnson, (*friend of Sam Smith*); Hattie Parker, unborn daughter of Anna Parks Arnold (*friend of Kathy Lanier*); Dana Mathis, (*friend of Sarah Jones*); Amber Lacewell (*friend of LeAnn & Price Homes*); Fin Anderson (*granddaughter of James and Camille*); Kathy Magness, (*friend of Amy & Clint Howard*); Andrew Langenbach (nephew of John Ried); The Bentley Family; Libby King (Daniel King); Sam Crawford (*friend of the congregation*); Chip Rayford (*son-in-law of Theodora Hightower*); Bill Olson (*friend Amy Crouch Howard*); Dwight Barnett & family (*brother of Carlene Lewis*); Kelli Sarrett (*niece of Celeste Whipple*); Dr. Mark Williams (*friend of Carlene Lewis*); Daniel Neal (*friend of Zack Mobley*); Charlie Robuck (*grandson of Jo Cudd*); Paul & Susan (Critz) Guthrie (*friend of the congregation*); Marjorie Seasholtz (*friend of Kathy Whittenton*); Don Weatherman (*friend of the congregation*); Todd Phillips (*nephew of Camille Anderson*); Eloise Kikkert (*granddaughter of Don & Lynn Weatherman*); Betty Howard (*friend of Kathy Whittenton*); Nick Slagle (*nephew of Ceil Smith*); Susan Anselm (*sister of Jo Gehm*).

Please Pray for...



December 7	Mountainburg Church	Active and Retired Ministers
December 14	Laotian Ministry, Fort Smith	Youth and Directors
December 21	Memorial Church, Atkins	First, Walnut Ridge
December 28	First, Paragould	Church Custodians

Stewardship Campaign

Please fill out your pledge card and return it to the church. There are multiple ways you can return your pledge card! You can drop by the office during the week and turn it in, mail it to the church, call Mollie and let her know your 2026 pledge, or drop an email at firstpresbatesville@gmail.com. We are beginning the planning stages for next year!