



# the Chimes

December 2023

F I R S T P R E S B Y T E R I A N C H U R C H

## Message from the Pastor

### Beloved of Christ,

December has arrived, and honestly, I cannot fathom where 2023 went. For us in the church, We enter a new year already. The liturgical year starts for us in Advent.

Isaiah 64:1-4 invites us into a season of preparation:

“O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence — as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil — to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence. When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him.”

I served as Chaplain for 2 summers with Appalachia Service Project. There were 25 counties in 4 states, so I did a lot of driving. One morning, I was on the interstate in West Virginia, jamming to my music, when suddenly, every light on the dashboard came on and the power steering failed. Let me tell you, that's frightening going 70 MPH. The temperature skyrocketed in the engine. Everything was failing in this car and so I slowed down, threw on the



emergency blinkers, and managed to get a mile to the nearest exit, which was in the middle of nowhere. At the bottom of the ramp, the car died — totally and completely.

I called the fleet manager and told him what happened and gave him the interstate I

was on and which exit number I was currently sitting. He did not want me to call a local tow truck, but told me he was jumping in the company tow truck and would be there in about 2 hours. Did I mention this exit was in the middle of nowhere? All I could see where trees, not even houses. I have no clue why there was an exit to this road from the interstate. So, there I sat. I had not packed anything entertainment wise and the car would not turn on, so no radio. This was also before smartphones. I took a nap. I took a walk. I repacked my bags. Every 5-10 minutes, a car would drive by and some of them would stop to ask if I wanted a ride. The only thing I could do was wait. Checking my watch every 15 seconds praying 15 minutes had passed.

Advent means coming. We remember Christ's first coming and we look forward to Christ's second coming. This is a season of waiting. *(Continues on page 3)*



- 9 a.m. Sunday School & Handbell Choir
- 10:30 a.m. Worship Service

Worship Service is in-person and online at [fpcfairmont.com](http://fpcfairmont.com) & Facebook



# Musical Notes

from John Morrison, Director of Music & Organist



## November is a great

month to be giving thanks, so let us reflect on some unique things to thank the choirs for this past month. One Sunday that was particularly special was November 12 when the Chancel Choir sang a festive anthem joined by some of the handbell ringers. The Cambridge Handbells also rang an exciting Cathy Mokebust arrangement of "Let All Things Now Living" which I played violin with. And the previous Sunday, November 5 it was a treat to have Davis and Elkins sharing a service with us. The D&E choir did a great job and it was wonderful to share in fellowship after the service. A special thanks to the Hospitality Team who works hard to pull off events like this. The Thanksgiving meal was delicious!

There is a lot to look forward to in the music ministry during the upcoming Advent and Christmas season! On December 3, Alyssa Schwartz will be playing a flute solo. The West Virginia Brass Quintet will be joining us for Christmas Eve Worship. The handbells will be ringing December 3, December 17 and on Christmas Eve. And December 17 is

the Chancel Choir Canata during worship which you won't want to miss! The cantata is called *Bethlehem's Child* by Victor C. Johnson and Lloyd Larson who wrote the following about their work: "The story of Christmas-God becoming human-is filled with the unlikelyest of elements. God chose an unlikely setting for this story: the tiny village of Bethlehem; an unlikely couple as supporting characters in this story; Joseph and Mary; God chose an unlikely audience through which to broadcast the news of Christ's birth: common shepherds; and He chose a newborn infant as the lead character in this life-changing story of redemption, love and grace; Jesus, the Holy Child of Bethlehem." "Isaiah, the Old Testament prophet, foretold that the Messiah would come and He would be called 'Emmanuel-God with us.' The gospel writer John, having had a personal association with Jesus and looking in retrospect at the miracle of God becoming human, said it this way 'The Word (meaning Jesus) became

flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. We have beheld His glory, the glory of the only Son of the heavenly Father. This is the compelling story of Christmas. This is the miraculous story of Bethlehem's Child. "

The narrator for the cantata is Marilyn Morgan. Soloists are Maria Potts, Stan Swihart, and Betty Pat Lee (descant). You will hear both familiar carols and original compositions. We hope you enjoy this year's cantata!

May the peace of Christ be with you,

John Morrison, Director of Music and Organist







## First Church's News & Notes

### Mark Your Calendars

- January 2024 Chimes deadline is **Friday, December 15** at noon.
- Parents' Night Out: December 8 at 5:30 p.m.
- Shoes For Kids distributed Dec. 9 9 a.m.- 1 p.m.
- Christmas Pageant: Dec. 10 during worship service
- Vocal Tapestry Concert: Dec. 10 at 4 p.m.
- Chancel Choir's Christmas Cantata: Dec. 17 during worship
- Men's Breakfast: Tuesdays at McAteer's at 8 a.m.
- Chancel Choir rehearsal: Wednesday at 7 p.m.
- Sunday Worship Service: 10:30 a.m.



The Christmas Joy Offering provides assistance to current and retired church workers and their families in their time of need, and develops our future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.



The Christmas Joy Offering is one of four annual special offerings. The church-wide Special Offerings of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) play an important role in defining what it means to be a congregational church in the 21st century, bringing together the diversity of the PC (USA) to focus and take faith-based action on shared concerns. The Special Offerings offer opportunities for partnerships, learning, and witness and they profoundly affect the life of the church as a collective witness to Jesus Christ's love for the whole church.



### 470 pairs of children's shoes purchased; warm clothing still need for Street Store

Many thanks to all who helped shop for 470 pairs of shoes! And, thanks to all who contributed throughout the year! The shoes will be distributed from our church on December 9.



The Centsability offering will be received at the Christmas meal after the service on December 10.

The Christmas Joy offering will be received on December 24.

More men's coats and other warm clothing items are needed for the Street Store. Very cold nights have depleted our supply.

### Pastor's Message *continues from pg. 1*

We start our Liturgical year, not with celebration and the birth of Jesus, but with waiting. AND, we have to wait 4 weeks!

Waiting. I don't know many people who look forward to waiting. Personally, I'm really bad at waiting. What I'm good at is over scheduling, looking busy, and cramming everything I possibly can into the shortest amount of time. Waiting is so much of life – there is truth in the phrase “Hurry up and wait.” We wait for the spotlight to change. We wait for a phone call. We wait for visitors to arrive. Children wait for Christmas break so they don't have to go to school. We wait in checkout lines. We wait for prayers to be answered and for news of a loved one. Some people wait to die. Some always wait for tomorrow. Spend so much time waiting for sometime else or something else, that we miss what God is doing right now and they forget to live.

Advent is time for us to reawaken and refocus. There is a difference between waiting for Christmas to come and waiting for Christ. We don't need much help determining when Christmas will come. It doesn't change – December 25 – whether we are finished shopping or not. I don't think many people wake up that morning and say, “I had no idea Christmas was today!” How much of what we do in this season is in preparation for Christmas Day and how much is in preparation for God to become flesh in Jesus Christ? Are we prepared to encounter the Lord of all creation?

Isaiah invites us to wait expectantly and hopefully. There are 2 ways to wait. You can wait like I did on the side of the road praying the time would pass. Or we can wait like we wait for parades on the side of the road – with expectation and hope. Isaiah invites us to shape our expectation and anticipation by the first Advent of Jesus – the one born in a stable and will hang on a tree. If the first coming taught us anything – God comes in ways we never expect.

We wait as people of the promise believing that God has come close and entered our world, that God has redeemed God's people, and that God is present right now.

If we take it seriously, this is Christ's birthday, not our birthday. As we busy ourselves making lists and buying presents, what if the most important list we can make is – what does Christ want from me on his birthday? Imagine if we all waited like this.

To the glory of God,

Rev. Evan Walker



# CONTACT INFORMATION

OFFICE HOURS: 9 AM - 1 PM ON MONDAY, WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY  
9 AM - 12 PM ON TUESDAY

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## ***Christian Education, A Big Thanks!***

As we get ready to say goodbye to 2023 and hello to 2024, I'd like to thank all the wonderful volunteers who have made Christian Education at First Presbyterian a possibility.

Our Sunday School teachers spend hours each week preparing their lessons, making sure our youth and adults have a firm foundation in the Word. Our Children's Church teachers and shepherds help educate our kids each Sunday in fun and creative ways. We had more than a dozen volunteers give of their time during VBS, helping with everything from crafts to games. More than 100 people attend our Trunk or Treat event, and our volunteers turned out in full force to fill bags full of candy for the clowns, superheroes, pirates, and ghouls who roamed our halls. The volunteers who help during Parents' Night Out give Moms and Dads a chance to reconnect while their kids learn about the Lord. A big thank you to the Hospitality team who keeps us well fed. We so appreciate CE committee members Lauren Ranson and Erin Hauser who attend all our meetings and give us valuable suggestions and feedback. To everyone who takes time to encourage, support, educate, and love our kids, THANK YOU!

As I move to the Outreach committee, Meredith will step up to serve as the Chair of the Christian Ed committee in 2024. If you've never volunteered with our Christian Education program, I urge you to do so. The smiles on these faces are all the thanks you need!

Jennifer Poling, *CE Chair*

## *Staff*

### **Pastor**

Evan Walker

[pastorevan@fairmontfirst.net](mailto:pastorevan@fairmontfirst.net)

### **Director of Music**

John Morrison

[music@fairmontfirst.net](mailto:music@fairmontfirst.net)

### **Discipleship Ministry Coordinator**

Emily Harden

[discipleship@fairmontfirst.net](mailto:discipleship@fairmontfirst.net)

### **Office Coordinator**

Cathy Woodson

[office@fairmontfirst.net](mailto:office@fairmontfirst.net)

### **Sexton**

Charles Lettrick

[sexton@fairmontfirst.net](mailto:sexton@fairmontfirst.net)

## *Session*

### **CLERK OF SESSION**

Kathy Snider

### **ADMINISTRATION**

Pam Nolan

Amy Turluck

### **OUTREACH**

Amy Koon

Diane Floyd

### **PROPERTY**

Eric Hauser

Joe Jernigan

### **WORSHIP & MUSIC**

Linda O'Connor

Marilyn Morgan

### **CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP**

Jennie Poling

Meredith Knight

### **HOSPITALITY**

Deanna Kritzer

Anne Schooley

## *Treasurer*

Roger Kritzer

### **NURSERY ATTENDANTS**

Jenna Renee Casto

Sophia Sammons





# December Nurturing Faith Ideas

## SCRIPTURE

**December 3:** Advent begins today. This season of the church year is when we prepare ourselves to welcome Jesus as a baby. This is a busy season with church services, decorating, concerts, parties, shopping and getting ready to visit with family members we might not see often. In the busyness of the season, don't forget why we are celebrating. How will you prepare your heart to welcome Jesus into your life once again?

**December 10:** Mark 1:1-8 introduces us to John the Baptist. John was Jesus' cousin, and his role in the story of Jesus was to prepare people for Jesus. What are ways that you and your family are preparing for Christmas? What are ways that you can help people in your community prepare for Jesus? If your church doesn't already do it, encourage them to go Christmas caroling, to bring some joy into people's lives.

**December 17:** One of the lectionary passages this morning is 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24. This is a letter to the church at Thessalonica. They are told that they are to rejoice always, to pray without ceasing, and to give thanks in all circumstances. Who and what are you praying for today? What are you thankful for?

**December 24:** It's Christmas Eve. As you prepare to exchange gifts with family and friends tomorrow, what gift will you bring to Jesus this year?

## BIRTHDAYS

December 2	Mike Stalnaker
3	Pam Bunner Dave Cooper
6	Evan Walker
9	Wren Knight
16	Chandler Urse
18	Amy Koon Lois Laughlin
21	Benita Jernigan Jean Lambert Liam Stalnaker
22	Linda Stoops
23	Taylor Downs

Dr. Pat Sloan  
DD Meighen  
Roman Solheim  
Sister-in-law of Doug Brenneman  
Brad Dodd  
Paul Hines  
Michelle Miller  
Peggy Twyman  
Linda Stoops

## OCT/NOV PLEDGES & GIFTS

October 22	\$2,111.88
October 29	\$14,250
Nov. 5	\$2,334
Nov. 12	\$3,362
Total:	\$22,057.88
Total to Date:	\$154,582.34

## ANNIVERSARIES

December 7 Ben & Jennie Poling

## PRAYER LIST

John Coutts  
Family of Michele Miller  
Family of Chuck Brenneman (Doug's brother)  
London Goff  
Penny Hollandsworth

**CONGRATULATIONS to Brian Starn on becoming Fairmont's new Fire Chief!**

December Ministry  
Volunteers

Liturgist: Jennie Poling

USHERS : Pam Stalnaker (captain), Bob & Lois Brummage

**NOTE: Ushers will need to open & close on December 10 & 24.**



## ***Hospitality wraps up busy year; December events announced***

**It's hard to believe** another year is coming to an end. I would like to take this time to reflect on all the happenings this past year in which Hospitality has been involved. Nine Parents' Night Out, "Souper Bowl of Caring," Session retreat, Matthew 25 luncheon, five Matthew 25 Lenten dinners, Seder meal, Marley's adoption reception, Baptism and new member receptions, Gather in the Garden (May thru August), VBS, Black Bear baseball outing, Rally Day, preparing applesauce, Apple Butter Day, Trunk or Treat, Thanksgiving dinner, hosting D&E College Choir, Advent Festival, Shoes for Kids (cookies and hot chocolate), Christmas Dinner, and a reception for Vocal Tapestry following their concert. It is truly a blessing when we come together to celebrate the blessings we have here at First Presbyterian.

I would also like to thank the Hospitality committee members for their service and dedication: Charlene Walker, Kathy Snider, Pam Bunner, Betty Pat Lee, Janet Chittum, Martha Sweet, and Anne Schooley (Co-Chair).

Also, a special thank you to Mike and Charlene Walker for donating the "Welcome" gift bags given to those who are visiting our church. Each bag has a Mason jar filled with a delicious cookie mix and information about First Presbyterian Church.

Thank you to all those who have donated cookies, cakes, and pies

for our dinners and other happenings.

The Hospitality committee is looking forward to 2024, serving God in fellowship at First Presbyterian Church. If anyone is interested in joining our committee, we meet the first Tuesday of every month at 10 a.m. in the church parlor.

### **Mark Your Calendar**

**Friday, December 1:** Staff/Session Christmas Dinner at Muriale's Restaurant at 6:00 p.m.

**Friday, December 8:** Parents' Night Out with Hospitality host Janet Chittum. Dinner at 5:30 p.m. Menu: pizza, veggies and dip, and fruit. Drinks: lemonade and water.

**Saturday, December 9:** Shoes for Kids distribution from 9 [a.m.to](#) noon. Hospitality will serve cookies and

hot chocolate to those picking up shoes.

**Sunday, December 10:** Christmas dinner immediately following the Children's Pageant. Menu: ham, Nathan's potato casserole, green beans, salad, and dinner rolls. Dessert: variety of cakes. Drinks: lemonade, iced tea, water, coffee, and hot tea.

**Sunday, December 10:** Vocal Tapestry concert at 4 p.m. Hospitality will be serving coffee, punch, and a variety of homemade cookies immediately following the concert in the church social room. This is a wonderful opportunity to welcome visitors to our church.

As you can see, the weekend of December 8-10 is going to be very busy. Hospitality will be reaching out asking for cookies for those picking up shoes on Saturday and cookies to be served at the reception immediately following the Vocal Tapestry concert on

Sunday. We will need help cleaning the social room after our Christmas dinner to prepare it for the reception following the concert.

Deanna Kritzer,  
*Hospitality Chair*





# Scenes from Thanksgiving, Shoes for Kids, Advent Workshop



**NOTES from Property Team:** Work on replacing the elevator will be starting in the next two weeks.

There is work being done on the heating system and a new motor will be installed to circulate water to heat the social room. New pressure relief valves will be installed on both boilers. These will be the correct valves for this system. Charles is refurbishing the counseling room so it can be used as a class room.

We are looking for a love seat, two comfortable chairs/rockers to be used in the nursery.



*The church with a heart in the heart of the city!*

*the*  
*December 2023* *Chimes*

F I R S T   P R E S B Y T E R I A N   C H U R C H



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