

JANUARY 2025

# The *View*

*from the Church on the Hill*

**THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**



**POTLUCK BRUNCH**  
**Sunday, December 29, 2024**  
**10 a.m.**

The FCP family will meet in Fellowship Hall at 10 a.m. for a **potluck brunch and informal worship service**. We will sing, share memories, and pray for God's blessings during the coming year.

Get creative with your leftovers and bring a breakfast/brunch dish to share.

Fruit juice and coffee will be provided.

*Sign up in Upper Narthex.*

*Y'All come to a ...*

## **Chili Charcuterie**

**January 12, 2025**

*following Worship*



There will be various types of chili (chicken, beef, vegetarian), with a myriad of toppings. And there will be desserts!

The lunch is when we request some donations to our annual Thank Offering for Presbyterian Women. This Offering benefits national and global missions, and traditionally we use half the funds for help in our local area.

*Starting in January*

## **Monthly Ministry Spotlight**

**January 19:**

### **Mentor Program of White County**

During the worship service, FPC members will share their experiences as volunteer mentors for students in the White County School District.



Pastor Burnetta Armour

## Pastor's Corner A Change in Attitude

Right now, many of us are making our New Year's resolutions. We are vowing to start 2025 on the right foot. We are going to exercise more, eat better, and spend more time with God. All of these are wonderful, positive changes to make in our lives. But we may not be making the biggest change we need — a change in our attitudes.

Our attitudes matter. If we **believe** that we can achieve our New Year's resolutions, most of us will achieve at least one. Optimism breeds more optimism, both in ourselves and in those around us. When we are optimistic about our future, we are able to make the changes we need to achieve our goals. On the other hand, if we constantly tell ourselves that we will never change, most of us never will.

The same is true in the life of the church: optimism about God's future for the church leads to participation with God in the change he longs to bring. Pessimism breeds a resistance to change — the change from something old into a new creation in Christ.

Too often, this pessimism is couched in terms of looking at things "realistically." We say that we are being realistic when we tell ourselves and others that the church is dying and that the doors will be closing soon because attendance is down. Yes, it is realistic to say that attendance at our church is down. It is down for all denominations. But this pessimism denies all of the good things that are happening. It denies that God is still working in the life of the church. It says that there is no hope.

In his *Presbyterian Outlook* article "Two Kinds of Congregations," Tom Ehrich writes: "I see two kinds of congregations emerging ... the congregation that will survive and thrive and ... the congregation that will struggle, fall behind and, more often than not, die. The situation is critical. What will make the difference? Attitudes toward change and boldness in adapting to change. ... The difference will be a self-confident nimbleness as a new era unfolds, as opposed to wary rigidity."

A change in attitude changes everything. What if, instead of looking at everything that is going wrong in our congregations, we looked to see what is going right — the ways in which God is moving in us and through us? What if we believed and lived out in

*continued on page 4*

### First Presbyterian Church

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#### JANUARY 2025 INSIDE

A Year of Action.....	3
Birthdays.....	4
Christmas Cantata .....	11
Christmas Party .....	5
C&C/Liturgists/Ushers...	14
Elected Officers .....	12
God's Garden .....	12
Growing Place .....	13
Memorials .....	10
Pastor's Corner.....	2,4
PW.....	12,14
Reflections .....	6-10
Sermons & Scriptures....	4
Session Summary.....	4
Sweet Treats.....	12
Volunteer Luncheon.....	12

# Starting in January: A Year of Action



At a workshop on Nov. 19, your Session made plans for a Year of Action to follow the Year of Discernment. Several projects will take some time to develop, but we expect that 2025 will be a year of forming partnerships in our community and finding new opportunities for outreach and service.

Please continue to pray for God's guidance for our church as we step out in faith.

## Partnering

Partnering with other area churches and service organizations will be explored during the year. Efforts will be made to strengthen current partnerships with Family Connection, the Friendship Nursing Home, White County Food Pantry, and others. A monthly "Ministry Spotlight" on the third Sunday of each month will focus on the work of these groups and how to get involved.

New partnering opportunities will be explored with the White County Senior Center and with other small-to-midsize churches in the Cleveland area.

Also, we plan to begin a collection for the Food Pantry on the first Sunday of each month, starting in February. Each month will feature a specific item that is most needed by the organization.

## Outreach

In addition to current projects, such as the Crafts & Cars event in October and the Veterans Day Celebration in November, there are plans to hold a Blessing of the Animals on Saturday, Sept. 13. Friends and neighbors will be invited to bring their pets (or photos of their pets) to an outdoor service.

## Service

The Session recognized that the church is uniquely gifted to meet an important need in the community: assisting the elderly and their caregivers.

This is expected to be a multi-year effort. During 2025, we plan to work to establish a

resource for caregivers of dementia patients. In cooperation with organizations such as the county Senior Center, the goal is to provide information, resources, and a support group for caregivers. If you have ideas, suggestions, or experience in this area, please contact Pastor Burnetta.

## Worship

Many of the ideas and suggestions submitted during the Year of Discernment were related to the weekly Sunday worship services.

### *Sitting forward*

In response to many requests, several back rows in the sanctuary will be roped off, starting on Jan. 5. The purpose is to bring the congregation closer to each other and to the pastor. It will also better reflect the actual number of people in the pews, from the perspective of those attending online. No one will be forced to sit "down front," but it would be great if everyone worked together to achieve this simple goal.

### *Departing from the traditional*

On months with five Sundays (March, June, August, and November in 2025), the pastor and Worship Committee will plan a nontraditional worship service for the fifth Sunday. The details are yet to be determined, but some ideas are a hymn sing, an outdoor service, or a less structured order of service.

One decision has been made: Aug. 31 will be a "homecoming" service. Former members and attendees will be personally invited to join us on that day.

Thanks to all who participated during the Year of Discernment by submitting ideas, by joining in focus groups, and, most of all, by praying for God's guidance. This year will bring some changes for our congregation, but "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). Our mission has not changed, as we grow together by sharing Christ's love.





## Session Summary

At the December meeting, your Session:

- ◆ Received "Thank You" notes for mission contributions
- ◆ Approved the November Financial Report
- ◆ Considered the challenge of the 2025 budget and delayed final approval
- ◆ Accepted the resignation of Hugh Walters
- ◆ Authorized the expenditure for a new heating unit in the Fellowship Hall
- ◆ Heard plans for the training and examination of new officers
- ◆ Called for the Annual Meeting of the congregation for Jan. 26
- ◆ Heard the Pastor's Report and approved vacation and study leave for Pastor Burnetta
- ◆ Prayed for many needs in the church family and set the next Session meeting for Jan. 19.

## Pastor's Corner

*continued from page 2*

our attitudes (our thinking and our way of being) the belief that God has a future for us?

Positive attitudes breed positive results; negative attitudes breed negative results. If we want to achieve our New Year's resolutions, we will be optimistic about our ability to fulfill them. If we want to take God's promises seriously, we need to change our attitudes. We need to see the many ways in which God is not yet finished with us as individuals or as a church. My sisters and brothers, God is still speaking, God is still working, and God is still preparing our future with hope. A change in attitude will help us all see it.

### Renewal of Baptismal Vows on January 12

On January 12, we will celebrate the remembrance of our Savior's Baptism by renewing the promises made at our baptism. At the end of the renewal, you will be invited to come to the

## JANUARY Birthdays

- 1 SANDRA NELLIS
- 13 DEWAYNE NIX
- 18 RACHEL FICKLIN
- 20 DAVID COOK
- 22 HUGH WALTERS
- 23 TC CIRIELLO
- 24 ROY FICKLIN
- 25 LINDA HOPPOCK
- 29 ZACHARY CIRIELLO



*If we missed your birthday,  
please let us know.*

## Sermons & Scriptures for JANUARY



### JANUARY 5—2nd Sunday of Christmas

Scripture: John 1:1-6, 10-18

*Coming Into the Light*

### JANUARY 12—Baptism of the Lord Sunday

Scripture: Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

*Baptized by Fire and the Holy Spirit*

### JANUARY 19—2nd Sunday After Epiphany

1Corinthians 12:1-11

*For the Common Good*

### JANUARY 26—4rd Sunday After Epiphany

Scripture: Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10

*Holy Days*

### JANUARY 12

### RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL VOWS

*Special Event—Invite others*

font and be reminded that you have been baptized and belong to God. Please come to this special service and invite others to join us in this time of renewal and remembrance.

*Peace and Love in Christ  
Pastor Burnetta*

# Merriment and Good Food

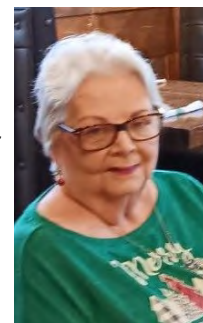
The Presbyterian Women and Presbyterian Men met for an early Christmas celebration with lunch, fellowship, and seasonal festivities on Dec. 10 at Chicago's Pizza in Demorest.

Despite the rainy and very gloomy weather, there were warm smiles, great conversations, lots of merriment and, of course, plenty of good food. A special thank you to Judy Winski for planning this fun party.

Those attending were very generous in bringing gifts for children in the Augusta area who experienced the devastation of Hurricane Helene to be distributed by the GAP ministry. GAP was founded in 1979 as a coalition of Presbyterian and Disciples of Christ churches. The nonprofit organization is devoted to providing services to the marginalized and ignored. It assists those who need support to regain physical and financial security, as well as those who need help to have enough to get by.

A couple of days after the party, Lindalee Walters and Judy Winski delivered a carload of toys and storm supplies to Judy Grieve, a volunteer at GAP in Augusta. That area continues to recover from the hurricane damage.

The toys are sure to give many children a brighter Christmas. Thank you to all who came and brought those gifts.





# Reflections on 2024



*Britt Jacobs became our Administrative Assistant and is such a great asset to our church.*



*The FPC ship set sail for the Year of Discernment. Members of the congregation were encouraged to pray and share their ideas about the church's future course.*



*Volunteer expertise at work! Hugh Walters and Roy Ficklin repaired water damage to the roof and steps at the side entrance to the church. They also constructed much-needed hand rails on either side of the Chancel.*

*The congregation gathered at the flower-covered cross for the closing benediction of the Easter worship service.*



*The roof over Fellowship Hall was replaced in March and new insulation was installed to lower heating and cooling costs.*



*On Memorial Day, crosses lined the major streets in Cleveland in honor of deceased veterans. Among them were memorials for Lindalee Walters's brother, Phillip Richardson, and Judy Winski's husband, Ron.*

*Our own Rachel Ficklin delighted many with an organ concert, part of the Lenten music series at the First Presbyterian Church of Clarkesville.*







*Judy Winski, Betty Royds, Elaine Wiegert, and Lindalee Walters attended the Annual NEGA PW Gathering in Augusta.*



*The Youth Ministry Partnership gathered at FPC to assemble 100 hygiene kits for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA).*



*Presbyterian Women enjoyed lunch at the Hofbrauhaus Restaurant and a day trip to the Lamb Lavender Farm for a summer outing.*



*Judy Winski presented a check on behalf of the PW to Nanette Baughman in support of White County Family Connection.*



*Presbyterian Men took in a baseball game at the University of North Georgia campus in Dahlonega.*



*James Armour translated the worship service for a guest who was hearing impaired.*



*The cast and crew of the WCHS production of "Frozen" enjoyed a dinner prepared by the PW.*



# Reflections (continued)



Six young students graduated from The Growing Place preschool in May.

Pastor Burnetta was recognized for completing two levels of certification in Older Adult Ministry. The Ministers Sarah Erickson and Pat Baker participated.



FPC staffed a face-painting booth at the annual Back2School Bash.



The PW had a table once a month at the Saturday morning Farmer's Market in Freedom Park.

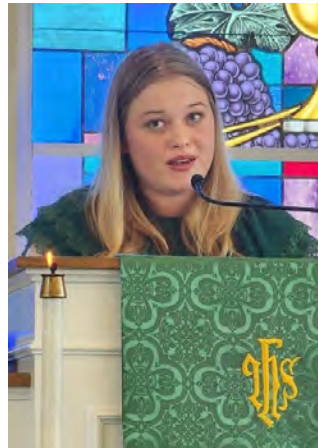
Sebastian and Jocelynn Wiley were baptized during the worship service in August.



Fellowship Hall was packed for the annual "Thanks, Y'all" barbecue. Good food, good friends, and good music, as usual!



*Lily Geiger led the congregation in worship and described her experiences as an intern for Roof Above, a nonprofit serving the homeless in Charlotte, N.C.*



*The Little Free Library was donated by the Wiegert family in memory of Hans-Jürgen Wiegert.*



*Piper Bill Lombardo led the procession into the sanctuary for the annual Kirkin' o' the Tartans.*



*The new class at TGP celebrated the first day of school.*



*Pastor Burnetta blessed the contributions collected in October for those affected by the hurricane-related floods in western North Carolina.*



*Veterans were honored and several flags were retired at an observance of Veterans Day.*



*Vintage cars were displayed and local crafts were sold at the Craft Sale and Car Show in October.*



# Reflections (continued)



## In Loving Memory of Rev. Dr. Bill Hines

July 22, 1932  
December 11, 2024



"Bill" Hines, as he liked to be called, was a pillar of our church from the very beginning.

On November 30, 1997, our church was chartered by the Northeast Georgia Presbytery and Bill Hines was appointed Moderator.

He preached and donated his time until a new Pastor was called.

During that time the Mauney House was purchased. Bill Hines oversaw and executed many of the modifications to the old house that made it more functional for use as a church.

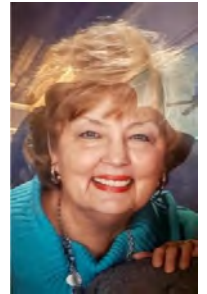
Bill's skills in design and with the construction continued years later with many projects around the church. He installed the window in the Sunday School room, designed and built the showcases for the PW necklaces, built bookcases, to mention just a few. Thank you, Bill!

You left a big impact on FPC.  
Rest in Peace!



## In Loving Memory of Paula Callaway

April 1, 1943  
November 17, 2024



Paula Callaway was the wife of one of our Interim Pastors as well as an important person in our church. She was instrumental in bringing the Presbyterian Women ministry to our church, knowing from experience how valuable this group could be.

She was also the designer and the creator (by sewing) of the window treatments in Fellowship Hall and in the small conference room in the Upper Narthex.

Paula brought joy and love to everything and everyone she touched, and was a beautiful Southern lady.

Paula, you will be missed.



These members also went to be with our Lord during 2024

**Bill Francis**

**Gary Nellis**

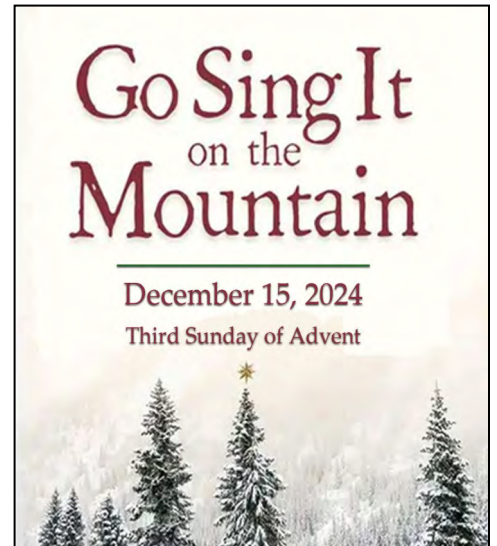
**Jan Christie Williams**



# A Morning of Music

On Sunday, Dec. 15, the Chancel Choir delighted the congregation with a beautiful cantata, *Go Sing It on the Mountain*. The service included mountain melodies, folk hymns, spirituals, familiar carols, and original music by Pepper Choplin. The choir of fifteen, plus four guest instrumentalists and James Geiger on the keyboard, gave a musical story of our journey to Christmas under the masterful direction of David Arvold. Pastor Burnetta and Charles Massingale were the narrators. The musical service was followed by a reception organized by Judy Massingale.

If you were unable to attend in person or online, a video is available on the church website by clicking "Join Us Online."



## PARTICIPANTS

### Musical Director

David Arvold

### Sopranos

Nanette Baughman  
 Barbara Chambers  
 Rachel Ficklin  
 Adele Page  
 Nancy Webber

### Altos

Susie Allen  
 Cheryl Cook  
 Rita Morgan  
 Melody Thomason  
 Debbie Wessely

### Tenors

Dick Frost  
 Ross DeMeritt

### Basses

James Armour  
 Tony Clark  
 Bruce Morgan

### Musicians

Heather Strachan - *Violin 1*  
 Carolyn Jones - *Violin 2*  
 Cathy Wallace - *Viola*  
 Esther Morgan-Ellis - *Cello*  
 James Geiger - *Keyboard*

# Volunteer Luncheon

The Presbyterian Women served a luncheon in appreciation for the volunteers at the Community Helping Hands Clinic in Cleveland, on Tuesday, Dec. 2, 2024. Even though the Fellowship Hall was too cold, the meal was served family-style in the cozy upper Narthex, which made the luncheon even more special.



## Sweet treat for parade goers

On the sidelines of the Annual Cleveland Lighted Christmas Parade, five of our Presbyterian Men served 120 cups of free hot chocolate. What didn't "sell" during the parade was given out in our first-time drive through service. As the street was opened up after the parade, the slow flow past our table allowed us to give cups to the cars as they rolled by.

For the first time in the many years of this tradition, we actually scraped the bottom of the pot and served every bit of our delicious Nestles hot chocolate.



Lots of "Merry Christmas" wishes were given and received.

## Church officers elected

Deacons and Elders for this year and beyond were elected at a congregational meeting on Sunday, Dec. 8. They include:

- Susie Allen ..... (Deacon, 3-year term)
- David Cook ..... (Elder, 1-year term)
- Roy Ficklin ..... (Elder, 3-year term)
- Bernice Rogers ..... (Elder, 3-year term)
- Debbie Wessely ..... (Deacon, 1-year term)

## From God's Garden

Beautiful poinsettia plants adorn our sanctuary and make it look so festive. They were donated by:



- Debbie Wessely in honor of the FPC musicians David Arvold, James Geiger, and Rachel Ficklin
- Jeannette and Bob Wiley in honor of their 47th Anniversary
- Nanette and Phil Baughman in memory of their parents
- Barbara Chambers in memory of Lanier Chambers
- Rita and Bruce Morgan in memory of their parents
- FPC Choir in memory of Paula Callaway

The new officers will be ordained and then installed during the worship service on Jan. 19. A congregational meeting will be held after worship on Sunday, Jan. 26, for the purpose of presenting the 2025 church budget and selecting a Nominating Committee.





# Happy Birthday, Jesus!

Students at The Growing Place presented a Christmas program on Thursday, Dec. 19. All who attended felt the joy of the season as the children portrayed the Lord's birth with drama and song. Parents, grandparents, and friends applauded enthusiastically. The performance was supported by TGP Director Melody Thomason and teachers Cara Jackson and Adele Page.



The group sings "Happy Birthday, Jesus!"

The wise men proceed down the center aisle on their way to the manger.



Students and their families enjoyed a Christmas party in Fellowship Hall.



Miss Adele talks about "what makes Christmas special to us."



Everyone opens Christmas gifts from their teachers.

This space is where we usually list the ushers for the month, but no one signed up. We're all busy during the holiday season, but it's also a time when visitors are more likely to come to church. How will they know we are a friendly church if no one is there to greet them with a smile and hand them a bulletin? This is an important job! If you can help, please contact the church office or Charles Massingale at: [massingale@windstream.net](mailto:massingale@windstream.net).



### Liturgists for JANUARY

- JANUARY 5 .....Phil Baughman
  - JANUARY 12 .....Dick Frost
  - JANUARY 19 .....Bob Thomason
  - JANUARY 26 .....Becky Clark
- Thank you for your willingness to serve.*



Judy Winski

Wishing everyone a HAPPY NEW YEAR! After a busy month of celebrating the birth of Jesus, we are now ready to plan for 2025. The PW **Coordinating Team** will meet on Wednesday, Jan. 8, at 2 p.m., to begin that plan. We will also be dispensing our available funds to the various charities we support.

Our **Bible study**, *John 3:16-The Numbers of Hope*, resumes meeting on the Tuesday, Jan. 14, at 12:30. Bring your lunch and join us as Betty Smith leads chapter 7, and our hostess, Elaine Wiegert, provides drinks and dessert.

We will celebrate the 2024 **Thank Offering** on Sunday, Jan. 12, with a **Chili Charcuterie** Board luncheon following worship. This offering allows PWs to pool their offerings so that we



Elaine Wiegert

Please join us at 10 a.m. on Sunday mornings for Coffee and Conversation. During January we will be discussing texts from Ephesians, Matthew, Luke, and John. The topics for discussion will be:

- JANUARY 5 .....Ephesians 1:3-14  
*Faithful Praise*
- JANUARY 12 .....Matthew 1:1-12  
*Guiding Lights*
- JANUARY 19 .....Luke 3:15-17  
*Lived Out Prayer*
- JANUARY 26 .....John 25:1-11  
*Abundant Life*

*Last year's chili luncheon raised \$700 for White County Family Connection.*



can make a greater impact with our grants than we are able to do on our own. With the help of 2024 grants, babies receive a warm welcome into the world, children and youth are cared for, and vulnerable people encounter the love of God through people who accompany and advocate for them. Please sign up to attend in the Upper Narthex so the appropriate amount of food is prepared.





**SUNDAYS**  
 Coffee & Conversation 10 am  
 Worship Service 11 am  
*(In the sanctuary and on Facebook)*  
 Valet Parking available Sunday mornings starting at 10:45 am

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<i>May your New Year be filled with good health and much happiness!</i>						
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Coffee & Conversation 10 am Worship Service 11 am and Online			<b>CT MEETING 2 pm</b> Choir Practice 6:30 pm	<b>Zoom Prayer Mtg. 10 am</b> Mah Jongg 1 pm		
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Coffee & Conversation 10 am Worship & Communion 11 am and Online		<b>PW BIBLE STUDY 12:30</b>		<b>Zoom Prayer Mtg. 10 am</b> Mah Jongg 1 pm		
<b>CHILI CHARCUTERIE</b>						
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Coffee & Conversation 10 am Worship Service 11 am and Online Session Meeting 12:15 pm		<b>PM LUNCH Noon</b>		<b>Zoom Prayer Mtg. 10 am</b> Mah Jongg 1 pm		
26	27	28	29	30	31	
Coffee & Conversation 10 am Worship Service 11 am and Online Congregational Meeting				<b>Zoom Prayer Mtg. 10 am</b> Mah Jongg 1 pm		

# THE VIEW

Publisher .....Penny Murdoch

## COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

Nancy Webber—Chair

Kim Ciriello           Penny Murdoch  
Dick Frost            Adele Page  
Bruce Morgan        Elaine Wiegert  
                          Lindalee Walters

## THE SESSION

Clerk .....Bruce Morgan  
Moderator ..... Rev. Burnetta Armour  
Clerk Emeritus..... Jim Hiers

### CLASS OF 2024

Worship .....Phil Baughman  
Congregational Care ..... Jim Crawford

### CLASS OF 2025

Admin. & Finance.....Bruce Morgan  
Building & Grounds.....Hugh Walters  
Discipleship ..... Elaine Wiegert

### CLASS OF 2026

Communications..... Nancy Webber  
Congregational Care ....Judy Massingale

## THE DIACONATE

Moderator .....Rita Morgan  
Session Liaison.....Judy Massingale

### CLASS OF 2024

Viveca Cooper  
Debbie Wessely

### CLASS OF 2025

Rita Morgan  
Adele Page

### CLASS OF 2026

Kim Ciriello  
Bob Thomason



**FREE**

## VALET PARKING

Every Sunday starting at 10:45 a.m.



First Presbyterian Church  
147 N. Main Street  
Cleveland, GA 30528

