



White Memorial Presbyterian Church

December 2018

...And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

~Isaiah 9:6b



Snowy Day, December 2017



a word from our pastor...

Reverend Bob Phelps

Christmas Lists

Our family is of at least two minds about Christmas lists. I don't like them. Other members of my family do. I'm talking about those lists people prepare or post online to let you know what they want for Christmas. Some of you have heard more stories about my difficult mother than you ever signed on for, but part of my dislike for Christmas lists comes from her. For many years, sometime around Thanksgiving, my sister and I would get the list. These were the things Her Majesty (our name for her, even to her face) would have for Christmas this year. Sometimes they were reasonable: new pinking shears that year she was into piecing quilts or new potholders for the kitchen (we always got the wrong color). But more often, the list included things that were not only unreasonable but impossible to find. One year she wanted a bottle of perfume that hadn't been made for twenty years. The year that children cried on Christmas morning because they didn't get the Tickle Me Elmo doll they hoped for, nothing would please her more than one of those dolls no one had. We were never brave enough to ask what a woman her age wanted with a Tickle Me Elmo? And she never got one, at least from us. I'm sure those lists color my thinking about Christmas lists. Some in our family still give them to us or post them online. I guess it's helpful to know what people might want, but there is still something special about finding things I think they might want or like (and that I might be able to afford!).

The whole idea of gift giving at Christmas originates, of course, in the gift that God sent to all of us in Jesus. The Wise Men brought the Christ Child gifts, but the real gift was that child himself. Our call to worship on the First Sunday in Advent included a statement we all read together, but one I want to us to hear again. Together, we all said, "Gathered here, we restate our intention to live as if we have received the greatest gift anyone could ever give, as if the Giver has somehow understood our deepest needs and most heartfelt prayers."

Among many other things, I'm grateful this season that God didn't wait for me to say what I thought I needed to restore my spirit and set me free from what bound me. God did and does understand my deepest need and doesn't even wait for my most heartfelt prayers to act on my behalf--or yours.

Wherever you stand on gift lists, do the best you can to make someone happy with a special surprise this season. Then be thankful that God already knows what we need most and has already given it. Merry Christmas, friends. Thanks be to God!

Grace and Peace,
Bob



2018 Advent and Christmas at J. J. White
Join us for Advent Worship.
Invite friends!



December 2, First Sunday in Advent

Hanging of the Green in worship.

Plan to be here to help us adorn our worship space
for the Advent and Christmas seasons.

Sermon: 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13, "Until He Comes"

December 9, Second Sunday in Advent

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

Sermon: Luke 3:1-6, "Prepare the Way"

December 16, Third Sunday in Advent

Children's Music

Sermon: Philippians 4:4-7,
"The Lord is Near! Rejoice!"



December 23, Fourth Sunday in Advent

A Service of Lessons and Carols

Sermon: Micah 5:1-5a, "Speak Peace"

December 24, Christmas Eve

Worship at 6 and 11 pm

Choir sings at 6 pm

Sermon: Luke 2:1-20, "Born To Us"

Music Notes

from Deanna Phelps, Music Director

Lessons and Carols

Churches and their musical ministries celebrate Christmas in many different ways. Some do the same thing year after year. We once had friends in a congregation near us who suffered through one particular soloist's annual rendition of "O Holy Night" on Christmas Eve every year long after her ability to sing it had changed. But she may still be singing it. Others mount elaborate productions with live animals and crying babies along with music to celebrate the birth of Jesus.



The tradition of a service including lessons and carols originated at King's College, Cambridge in England in 1918 as a way, even way back then, to keep the focus of the church's celebration on Christ in the midst of what some then understood to be secular and commercial encroachment. The service traditionally includes nine readings from Scripture that tell the story of God's redemptive presence among us from the time of our enslavement to sin to

the redemption that comes to us through Jesus. We enjoyed going to the annual Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols at the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee when we lived near there.

Many churches, including ours, have modified the original order for this service to accommodate local needs and resources. We will not be doing all nine readings from the traditional service this year, but will include four readings and anthems as well as Bob's text for the sermon that morning.

We will celebrate Lessons and Carols this year on Sunday morning, December 23 at 10:30 am. We look forward to sharing the story of the greatest gift of Christmas with you again this year. Please invite friends and family to join us for this annual special worship time.

Rejoice with those who rejoice... Romans 12:15a



Joel Eldridge Barr was joined at the baptismal font by his big sister Greta James, his mom, dad, and Reverend Bob Phelps

Baptismal Promises

We were happy to celebrate baptism with Joel Eldridge Barr, son of Nicky and Joanna and little brother of Greta James, on November 18. Baptism is always a special celebration, especially with young families like the Barrs who depend on us to help them rear precious little ones like Ridge to profess faith in Christ. Please keep Ridge and his family in your prayers.

Congratulations, Newlyweds

Congratulations to Bob and Sue Nunnery Reeves, who were married here on Friday, November 30. They have left on an extended honeymoon trip. Please keep them in your prayers and be prepared to welcome them when they come home in time for Christmas.

Margaret Ann Morgan and Brandon Macloud became husband and wife here on Saturday, December 1 in the midst of rain and a rescheduled Christmas parade. We got them married even among all the changes. They, too, are traveling. Keep them in your prayers and welcome them home to their new life together soon.

(Wedding photos will be in the January newsletter.)

Our Presbyterian Women's group meets every month on the second Tuesday of the month for lunch, fellowship, Bible study, some PW business. The December meeting is a special time when we enjoy pot-luck lunch and a special program from our pastor. Again this year, the program will feature the theme of this year's PW Bible Study, God's Promise. Even if you're not a regular participant in PW, we invite you to this special holiday meeting. Who knows? You might decide to stay on.



Reaching Out During Advent and Christmas

Christmas Joy Denominational Offering

Special envelopes are available for this offering that benefits retired ministers and others on pension who are in need. Also, the offering helps support schools and colleges equipping people of color. All gifts designated for "Christmas Joy" will go to this offering. The envelopes may be placed in the offering plate any Sunday in December.

Salvation Army Bell Ringing

Thanks to those who rang the bell on Tuesday, December 4. Now we need to be sure to fill the slots available for ringing on Monday, December 10, at Kroger 9:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. Sign up sheets are available on Sunday morning.



Flo's Christmas Party

For many years, Flo Boyd, a now-departed member of our congregation, put on a Christmas Party for underprivileged children in our community with the help of many friends and sponsors. Since Flo's death in 2016, her daughter, Brandy Dyess and family friend, Janet Stewart, have continued that event through an organization they created called Flo's Angels. This year's event will be on Saturday, December 8 in the Fellowship Hall. Several members of our congregation and others from across our community help this event happen. Please keep all involved in your prayers.

Wednesday Schedule

Join us on Wednesdays during Advent. We'll enjoy supper together at 5:15 each week. Then children and youth will participate in events for them and adults will have a special Advent Bible study each week. The choir continues to prepare for the season on Wednesdays at 6:30 pm.

We will not meet on Wednesdays, December 26 or January 2. Enjoy those holiday times with family and friends, and plan to join us on January 9 when we begin the new year of fellowship and learning together.



The Session held its regular meeting for November on the 11th at noon in the Ewell Martin Room. Elders Kennon Singley and Will Kimmel were excused. All other elders, the Moderator, and newly elected elder Andrew DeCoux were present. Actions taken at the meeting include:



- ◆ Approval of minutes and financial statements
- ◆ Welcomed newly elected elder, Andrew DeCoux, and discussed dates for orientation, ordination, and installation for him and Amanda Lewis and Wayne Hutchison.
- ◆ Discussed the annual Stewardship Campaign and 2019 Church Budget development
- ◆ Discussed search for a new organist.
- ◆ Approved the baptism of Ridge Barr, son of Nicky and Joanna, on November 18.
- ◆ Heard reports from Christian Education, Fellowship and Congregational Care, Government, Missions, Property, and Worship Committees.
- ◆ Set the Advent schedule for this year.

The Session meets monthly, normally on the second or third Sunday. If you have questions or need additional information, please see Bob or another member of the Session. Please keep these who guide the ministry of our congregation in your prayers.



December Schedules



Flowers

Poinsettias for December

Children's Church

2 Stay in Church (Chrismons)
9 Melisa DeCoux
16 Carol Rawlings
23 SaraBeth Williams
30 Susan White

Sunday Morning Breakfast

2 Mary Ann Ratcliff
9 Tommy and Debbi Brock
16 Hutchison Crew
23 Sharon White
30 Bill Mitchell

Ushers/Greeters

Tommy Ratcliff, Captain
Robbie DeCoux
John Drummond
Stacey Moak
Johnny Nance

Men's Interdenominational

Breakfast

5 Kennon and Joseph
12 Renan and Buddy
19 Rick, Jim, and Bob Hensarling
26 Christmas

Elder of the Month

Kathy Harbour

Happy Birthday to...

December

4 Will Kimmel
6 Kristen Allred,
Delores Feldman
7 Bob Phelps
Carol Rawlings
Colin Catchings
9 Tommy Walman
10 J. W. Burt
14 Carol Wood
15 Bob Arnold
16 Eleanor White
21 Sue Sullivan
Norma Ann Williams
25 Billie Nance
27 Hunter Nance
29 Rusten Lewis
Phillip Nance
30 Julia Arnold

January

2 Nancy McElwee
3 Beverly Nelson
9 Lily Warshauer
10 Ann Jackson
10 Toni James
15 Mark Statham
17 Tommy Morgan
18 Prudence McGehee
23 Ralph Brock
24 James DeLoach
25 Tommy Ratcliff
30 Bill Jones
31 Roger Nickerson