

Confirmation Sunday

Denisse and Jacelynn went through several months of confirmation classes taught by Margot and Mary Jane. Karen and Mary Lee were their mentors. Pam, Barbara, and others provided meals for the girls and their family. Besides participating in class, the girls helped lead worship as lay leaders, worked at the Disaster Assistance Center bagging hygiene kits, and wrote their own statements of faith that were presented to the session subcommittee. They were confirmed on December 10 and a reception was given to welcome them to full membership in the Presbyterian Church. Welcome, Jacelynn and Denisse!



Confirmation 2.0: What Does It Mean?

What is the church all about? Why are we Presbyterian? Is there a reason we have communion and baptism? For those who would like to delve into these questions and others, the Worship and Christian Education Committee will be offering a class; similar to a confirmation class, but for adults. Anyone who would like to learn more about God, the church, worship, the sacraments, the Book of Confessions, church government and much more would be welcome in the class. The class will begin in February. Please let Mary Jane or Margot know if you are interested. We will set times and dates when we find out schedules from those who would like to participate.

Star Words



January 6 is Epiphany. It is the celebration of God's presence breaking through to shine as a light in the darkness. We remember the star that guided the wise men to Jesus. Like the wise men, we also seek to follow the light of God. As we journey together we search for the new life God has in store for us.

As in the past few years, you will again have the opportunity to receive a "star word." You are invited to reflect on your word throughout 2024. What significance could this word have on your life? How might God guide you or bring you peace through this word? What can you learn from your word? What new ideas might evolve; what treasured wisdom be confirmed?

You could put your word someplace that you will see it often or use your word during your prayers at home. Your star word can be a visible, tangible reminder of our generous, loving God!

New Baby!

Beau Oliver was born January 1, 2024 and weighed 9 lbs and 8 oz. Congratulations to the whole family: parents, Sarah and Ben; siblings, Ellie, Miles, and Palmer; and grandparents, Pam and Steve! Remember to keep the family in your prayers.

How Does a Weary World Rejoice?

Our theme through Advent and Christmastide has been “How Does a Weary World Rejoice?” The material used came from a Sanctified Art. Using the first few chapters of Luke’s gospel we discovered several ways that we can find joy even when we have heavy hearts. Maybe some of these resonated with you:

We acknowledge our weariness

We allow ourselves to be amazed

We make room

We trust our belovedness

We find joy in connection

We sing stories of hope

We root ourselves in ritual

Our manger scene, complete with human and animal toys to represent one of our Advent focus statements : “We Make Room.” Our Savior welcomes all, and we reflect his love to all creation when we also value everyone.



Dear Church Family,

Thank you so much for the Christmas love offering. I feel grateful and blessed to be able to help lead our congregation in worship. You are kind, generous and loving and it is a pleasure to be able to grow in faith and share the love of Christ with all of you.

Blessings,

Mary Jane



Upcoming Events!

On Saturday January 6th at 10:00 a.m. we will be meeting to put away our Advent/Christmas decorations. All help would be appreciated: the more hands and hearts we have, the faster the job will go!

New Elders will be ordained and instituted during the service on January 7th, with The Reverend Brittany Fiscus-van Rossum leading worship. Our Community Lunch and Church Potluck will be after worship that day.

The Presbyterian Women's Circle will meet on Tuesday, January 16th at 10 a.m.

Our church will have its yearly congregational meeting and Report to the Congregation after worship on January 21st: The report from the session and committees to the congregation for 2023 will be mailed to you in the middle of January. We will have a congregational meeting on January 21 to review the report. Comments and questions about the report will be welcomed at that meeting.

The newly elected elders will have training on January 27th at 10 a.m. at the church.

The Session will meet at 1 pm on January 27th.

Christmas Carol Winner

Here are the winners from the Christmas Carol voting brackets. Thanks for Voting!

*Away in a Manger
It Came Upon a Midnight Clear
O Little Town of Bethlehem
O Come All Ye Faithful*

Keeping God's House Clean

Please consider signing up on the tablet in the west lobby to help clean the church one weekend this month. We can do it if we all pitch in!

Ministers for January

Advent Theme –How Does a Weary World Rejoice? From A Sanctified Art

January 7 Brittany Fiscus vanRossum (Baptism of the Lord) Luke 3:21-22 *We trust our belovedness*

January 14 Mary Jane Psalm 139:1-6,13-18 1 Samuel 3:1-20

January 21 The Reverend Michael Vinson

Thank You to our Musician!

Bob shares his gift of music with our congregation each Sunday, playing his guitar to accompany our hymn singing and providing preludes, postludes and other music during our worship services. He is gracious to give of himself, spend time practicing and share his talent with us. Because of this, we have the opportunity to enjoy singing together to the glory of God. Thank you, Bob for sharing your gift!



Jonathan attended his Citizenship Ceremony after becoming a U.S. citizen last month. Congratulations, Jonathan!

The FPC Ukulele Band played Joy To the World on Dec. 17th. [See the video at this link.](#)



Our next monthly Community Lunch/churchwide potluck will be on Jan. 7th from 11:30-12:30. We will be serving a hot meal and friendship in a welcoming environment.

Want to Be Involved?

Bring a potluck dish to share. Plan to stay and break bread together with our neighbors so that they can feel the love of community as we have been blessed to know it. You can also sign up to help with set up, clean up or serving by using the sign-up sheet near the offering plate at church.



Covering Our Church Ministries With Prayer

Please pray for:

- cooperation among churches and the government in Jacksonville to address the burgeoning needs of our people;
- families in need in our community and for the donors who have supplied food, water, toiletries, clothing, and bedding for those families;
- our Community Lunch Program, its volunteers, and the people it serves;
- the leaders of our city, church, and communities;
- teachers, bus drivers, students, and school employees, especially those in our city;
- our church family;
- youth of our church, city, and state
- Our Ukulele Band and all our musicians, worship leaders, and speakers

Attendance for December

Dec 3: 29

Dec 10: 32

Dec 17:

Dec 24: 26

Dec 31: 29

Report of Session meeting

The Session met on December 16th. They voted to provide \$1,500 to sponsor a student for the Spring Break Honduras Mission Trip. Duke reported that the expenses portion of the 2024 First Presbyterian budget was complete. He was waiting to finish the income portion after more pledge cards have been returned. Paula has submitted her resignation and the personnel committee has begun searching for her replacement. The yearly congregational meeting has been scheduled for January 21st. Installation of the new class of session members will be January 7th and Elder training will be at the next Session meeting on January 27th .

Prayer Requests From December

The Monroe family

The Belden family

Zoe S

Shelby S

Jim S

Lynn B

Scottie R

Chris, Elba and Isabella S

Jeff and Pam S

Paul and Barbara J

Pat and Jay H

Pam H

Ainsley C (Amber's
daughter)

Alton J

Harper P

Stu E

Bill C

Joe P

David G

Bill F

Matt F

Leeann C

Tylar C

Terri L

Dee B

Shauna T

John and Jeannie P

Elizabeth P

Bob F

Paula P

Buck and Beth B

Ron Q

Christina H

Madison S

Ann and Greg S

Wrenetta G

Billie Ann M

Natalyia (in Ukraine) and family

All people of Ukraine

All people of Morocco

All people of Libya

People of Sudan

Those affected by drought and
flooding

All first responders

All victims of war and violence

Peace in the world



Nothing Can Separate
Us From the Love of God
Romans 8:31-39

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*May the Christ who walks on wounded feet walk with you.
May the Christ who serves with wounded hands stretch out
your hands to serve.
May the Christ who loves with a wounded heart open your
heart to love.
And as you leave this place, may you see the face of Christ on
everyone you meet, and may everyone you meet see the face
of Christ on you.*

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If you are receiving this newsletter by mistake or would rather get one at the church in person, please let us know. If you know of someone who would like to receive this newsletter in the mail, please call us at 501-982-2876. God Bless You!