



The Presbyter

December 2017

The First Presbyterian Church of Clarks Summit



Christmas Eve Services

Join us for worship on Christmas Eve

In the morning of December 24, we will gather for our weekly worship service at **10:00 a.m.** Through December, Rev. Carter will preach a sermon series on **“Have Yourself a Spiritual Little Advent.”**

At **6:30 p.m.** we welcome children and their families for a special service planned with them in mind. We sing our favorite carols and retell the Christmas story in a fresh and engaging way. This year, we have heard that three of the Bethlehem shepherds are coming to visit us.

Our **9:00 p.m.** service is a traditional Lessons and Carols service with our Adult Choir leading us in the singing of carols. Rev. Carter will preach, and we conclude by lighting candles to “Silent Night”.

The **11:00 p.m.** service is a joyful and informal jazz communion for Christmas. It is our

syncopated celebration with the Presbybop Christmas Eve Band. What a fun way to welcome the birth of Christ!

We will worship on Sunday, December 31, with a special New Year’s Eve service at 10:00 a.m.

Celebrate with us on Sunday, December 3



We welcome the season of Advent with a “Hanging of the Greens” gathering. It is a pre-Christmas party for all ages.

We will decorate our church for Christmas immediately after worship (about 11 a.m.).

A simple soup lunch will be served at 12:00 noon. All are welcome!



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Notes from November Session Meeting

1. Rev. Vernon and Margaret Towne sent warm wishes to all of their friends and members of First Presbyterian Church Clarks Summit. Adrienne and Paul Horger saw them on a recent trip.

2. Session would like to thank all of the members and friends of First Presbyterian Church for their stewardship pledges for 2018 and volunteer and financial support in 2017. We have very caring members in our congregations and we want to thank each one of them for their faithfulness.



It's time to write our annual reports.

All committee chairpersons, Board Moderators, and program leaders are encouraged to share the good news of your committee's activities

for 2017 and goals for 2018.

Please forward your report (electronically if possible) to the church office by January 12, 2018.

The Presbyterian deadline for the December issue is December 15, 2017

The Presbyter is a monthly newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church, 300 School Street, Clarks Summit, PA 18411.

All visitors are welcome to worship with us.

Worship services are held on Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m. Child care is available. Communion is observed the first Sunday of every month.

If you do not attend a church in this area, we invite you to any and all of the events, programs, and worship services described in this newsletter. Please call the church office to arrange child care. Our sanctuary and Fellowship Hall are both handicapped accessible.

Church Office	(570) 586-6306
Fax	(570) 587-3784
Web Page	www.fpccs.org
Pastor	William G. Carter
Administrative Assistant	Nancy Owens
Coordinator of Children & Youth	Jana Schillinger
Treasurer	Wayne Griffiths
Editor	
Clerk of Session	Beverly Bright
Director of Music	Frank Jones
Director of Bells	Richard Cochrane
Director of Chapel Choir	Kay Ten Eyck
Organist	Kay Ten Eyck
Sexton	John Conklin

This church has a wish list . . .

Ever wonder what our church needs? Here is our end of the year wish list.

- Bench for the new Clavinova keyboard (\$70)
- Anthem for the children's choir (\$30)
- Anthem for the adult choir (\$75)
- Music folders for the adult choir (\$200)
- Padding for the Baldwin piano (\$70)
- Cover for the Baldwin piano, custom made (\$200)
- Help us hire an instrumentalist (\$125 to \$200)
- Scholarships for camps and conferences (any amount)

Feel free to claim any of these extra-commitment items, especially by the end of the year. Simply notify the church office of your desire (office@fpccs.org) and make a check payable to First Presbyterian Church.

Thank you for assisting us in praising, teaching, and serving Jesus Christ!

FROM YOUR FINANCE COMMITTEE FOR THE MONTH ENDING OCTOBER 31, 2017

REVENUE

Budget	\$ 293,750
Actual Received	<u>278,070</u>
Difference	\$ 15,680
	=====

EXPENSES

Budget	\$ 305,457
Actual Expenses	<u>300,853</u>
Difference	\$ 4,604
	=====

BUDGET VARIANCE \$ (11,076)

PLEDGE INCOME

Budget	\$ 266,637
Received	<u>254,462</u>
Difference	\$ (12,205)
	=====

Per Capita 2017 is \$32 per member. As of the end of October, \$3,255 has been contributed.

From the Pastor
December 2017



"In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered." (Luke 2:1)

Our Christmas story begins with a political decree. That's a striking detail, often overlooked in our rush to move to the manger. Far from the region of Judea, a pagan politician ordered a census. The purpose was not to fix gerrymandered districts nor to distribute funds to those in greater need. Rather it was to expand the tax system, probably to help finance the billeting of Roman soldiers that occupied Judea.

Some scholars believe that peasants and artisans (like the carpenter Joseph) had as much as half of their income consumed by Roman taxes. These taxes were imposed without representation, collected by local collaborators with the empire, and enforced by the sword. It's hard to imagine this. The closest analogy to my experience is the imperial oppression depicted in the first couple of Star Wars movies; even that is difficult to fathom in real life.

Yet this was the situation under which Jesus was born. Throughout the Mediterranean world there was a cruel tyrant, an oppressive regime, a system of unfairness and cruelty, all run by violence. . . "and unto us a child is born, a son is given."

In telling the birth of Jesus, Luke does not directly criticize the empire. If Caesar's minions had noticed that, they would have smacked him down. But the account of our savior's birth gives a clear alternative to the way the world worked - and still works. It is the way of humility, the humility of God.

As the British cleric J. B. Phillips wrote,

"It is fifteen hundred years ago that this apparently invincible Empire utterly collapsed, and all that is left of it is ruins. Yet the little baby, born in such pitiful humility and cut down as a young man in his prime, commands the allegiance of millions of people all over the world. Although they have never seen him, he has become friend and companion to innumerable people. This undeniable fact is, by any measurement, the most astonishing phenomenon of human history. It is a solid rock of evidence that no agnostic can ever explain away." ("The Dangers of Advent")

What we celebrate in December is a world-shaking truth: that God has come and been found among us. His birth, life, death, and resurrection still offer an alternative to the brutal ways of the world. Jesus offers salvation - a saving from ourselves - and blessed are those who become as humble as he.

With you in the journey,

Rev. Bill

Check out our pastor's online sermon blog at www.billcartersermons.blogspot.com

Christian Education



It's for life!

THE W.A.Y.The Wednesday Aadults and Youth Christian Education

"I am the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE"

IMPORTANT DATES:**Sunday, December 3** - Advent Program following worship featuring Hanging of the Greens.

All are welcome! Soup lunch provided.

Wednesday, December 27 - no WAY classes. Merry Christmas!!**Classes for Children and Youth**

Spark (Newborn - 3 year old) enjoy Bible stories, songs and games in the nursery. In December the kids will be learning about a child called Immanuel, Angels visit, and Jesus is born.

Power Xpress (4 year old - Grade 5) experience Bible stories through interactive rotation classes. December's units will focus on Advent and Christmas.

We Believe (Grades 6-8) Using *We Believe: The Story of God's Faithfulness*, the class will spend the year digging deeper into the Old Testament, learning and experiencing how God revealed himself to the Hebrew people. In December, we'll learn about Joseph in Egypt, the call of Moses, and how the Hebrews were freed from slavery.

PresbyYouth (Grades 9-12 and college-age adults) are encouraged to either join an adult class or participate in the middle school class.

Our Wednesday Evening Schedule

5:00-6:10 pm	Light supper begins
5:30-6:10	Chapel Choir Rehearsal
6:15-7:10	Christian Education classes for All Ages
7:15-8:25	Adult Choir
8:30-9:15	Bell Choir

Wednesday Classes for Adults

"The Protestant Reformation(s)" with Tabbi Miller-Scandle in room 210. We will explore the series of Reformations that became the basis for the founding of Protestantism, and reflect on their impact on our theology today. (November 29 and December 6)

Advent Bible Study with Charlie Pinches in room 206. We will study and reflect together on some of the great Bible passages for the season. (November 29, December 6, 13, 20)

Come and learn with us!**Wednesday Supper Reservations**

Light Supper is served before The Way classes from 5:00-6:10 for those with **reservations**.
Suggested donation: \$3 per person.



Please return reservation slips no later than **Monday**. Slips can be placed in the **basket near the phone in the kitchen** or in the **offering plate**. You may also **call the church office** to make reservations. Reservations slips can be found in the church office, in the kitchen, or in pews.

Adventures in the Bible



Adventures in the Bible meets each Sunday at 9:00 a.m. for children ages 2 to 7 and parent(s) in room 110. The children will hear a story from the

Bible, then participate in activities that will reinforce the story.

Don't miss out on all the fun! Contact Karis Naeher at knaeher@outlook.com or Tabbi Miller-Scandle at tabbi.miller-scandle@scranton.edu

Youth Fellowship

All youth grades 4-12 are invited to join us on

Saturday, December 2
8:30 p.m. for bowling

and

Sunday, December 17
6:30 p.m. for our Christmas Party

Bring a friend! New faces always welcome.

HOLIDAY PAJAMA DRIVE

Janet Dobson



The Pajama Drive kicked off November 26. Please take a tag from our tree in the Narthex. PJ'S must either be wrapped or in gift bag along with attached tag and returned to the Narthex by Dec 10th. Any questions please call Janet Dobson 570-563-1887.

Please return your PJ's wrapped or in gift bag by Dec 10th to the Narthex. It is very important that you attach the gift tag as that identifies the HeadStart location

And please, don't add anything extra. All of the gifts must be the same . . . just PJs.

Calling all teachers!

The Wednesday Adults and Youth Christian Education Program (the WAY), offers classes for all ages every week. Christian Education is an important part of who we are and what we do — and you can be a part of it! Help us all to grow in Christ by volunteering to teach...at any grade level for any amount of time, you can lead our children and adults in learning and growth. Please prayerfully consider helping with this important ministry.

Contact Nancy Dennen at (570)407-1037 for more information.

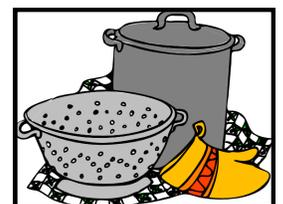
Helpers Needed!

The W.A.Y. is looking for people to help with our meals. You are welcome to help once in a while, once a month, or whenever you are able!

You can help by:

- * Cooking / assisting with a main dish
- * Providing a salad or dessert
- * Setting up or cleaning up

Contact Karen White or Nancy Dennen to volunteer!



Book Group



We will take a break from meeting for the month of December.

Here is a list of our titles and dates for early 2018.

January 25	<u>Pillars of the Earth</u> : by Ken Follett
February 22	<u>The Underground Railroad</u> by Colson Whitehead
March 22	<u>My Cousin Rachel</u> : by Daphne du Maurier
April 26	<u>Commonwealth</u> : by Ann Patchett

If you would like more information about the group or upcoming titles, contact Judy Cutler at 570-446-9310 or jdragonflyc@hotmail.com

Building and Grounds Paving Update November 2017

Frank Garnecki

We are pleased to report that the paving project is completed. The problem areas in upper and lower lots were repaired & sealed, drainage was improved, foundation leakage stopped, and 3 handicapped spaces were paved. In addition, Nick Stanley, the owner of the paving company "N Stanley Paving, Inc." in Dalton (570) 587-8989, donated over \$1000 worth of time, labor, and materials for repairs not included in original quote, including double sealing, resealing the back lot, and filling cracks under the front curb. It is always a pleasure to find good people who do quality work and have a charitable heart.

Also: if your favorite contractor is busy or you just want to get a few more quotes for a home project, you can call Mario Diana at (570) 241-1266. He helped us obtain paving bids. He has 20+ years experience with DPW, and knows dozens of local contractors in every field. He is always willing to give his time, is reliable, and places great emphasis on quality workmanship and materials.

Lectionary Readings

December 3

Isaiah 64:1-9; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19;
1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37

December 10

Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13;
2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8

December 17

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Psalm 126;
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28

December 24

Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96;
Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)

December 31

Isaiah 61:10-62:3; Psalm 148;
Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40

December 3 Communion Servers

Heather Acker, Captain
Adrienne Horger
Gwynne Gilbert
Warren Acker

On the Road with My Brothers' Keeper Quilts!

Marie Cochrane

On November 8th, several members of the My Brothers' Keeper Quilting group took a road trip to Hop Bottom to deliver the thirteen sleeping bags made during the Worship through Service workday of September 25th, and the regular Second & Fourth Tuesday work sessions of MBK.



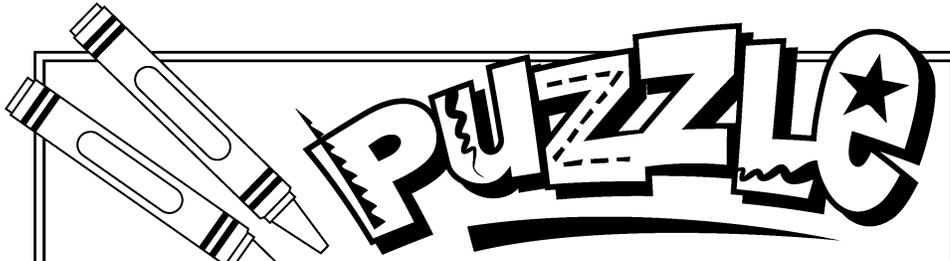
We were able to share coffee and sweets with Flo and Jim Wheatley, founders of the My Brothers' Keeper movement; their daughter, Marge; niece, Maureen; and friend, Ann, at their regular Wednesday work day. It was good timing, as there was need of 150 sleeping bags at a local shelter. Please join us December 12 at 10 AM, for the next MBK work session.



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN CIRCLE BIBLE STUDIES

Mary Ellen Lawlor

Our December lesson is "In Community with God's messengers." What a perfect time of the year to be studying about angels and Christ's superiority to the angels. While it's unlikely first century Christians celebrated Christmas as we do today, they most likely knew about angels as God's messengers from the Old Testament and had possibly heard of God's message by the angels at Christ's birth. Come and study about the angels and God's messengers for us today. If you have an "angel pin" feel free to wear it. Times and places for the December Circle meetings will be announced in the church bulletin or by phone call. All ladies are invited to join our time of Christmas fellowship. If you have any questions please contact Barbara Pitman at 587-2050, Bonnie Plantholt at 570-586-0963 or Kate Hopkins at 570-587-2390. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

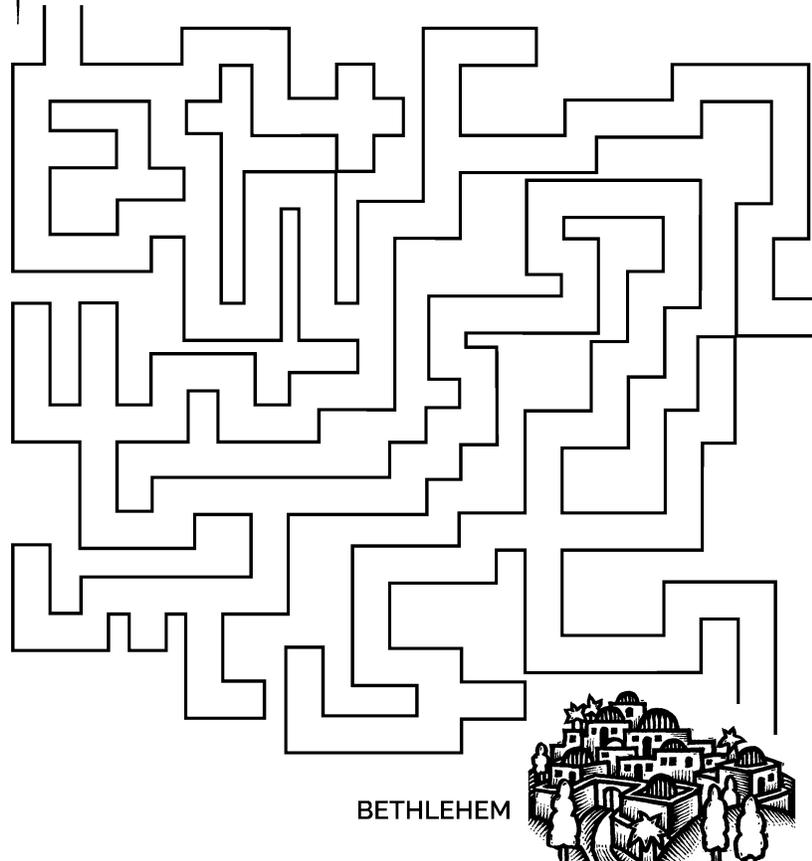


PUZZLE

JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM

In the Christmas story in Luke 2, an angel tells some shepherds to go see baby Jesus in Bethlehem.

START *Directions: Follow the maze to arrive in Bethlehem.*



BETHLEHEM

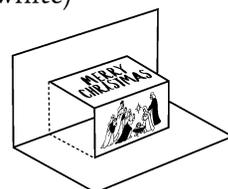
See page 11 for answer.

POP-UP CARD

Share the good news of Jesus' birth with this creative Christmas card.

What you need:

- Construction paper (two pieces, including one white)
- Pencil
- Scissors
- Pens
- Glue stick



What you do:

1. Neatly fold the white paper in half, short side to short side.
2. Draw two parallel lines (at least 2 inches apart) from the fold to about halfway to the edge. Cut along the lines.
3. Fold the cut section back and forth so it pops up.
4. Push the section up so it pops up inside the folded paper. Draw a nativity scene on the pop-up box.
5. Fold the colored paper in half, short side to short side. Place the white paper inside it and glue the white paper down, being careful not to glue the pop-up box.
6. Write a Christmas message and give or send the card to someone.

Bible Quiz

After Mary learned she was pregnant with God's Son, what relative — also miraculously pregnant — did she go visit?

- A. Esther
- B. Elizabeth
- C. Anne
- D. Anna



See page 11 for answer.

Mission and Justice Committee Activities



Alternative Gift Market

Robin Pinches

The Alternative Gift Market for 2017 was well attended with gifts purchased totaling \$2501.52.

The entities supplying items for sale included Serrv, Heifer International, Reaching the Pygmies Ministry, Appalachia Service Project (ASP), PCUSA Coffee, and a new artisan this year, Calice Michelet, who provided colorful paintings depicting his native Haitian culture.

Thank you to all who participated in this year's gift market, and also to those members who worked to make it a success.

Bethel AME

Melba Fialko

We received the following message from Bethel AME Church regarding their cold shelter.

"We at Bethel AME are sad to announce that we will be unable to open the cold weather shelter for the 2017-2018 season. Thank you for all your support."

The Mission and Justice Committee will explore options to continue our support for the homeless in Scranton.



CEO Weinberg NE Regional Food Bank

Diane Scheuer, Mission and Justice

In conjunction with the church's Worship Through Service initiative, on September 23rd, eighteen members of our congregation traveled to the Weinberg Food Bank facility in Pittston Township to volunteer with the assembly of food boxes for distribution to qualifying senior citizens. Through the interaction with the energetic volunteer coordinator, Rich Piccolotti, the group was able to learn a great deal about the food bank facility and its ongoing operation. Due to the positive response of our church's participation, an additional volunteer day was organized on November 12th at another Weinberg Food Bank facility in Wilkes-Barre. Seventeen members of our church participated in the assembly and distribution of Thanksgiving food items. Approximately 1500 families received food on the day we volunteered. Members of our congregation have again expressed a strong interest in continuing with this vital effort. We hope to have Rich Piccolotti present a table talk at our church in January, and another volunteer day can be discussed at that time. Thank you to all who have helped with this worthwhile endeavor to serve disadvantaged members of our community.



Gifts of The Heart Kits

Melba Fialko

Thank you to all who contributed to the Gifts of the Heart Kits.

In October, 22 clean-up buckets, 51 School Kits, and 9 Health Kits were delivered to Church World Services. Also a donation of \$75 was given to help defray shipping charges when they are sent to needed areas. The monetary value of our donation was \$2,550. The value to those who receive them is priceless.

The Christmas Joy Offering

Melba Fialko

Advent asks us to open our hearts to God's love and grace. In response, Presbyterians have long given generously through the Christmas Joy Offering. This offering equally supports the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and racial ethnic schools and colleges of PCUSA.

Designated envelope can be found in your envelope box as well as in the pew racks. Thank you in advance for your consideration of this worthy offering.

Joys

Sorrows

Thank You



PRAYERS OF Thanks

Blessings and Best wishes to Billy and Hillary Werner on the birth of their third child, a son named Roan. Roan joins Rilya and Rhys in the family. They are grandchildren of Marsha Parrish.

Frances Justin
November 1, 2017

Mary Acker
November 8, 2017

Jim Overgard
November 26, 2017

Our love and deepest sympathy to their families and friends.

Dear friends,

My family and I wish to thank the congregation of the First Presbyterian Church for their thoughts and prayers over the past almost two years during Fran's illness; especially, our thanks to the Deacons and others who furnished us with a meal a week. This fulfills the scripture: I was hungry, and you fed me.

We will always be grateful.
Jim Justin and family



14 Bill and Sue Fulton

23 Bill and Jessie Davis



Welcomers

- 3 Sara Ann Hosier
- 10 Sandra and Steuart Bailey
- 17 Janet Stansbury
- 24 Open
- 31 Janet Stansbury

Ushers

- Jim McLaughlin
- Betty Keen

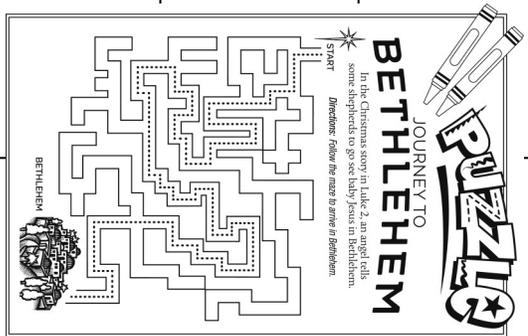
- 7 Dylan Farrell
- 8 Ginny O'Brien
- 9 Betty Keen
- 14 Linda Young
- 18 Kevin Shane
- 19 Aaron Cole
- 20 Brian Schillinger
- 21 Fred Campbell
- 22 Jeanne Comly
- 28 Shirley McLaughlin
- 30 Liam Farrell



Thank you to the many hearts and hands who participated in all phases of the meals served to families at their time of loss. From preparing the rooms, to cutting vegetables, to washing tablecloths and cleaning up afterwards, what a blessing you all were.

Special shouts out to Betty Keen, Ginny O'Brien and Karen White for so much kitchen care, and to the O'Brien-Copley family that responded in force to the SOS when the dishwasher broke!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH</p> <p>DECEMBER 2017</p>						<p>1</p> <p>7am—AA Recital rehearsal</p>
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<p>7am—AA 9 am-Adventures In the Bible 10 am-Worship 11:15-Hanging of the Greens Party 3:00pm-OA</p> <p>First Sunday of Advent</p>	<p>7am—AA 6pm-Weight Watchers 7pm-Mission & Justice</p>	<p>7am—AA 10am-PW Exec. Board 6pm-OA 7pm-Big Book</p>	<p>7am—AA 11am-Prayer & Share 5pm—THE WAY Supper 5:30-Chapel Ch 6:15-Christian Ed 7:15-Adult Choir 8pm-AIAnon 8:30-Bell Choir</p>	<p>7am—AA 8:30am-Men's Breakfast 4:30pm-Staff 6pm-Alleluia Ch. 7pm-Building & Grounds 7pm-Christian Ed. 7pm-Finance</p>	<p>7am—AA</p>	<p>7am—AA</p>
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
<p>7am-AA 9 am-Adventures In the Bible 10 am-Worship 11:15-Special Session Mtg. 3:00pm-OA</p> <p>Second Sunday of Advent</p>	<p>7am-AA 6pm-Weight Watchers</p>	<p>7am-AA 10am- MBK quilts 6pm-OA 7pm-Big Book</p>	<p>7am—AA 11am-Prayer & Share 5pm—THE WAY Supper 5:30-Chapel Ch 6:15-Christian Ed 7:15-Adult Choir 8pm-AIAnon 8:30-Bell Choir</p>	<p>7am-AA 6pm-Alleluia Ch.</p>	<p>7am-AA Presbyter Deadline</p>	<p>7am-AA</p>
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
<p>7am-AA 9am-Adventures in the Bible 10am-Worship 3pm-OA</p> <p>Third Sunday of Advent</p>	<p>7am-AA 6pm-Weight Watchers</p>	<p>7am-AA 10—Morning Circle 6pm-OA 7-Eunice Circle 7pm-Big Book</p>	<p>7am-AA 11am-Prayer & Share 5pm-The Way Light Supper 5:30-Chapel Choir 6:15-Christian Ed. for all ages 7:15-Adult Choir 8pm-AIAnon/AA 8:30-Bell Choir</p>	<p>7am—AA 8:30am-Men's Breakfast</p>	<p>7am—AA</p>	<p>7am-AA</p>
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<p>7am-AA 10am-Worship 3pm-OA 6:30pm-9pm- 11pm Christmas Eve Services</p> <p>Fourth Sunday of Advent/Christmas Eve</p>	<p>7am-AA Christmas Day Church Office is Closed.</p>	<p>7am-AA 6pm-OA 7pm-Big Book</p>	<p>7am-AA 11am-Prayer & Share 8pm-AIAnon/AA</p>	<p>7am-AA</p>	<p>7am—AA</p>	<p>7am—AA</p>
31						
<p>7am-AA 9am-Adventures in the Bible 10am-Worship 3pm-OA New Years Eve</p>						



Bible Quiz Answer: B (See Luke 1:39-41.)



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Merry Christmas and Happy New Year
to all of you
from the staff at First Presbyterian Church:
Bill, Frank, Jana, John, Kay, and Nancy



Watching for the Light

Our Advent Devotional Blog, ***“Watching for the Light”*** will begin on December 3rd, which is the first Sunday of Advent. Written by members and friends of our congregation, it is offered to encourage us to “Prepare for the birth of Jesus.”

Each entry has an Advent scripture passage and a brief personal reflection that may help us understand some aspect of the reading.

To find this devotional on line, go to **<http://adventfpccs.blogspot.com>**

You can also subscribe to have the meditations sent to you by email. Printed copies will be available in the Narthex.