



December 2025

An angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. Luke 2:9-11

In the midst of a hectic time in my life, a friend came to the office, parking right in front of the church, and dragged me out of the office, telling me to get into her van because she was kidnapping me for just a bit! We went to Dellinger Park for a walk so I could talk about everything that was going on. Have you ever felt better after simply acknowledging a challenge, fear, or burden? I felt much better after walking and just speaking the words, naming the fears, the anxiety, and the powerlessness that I felt. There were no immediate solutions, nor easy answers, but naming it all somehow made it a little easier to bear.

The season of Advent is not only a time to deck the halls and sing joyful songs, even though that is a wonderful part of Advent (plus I can get out all my cute Christmas socks). Advent is also about naming the darkness, the fears that we struggle with, the powerlessness that we feel in the midst of world where hope and light can seem so dim.

The angel's words to the shepherds are some of the most well-known Scripture in the world! Yet, is it even possible to be fearless in a fearful world? When the shepherds, and Mary and Joseph and the magi are called to be a part of the God's redemptive acts in the world, they ask questions, they hold fast to courage, they cling to the good news, but they do not deny their fears. Instead, they acknowledge their fears and move through them.

Fear has enormous power. It can divide us and paralyze us and even be used to justify horrific acts (Consider for example the account of Herod and the slaughter of the Innocents found in Matthew). But what if we formed a different relationship with fear? Can we acknowledge fear without letting it rule us? Can we name our fears and use them to fuel our voices lifted, our hands reaching out, our hearts offered to God to proclaim that God's love is stronger than any and all fear?

Naming our fear can help us see more clearly how God is breaking in and where God is at work and how God is calling us to be a part of that work. This Advent season, let us acknowledge our fears, while seeking to cling to and trust the good news of great joy, God-with-us, who comes to walk with us as we move through our fears. May we name our fear so that we can move toward the joy of knowing that, as Isaiah reminds us, a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Pastor Leigh

Christmas is Not Your Birthday

An Advent Study

You are invited to the Cornerstone Room (behind the Fellowship Hall) Sunday mornings at 10:00 AM to be a part of the Advent Study, *Christmas is not your birthday*. Let us enter into this holy time of year by focusing our hearts and lives on the greatest gift, our Savior.



As we look toward the Holy Season of Advent, we invite you to times of prayer and reflection and sharing Christ's love. There are advent devotionals as well as advent calendars in the back that you can take for yourself and to share. Our FB and IG will have special devotions and reflections for this season for you and for you to share with friends. We also ask you to share the posts as a way to invite others to grow closer to Christ in this holy season.

There are several special services for this time and we invite you to attend and invite friends also.

- Christmas Caroling for all ages is **Sunday, December 14th at 3:30 PM**. If you would like to join us or suggest someone who would like a caroling visit, contact Molly Collins at mjcollins1995@gmail.com.
- On **Sunday, December 21st**, at the 11:00 AM service, we will have our Christmas Cantata. Also on that Sunday, at 5:00 PM we will have worship in our sanctuary as a joint worship with the Church of the Ascension to mark the Longest Night (a service for those mourning and to name those who are suffering in this time).
- **Christmas Eve** services will be **Wednesday, December 24th**, with a 5:00 PM family service and a 7:00 PM Traditional service. Nursery care available at the 5:00 PM service.

Christmas Cantata: Festival of Lessons and Carols, By John Leavitt

Join us **Sunday, December 21st at 11:00 AM** for a very special worship service as our Choir presents this year's Christmas Cantata. This is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate this Holy Season and to invite friends and neighbors to come and worship and rejoice in our Savior.



DFACS Angel Tree!

This year we will be providing Christmas gifts to children in foster care in Bartow County. The Angel Trees are located at the back of the Sanctuary and outside the Sanctuary door by the choir loft stairs. Please remove an angel from the tree, sign the gift list and return the unwrapped gift to the church office. Please attach the angel tag to the gift. **All gifts need to be turned in to the office by Sunday, Dec. 7th.**

If you prefer to make a donation, please make your check payable to First Presbyterian Church with "Angel Tree" in the memo line. Thank you!

From the Session:

At its stated meeting on November 18, the Session took the following actions:

- Approved a Longest Night joint worship service with Ascension Church on Dec. 21 at 5 p.m. in the FPC Sanctuary. This service is very much like a service for hope and healing.
- Approved a recommendation from the Mission Committee to dedicate the offering from the Feb. 7 meeting of Cherokee Presbytery at FPC to Friendship Table. A committee led by Beth Gaines and including Jean Gilliland, Scott Panter, Suzanne Collins, Jim Stanley and Rev. Jones will be preparing for the meeting, and volunteers are needed with hosting duties. Rev. Jones is scheduled to be installed as moderator of the presbytery at this meeting.
- Authorized the Properties Committee to work out details for an AI Anon group to meet on Monday afternoons at the church.
- The Worship Committee reported that communion will be served by passing in the pews at worship on Sunday, Dec. 7 and by intinction during the two Christmas Eve services.



Mark your calendar!

Sunday, December 7th, 9:00 a.m.

Please join us for the MOC breakfast provided by Kyle Russell and an exciting presentation by Randy Davis on the adventures of the Phoenix Air Group.

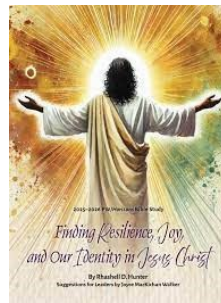
We meet on the first Sunday each month at 9:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. This breakfast is a perfect opportunity to get to know the other men in your church family. RSVP to dwc1945@gmail.com

Ladies Night Out

December 17th at 6:00 p.m.

Come join us for good food and fellowship. We will be dining at The City Cellar, located at 110 S. Museum Drive, Cartersville.

All ladies are welcome!



2025-2026 PW/Horizons Bible Study

“Finding Resilience, Joy and Our Identity in Jesus Christ” will meet **Thursday, December 4th at 10:30 a.m.** in the Cornerstone Room. We will be discussing Lesson 4, “The Prodigal Child, The Eldest Child, and The Devoted Parent”. Scripture is Luke 15:11-32. All are welcome!



There is no FPC Book Club meeting in December. Our next FPC Book Club meeting will be **Thursday, January 22, 2026,** at 10:30 a.m. in the Cornerstone

Room. The book selection is Lilac Girls by Martha Hall Kelly, which is a novel about an historical figure and her adventures in pre-WWII Europe. Available in multiple formats from the library or your favorite bookseller. Please join us and bring a friend!

December Faith Development Dates

- **Thursday, December 4, 10:30 a.m.**
Cornerstone Room
Bible Study--*Finding Resilience, Joy, and Our Identity in Jesus Christ*
- **Sunday, December 7, 14, 21, 28, 10 a.m.**
Sunday School for All Ages
Room 112 (Children's Library)--PreK through Grade 1
Room 114 --Grade 2 through Grade 5
Youth--Youth Room on 2nd Floor in Education Bldg.
Adults--Cornerstone Room
Adults--Fellowship Hall
Special Note: Children and youth Sunday School will pause after December 14 until January 11. Adult Sunday School will continue every Sunday.
- **Monday, December 6, 15, 22, 29, 6 p.m.**
Room 114
Prayer Group
- **Saturday, December 13, 5-7:30 p.m.**
Parents Night Out
- **Sunday, December 14, 5-6 p.m.**
Youth Room
Youth Bible Study
- **Tuesday, December 16, 10:30 a.m.**
Bible Study--*Bad Girls of the Bible and What We Can Learn From Them*

Save the Date!

An exciting new weekly Bible study series begins on Wednesday, January 7, 7:15-8:30 p.m. following Handbell Choir. The study will be led by Rev. Maryellen Hittel, and is based on the book, [An Altar in the World](#), by Barbara Brown Taylor. Anyone in need of childcare please contact Andrea Roche.

Deacons' Fund Offering

Undesignated offering in the plate at the two Christmas Eve services goes to our Deacons' Fund. This fund is used throughout the year to address urgent needs by individuals or groups within our church, those that come to our Friendship Table or our neighbors in need. Through the Deacons' Fund, FPC also contributes monthly to the Bartow County Community Resource Office (CRO) which provides similar assistance to our neighbors in crisis. The CRO disperses food and hygiene items, helps with utilities and medicine, and provides referrals to other agencies. In the first half of 2025 the CRO provided help to 884 people. A donation may be made at any time to the Deacons' Fund, but please consider giving this Christmas Eve.



Holiday Schedule

December 22—January 6

Preschool Christmas Holidays

December 25 & 26

Church Office Closed

December 31 & January 1

Church Office Closed

DECEMBER 2025

First Presbyterian Pre-School

Jennifer Graves, Director
770-382-0755

Events in December

- Nutcracker @ The Grand:** Thurs. Dec. 4 (4-year-old & Kindergarten classes only)
- Polar Express Pajama Days:** Tues. Dec. 9 (Ms. Kelsey, Ms. Lauren, Ms. Sharon), Wed. 17 (All other classes)
- Christmas Parties** - Friday Dec. 19 (following Sing Around the Tree (3's, 4's Kinder.) Ms. Sharon Fri. 5 Ms. Kelsey Tues. 16
- School closed for Christmas Break** ~ Dec. 22– Jan. 6
- School resumes** – Wednesday, January 7, 2026



Sing Around the Tree

*Friday, December 19th –
3 Year Old Classes at 9:00
4 Year Old & Kindergarten classes at 10:00*

You are invited to join us for the Pre-school’s annual “Sing Around the Tree” in the church sanctuary. Our adorable students will be singing and performing all things Christmas. Our classroom Christmas celebrations will follow in classrooms.



Our **Friendship Table Food Drive** was a HUGE success! Thank you to all of our wonderful parents and students for their loving donations. We had over 900 items of food donated. Mrs. Jennifer’s 3-year-old class had the most donations and won a pizza party for their classroom! Thank you to all our families for being so very generous during this holiday season.



Preschool Registration will begin at the end of January for the 2026-2027 school year! Registration packets can be picked up from the Pre-School office from 8:00-12:00 or in the Church Office. Please call 770-382-0755 to schedule a tour if you are interested.



Parents' Night Out – Volunteers Needed - Saturday, December 13 - 5-7:30 p.m.

We are hosting another PNO for foster families and for our own church families. This is for children & youth of all ages. Volunteers needed to help with children, prepping & serving dinner, clean-up. Let andrea@cartersvillepres.org know if you can help out.

Parents' Night Out – Saturday, December 13 from 5-7:30 p.m.

FPC volunteers will be offering a night of fun for children while giving parents an opportunity to go out or stay in for a quiet night! Dinner (pizza) for kids and our volunteers will be offered, and there will be times of fellowship, fun, and games for the children.

Pre-registration is REQUIRED – [PNO Registration Form](#)

Contact andrea@cartersvillepres.org with any questions.

December Children & Youth Calendar

- **Dec. 2** - (Tues) Serve at Friendship Table (4:30-7:15 p.m.)
- **Dec. 4** – Cartersville Christmas Parade
- **Dec. 7** – Community Youth Group – 5-6:30 (Nagel's Bagels)
- **Dec. 13** – Parents Night Out
- **Dec. 14** - Advent Workshop (Youth & Children, during Sunday School)
- **Dec. 14** – Caroling in the afternoon, all ages welcome
- **Dec. 24** - Christmas Eve Worship – 5 p.m. Family Oriented Service, Nursery Available, 7 p.m. service, both are Communion Services.



MONTREAT
CONFERENCE CENTER

Montreat College Conference – January 2-5, 2026

For more Information, visit <https://montreat.org/events/ccm26>

What does joy have to do with being a person of faith? What about the times when finding joy feels really hard? Join us for the 2026 College Conference at Montreat as we explore these questions and more.

College Conference @ Montreat invites college-aged young adults to spend three days in the mountains of Western North Carolina nurturing their faith and connecting with others as they engage in worship, recreation, and critical conversations. This conference welcomes all to know and experience God's word more fully, regardless of each person's religious affiliation, area of study, or where they might be on their spiritual journey.

If you are interested in going, or need financial assistance, please contact andrea@cartersvillepres.org.

Save the Dates—Summer 2026

- ◆ High School Youth Montreat – June 14-20
Worship & Music (Children, Youth, & Adults)
– June 28-July 3
- ◆ VBS – July 6-10
- ◆ Middle School Youth Montreat – July 15-19

◆ The Calvin Center (aka Camp Calvin) also has a lot of summer camps. Check out what they offer: <https://calvincenter.org/atlanta-youth-summer-camps/>



December Birthdays

5	Laurie McAfee	26	Rick Richardson
7	Ken Thornton	28	Allyson Ireland
7	Sarah Craighead	29	Faye Johnson
9	Suzanne Collins	30	Molly Collins
10	Joe Noble		
10	Marion Panter		
12	Jennifer Nebergall		
15	Pat Bivens		
15	Kathy Farnon		
15	Logan Davis		
15	Anne Tatum Johnson		
18	Harry Treadaway		
18	Molly Mendenhall		
20	Emma James		
20	Elise Shrader		
21	Anna Rentz		
25	Laura Layne		



In December Pray for Our Church:

Staff: Jennifer Graves, Rosemary Purdy (Preschool), Shelia Rosser (Preschool)

Officers: Joe Klingbeil (Session), Jessica Gardner (Diaconate)

Ministries: Mission and Service Ministry

Families: December 1-7: Janet Martin and Larry Eggersman, Frank McAdoo, Laurie McAfee, Bob and Anita Meadows, Tom and Molly Mendenhall

December 8-14: Neal Miller, Becky Morris, Karl Mosley, Jennifer Nebergall (Lee, Logan), Tom Nebergall

December 15-21: Terry Nelson, Joe and Carolyn Noble, Billy and Sonya Noble (Will, Jake), Ellyn Olson (Grey, Eden), Peter Olson

December 22-31: Scott and Susan Panter, Brac and Louise Panter (Marion and John), Bettye Parker, Lauren Paul, Harrison Paul

First Presbyterian Church

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Contact

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Andrea Roche, children & youth director

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Jim Stanley, choir director

music@cartersvillepres.org

Becky Ferguson, ministry assistant

becky@cartersvillepres.org

Angie Hood, church administrator

angie@cartersvillepres.org

Jennifer Graves, preschool director

jennifer@cartersvillepres.org

December Calendar

December 2

6:30pm - Properties Committee Meeting

December 4

10:30am - Women's PW Bible Study

December 7

Deadline for Angel Tree Gifts

9:00am - Men's Monthly Breakfast

5:00pm - Community Youth Group @ Nagel's Bagels

December 8

6:00pm - Worship Committee Meeting

December 13

10:00am - Wreaths Across America at Friendship Cemetery

5:00pm - Parents Night Out

December 14

10:00am - Advent Workshop

3:30pm - Christmas Caroling Event

December 15

5:30pm - Stewardship & Finance Meeting

December 16

10:30am - Monthly Study - *Bad Girls of the Bible*

7:00pm - Session Meeting

December 17

6:00pm - Ladies Night Out @ The City Cellar

December 21

11:00am - Worship & Christmas Cantata

5:00pm - Longest Night Service w/Church of the Ascension

December 22 - January 6

Preschool Christmas Break

December 24

5:00pm - Christmas Eve Family Service

7:00pm - Christmas Eve Traditional Service

December 25 & 26

Church Office Closed

December 31 & January 1

Church Office Closed

