

“THE MEADOWS MESSENGER”

Ann Dietz, Publisher

December 2016, Issue



Wishing You and Yours A Very Merry Christmas & A Happy New Year

October and November Financial Reports

We hope that you find this information helpful as you pray for this congregation and evaluate your giving and participation in the worship, work and mission of this part of the Body of Christ. Sincerely, the Session and Pastor

Tithes and Offerings needed for each week of this year = \$1,702.00. This figure is based on a total 2016 budget of \$88,504.00 which was approved by the Session on December 27, 2015.

OCTOBER

Total Tithes and Offerings needed (5 weeks)	\$8,510.00
Actual Tithes and Offerings received (5 weeks)	\$7,944.02
This results in a budget shortage for this month	(\$565.98)
Total Expenses (5 weeks) resulting in an overage for the month	\$1,045.04

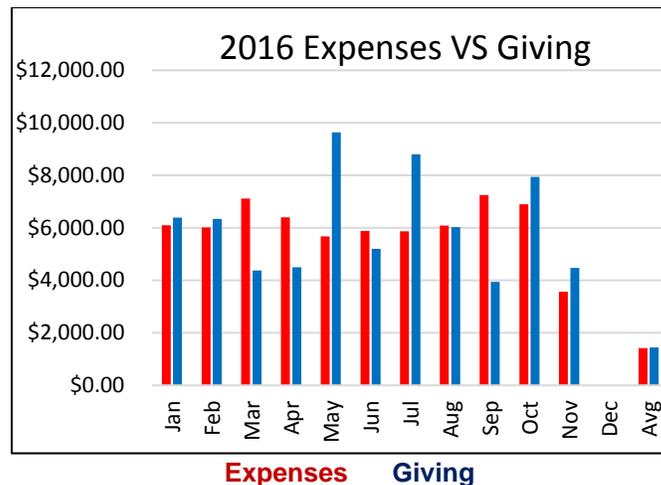
NOVEMBER

Total Tithes and Offerings needed (3 of 4 weeks)	\$5,106.00
Actual Tithes and Offerings received (3 of 4 weeks)	\$4,475.00
This results in a budget shortage for this month	(\$631.00)
Total Expenses (3 of 4 weeks) resulting in an overage for the month	\$909.39

YEAR-TO-DATE

Total Tithes and Offerings needed (47 weeks)	\$79,994.00
Actual Tithes and Offerings (47 weeks) received	\$67,617.02
This results in a budget shortage to this point	(\$12,376.98)
Total Expenses (47 weeks) This results in an overage to expenses for the year	\$768.42

For those of you who understand a chart better than a bunch of numbers, below is the 'picture' of our YTD finances for November 2016 (through week 3):



Session Highlights

Stated Meeting – October 23rd

The Session:

- Approved the September financial report.
- Received notice that our Treasurer, Terry Smith, has resigned effective December 31st. Rev. Thurmond and the Session will be searching for a new treasurer during the month of November.
- Approved Mary Lou Furr to work with Mark Paul to hang the Revolutionary War Patriots Plagues in the narthex.
- Changed the dates for the next two Session meetings to November 20th and December 18th, due to the holidays.
- Approved moving the adult Sunday school class to the new fellowship hall so that accessibility is increased. It is hoped that some people who have stopped coming will return.
- Reviewed and approved the proposed budget for 2017 (with the exclusion of the pastor's compensation, which will be discussed and approved by the congregation at the January 2017 congregational meeting). The budget was posted in the narthex for review by the congregation.

Other comments about the proposed 2017 budget:

- A recommendation was made by the Finance Committee to disconnect the phone in the church as a way to save us about \$95.00 a month. The phone is not used enough to justify the cost. The Session agreed and if there is no penalty for disconnection it will be done before the next meeting.
- Rev. Thurmond explained the addition of \$3,000.00 in the proposed budget for sabbatical travel expenses. She was promised a 6-week sabbatical leave after 4 years of service, as a part of her initial terms of call with this congregation in 2012. She is beginning her fifth year with us and wishes to plan a half-sabbatical for next year – which is 3 additional weeks off. After some discussion the Session approved this request.



Fall Festival

On Sunday afternoon (October 30th) there was a party atmosphere in and around the new fellowship hall. A group of people gathered for games, food and fellowship – some even came dressed in costumes.

Bobbing for apples ...



Robin (Phillip Pershing)
Holy cow, Batman, this is wet!

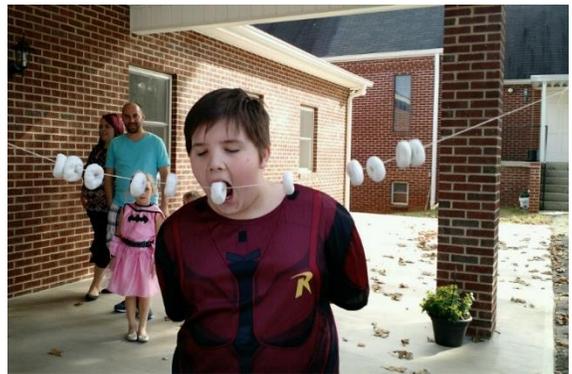


Superman (Braedon Rose)
How low can you go?



Batgirl (Lilly Rose)
That's a strong jaw you have.

Eating a donut without using your hands ...





Come, Lord Jesus
By Jill Duffield, editor

I am tired of waiting for Jesus. The wrangling of a national election that had the feel of a raunchy reality show, the endless violence of war, the in-your-face racism of our country, the tidal wave of mistrust that swamps us, the viral hatred everywhere on the web. Enough already.

Come, Lord Jesus.

I don't know what Jesus' Second Coming will entail, but some days I think it can only be better than what we're living. I looked back at pastoral prayers I'd written, not years ago, but over a decade ago, and I realized that I could have written them last week, or yesterday. Change the name of the country devastated by war or natural disaster, insert a different person in need of healing, replace one grieving family with another, and there you have it: the prayer for the day that was the prayer for yesterday and for the day before that. And for tomorrow, too.

Come, Lord Jesus.

I am weary of waiting for reconciliation, for redemption, for the peace that passes understanding, for light and life and the end of crying and mourning. I want it now. I want the meek to have their turn with the earth. I want the last to be first, even if it means I get moved to the back of the line. I promise I will cheer for the underdog and gladly give up my seat if it means we all get to rest and rejoice.

Come, Lord Jesus.

As the days get shorter and the nights get deeper, I long for the angels to announce to the shepherds that Jesus has finally arrived. I hope I will be close enough to overhear their chorus, the good news of great joy for all of us. I hope I can peek out my window and see that glowing star. Too often I forget to look up because I am concentrating so hard on the ground, trying not to stumble in the dark.

Come, Lord Jesus.



Even Cameron Thorne enjoyed the afternoon.



Learning to play Skip-Bo

There were other games: Bingo, Coin Toss, Go Fish, Milk Bottle Bowling, and Ring Toss. Then, we all enjoyed hot dog with all the trimmings, chips, and ice cream. Thanks to everyone who made the time fun for all.

The Pastor's Ponderings

Now for a change of pace – from Halloween to Advent and Christmas. The following article is slightly edited from the November 21st issue of The Presbyterian Outlook.

The twinkling lights of the Advent season get my attention, though. At dusk, when the sun has all but set and I round the corner of the country road near my house, they start to glow, faint at first, but increasingly bright as I get closer to home. There are angels, snowmen, candles in windows, colorful strings on trees and mailboxes. The later it gets, the more vivid the characters become. Finally, there is the Holy Family, all lit up in a neighbor's front yard. The darkness hasn't overcome them. Instead, it casts them in brilliant contrast.

Jesus is here.

The pastoral prayers of years gone by and the ones lifted up today have not gone unheard or unheeded. The pleas of the last and the least haven't been in vain. Right there, in the dark, is the Lord Jesus. In the outposts of our lives and the world, new life is born, and the ones working the night shift are the first to hear its cry.

Jesus is here.

Emperors make decrees and governors rule, and all the while shepherds go to work, and prayers are mumbled, shouted and pondered in people's hearts. The great world spins, wars rage, cancer spreads, death visits with relentless certainty. Petitions are repeated again and again and again.

Come, Lord Jesus.

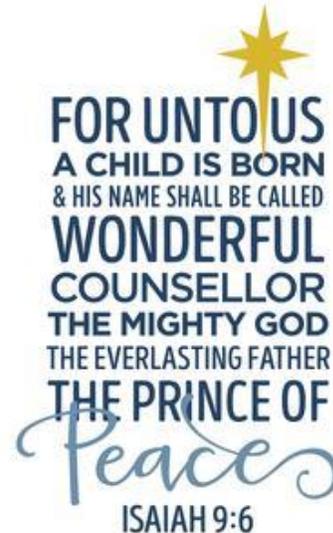
And then, in the midst of it all, he does. Heaven and earth kiss with Mary's lips on her baby's brow.

Peace becomes not possible, but promised. Healing and wholeness, now remote in a stable, will soon come to find us. The light of the star points to the light of the world, and the twinkling lights reveal angels among us. The mix and match of names and places and pleas of pastoral prayers aren't a never-ending rotation of random tragedies. Each place and person is known by God, so beloved that Jesus is coming, not to condemn, but to save them.

Come, Lord Jesus. Please, Lord, Jesus. Now, Lord, Jesus.

It is getting dark. Dark enough to be afraid. Dark enough to see the baby Jesus cast in high contrast, illumining the night as I round the corner to home. (End of article)

Many of us might be longing for the Second Coming of Jesus. Like Jill, we are weary from living in a world where the powers of darkness seem to have the upper hand, a world that steals our hope and joy and peace at every turn. But, part of the Good News of Christmas is, God will go a very long way, God will do a great deal, God will never give up on us and his creation. Jesus was willing to give up his glory in heaven to be born as a human being and live in this world of sin and suffering – just to make sure we have a reason never to lose our hope, our joy and our peace, forever. So, friends, rejoice and be glad ...



Pastor Yvonne

Climbing Frogs

Submitted by Grace Glenn

Once upon a time there was a bunch of tiny frogs, who arranged a climbing competition. The goal was to reach the top of a very high tower. A big crowd had gathered around the tower to see the race and cheer on the contestants.

As race began, no one in crowd really believed that the tiny frogs would reach the top of the tower. There were statements such as:

"Oh, way too difficult!!!"

"They will never make it to the top."

"Not a chance that they will succeed. The tower is too high!"

The tiny frogs began collapsing, one by one, and falling back to the ground. Except for a few, who with fresh energy, were climbing higher and higher.

The crowd continued to yell, "It is too difficult!!! No one will make it!"

More tiny frogs got tired and gave up. But one continued higher and higher and higher. This one just would not give up!

At the end, only the one tiny frog, who after a big effort, was the only one who reached the top!

Then all of the other tiny frogs naturally wanted to know how this one frog managed to do it? So, one of them asked the winner how he had found the strength to succeed and reach the goal?

It turned out ... that he was deaf!!!!



The wisdom of this story is: Never listen to other people's tendencies to be negative or pessimistic, because they take away the energy you have to reach your most wonderful dreams and wishes – the ones you have in your heart!

Always think of the power words have. Because everything you hear and read will affect your actions! Therefore, always be positive – to yourself and others! And above all, be deaf when

people tell you that you cannot fulfill your dreams!

Instead, remember the words of Scripture as found in Philippians 4:8 and 2:13 – “Beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.” And then strive for whatever goal God puts in your heart with the confidence that “God ... is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.”

Now That's God

It was one of the hottest days of dry season. We hadn't seen rain in almost a month. The crops were dying. Cows had stopped giving milk. The creeks and streams were long gone back to the earth. It was a dry season that would bankrupt several farmers before it was through. Every day, my husband and his brothers would go about the difficult process of trying to get water to the fields. Lately, this process had involved taking a truck to the local water rendering plant and filling it up with water. But severe rationing had cut everyone off. If we didn't see some rain soon, we would lose everything. It was on this day that I learned the true lesson of sharing and witnessed the only miracle I have seen with my own eyes. I was in the kitchen making lunch for my husband and his brothers when I saw my six-year-old son, Billy, walking toward the woods. He wasn't walking with the usual carefree abandon of a youth, but with a serious purpose. I could only see his back. He was obviously walking with a great effort, trying to be as still as possible.

Minutes after he disappeared into the woods, he came running out again, toward the house. I went back to making sandwiches; thinking that whatever task he had been doing was completed. Moments later, however, he was once again walking in that slow purposeful stride toward the woods. This activity went on for an hour; walking carefully to the woods, running back, to the house.

Finally, I couldn't take it any longer and I crept out of the house and followed him on his journey (being very careful not to be seen as he was obviously doing important work and didn't need his mommy checking up on him). He was cupping both hands in front of him as he walked, being very careful not to spill the water he held in them – just two or three tablespoons were held in his tiny hands. I sneaked close as he went into the woods. Branches and thorns slapped his little face, but he didn't try to avoid them. He had a much higher purpose. As I leaned in to spy on him, I saw the most amazing site.

Several large deer loomed in front of him. Billy walked right up to them. I almost screamed for him to get away. A huge buck with elaborate antlers was dangerously close. But the buck didn't threaten him. He didn't even move as Billy knelt down. And I saw a fawn lying on the ground (obviously suffering from dehydration and heat exhaustion), lifting its head with great effort to lap up the water cupped in my beautiful boy's hand. When the water was gone, Billy jumped up to run back to the house, while I hid behind a tree.

I followed him back to the house to a spigot to which we had shut off the water. Billy opened it all the way up and a small trickle began to creep out. He knelt there, letting the drip, drip slowly fill up his makeshift "cup", as the sun beat down on his little back. And it came clear to me; the trouble he had gotten into for playing with the hose the week before. The lecture he had received about the importance of not wasting water. The reason he didn't ask me to help him. It took almost twenty minutes for the drops to fill his hands. When he stood up and began the trek back, I was there in front of him.

His little eyes just filled with tears. "I'm not wasting," was all he said. As he began his walk, I joined him, with a small pot of water from the kitchen. I let him tend to the fawn. I stayed away. It was his job. I stood on the edge of the woods watching the most beautiful heart I have ever known working so hard to save another life. As the tears that rolled down my face began to hit the

ground, other drops...and more drops...and more suddenly joined them. I looked up at the sky. It was as if God, himself, was weeping with pride.

Some would probably say that this was all just a huge coincidence. Those miracles don't really exist. That it was bound to rain sometime. And I can't argue with that; I'm not going to try. All I can say is that the rain that came that day saved our farm...just like the actions of one little boy saved another.

I don't know if anyone will read this, but I had to tell you about it. To honor the memory of my beautiful Billy, who was taken from me much too soon...but not before showing me the face of God, in a little sunburned body. That's God!!



A Story from a Music Teacher

This is a beautiful and touching story of love and perseverance. At the prodding of my friends I am writing this story. My name is Mildred Honor and I am a former elementary school music teacher from Des Moines, Iowa. I have always supplemented my income by teaching piano lessons, something I have done for over 30 years. During those years I found that children have many levels of musical ability, and even though I have never had the pleasure of having a prodigy, I have taught some very talented students.

However, I have also had my share of what I call "musically challenged" pupils, one such pupil being Robby. Robby was 11 years old when his mother (a single mom) dropped him off for his first piano lesson. I prefer that students (especially boys) begin at an earlier age, which I explained to Robby. But Robby said that it had always been his mother's dream to hear him play the piano, so I took him as a student.

Well, Robby began his piano lessons and from the beginning I thought it was a hopeless endeavor. As much as Robby tried, he lacked the sense of tone and basic rhythm needed to excel. But he dutifully reviewed his scales and some elementary piano pieces that I require all my students to learn. Over the months he tried and tried while I listened and cringed and tried to encourage him. At the end of each weekly lesson he would always say, "My mom's going to hear me play someday, but to me, it seemed hopeless, he just did not have any inborn ability. I only knew his mother from a distance as she dropped Robby off or waited in her aged car to pick him up. She always waved and smiled, but never dropped in. Then one day Robby stopped coming for his lessons. I thought about calling him but assumed that because of his lack of ability he had decided to pursue something else. I was also glad that he had stopped coming; he was a bad advertisement for my teaching!

Several weeks later I mailed a flyer recital to the students' homes. To my surprise Robby (who received a flyer) asked me if he could be in the recital. I told him that the recital was for current pupils and that because he had dropped out, he really did not qualify. He told me that his mother had been sick and unable to take him to his piano lessons, but that he had been practicing. "Please Miss Honor, I've just got to play", he insisted " I don't know what led me to allow him to play In the recital, perhaps it was his insistence or maybe something inside me saying that it would be all right.

The night of the recital came and the high school gym was packed with parents, relatives and friends. I put Robby last in the program, just before I was to come up and thank all the students and play a finishing piece. I thought that any damage he might do would come at the end of the program and I would always salvage his poor performance through my curtain closer.

Well, the recital went off without a hitch; the students had been practicing and it showed. Then Robby came up on the stage. His clothes were wrinkled and his hair looked as though he had run

an egg beater through it. "Why wasn't he dressed up like the other students?" I thought. "Why didn't his mother at least make him comb his hair for this special night? Robby pulled out the piano bench, and announced that he had chosen to play Mozart's concerto #21 in C Major. I was not prepared for what I heard next. His fingers were light on the keys, they even danced nimbly on the ivories.

He went from pianissimo to fortissimo, from allegro to virtuoso; his suspended chords that Mozart demands were magnificent! Never had I heard Mozart played so well by anyone his age. After six and half minutes he ended in a grand crescendo, and everyone was on their feet in wild applause! Overcome and in tears, I ran up on stage and put my arms around Robby in joy. I have never heard you play like that Robby, how did you do it?" "Through the microphone Robby explained: "Well, Miss Honor, remember I told you that my mom was sick?" "Well, she actually had cancer, and died this morning. And well she was born deaf, so tonight was the first time she had ever heard me play, and I wanted to make it special."

There wasn't a dry eye in the house that evening.

As the people from Social Services led Robby from the stage to be placed in foster care, I noticed that even their eyes were red and puffy. I thought to myself then how much richer my life had been for taking Robby as my pupil. No, I have never had a prodigy, but that night I became a prodigy of Robby. He was the teacher and I was the pupil, for he had taught me the meaning of perseverance and love and believing in yourself and maybe even taking a chance on someone when you didn't know why.

Robby was killed years later in the senseless bombing of the Alfred P. Murray Federal Building in Oklahoma City, in April 1995.

Love generously, care deeply, speak kindly, and leave the rest to God. Amen.



A Christmas to Remember

This is a first-person account from a mother about her family as they ate dinner on Christmas Day in a small restaurant many miles from their home. Nancy, the mother, relates:

We were the only family with children in the restaurant. I sat Erik in a high chair and noticed everyone was quietly eating and talking. Suddenly, Erik squealed with glee and said, "Hi there." He pounded his fat baby hands on the high-chair tray. His eyes were wide with excitement and his mouth was bared in a toothless grin. He wriggled and giggled with merriment.

I looked around and saw the source of his merriment. It was a man with a tattered rag of a coat; dirty, greasy and worn. His pants were baggy with a zipper at half- mast and his toes poked out of would-be shoes. His shirt was dirty and his hair was uncombed and unwashed. His whiskers were too short to be called a beard and nose was so varicose it looked like a road map.

We were too far from him to smell, but I was sure he smelled. His hands waved and flapped on loose wrists. "Hi there, baby, big boy. I see ya', buster" the man said to Erik.

My husband and I exchanged looks, "what do we do?"

Erik continued to laugh and answer, "Hi, hi there." Everyone in the restaurant noticed and looked at us and then at the man. The old geezer was creating a nuisance with my beautiful baby.

Our meal came and the man began shouting from across the room, "Do ya' know patty cake? Do you know peek-a-boo? Hey, look, he knows peek-a-boo."

Nobody thought the old man was cute. He was obviously drunk. My husband and I were embarrassed. We ate in silence; all except for Erik, who was running through his repertoire for the admiring skid-row bum, who in turn, reciprocated with his cute comments.

We finally got through the meal and headed for the door. My husband went to pay the check and told me to meet him in the parking lot. The old man sat poised between me and the door. "Lord, just let me out of here before he speaks to me or Erik," I prayed. As I drew closer to the man, I turned my back trying to side-step him and avoid any air he might be breathing. As I did, Erik leaned over my arm, reaching with both arms in a baby's pick-me-up, position. Before I could stop him, Erik had propelled himself from my arms to the man's.

Suddenly a very old smelly man and a very young baby consummated their love relationship. Erik in an act of total trust, love and submission laid his tiny head upon the man's ragged shoulder. The man's eyes closed, and I saw tears hover beneath his lashes. His aged hands full of grime and pain and hard labor-gently, so gently cradled my baby's bottom and stroked his back.

No two beings have ever loved so deeply for so short a time. I stood awestruck. The old man rocked and cradled Erik in his arms for a moment, and then his eyes opened and set squarely on mine. He said in a firm commanding voice, "You take care of this baby." Somehow I managed, "I will", from a throat that contained a stone. He pried Erik from his chest unwillingly, longingly, as though he were in pain, I received my baby, and the man said, "God Bless you Ma'am; you've given me my Christmas gift."

I said nothing more than a muttered thanks. With Erik in my arms, I ran for the car. My husband

was wondering why I was crying and holding Erik so tightly, and why I was saying, "My God, my God, forgive me." I had just witnessed Christ's love shown through the innocence of a tiny child who saw no sin, who made no judgment; a child who saw a soul, and a mother who saw a suit of clothes.

I was a Christian who was blind, holding a child who was not. I felt it was God asking- "Are you willing to share your son for a moment?" When He shared His son for all eternity.

The ragged old man, unwittingly, had reminded me, "To enter the Kingdom of God, we must become as little children."

Author Unknown

High School Exit Exam

(You only need 4 correct answers out of 10 to pass.)

1. How long did the Hundred Years' war last?
2. Which Country makes Panama Hats?
3. From which animal do we get cat gut?
4. In which month do Russians celebrate the October Revolution?
5. What is a camel's hair brush made of?
6. The Canary Islands in the Pacific are named after what animal?
7. What was King George VI's first name?
8. What color is a purple finch?
9. Where are Chinese gooseberries from?
10. What is the color of the black box in a commercial airplane?

Check Your Answers Below:

1. 116 years
2. Ecuador
3. Sheep and Horses
4. November
5. Squirrel Fur
6. Dogs
7. Albert
8. Crimson
9. New Zealand
10. Orange

Smart Donkey

One day a farmer's donkey fell down into a well. The animal cried piteously for hours as the farmer tried to figure out what to do.

Finally, he decided the animal was old, and the well needed to be covered up anyway; it just wasn't worth it to retrieve the donkey.

He invited all his neighbors to come over and help him. They all grabbed a shovel and began to shovel dirt into the well. At first, the donkey realized what was happening and cried horribly. Then, to everyone's amazement he quieted down.

A few shovel loads later, the farmer finally looked down the well. He was astonished at what he saw. With each shovel of dirt that hit his back, the donkey was doing something amazing, he would shake it off and take a step up.

As the farmer's neighbors continued to shovel dirt on top of the animal, he would shake it off and take a step up.

Pretty soon, everyone was amazed as the donkey stepped up over the edge of the well and happily trotted off!

Life is going to shovel dirt on you, all kinds of dirt. The trick to getting out of the well is to shake it off and take a step up. Each of our troubles is a stepping stone. We can get out of the deepest wells just by not stopping, never giving up! Shake it off and take a step up.

Remember the 5 simple rules to happiness:

1. Free your heart from hatred – forgive.
2. Free your mind from worries – most never happen.
3. Live simply and appreciate what you have.
4. Give more.
5. Expect less.

Now, enough of this. The donkey later came back, and bit the farmer who had tried to bury him. The

gash from the bite got so infected and the farmer eventually died in agony from septic shock.

The Moral of the Story: When you do something wrong, and try to cover your backside, it always comes back to bite you.



Hot & Dry In Arizona

How hot and dry is it? An Apache friend said he'd killed a mosquito that was carrying a canteen.

A man in Maricopa said the chicken farmers were giving the chickens crushed ice to keep them from laying hard-boiled eggs.

At Roosevelt Lake, they caught a 10lb. catfish that had ticks on it!

In Flagstaff, it was so hot that two trees were actually fighting over a dog!

Just this week, in Phoenix, a fire hydrant was seen bribing a dog.

It's so hot and dry in Prescott, the raccoons are carrying water to the sweet corn.

In Gila, you have to eat hot peppers just to cool your mouth off.

It's so dry in Phoenix that the Baptists are starting to baptize by sprinkling, the Methodists are using wet-wipes, the Presbyterians are giving out rain-checks, and the Catholics are praying for the wine to turn back into water. Now that's dry, my friend!!!

The Coming and Going at QMPC in December

Elders on Call

Dec 04-10 – Doris Whisnant
Dec 11-17 – Rich Bruder

Dec 18-24 – Bennett Ross
Dec 25-31 – Ann Dietz

Ministry with the Children

Dec 04th - Ruth Pershing (sermon), Lelia Bruder (downstairs)
Dec 11th – Darleen Caputo (sermon), Betty Williams (downstairs)
Dec 18th – Heather Kramer (sermon), Gladys Ross (downstairs)
Dec 25th – Ruth Pershing (sermon), Lelia Bruder (downstairs)

Upcoming Events in December

Dec 08th – Bible Study at Manse - 12:30 pm
Dec 15th – Bible Study at Manse 12:30 pm
Dec 18th – Annual children's Christmas program at 5:00 pm, followed by a covered-dish supper in the new bldg.
Dec 24th – Christmas Eve Communion and Candlelight Service at 6:30 pm
Dec 25th – Christmas Day worship at 11:00 am (No Sunday School.)