

The First Word

DECEMBER
2024

December Lectionary

December 1

1st Sunday of Advent

Jer. 33:14-16 and Ps. 25:1-10;
1 Thess. 3:9-13; Luke 21:25-36

December 8

2nd Sunday of Advent

Mal. 3:1-4 and Luke 1:68-79;
Phil. 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-6

December 15

3rd Sunday of Advent

Zeph. 3:14-20 and Isa. 12:2-6;
Phil. 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18

December 22

4th Sunday of Advent

Micah 5:2-5a and
Luke 1:46b-55 or Ps. 80:1-7;
Heb. 10:5-10;
Luke 1:39-45 (46-55)

December 24

Christmas Eve

Isa. 9:2-7 and Ps. 96; Titus 2:11-14;
Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)

December 25

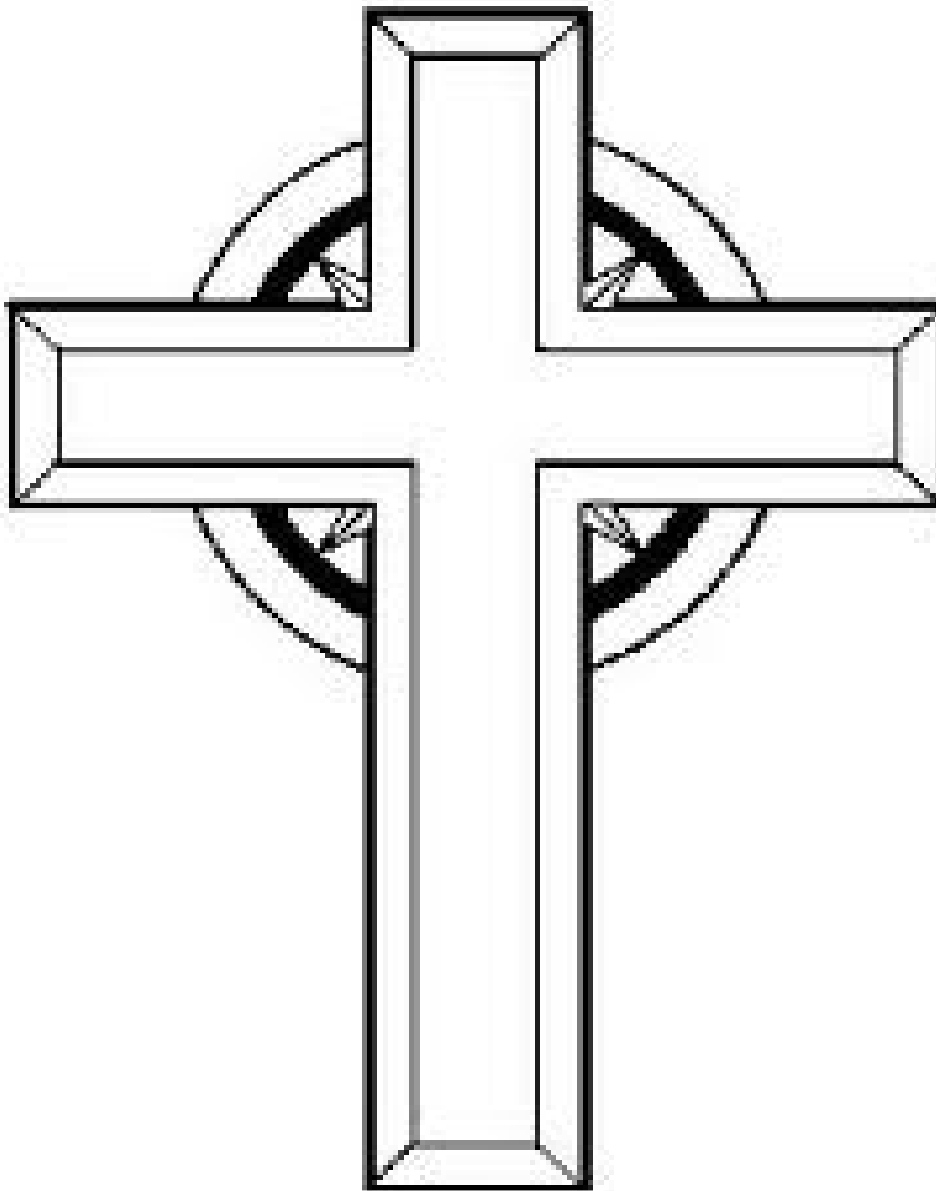
**Nativity of the Lord/
Christmas Day**

Dawn: Isa. 62:6-12 and Ps. 97;
Titus 3:4-7; Luke 2:(1-7) 8-20
Day: Isa. 52:7-10 and Ps. 98;
Heb. 1:1-4 (5-12); John 1:1-14

December 29

1st Sunday of Christmas

1 Sam. 2:18-20, 26 and Ps. 148;
Col. 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52



December 2024 Reflection

Rerun: First Sunday of Advent, Hope and Apocalypse

“So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come.” (Mark 13:29, 32-33, NRSV)

Advent means “arrival” or “the coming of Christ into the world.” While we emphasize the first arrival of Christ, it is the second arrival that is the nucleus of Christian hope.

Karl Barth emphasizes advent as a time when we remember our locale in the in-between; we are in both the “already here” and the “not yet” of the Kingdom of God. Christ already enables us to live into a new being all while knowing things won’t be fully redeemed until they are.

In this in-between, we are promised many things to happen, and none can tell us when “the end” will arrive.

This is just what apocalyptic literature does. It describes present, rather than future, trials. The author of Mark’s gospel has likely already experienced the first century uprising and the destruction of the temple, just as the prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures are already many times already amid war, chaos, and exile. They explain the present through a theological lens. Things don’t “get” scary, they *are already* scary.

These stories are contained in our Bible for comfort rather than terror. Stories of the Exodus, the Babylonian exile, the persecution of Jews in first-century Rome, the subsequent uprising and destruction of the temple, and all our shared history between then and now are frightening. They also testify to our hope. As apocalyptic as many events were, God’s people, the temple, and the church have all persisted.

The “end” hasn’t yet been the end, and so what if it is?

Worlds have ended for individuals and for entire groups of people. This is the “in-between” life that Jesus promised. All the bad that has happened, is happening, and will happen may steer us toward despair and violence if we let it.

We cannot control what the world does to us. We can control how we respond. Will the world dictate our actions, or will we witness to the second advent, the coming kingdom marked by love and grace?

It is to this we are called.

Blessings,

BJ

Financial Information:

The information presented below reflects First Presbyterian Church finances as of November 22, 2024.

| | |
|---------------|--------------|
| YTD Income: | \$155,480.91 |
| YTD Expenses: | \$188,794.04 |
| YTD Balance: | -\$33,313.13 |

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| 2024 Pledge Total | \$155,224.00 |
| November Total Pledged: | \$131,591.00 |
| November Total Received: | \$132,855.00 |



Children's Message



Sunday morning talks with Pastor B.J.



A decorative border surrounds the central text. It features clusters of red, yellow, and blue balloons on the left and right sides. At the top, there are white and yellow stars and a blue ribbon with a swirl. At the bottom, there are wrapped gifts in yellow, blue, and red with bows, and a blue ribbon with a swirl.

December Birthdays

| | |
|-------------|----------------------|
| December 4 | Sue Weiger |
| December 10 | Jon Fortman |
| December 13 | Mark Porter, Jr. |
| December 15 | Hope Oakes |
| December 16 | Allie Porter |
| December 17 | Taylor Richardson |
| December 18 | Claire Hackett Ellis |
| December 21 | Egan Monroe |
| December 22 | Sue Hatcher |

prayer Requests



Diane Keen
(Carol Jones Sister)
Health Concerns

Brennen Bowen
Health Concerns

Toni Oakes
(Ed Oakes Sister)
Health Concerns

Allison L. Jones
(Scott Jones Mother)
Health Concerns

Amy Sullivan
(Pam Sullivan's Daughter-In-Law)
Health Concerns

Ronnie Richardson
(Taylor Richardson's Father)
Health Concerns

The Family of James Pope
(Family Friend)
Prayer Request

Susan Smith
Recovery from knee surgery

Katy Voorhees
Recovery from surgery

Becky Owings & Family
On the loss of John Owings

Peggy Barksdale
(Tracie Hanson's Mother)
Recovery from heel fracture

Sandra Mims
Health Concerns

Bonnie Boyd
Health Concerns

Ginny Oakes
(Ed Oakes Mother)
Prayer Request

Patty Jones Family
Prayer Concerns

Lyla Fulton (2 Years old)
(Holly Longton's Great Niece)
Cancer Diagnosis

Desiree Krieger
Recovery from back surgery

Tom Young
Recovery from knee surgery

Jim Loveland
(Holly Longton's Father)
Recovery from stroke

Wayne Bruchey
Health Concerns

The Callaway Family
On the loss of Paula Callaway,
wife of former pastor Roe Callaway



JOIN A CHRISTIAN EDUCATION PROGRAM TODAY

Nursery Care

Nursery Care is available in the Education Building from 9:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. from ages birth to 5 years old.

Children's Sunday School

Grades 1 & 2 – 9:45 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Grades 3 & up – 9:45 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Children's Sermon – During Worship

Children's Church – Ages 3 – Kindergarten

After Children's Sermon until 12:00 p.m.

Adult Sunday School – Tom Richardson 9:45 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

In the Agape Sunday School Class, we usually do a close study of biblical text. The Agape Sunday School class has just begun a study of the biblical book of Genesis. In addition to addressing the foundational significance of Genesis for our Bible, we will discuss the book as literature, focusing on the elements of the art of storytelling, as well as the complexity of the authorship and sources of Genesis. Everyone is welcome!"

From time to time we also read other literary works with important theological themes or books by biblical scholars and theologians that help us understand biblical texts or challenge us to think in fresh ways about our roles as Christians in the modern world.

Adult Sunday School – Dennis Harmon 9:45 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

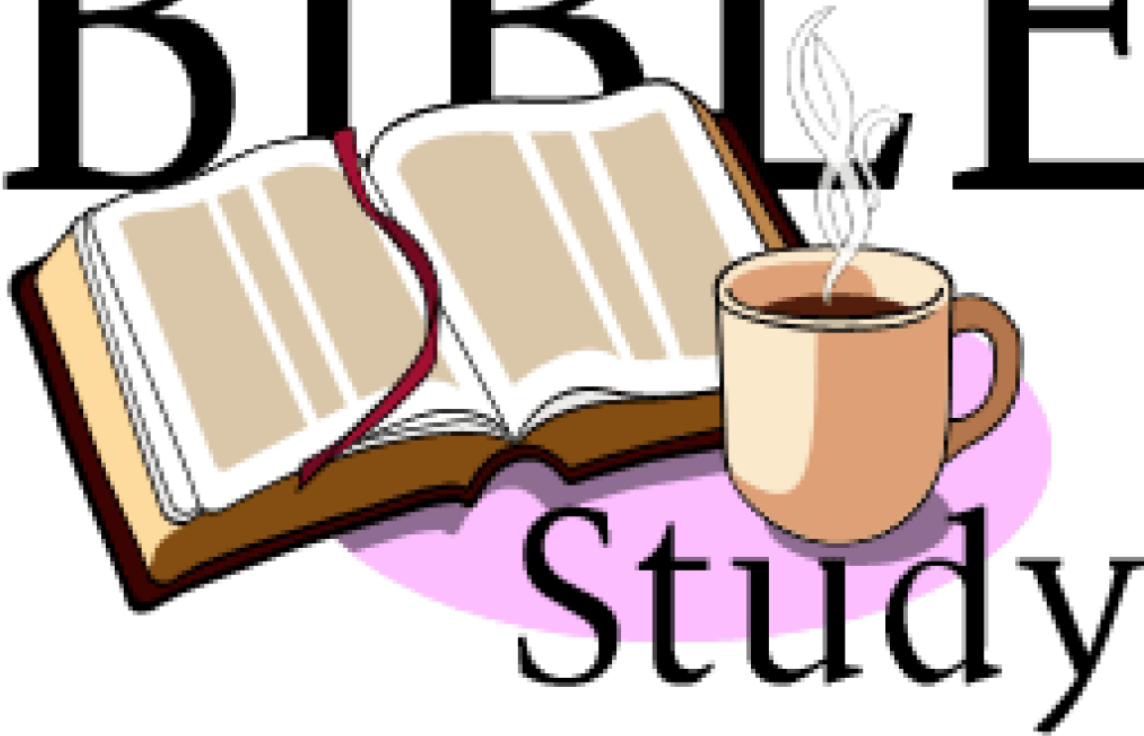
In this Sunday School Class, we are studying a series of books by Henri J.M. Nouwen. We are currently studying "The Return of the Prodigal Son-A Story of Homecoming". A look at the painting and parable in light of the three principle figures-the younger son, the elder son, and the Father.

Bible Study & Prayer Group – Reverend B. J. Chain

Wednesdays 12:30 p.m.

Following the lectionary, we explore our thoughts on the scripture that is likely to be the basis of next Sunday's sermon.

COME JOIN OUR
BIBLE



Every Wednesday at 12:30 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church
3200 Bluzcutt Road
Columbus, MS 39705



Men's Prayer Breakfast

JOIN US FOR
Faith, Food, and
Fellowship

Saturday, December 7th
8:00 a.m.

First Presbyterian Church
3200 Bluecutt Road
Columbus, MS 39705



Presbyterian Women Invite You for

COOKIES, COCOA, & CARING

December 8, 2024

SHARE THE WARMTH OF CHRISTMAS BY
BRINGING A BLANKET FOR SOMEONE IN NEED

Sunday
3:00 PM

First Presbyterian Church
Fellowship Hall
Bring A Friend

Made with PosterMyWall.com

PCDP is sponsoring a holiday market on Saturday, December 14th. We are still looking for vendors to participate so please spread the word.



PRESBYTERIAN CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM PRESENTS

HOLIDAY MARKET

DECEMBER 14TH
9:00 AM TO 2:00 PM
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
3200 BLUECUTT RD
PCDPCOLUMBUS@GMAIL.COM

GIFTS, CRAFTS, & MORE

VENDOR REGISTRATION FREE



December Fellowship Lunch

Join us Sun., December 15th
following worship.

Shepherding Group 1
will provide soup.

Please bring your
favorite sandwiches
or dessert to share.

Christmas Adopt-A-Family

WE ARE COLLECTING MONETARY
DONATIONS NOW THROUGH
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1ST.

OUR FAMILY IS A SINGLE MOTHER AND HER
THREE CHILDREN AGES TWO, SIX, AND EIGHT.
MOM HAS RECENTLY GONE THROUGH A DIVORCE
FROM HER ABUSIVE HUSBAND. SHE LIVES ALONE
WITH HER THREE CHILDREN AND WORKS FULL
TIME WHILE ALSO TAKING COLLEGE CLASSES.
THE FAMILY IS STRUGGLING WITH EXCESS DEBT
ACCRUED WHILE GOING THROUGH THE DIVORCE.
THEY ARE ALSO TRYING TO ADJUST TO BEING A
SINGLE INCOME FAMILY. MOM AND KIDS HAVE
RECENTLY SETTLED INTO A HOME AND HOPE TO
MAKE NEW MEMORIES.

WE HOPE TO GIVE A LOCAL FAMILY
A MERRY CHRISTMAS!

PLEASE DROP YOUR DONATION IN
THE OFFERING PLATE OR LEAVE IT
IN THE OFFICE.





Community Benefit
Committee Partners With
The Lowndes County
Sheriff's Office

TOY DRIVE

Drop Off At The
Lowndes County Sheriff's Office

8:00am - 5:00pm

NEW TOYS OR GIFT CARDS
CHILDREN AGES 1 - 18
For Lowndes County Foster Children

ALL TOYS ARE DUE BY DEC. 13, 2024

CONTACT LIEUTENANT RHONDA SANDERS FOR MORE INFORMATION

This year FPC is participating in the Lowndes County Sheriff's Department Toy Drive. We will be collecting new toys or gift cards for Lowndes County foster children ages 1 - 18 until December 13th. The collection box is located in the education building. Thank you for your support in giving these children a Merry Christmas.

Staff Love Gift



It is customary to distribute a *Love Gift* Offering each Christmas from members of our church to our Church Staff in appreciation of their work and service to this church. If you would like to participate in this year's "Love Gift", you may place your gift in the offering plate by Sunday, December 15th. Please be sure to designate the donation: "Staff Love Gift" unless you would like to designate a specific person, if so please add their name.

Save Your Plastic Grocery Bags



The Deacons are collecting plastic grocery bags for Helping Hands. Helping Hands uses these bags for food disbursement.

Bags can be dropped off in the fellowship hall in the box provided.

PCDP

December is a very busy month for our preschool children. We will be learning about the true meaning of Christmas while enjoying fun activities. We will have units on gingerbread, Christmas traditions, and Christmas fun.



We are planning a parent engagement event for Tuesday, December 17th at 11AM. This will be our Christmas party with hot cocoa, cookies, and activities for the children and parents. Donations of cookies are needed.



We will end our semester with a Christmas program on Thursday, December 19th at 11:00AM. The title of our program is, "This is the Stable".



PCDP will be closed for our winter break December 23rd through January 3rd. We will return to school on Monday, January 6th.



JOIN US FOR OUR PCDP
CHRISTMAS CONCERT

This is the Stable

11.00 AM

DECEMBER

19

*First
Presbyterian
Church*

3200 Bluecutt Rd

Happy FRIENDS Giving



PCDP celebrated Thanksgiving early with a Thanksgiving Feast amongst friends.

Life is
Better
WITH
Friends

Come Worship With Us Every Sunday
 Choir Practice
 9:00 a.m. Every Sunday
 Sunday School: 9:45 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.
 Social Gathering: 10:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
 Worship: 11:00 a.m.




DECEMBER



Join us for
Bible Study
 every Wednesday
 @ 12:30 pm



| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|---|---|--|---|
| 1 11:00 a.m. Communion Worship | 2 | 3 | 4 12:30 p.m. Bible Study 6:00 p.m. Deacons' Meeting Hope Oakes House | 5 | 6 | 7 8:00 a.m. Men's Prayer Breakfast |
| 8 11:00 a.m. Worship 3:00 p.m. Presbyterian Women Gathering - Cookies, Cocoa, & Caring | 9 | 10 | 11 12:30 p.m. Bible Study 5:00 p.m. Worship & Music Meeting | 12 5:00 p.m. Building & Grounds Meeting 5:30 p.m. Al-Anon | 13 | 14 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. PCDP Holiday Market |
| 15 11:00 a.m. Lessons & Carols Joy Gift Fellowship Lunch following worship (Shepherding Group 1) | 16 | 17 11:00 a.m. PCDP Christmas Party  | 18 12:30 p.m. Bible Study | 19 11:00 a.m. PCDP Christmas Program "This Is The Stable" 5:30 p.m. Al-Anon | 20 | 21 |
| 22 11:00 a.m. Worship | 23 Office & PCDP Closed | 24 Christmas Eve Office & PCDP Closed 6:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service | 25 Nativity of the Lord/ Christmas Day Office & PCDP Closed No Bible Study <i>Merry Christmas!</i> | 26 Office & PCDP Closed 5:30 p.m. Al-Anon | 27 Office & PCDP Closed | 28 Office & PCDP Closed |
| 29 11:00 a.m. Worship 2 Cents A Meal Offering | 30 Office & PCDP Closed | 31 Office & PCDP Closed | January 1 New Year's Day Office & PCDP Closed No Bible Study <i>Happy New Year!</i> | January 2 Office & PCDP Closed 5:30 p.m. Al-Anon | January 3 Office & PCDP Closed | January 4 |