



# December 2025



**410-289-9340**

## December 2025

Congregational Mtg.  
Christian Book Club  
Flowers  
Blue Holiday Service  
Joining FPCOC  
Handbell Choir  
Lectionary  
WOW  
Calendar/birthdays  
Bible Study  
Women of Worship  
Prayer Alert  
Advent  
Samaritan Shelter  
Lunch Bunch  
Member of the month  
Hymn of the month  
Fellowship

## From the Pastor

It is almost here! My favorite time of the year: Advent, because we are getting ready for the “big day.” I have been singing as I am preparing: “It’s Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas.” Soon the sanctuary and church will be decorated, the Advent candles will be lit each Sunday, and we will be hearing all of those familiar Advent texts being read.

I am happy to be here celebrating Advent and Christmas with you as I wind down my time in Ocean City. It’s been a good experience, and I am so excited about the news coming from the PNC, not just because I will be leaving but because you all will have a new installed pastor. It won’t happen before Christmas, so you will be getting a “late” Christmas gift!

I am putting up my tree in Felton, DE so that when I return there on my days off, I can play my Christmas music, drink hot chocolate, and watch the tree. (I know that sounds weird).

I have been thinking a lot about the fact that we not only celebrate the birth of Christ during Advent, but also His Second Coming. We are living in that “in between time.”

The folks in Jesus’ time and even after were expecting that Second Coming to happen in their lifetime, but it did not. Until that time we are to busy ourselves with the work and service of Christ in this world.

My wish for all of you is for a holy and meaningful Advent season and Christmas in whatever way you celebrate.

*Pastor Debbie*

*Next Issue*  
**Please** consider  
adding content to  
this newsletter.

Thank you!  
**Deadline December**  
**27, 2025**

## CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

Our Christmas Eve service will be held on Wednesday, December 24 at 6 PM. There will be traditional readings and singing of familiar Christmas carols. Come and join us for a time of rest, peace and comfort as we prepare our hearts to welcome the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!



**IMPORTANT!**

**Annual Congregational Meeting following worship on **January 4, 2026.****

**Election of Officers (Session and Deacons)**

**Approve Budget**

**Plan on attending this important meeting!**

**If you are a Chairman of a committee or group within the church family, please have your annual report ready and turned into the office in order that annual reports can be compiled.**

**Deadline December 15, 2025**

**BLUE HOLIDAY SERVICE**

For some, the holidays bring feelings of sadness and loss. Come and join the community for a Blue Holiday Service at 3 PM. on Sunday, December 14 at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 3 Church St, Berlin.

**Women of Worship (WOW)**

The next WOW meeting will be Tuesday, December 16, at 11:00am. We will have a pot luck lunch. Bring a dish to share. Please consider joining the WOW ladies!

As a mission project for Christmas, WOW will be purchasing gift cards for the staff at Samaritan Shelter to be able to gift the clients in the shelter at that time. We hope that the congregation will join us in blessing these people who are in the shelter during the Christmas holidays. All gifts will be appreciated!

**Betsy and Nancy Co-Chairs**



The Grace Parker Breakfast will be held on Wed. morning December 3, 2025 in the church fellowship hall. We serve from 7AM-11AM. Cost is \$12 dine in and \$10 carry-out.. Please come and join us in fellowship and have a hearty breakfast-you won't go home hungry! Help is always needed in the kitchen, waiting tables, setting up and cleaning up! See Chris Greenwood to volunteer.

**NOTE**

**THIS IS OUR LAST BREAKFAST UNTIL NOVEMBER 2026! DUE TO LIMITED HELP!**

**Please don't forget our 3rd Sunday collection for Samaritan Shelter!** We will be collecting household supplies on Sunday, November 16th to take to Samaritan Shelter in Pocomoke City. This has been a monthly activity of our church for quite some time. Household items such as dish soap, laundry soap, bath tissue, paper towels, zip loc bags, aluminum foil, etc. Anything that you need to maintain a household will be welcome. So please remember this when you are grocery shopping. Nancy and Rich Wright will be taking the items to Pocomoke to the Samaritan Shelter.. Thank you Nancy and Rich!



## THE MEANING OF ADVENT

The word "advent" means "coming" or "arrival." Advent is composed of the 4 Sundays prior to Christmas when we prepare our hearts and minds to receive God's gift of Jesus Christ. Just as Lent prepares us for Easter, so Advent is a time for us to reflect on what needs to be changed in our lives as we hear John the Baptist preach his message of repentance and prepare ourselves for Christmas. We cannot celebrate Christmas without first celebrating Advent. The Christmas songs playing on the radio and in stores serve only to remind us that our spiritual holiday is not based on the values of the secular world. Advent must happen before Christmas, and there are Advent hymns in all church hymnals to celebrate this time of preparation and reflection. Christians have a very distinct agenda in Advent, very different from our commercial environment. We need to acknowledge our yearning for God, undertake our repentance, and ponder who this one is for whom we wait. We need this time of preparation before we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior. The waiting has begun.

### New Members Class

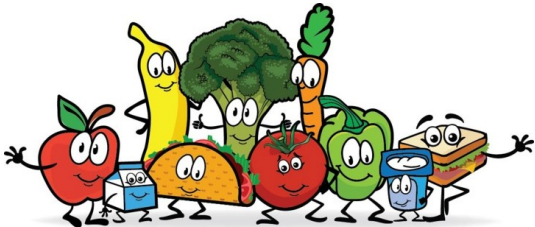
**NOT TOO LATE!**

New member classes are to be held on November 30 and December 14 from 12N-1PM. You do not have to join immediately to attend. Just come and find out about what it means to be Presbyterian and some interesting facts about this church. Then make the decision to join any time after the class ends. At both, lunch will be provided (fellowship plus)!



### Lunch Bunch

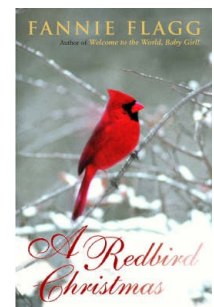
Last Lunch Bunch of the year on **Tuesday, December 2, 2025 at the Taphouse** on the corner of Rt. 50 and Keyser Point Rd. at 12Noon. (They do not open til 12)



Jan Phillips will be making the reservations. So give Jan a call at 410-600-5631 and plan on being there. Bring a friend and join the lunch bunch on December 2, 2025 at 12N. **All Welcome- men also!**

### Book Club December 16, 2025 at 12N Bring bagged lunch!

Our book club read will be *A Redbird Christmas* by Fannie Flagg on December 16, 2025 at 12N. Oswald T. Campbell, aged 52, down-and-out in a Chicago winter, is given only months to live unless he moves South...He finds himself in the small-town of Lost River, Alabama, where the residents are friendly if feud-prone and eccentric to a fault. All are welcome!





## Member of the Month

Dee Lebo

by Dawn Butler

I had the pleasure of interviewing Dee Lebo for December's member of the month.

Some of the things I found out about Dee are:

Her favorite hymn is "In The Garden"

Her favorite Bible verse is John 3:16 "For God so loved the world He gave His only Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."

Dee has attended First Presbyterian church for over 30 years, and has served in the nursery for 25 years. She has served as a deacon.

She has five sisters and three brothers

Marion & Tip Quillen took Dee under their "wings" when she started attending our church.

Dee believes the most important aspect of building relationships in the church is to have conversations with each other. She also shared with me how pretty our church sanctuary is, I agree! Thank you, Dee for allowing me to interview you!

Editor's note: Dee makes the best potato salad and is always willing to bring to a covered dish. Her husband Bob, helps with the cutting of the vegetables. Thank you both!



**In the Garden** 428  
C. AUSTIN MILES C. AUSTIN MILES

1. I come to the gar-den a - lone, While the dew is still on the  
2. He speaks, and the sound of His voice Is so sweet the birds hush their  
3. I'd stay in the gar-den with Him 'Tho' the night a - round me be

ros - es, And the voice I hear, Fall-ing on my ear, The  
sing - ing, And the mel - o - dy That He gave to me, With-  
fall - ing, But He bids me go; Thro' the voice of woe His

**Chorus**  
Son of God dis - clos - es.  
in my heart is ring - ing. And He walks with me, and He  
voice to me is call - ing.

talks with me, And He tells me I am His own; And the  
joy we share as we tar - ry there, None oth - er has ev - er known.

C. Austin Miles wrote both the lyrics and music for the popular hymn "In the Garden". His trade was as a pharmacist but after some success as a songwriter he pursued this vocation. In his own words, here is how he came to write this favorite hymn:

*One day in March, 1912, I was seated in the dark-room, where I kept my photographic equipment and organ. I drew my Bible toward me; it opened at my favorite chapter, John XX—whether by chance or inspiration let each reader decide. That meeting of Jesus and Mary had lost none of its power to charm. As I read it that day, I seemed to be part of the scene. I became a silent witness to that dramatic moment in Mary's life, when she knelt before her Lord, and cried, "Rabboni!"*

*My hands were resting on the Bible while I stared at the light blue wall. As the light faded I seemed to be standing at the entrance of a garden, looking down a gently winding path, shaded by olive branches. A woman in white, with head bowed, hand clasping her throat, as if to choke back her sobs, walked slowly into the shadows. It was Mary. As she came to the tomb, upon which she placed her hand, she bent over to look in and hurried away.*

*John, in flowing robe, appeared, looking at the tomb; then came Peter, who entered the tomb, followed slowly by John. As they departed, Mary reappeared, leaning her head upon her arm at the tomb, she wept. Turning herself, she saw Jesus standing, so did I. I knew it was He. She knelt before Him, with arms outstretched and looking into His face cried, "Rabboni!"*

*I awakened in full light, gripping the Bible, with muscles tense and nerves vibrating. Under the inspiration of this vision I wrote as quickly as the words could be formed the poem exactly as it has since appeared. That same evening I wrote the music.*

## Prayer Alert

Don't ever forget it is a wonderful privilege the Lord has given us, to lift anyone in prayer in the Name of Jesus, Who is the GREAT Physician. Praise His Holy name!

Our Lord wants to hear from us daily, so remember our prayer list as you pray daily! If you have a prayer request (no prayer is too big or too small for our Lord and King) please contact Pastor Debbie at 843-568-6480 or email [djh3675@gmail.com](mailto:djh3675@gmail.com)



*Blessings, Pastor Deb and Beth*



*Thanksgiving Fellowship  
Covered Dish  
Sunday, November 9, 2025*



**GOOD BYE, TRACY AND BEST WISHES!!**

A retirement party to celebrate the ministry of the Rev. Dr. Tracy Keenan, Missional Presbyter for New Castle Presbytery will be held on Wednesday, December 10 beginning at 12 Noon at Jonathan's Landing, Magnolia DE. Pastor Debbie will be attending. We will miss Tracy but wish her only the best in this next chapter of her life.



# December 2025

Sun

Mon


Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

	1	2	3 Grace Parker Breakfast Bill Jones BD Choir Practice 6PM	4 Advent Bible Study 10AM	5	6
7 Worship 10:30AM	8	9	10 D. Messick BD Handbell practice 5PM Choir Practice 6PM	11 Advent Bible Study 10AM	12	13
14 Worship 10:30AM Beth LaBrunda BD	15	16 WOW 11AM Book Club 12N Session 1PM Marty Cropper BD	17 Handbell practice 5PM Choir Practice 6PM	18 Advent Bible Study 10AM	19	20
21 Worship 10:30AM	22	23 Bill and Jonelle Jones Anniversary	24 Christmas Eve Service 6PM	25 	26	27
28 Worship 10:30AM	29	30	31			

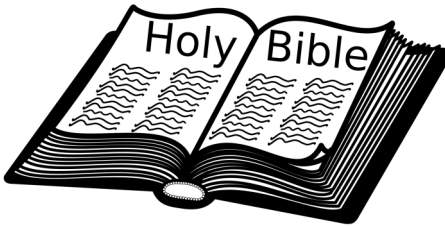


## Advent Bible Study

Our Advent Bible study began on November 20 with the book titled, "Blessings of the Manger." We will be looking at the Lectionary texts for each Sunday of Advent and Christmas Eve. The other dates for Thursday morning meetings are: December 4, 11, and 18. There is a sign-up sheet on the back table to sign up. Come and join us as we look forward to the coming of our Lord and Savior.



## ISAIAH PASSAGES FOR SERMONS OF ADVENT



Pastor Debbie will be preaching on the texts from the Old Testament book of Isaiah during the 4 Sundays of Advent. The Book of Isaiah is particularly appropriate for us to read during Advent for several reasons: Prophecies of the Messiah: Isaiah contains numerous prophecies about the coming of the Messiah, which we believe were fulfilled in Jesus Christ. We will still hear the

Gospel text read along with the Epistle for that day. The Psalm will be the Call to Worship from a site called The Timeless Psalms.

## FLOWERS FOR ADVENT

During the month of December, we decorate our sanctuary with poinsettias. The first 3 weeks of Advent are covered with dedications. But it is not too late to order and dedicate the 6" pots of poinsettias that will fill the poinsettia tree in the back of the sanctuary. These plants, which can be taken home after the Christmas Eve service, are \$10 and dedications should be given to Marty Cropper .



## Have You Ever Thought About Learning to Ring Handbells?

Did you know that it wasn't until the 20th century that handbells gained traction in churches, schools, and other organizations, largely due to the efforts of a woman named Margaret Shurcliff and the American Guild of English Handbell Ringers (AGEHR)? Ringing is lots of fun and we have a great group of ringers here at First Presbyterian.

And, the First Presby Ringers could really use 1 or 2 more ringers. We practice at 5pm on Wednesday evenings. Knowing how to read music does help, but it isn't absolutely necessary. We are a fun group of

ringers that practice for 45 minutes each Wednesday, 5-545pm. If you would like to learn to play and join our group, please talk to Barbara or Betsy Kipila at church -- or call/send an email. **Both Men and Women are welcome and needed!**



## REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY TEXTS FOR DECEMBER

For those of you who like to read the Bible passages before the Sunday service, here they are for December:

### Revised Common Lectionary Readings for Sunday, December 7, 2025, the Second Sunday of Advent (Year A)

[First Reading Isaiah 11:1-10](#)

[Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19](#)

[Second Reading Romans 15:4-13](#)

[Gospel Matthew 3:1-12](#)

### Revised Common Lectionary Readings for Sunday, December 14, 2025, the Third Sunday of Advent (Year A)

[Isaiah 35:1-10](#)

[Psalm 146:5-10](#)

[Luke 1:46b-55](#)

[James 5:7-10](#)

[Matthew 11:2-11](#)

### Revised Common Lectionary Readings for Sunday, December 21, 2025, the Fourth Sunday of Advent (Year A)

[First Reading Isaiah 7:10-16](#)

[Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19](#)

[Second Reading Romans 1:1-7](#)

[Gospel Matthew 1:18-25](#)

### Revised Common Lectionary Readings for Sunday, December 24, 2025, Christmas Eve (Year A)

First Reading Isaiah 9: 2-7

Psalm 96

Second Reading Titus 2: 11-14

Luke 2: 1-14 (15-20)

### Revised Common Lectionary Readings for Sunday, December 28, 2025, the First Sunday after Christmas (Year A)

[First Reading Isaiah 63:7-9](#)

[Psalm 148](#)

[Second Reading Hebrews 2:10-18](#)

[Gospel Matthew 2:13-23](#)

## PRESBYTERY RESTRUCTURING

One part of our Presbytery's New Restructuring includes the addition of two new staff positions: [Associate Presbyter for Congregational Ministries](#) and Associate Presbyter for Missional Ministries. Our recently updated Mission Statement states "We are sparked by the Spirit's grace to transform the body of Christ for the good of God's World."

## YOU ARE INVITED TO A RETREAT IN 2026

Any member of First Presbyterian in Ocean City can attend! It's great fun!  
March 5-7 in Dewey Beach.

*Registration opening after Thanksgiving*

What's planned for the retreat?

- Discuss the Presbytery new structure
- Learn how the new structure will move toward revitalization of our churches, our youth and more!
- Collaborate with fellow church leadership AND members to be a part of it!

Receive a \$100 reimbursement after the event for 3 or more attending from your church