

From under the Redbud Tree.....



The Redbud

The Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church

Mountain Home, Arkansas

from Pastor's Desk

December, 2017

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The Advent wreath, at first glance, is just a pleasing seasonal decoration, much like strings of lights or mistletoe. A ring of evergreens, five bright candles—what could be more appropriate for the Christmas season? Not until worshipers understand how the wreath symbolizes the meaning of the Advent season do they begin seeing in the evergreen and candles a visual reminder of the coming of Christ.

A Season of Longing

Sometime after the sixth century the church designated the four Sundays before Christmas as Advent. This season, which begins the liturgical year, was not intended to be a merry four-week celebration of Christmas. Such celebration was reserved for Christmas Day and Christmastide, the twelve days between Christmas and Epiphany (January 6). Advent was, in contrast, an echo of Israel's deep longing for the promised Messiah. As such, the season, also known as Winter Lent, called for fasting and penitence.

However, Advent was never as austere as regular Lent; joy always seemed to be rippling just beneath the surface. And on the third Sunday of the season, believers were invited to break their fast and rejoice.

This joining of penitence and joy during Advent continued in later centuries. Even though the church demanded self-examination during this

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season, it also, with an undercurrent of joyful anticipation, encouraged believers to focus on the four comings, or "advents," of Christ: the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah, the birth of Christ in Bethlehem, the presence of Christ in the hearts of believers, and the second coming.

Today Advent is still a time of joyful anticipation, of studying Bible passages that reveal the comings of Christ. For many churches it is also a time for lighting candles in an Advent wreath, a visual aid that helps the congregation better see and understand the meaning of the Advent season.

The wreath, first of all, has a circular shape. The circle, without beginning or end, reminds us of Jesus' divinity, of his sacrifice in becoming Immanuel, and of his unending love and care for us.

The evergreens, a sign of life amid the starkness of winter, point to Christ's redemptive gift of life, now and forever. With the assurance of this gift, we can eagerly pray for Christ to return and to restore all of creation.

The Advent candles call forth memories of the contrast between darkness and light—between the darkness of sin and separation from God and the rich messianic promise that God's people will see a "great light."

The four Advent candles in the wreath are lit successively, one candle the first week, two candles the second week, and so on. On Christmas the center, Christ candle is lit. This tradition of increasing the number of candles each week sharpens our anticipation as it reminds us that we are getting closer and closer to the celebration of Christ's birth. Jesus announced himself as the completion of Isaiah's promise of "a great light" when he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12, NIV). The full blaze of light in the Advent wreath on Christmas represents the fulfillment of this promise.

The color of the Advent candles varies. Some churches use white for purity, some use red for joy. However, most Advent candles are violet or purple, the traditional color of the Advent season—a color that signifies penitence and the royalty of the coming King.

In some churches one rose-colored candle is also used to suggest the Rose of Sharon. Traditionally this candle is lit on the third Sunday, a time of joy.

The center candle, the Christ candle, is always white. It is lit on Christmas, the end of Advent. While the Advent wreath and its four candles are discarded after Christmas, the Christ candle is used throughout Christmastide.

Some churches teach a special significance for each of the four Advent candles, but there is no longer a common tradition of themes. The following are typical of the scriptural themes associated with the candles: the first candle, called the Prophecy candle, recalls the Old Testament promises of the coming Messiah; the second, the Bethlehem candle, focuses on the preparations of Mary and Joseph for the actual birth of Christ; the third, the Shepherd's candle, emphasizes the joy of finding the Christ child and the witnessing of this joy to others; and the fourth, the Angel's candle, reminds us of Christ's divinity and of the blessings intended for all people by his coming.

The Advent wreath is appropriate for worship in both church and home. To encourage its use by families, some churches begin Advent with a family night. The congregation, both parents and children, gather to share a meal, sing some carols, and construct Advent wreaths. Other churches

Continued from page 2.....*from Pastor's desk,*

encourage family worship by distributing booklets of Advent meditations, which can be used at home in conjunction with the wreath.

When used for congregational worship, the Advent wreath should be large enough to be visible to everyone. Most churches either display it on a raised platform or draped table or suspend it from the ceiling. The ceremony of lighting the candles gives the pastor or the worship leader a chance to explain the significance of the wreath, the greenery, the candles. Some congregations ask a church family or a member to be in charge of the Advent wreath each week. Family members explain the significance of the candle they are about to light, read Scripture, recite a poem, and either sing an appropriate song or select one for the congregation to sing.

Merry Christmas,

Pastor Mike Clark,



Dec. 1st - Jack Coffman
Dec. 2nd - Joyce Hofer
Dec. 8th - Sue Mahoney
Dec. 11th - Sarah Ruegsegger
Dec. 12th - Patti Gamelin
Dec. 14th - Sherman Fine
Dec. 16th - Iona Weeks (102)
Dec. 17th - Loweta Rogers
Dec. 18th - Frank Root
Dec. 20th - David Buff
Dec. 22nd - Sarah Kelly

***IF YOU DON'T SEE YOUR BIRTHDAY
OR ANNIVERSARY, PLEASE CONTACT
THE OFFICE SO WE CAN GET YOU
STORED IN OUR RECORDS!! THE
SAME GOES FOR ANY MISTAKES YOU
MAY SEE!!***

***(We can't fix it...if we don't know
it's broke!) We appreciate your
help!***

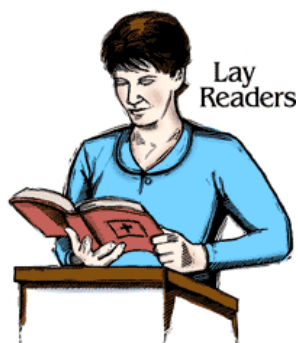
***COMMUNION SET-UP
TEAM FOR DECEMBER 3rd***

Bob & Sue Kearns

SET UP FOR DEC. 24TH
Lillian Euers & Loweta Rogers



Dec. 7th - David & Vicky Buff
Dec. 28th - Phil & Ellen Jordan
Dec. 30th - Robert & JoAnn James



For the month of December

Dec. 3rd - Wayne Faust
Dec. 10th - Suzanne Smyth
Dec. 17th - Sissy Wells
Dec. 24th - Nan Jordan
Dec. 31st - Nancy Priest



3rd - Phil & Ellen Jordan
10th - Phil & Ellen Jordan
17th - Susan & Bob Kearns
24th - Susan & Bob Kearns
31st - Robert & Yvonne Kilpatrick



COMMUNION SERVERS

DECEMBER

**Marti Frazier, Gale Newman,
Janet Newman &
Carolyn Hannon**

A secretary decided to apply for work in a church office. She filled out a job application and later was being interviewed by the pastor. The pastor noted that she didn't fill in the year of her birth. "I see that your birthday is July 10th," said the pastor, "May I ask what year?" "Every year!" replied the prospective secretary.

Jim: "My wife is going to have plastic surgery."

Friend: "Oh, what kind?"

Jim: "We're going to cut off her credit cards."

"Folks," the old Baptist minister said, "the subject I wish to discuss tonight is 'Liars.' How many of you in this church have read the 69th chapter of Matthew?"

Nearly every hand in the audience was raised. "I thought so," said the Reverend. "You are the folks I want to direct my sermon to. There is no 69th chapter of Matthew."



Meeting the 'Man in Red'

Last year, when our 3 year old great-granddaughter Kylie was taken to see Santa Claus, she made sure to give him her wish list of toys. A week later, she ran into a different Santa in a mall. He stopped to ask what she wanted for Christmas. Kylie was appalled and let him know: "If you can't remember what I told you last week, how are you going to remember on Christmas Eve?!" Ellen Seedall, Idaho Falls, Idaho

I was five when my brother took me to the firehouse to see Santa Claus, who, unbeknownst to me then, was actually my father. Later, when I got home, I excitedly told my mother that Santa had boots just like Dad's! She smiled. Then, I added, "And he had lots of women come sit on his lap too." THERE WENT THE SMILE.

Dianna Reed, Millersburg, PA

My two granddaughters had a visit from Santa (my son-in-law's coworker). Santa asked the two year old, "So what do you want for Christmas?" Before the shy little girl could give an answer, her four year old sister gave it for her: "She wants me to have a Barbie doll."

Brenda Morris, Salisbury, NC



Lighting of the Advent Candles



December 3, 2017
Ralph & Karen Gillespie

December 10, 2017
Carolyn Hannon & Velma Shaw

December 17, 2017
Gale & Janet Newman

December 24, 2017
Fred & Mari Ruegsegger

Trivia Question: In the New Testament, who had the occupation as a Tentmaker?

Scripture Readings for the month of December

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

The Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Mountain Home, Arkansas, met for a Stated Session meeting on Tuesday, October 17, 2017 at 1:00 p.m.

- ⇒ Bids for the 2018 budget are being submitted for approval by budget and finance.
- ⇒ Nominating committee will be presented at the congregational meeting on October 22, 2017 to begin their search of nominations to fill four slots on the session, moderator of deacons and moderator of worship.
- ⇒ There is a member of the church interested in serving at the moderator the deacons committee.

The next meeting will be November 21, 2017.

These are only the highlights; you can find a full report in the mailroom. Thank You!

Mari Ruegsegger,
Clerk of Session

Sunday, December 3rd

First Sunday of Advent

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

Sunday, December 10th

Second Sunday of Advent

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

Sunday, December 17th

Third Sunday of Advent

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

Sunday, December 24th

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Samuel 7:1-11, 16
Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26
Romans 16:25-27
Luke 1:26-38

Sunday, December 31st

1st Sunday after Christmas Day

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



Please notify the church office if you have had a change in your mailing address, email address, phone number, etc!!

We will be starting the 2018 church directory soon and need all changes you may have.

Thanks for your co-operation!

Your Office Staff



Poinsettias for Advent

If you would like to order a Poinsettia in Honor of and/or in Memory of someone special, please fill in the following information and return this slip to the church office. Please make your check payable to First Presbyterian Church and your memo "Flower Fund" poinsettia.

Thank you, Worship Committee

(You are welcome to donate any amount for your poinsettia which will go into the Flower Fund-Sanctuary).

DEADLINE IS DECEMBER 5TH

I would like ____ Poinsettia (s).

Given by: _____

In Memory of: _____

In Honor of: _____



Hanging of the Greens

Would you like to help with assembling of the Advent decorations for the Sanctuary and the Fellowship Hall?

We will be gathering on Friday morning, December 1st at 9:30 a.m. We need your help.....come and stay as long as you can! We need a few men able to climb ladders.

No talent required!! If you have a glue gun and an extension cord, please bring them. If you have any questions, please call Sissy Wells at 499-3413.






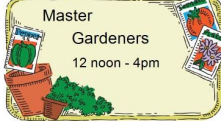






Come join the fun!!



A Big Thank You.....to everyone who gave of their time and effort to fill a shoe box. Sarah Kelly reports we ended up with a Whopping (biggest ever) total of 117 boxes. That's a big achievement for our little church. MANY THANKS to everyone and to Sarah Kelly for the endless hours she puts into this wonderful project....every year!

REDBUD CALENDAR DECEMBER, 2017

Dec. 7th
Remember
Pearl
Harbor

Sunday	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	1 Fri	2 Sat
3 9am - Adult Sunday School 10am - Worship, Communion 11am - Coffee hosted by Women's Circle #1 - Blood Pressure Screening/Deacons offering 	4 9 am - Counters 	5 	6 10 am - Lectionary Bible Study 1pm - Choir Practice 2 pm - Mission Committee Meeting 	7  CHURCH CHRISTMAS PARTY 5:30 pm 	8 Hanging of the Greens—9:30 am 	9
10 9am - Adult Sunday School 10am - Worship 11am - Coffee hosted by Finance Committee Copper Kettle offering 	11 9 am - Counters Women's Circles  11:00 a.m. at Bradley's on Highway 5 So. For Christmas Luncheon 	12 	13 10 am - Lectionary Bible Study 1pm - Choir Practice 1 pm - Finance Committee 	14 12 noon - Master Gardeners  Master Gardeners 12 noon - 4pm 	15 C L O S E D 	16
17 9am - Adult Sunday School 10am - Worship Service 11am - Coffee hosted by Ministry Committee 	18 9 am - Counters 	19 12noon - Ministry Mtg. 1pm - Session 	20 10 am - Lectionary Bible Study 1pm - Choir Practice REDBUD DEADLINE 	21  First Day of Winter 	22 C L O S E D 	23
24  Candlelight Service 5:30 p.m. 	25  Christmas DAY 	26 1 pm - Worship Committee 	27 10 am - Lectionary Bible Study 1pm - Choir Practice 	28 9am -Taking down the greens !! 	29 C L O S E D 	30
31 9am - Adult Sunday School 10am - Worship Service 11am - Coffee hosted by Special Volunteers 	OFFICE CLOSED  Welcome 2018! 				C L O S E D	

Publication Deadlines

Weekly bulletin - Wednesday afternoon by 2:00 pm
 Newsletter - Redbud deadline - Wed. Dec. 20th
 Please submit all articles in writing.
 You may drop them off at the office or email to Connie McLaurin: fpcmh@centurytel.net
 Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Please verify committee meetings with the Moderator as days/times are subject to change!

*I've learned so much from my mistakes.....
 I'm thinking of making a few more!*



Thank You

Thank you for inquiring about my son, Daniel. He says that he is back at work now and extremely busy. Says he is well but still cannot raise his arm above the elbow. New Prosthesis is in right shoulder so he is working to get better usage of this arm. He drives about forty miles to and from the military site where he works. Los Angeles traffic is an ordeal for his commute. Continued prayers for him would be most appreciated. Thank you, Dear Hearts, for your loving concern and blessings.

Margie LaFevers

THE PERFECT GIFT

Do you stress about finding just the right gift for everyone on your Christmas list? Does it make the season more a hassle than a joy? Pastor Mike Slaughter reminds us that Christmas isn't about perfect presents for people, as if it were their birthday — or ours. Christmas is about the perfect *presence* of Immanuel, God with us, through the birth of Jesus; it's his birthday, after all!

In *Christmas Is Not Your Birthday* (Abingdon), Slaughter writes, "How funny that it can be so hard to find gifts that will please certain family members or friends — the people who seem to have everything — and yet it is so clear what the Lord of lords and King of kings wants for his birthday.

God wants you — your time, your talent and your treasure — used in service to others."

Merry Christmas

Women of the Church



**CORRECTION TO LAST MONTHS REDBUD.
\$500 WAS GIVEN TO THE FOLLOWING:**

Kindness, Inc.
Ozark Center of Hope
Caring Center Ministries
Rock Steady Boxing

Trivia answer: Acts 18:1-3

Women of the Church



WOC NEWS

The Women of the Church met for their November meeting on Tuesday the second with nine members present. Mary Smith served as hostess and Nancy Priest led a very interesting study of light and darkness from the book of Hebrews. A special thanks to Lillian Euers for her work on organizing our coupon project. Our December meeting will be our annual Christmas luncheon.

We will gather at Bradley's on highway 5 south at 11:00 on Monday, December 11. Please contact Dee Crapnell as soon as possible to make your reservations. All women are encouraged to come for this time of fellowship.

Church Office Hours
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Monday - Thursday

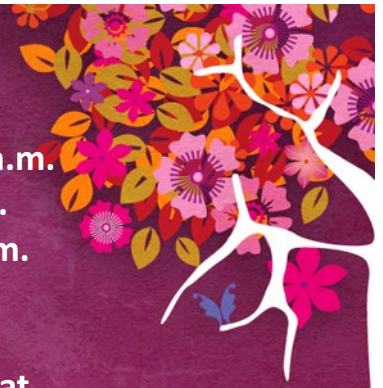
Church Mailing Address:
1106 Spring Street
Mountain Home, AR 72653
870-425-3799

fpcmh@centurytel.net
Website: www.fpcmh.net

Rev. Mike Clark,
Transitional Pastor

Adult Sunday School: 9:00 a.m.
Sunday Worship: 10:00 a.m.
Fellowship Coffee: 11:00 a.m.

Secretary: Connie McLaurin
Support Staff: Marilyn Wheat
Barb Sandberg
Bookkeeper: Nancy Priest



First Presbyterian Church
1106 Spring Street
Mountain Home, AR 72653

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

