

# The Bell Tower

## First Presbyterian Church Happenings

December MMXXIV



**JINGLE  
JAM**

A date to remember is December 15th. The night is called Jingle Jam. This event will happen during Kid's 3F and 612, a night of Christmas fun. Children, K through 5th grade at 4-5:30 and 612 from 6-7:30 are invited to come dressed in an ugly Christmas sweater as we get in the holiday season with fun games, food, and faith lessons.

### Presbyterian Women Christmas Dinner

Tuesday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> Erin Warren, a covenant partner at First Presbyterian Church and an elementary school music teacher, will help the Presbyterian women enjoy Christmas carols at our annual Christmas Dinner in Calvin Hall at 6:00 pm. Dinner will be provided by the Daytime and Evening Circles. Each person is asked to bring their table service. After a delicious dinner we will have devotions and a business meeting. We hope you will come and enjoy gathering together during the Christmas Season.

**THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION** is scheduled for January 26 preceded by a soup 'n sundae lunch.

### Christmas Joy Offering

The Mission Committee has decided to designate The Christmas Joy Offering to be sent to our local nursing homes to help provide care for the residents who have financial needs. Many of these persons have dedicated their lives to serve the Lord and have emphasized service over financial reward. Half of the offering will be given to St Paul's Senior Living and half to Shenango on the Green New Wilmington. Your donations can be given in the specially marked envelopes or in the general pew envelope with Joy Offering written on the outside. The offering can be given any time during Advent and until January 12.



Tammy Hornick & Gail Gongaware have accepted the challenge of overseeing the Calvin Hall Kitchen. We are very excited about this new opportunity. Please stay tuned monthly as we share updates and important information related to the operation of the kitchen. Below is our contact information. Please feel free to contact us with any questions you might have.

Tammy Hornick - 443-532-7897 [tammy.hornick12@gmail.com](mailto:tammy.hornick12@gmail.com)

Gail Gongaware - 917-623-4207 [gmg228@nyu.edu](mailto:gmg228@nyu.edu)

*Tammy & Gail  
Your "Kitchen Sisters"*



# January

## December

Michelle Harris	12/2
Tom Mentch	12/3
Treasa Gruber	12/5
Drew Dershimer	12/6
Aldra Ritter	12/10
Kaye Williams	12/10
Shelia Buchanan	12/14
Robert Ohr	12/18
Jane Loutzenhiser	12/19
Randy Curtis	12/20
Phil Godfrey	12/20
Matt Manning	12/21
Gail Fay	12/29
Kendall Ohr	12/30
Brook Truby	12/31

### Youth

Brayden Straw	12/4
Dominic Deist	12/16
Henry Minner	12/21



Nancy Hauser	1/1
Nancy Russell	1/1
Jane Miller	1/3
Kathy Scobbie	1/5
Cris Loutzenhiser	1/9
Bonnie Dobi	1/11
Kim Ohr	1/11
Bob Hart	1/15
Judy Hodge	1/16
Gary Hull	1/16
Donovan Curtis	1/18
Barbara Deist	1/18
Dave Geisel	1/18
Steve Nystrom	1/18
Tom Brainard	1/19
Dale Deist	1/19
Bob Petty	1/23
Dean Poolos	1/23
Alice Craine	1/24
Randy Blum	1/27
Jaci Hittle	1/27
Molly Davis	1/28
Janice Harbison	1/28
Leanna Mayberry	1/29
Lynn Lewinsky	1/29
Stacey Walberg	1/31

### Youth

Falon Scobbie	1/11
Cole Geibel	1/18
Lizzie Claypool	1/19
Rae Hammons	1/19
Mary Reed	1/21
Jane Schamberg	1/23
A.J. Hart	1/26

Thank you to the covenant partners and friends of FPC for your attendance and monetary donations at the Deacon Brunch on Sunday, November 10th. The brunch was in honor and with gratitude for Military Veterans. The donations collected will be used for hurricane relief in the U.S.



Thank you to First Presbyterian Church for your thoughtfulness and generosity in supporting those of the Canton, NC, community deeply impacted by hurricane Helene. Your bountiful donations helped spread the love of God to so many and their families more than 580 miles away. God is Great! Thank you FPC!! Katie (Miller) Biter



## DECEMBER NURSERY SCHEDULE

12/1	Paul & Savannah Johnson
12/8	Becky Bray & Barbara Deist
12/15	Jackie Grisetti & Sue Wilson
12/22	Jamie & Megan Ickes
12/29	Diane Dawson & Kim Brainard

## JANUARY NURSERY SCHEDULE

1/5	Sue Blum & Mary K. Miller
1/12	Ericka Dershimer & Savannah Johnson
1/19	Nancy Hoffacker & Carol Houck
1/26	Molly Davis family

**Men's Breakfast** upcoming dates December 14 and January 11. Come for food, fellowship, and faith. There is no cost; donations are

### Greeters Schedule

12/1/24	Becky Bray
12/8/24	Josh & Michelle Lentz
12/15/24	Karen Patterson
12/22/24	Terry & Carol Cooper
12/24/24	Deacons
12/29/24	Terri Clark



## Pen from Ben

As we come to the end of one year and the beginning of a new one, it is good to reflect on how God has worked in our lives—both together and individually. God has moved me to take discipleship more seriously and to adopt a more Biblical approach to disciple-making. According to Ben Sobels and Bill Hull in their book *The Discipleship Gospel Workbook*, a disciple is someone who is learning to live with Jesus and to love others like Jesus. Living and loving with and like Jesus means making disciples who also live and love in the same way.

Bill and Ben also define disciple-making as "Jesus' intentional process of servant-leadership training that multiplies disciples a few at a time to build up the church and advance God's kingdom throughout the world." This process involves training people to go and do, which was Jesus' model. Jesus called 12 men to follow Him with the intention that they would go and do the same. He invested in them, teaching them through shared life experiences. Among the 12, He focused more intensely on three—Peter, James, and John—who formed His inner circle and witnessed things the others did not. This is the model I have been using with the discipleship groups that have been meeting since June.

We began by redefining the Gospel, as many people do not fully understand what it is. The Gospel consists of four statements followed by three actions. The four statements are: **The Kingdom of God is at hand, Jesus came as the King (the Christ), He died and rose on the third day according to Scripture, and the response to the Gospel is to repent, believe, and follow Jesus.** Following Jesus means doing all He commanded, which includes making disciples of all nations. Those disciples, in turn, are to make disciples. According to ECO, this cycle is a mark of a flourishing church.

With all that in mind, how did you do with my challenge at the beginning of the year to invest in one person and invite them into the covenant we share here at First Presbyterian Church? In my February sermon, I challenged everyone to invest in one person and invite them to church. The goal was to have 200 people gathering on a Sunday morning for our 200th anniversary. Growing the church happens through the Holy Spirit working in and through all of you who invest in people and love as Jesus loved. It is not solely the responsibility of Rev. Dobi or myself—it requires all of us working together.

As we enter the new year and celebrate our 200th anniversary, can we commit to taking discipleship more seriously? Can we truly invest in our church and our community for the sake of Christ? The anniversary motto is "Generations of Faith." Is that truly visible on Sunday mornings? Are all generations equally represented? For "all generations" to be accounted for, we must intentionally invest in others beyond our own.

In the new year, we must work together to achieve many goals and to celebrate God's work in this town over the past 200 years. While it is wonderful that many of you serve individually, there is also a need for greater community collaboration. As we move forward, let's take an inventory of what we have been doing and discern what needs improvement, removal, or addition.

Bill and Ben, in their book *The Discipleship Gospel*, write:

*"Sunday services, small groups, children's ministry, youth ministry, young adults' ministry, men's ministry, women's ministry, senior ministry, serving opportunities, and community outreach—all these ministries advance a church's disciple-making efforts. The trick is learning how they all fit together and defining their specific discipleship purpose. Stating the discipleship purpose of a specific ministry isn't easy, but it's worth it. Lastly, we urge you to define the discipleship purpose of each ministry in your church so that all your members can grow to understand how everything your church does seeks to fulfill Christ's Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20)."*

May the new year be filled with new opportunities for discipleship.

Meet our new covenant partner, Karen Shilling. Karen grew up in the Greenville Area and attended Greenville High School, Class of '64. Currently she is a retired church secretary serving FPC from 1970-1992. After leaving FPC Karen went on to work at a dental/business office until 2008.

Karen has been married for 60 years to her husband David. Together they raised two sons, David Jr. and Keith. The two sons have given them two daughters-in-law and 3 grandchildren. You may have seen Karen around church for the last few years even before coming a Covenant Partner. She is active in the Daytime Circle, where she is co-chair, part of the Bicentennial Committee, and involved in funeral dinner preparations. When she is not in church, you may find her working in her flower garden, attending a study class at Jamestown, reading or cross stitching. She also listens to all kinds of music from classical to country. Karen felt God calling her back to her home church to reactivate former relationships at First Presbyterian Church. She also cites her mother and grandmother Redfoot as influential in her life. Karen says, "They were strong, independent women with a solid personal relationship with Jesus Christ." Make sure to welcome Karen the next time you see her, and maybe you will have something in common with her besides being covenant partners at First Presbyterian Church.

Karen was asked for her favorite Bible verse, quote, and when she felt closest to God:

Bible Verse: As I read and study my favorite keeps changing. God has so many glorious words that inspire and challenge me.

Closest to God: Every day presents an opportunity for closeness to God—in daily Bible reading, interacting with others, every day life experiences, and especially when dealing with adversity.



Meet our new covenant partner, William "Bill" Kitch. Bill grew up in the Sharpsville Area and attended Sharpsville High School, Class of '74. Currently he is retired.

Bill is single and enjoys biking, reading, puzzles and kayaking. His favorite song is Sanctuary. He enjoys watching The Gift. Bill is also returning back to First Presbyterian Church after some time away and he credits a chaplain as his most influential person in his life. Make sure to welcome Bill the next time you see him, and maybe you will have something in common with him besides being covenant partners at First Presbyterian Church.

Bill was asked for his favorite Bible verse, quote, and when he felt closest to God:

Bible Verse: Micah 6:8

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.  
And what does the Lord require of you?  
To act justly and to love mercy  
and to walk humbly with your God.

Closest to God: When I pray





## GRACE MISSION REPORT

Many or maybe most of you have heard about the terrible condition in Haiti with the gangs controlling the country and no significant government functioning. We continue to support Grace Mission and Pastor Beril. We got a recent report from the local Grace Mission Fund organization to update us on the conditions in Haiti. It describes the continuing suffering they are enduring as well as their dedication to the Lord and their determination to preach the Gospel. All of the churches connected with the mission are open and functioning save one. For more information and details you can sign up for the email newsletter from the fund organization at [www.GraceMissionFund.org/signup](http://www.GraceMissionFund.org/signup)

The Women's Daytime Circle will meet on January 7, 2025 in the church conference room. Nancy Stevenson will lead the Bible Study on *The Shumammite Woman* (lesson #29), page 127. Michelle Harris will do the devotions. All women are invited to attend.

On Saturday morning, October 19, 2024, AED/CPR training was provided by John Libonati and the Buhl Foundation. As a result of the training, 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian Church has received a second AED machine which will be placed on the lower level of the church. Another AED machine is located at the top of the steps near the entrance to the sanctuary. Doug Groover, moderator for the Deacons, arranged this important training. Those receiving a certificate of completion include: Connie Chalfant, Lisa Courtney, David Dobi, Jennifer Forbes, Doug Groover, Tom Harpst, Kelly Jones, Irv Milheim, Jim Miller, Janie Miller, Ruth Reither, and Linda Shearer.

### Christmas Giving Trees

The Christmas Giving Trees are available in the Church Narthex and Rear Vestibule. This is an opportunity to purchase a Christmas gift for others who may have limited resources. Tags on the trees describe specific gifts for children, youth, and nursing home residents. **The gifts are to be returned in Christmas gift bags, with the tags securely attached on the outside, to the church no later than Sunday, December 8.** If you are unable to shop and want to be a part of this joy of giving, you may provide a monetary donation and a gift will be purchased for you. Donations may be left at the Church office or given to Dan Baker, Cherri Artman, Kelly Hittle, Carol Riley or Beth McCracken.

### All Congregational Christmas "Pay It Forward" Breakfast Sunday, December 22, 9:30 AM to 10:30 AM

Each Sunday School class, Children's 3F and Youth 612 will receive \$50 to "Pay It Forward," by donating this \$50 to an organization or project of their choice during the Christmas Season. On Sunday morning December 22, beginning at 9:30 AM, we will have the opportunity to enjoy a delicious breakfast, sing Christmas Carols, fellowship and hear how the "Pay It Forward" gifts were given. Covenant Partners, family and friends are welcomed and encouraged to attend. **Please come and enjoy this celebration!**

If interested, but not necessary, there will be an opportunity on Sundays December 8 and 15 to sign up to provide/prepare specific food items for this gathering. Lists of items will be located on tables at the rear entrance to the Sanctuary.