

December 12, 2022



First Word

“To live by faith, to be known by love, and to be a voice of hope.”

From the Desk...

Dear First Presbyterian Church Family,

I have the honor once again to share my thoughts with you for this edition of First Word. As I was pondering what to write about, I had several thoughts. Should I go with something easy for me, or something a little harder to share? I chose the latter.

Here it goes, I have to admit something I wish I could change with all my heart. I have a very hard time relinquishing control over things in my life to God. There, I said it. Whether its family, financial, job, church related, I try to control it all. Why are there spats among my family members? Can I pay all of my bills this month? Why am I having trouble growing the Youth Group? Why aren't more people attending church services? I think I have an answer for it all. I can fix it all. Guess what, I can't.

Why do we have such a hard time of letting go and giving it to God? After all, He is the Creator of Heaven and Earth. Our Father, our Emanuel, our Savior, our Redeemer. Isn't he much more equipped to handle everything than we are? Than I am? I tell myself all the time I am going to stop this awful habit. I pray to the Lord to take this need to control everything away from me, but it's hard.

Does this mean I lack the trust I'm supposed to have in Him? Does this mean I'm just too stubborn to give it all up? I think it's a combination of these things, and I want to change it. Right now, during Advent, I want to give it all to Him and ease my anxiety of what my future holds, in every aspect of my life. I want to focus on Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace and know God's got this. All of this. I want to celebrate that Christmas is all about the birth of Jesus Christ and the true meaning of what that means for me, for us.

Friends, may we all find Hope, Love, Joy and Peace this Advent Season and forever.

*God Bless,
Michele*

Pray:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love.

Where there is discord, union.

Where there is doubt, faith.

Where there is despair, hope.

Where there is darkness, light.

Where there is sadness, joy.

Where there is injury, pardon.

O Divine Master,

grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;

to be understood, as to understand;

to be loved, as to love;

For it is in giving that we receive,

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

— Prayer for Peace of St. Francis of Assisi



12/15: Ainsley Kimble
 12/16: Peggy Hendley
 12/16: Mary Lynn Ingram
 12/18: Brad Marin
 12/18: Ashe Maurer



Giving Envelopes for 2023 are available on the table in the Colonnade. If you would like to request a box, please contact the church office.



If your calling is to be a child or adult Sunday School teacher, we need you! Please contact Sally Chapin at 919-353-8437 or schap-infnp@gmail.com. We are also in need of a nursery staff person every other Sunday. Please let Sally know if you have an interest.

There will be no nursery provided on Sunday, December 25th.

The new Handbell group will begin on Monday Jan 9th at 7:15pm in the Handbell room behind the sanctuary. The first few weeks will be a basic learning of Handbell technique and will play some simpler songs. Please come if you are interested. It will take practice, willingness to learn, teamwork and a sense of humor. For questions or concerns contact Wanda Wazenegger, (H) 919-774-3775 or (C) 919-777-3855, or email at waziesouth@windstream.net. We will enjoy learning together.



If you would like to volunteer to feed our FPC Youth during 2023, there is a sign-up sheet on the table in the Colonnade. As always, your support is greatly appreciated!

This week's walking track volunteers:

12/12-Julie Lemon, 12/13-Charlie Hicks, 12/14-Don Wazenegger, 12/15-Gary Walker, 12/16-Joyce Kelly

OUR PRAYER LIST

Parkview: Paul Kelly, Rexine Lloyd, Maxine Auman

Cape Fear Valley Medical Center: Betty Lou Bristow

Home or with family: Jean Perry; Cathy Johnson; Don Suddarth; Bruce Benton; Ann Barkley

Our Friends & Family: Tiffany Scott Heron (Donna McClune's niece); Michael McClune (Donna McClune's son); James Cox; Billy Boaz; Jamey Allen (Harold James' sister); Phyllis Moore; Carolyn Herring (Bunny Paderick's niece); Greg Horrell (Bunny Paderick's brother-in-law); Richard Angel (Pat Angel's husband); Marci Hudzik; Dennis Parnell (friend of David Vann); Emily Heeseman (Samantha Morgan's friend and college roommate); Heather Wicker; Carla Bailey; Joanna Dempsey; Michelle Hendley Leonhardt (Daughter of Mike and Peggy Hendley); Flora Harrington

This Weeks Calendar

Monday 12/12: Circle Meetings

9AM-12PM: Walking Track

5:30 PM: Contemporary Choir Rehearsal

6:30 PM: Traditional Choir Rehearsal

Tuesday 12/13:

9AM-12PM: Walking Track

10AM: Bible Study

1PM: CDC Committee Meeting

6PM: Yoga in the Harper Center

Wednesday 12/14:

9AM-12PM: Walking Track

10AM: CDC Devotion

7PM: Prayer Group

Thursday 12/15:

9AM-12PM: Walking Track

Friday 12/16:

9AM-12PM: Walking Track

11AM: Blanket Ministry

4-7PM: Salvation Army Bell Ringing at Tramway Food Lion

Sunday 12/18: 4th Sunday of Advent

Pick up Bake Sale items after each service in the Harper Center

9AM: Contemporary Service

11AM: Traditional Service

12PM: CE Committee Meeting

No Youth Group Meeting

Offering Counters Schedule - December 2022

Week 1 (12/4) John Garris and Daryl Perry, Week 2 (12/11) Samantha Jeffries and Don Wazenegger, Week 3 (12/18) Rhonda and David Miller, Week 4 (12/25) Joan Bland and Julie Lemon

The Lay Readers for December are Ronnie and Julie Lemon for the 9am service and David Vann for the 11:00 am service.

FPC Youth News

18th – Bake Sale Items available after both services in the Harper Center/No Youth

25th – No Youth (Christmas)

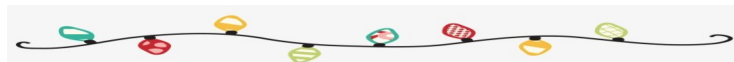
**If anyone needs a ride to any of our Youth Meetings, please let Michele know, 919-935-2089.*

FPC Youth Christmas Party



With sponsorship through the Presbytery of Coastal Carolina, and Jerrod Lowry as signer, I applied for a Youth Grant offered by PCUSA. **WE GOT IT!!!** We have received \$1,000 for our youth to go towards our 2023 Summer Youth trip to help anyone who is unable to pay their expenses. I will announce further details of our next trip and where we will be going very soon. God is so good!

God Bless, Michele



You are invited, once again, to participate in the collection for **Staff Christmas Bonuses**. Simply make your check payable to First Presbyterian Church and write *Christmas Staff Bonus* on the memo line. Your generosity is always very much appreciated!
-First Presbyterian Church Session



On **Sunday, December 25th, and Sunday, January 1st**, there will be one service in the Sanctuary at 11am. The Worship Committee will not meet in December, but will resume meetings on January 22nd at 1:30pm.



*Sunday, December 11th Christmas Music Program for both
Worship Services*

*Friday, December 16th-4-7pm Salvation Army Bell
Ringing at Tramway Food Lion*

*Sunday, December 18th-Bake Sale Pick-Up after both
services*

*Wednesday, December 21st-12-2pm Staff Christmas Lunch
(Church Office will be closed)*

*Saturday, December 24th-5pm Christmas Eve Service/Lessons
and Carols in the Sanctuary/Luminaries*

*Sunday, December 25th-11am Christmas Service in the
Sanctuary*



Third Week of Advent

JOY

“Joy to the world! The Lord is come.” My favorite Christmas carol. Why? It sparks joy in me. The words and the music combine to just sound joyful. The first line speaks of the event we prepare for and celebrate on Christmas Day. And the last verse begins with “He rules the world with truth and grace,” and speaks of a future time which we hope for and celebrate during Advent.

Paul tells his audience, including us, in Philippians 4:4 to “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.” Indeed Paul did rejoice even when he was unjustly imprisoned, which he could not have happy about. Rejoicing when he wasn’t happy? Joy and happiness are not the same; happiness is dependent on one’s current situation; Joy is a gift from God and can be known regardless of what is happening in one’s life.

I am drawn to Scripture verses that speak of Joy. In Psalm 30 we read these words: “Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning.” (v. 5b) Verse 11 says, talking to God, “You have turned my mourning into dancing; you have taken off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy.”!!! The writer here was thanking God for recovery from disease.

Isaiah talks about the Hope of being released from captivity and returning to Jerusalem. That Hope includes Joy. Isaiah 51:11 says “So the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” In chapter 52, v.8 we read “Your sentinels lift up their voices, together they sing for joy.” Again, “For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; The mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.” (Isaiah 55:12)

We can claim that Hope for Joy for ourselves, imperfectly now since we are human, but the Joy will be perfected in the Kingdom of God. Remember, your smile of genuine Joy can light a candle in someone’s darkness.

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.” (Paul, in Romans 15:13)

Joyce Kelly

FPC Christmas Social

