

# Shepherd's Staff

December 2017

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## ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

<b>December 3</b>	<b>11:00 am</b>	<b>First Sunday of Advent</b> Isaiah 64:1-9; Mark 13:24-37 Sacrament of the Lord's Supper Ten Cents a Meal offering received
	<b>12:00 pm</b>	<b>Pot Luck Soup Lunch</b> followed by SPLASH for ages 3 – 5 <sup>th</sup> grade Decorating the Church- youth and adults
<b>December 10</b>	<b>11:00 am</b>	<b>Second Sunday of Advent</b> Isaiah 40:1-11; 2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8
	<b>5:00 pm</b>	<b>Longest Night Worship</b>
<b>December 17</b>	<b>11:00 am</b>	<b>Third Sunday of Advent</b> Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Luke 1:46b-55 Special Music by the Choir
	<b>6:00 pm</b>	<b>White Christmas Pot Luck and Program</b> Receive White Gift offering for local family
<b>December 21</b>	<b>6:00 pm</b>	<b>Caroling with area churches</b> Meet at Church of the Nazarene
<b>December 24</b>	<b><u>10:00am</u></b>	<b>Fourth Sunday of Advent</b> <b>Children's Christmas Pageant</b> No Sunday School
	<b>7:00 pm</b>	<b>Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Worship</b> Receive the PC(USA) Christmas Joy Offering
<b>December 30</b>		<b>Community Table</b>
<b>December 31</b>	<b>11:00 am</b>	<b>Service of Lessons and Carols</b> College Students will lead worship No Sunday School
		<b>Faith on the Fifth</b> offering will be received.
<b>January 7</b>	<b>11:00 am</b>	<b>Epiphany/Baptism of the Lord</b> Sacrament of the Lord's Supper Ten Cents a Meal offering received Dedicate "Brown Bag Advent" offerings
	<b>7:00 pm</b>	<b>Coffee House with Steve Gretz and Leslie Lee</b>

**Wednesday December 6, 13, & 20 at 5:30 pm in the Glendale Thompson Classroom:**  
Feasting on the Word Bible Study.



Dear Friends,

At a time when the world around us speeds up, with gift-giving, parties, and baking galore, we in the church seek to slow down, to pause and ponder, to prepare our hearts for the angel's announcement of "good news of great joy for all the people." We seek to prepare for the Christ Child and to remember our great need for a savior.

In this newsletter, you will find many opportunities to join your church family this season in worship, learning, fellowship, and giving. I hope you will not only participate but also ask friends and neighbors to join you. I am also including here "The Christmas Pledge" from the book Unplug the Christmas Machine. I have found this to be a helpful reminder as I seek to navigate the cultural expectations of the season. I offer it in hopes that you may find it helpful as well.

With a heart full of gratitude for your faithfulness and generosity in the year past, I wish you a meaningful Advent season and a joy-filled Christmas.

*Julie*

**The Christmas Pledge**  
**Believing in the beauty and simplicity of Christmas,**  
**I commit myself to the following:**

1. To remember those people who truly need my gifts.
2. To express my love for family and friends in more direct ways than presents.
3. To rededicate myself to the spiritual growth of my family.
4. To examine my holiday activities in light of the true light of Christ.
5. To initiate one act of peacemaking within my circle of family and friends.

Reprinted from Unplug the Christmas Machine by Jo Robinson and Jean Staehell.

**White Christmas Pot Luck and Fellowship**  
**Sunday, December 17**  
**6:00 p.m.**

Enjoy a scrumptious Holiday Pot Luck Supper  
then move to the Sanctuary  
for fun and carol singing.

**Sunday, December 3  
is the  
First Sunday of Advent!**

**Pot Luck Soup Lunch**  
following worship.

Dress comfortably for worship and  
Bring a crock pot of soup or a desert.  
Macaroni and Cheese will be provided for the children.

After lunch:

**SPLASH** for the kids!

Hear the Christmas story, make some holiday crafts, sing  
and begin preparations for the Christmas Pageant.

**Deck the Halls**

Decorate the Chrismon Tree, hang wreaths, put up garland,  
and enjoy great fellowship!



**Faith on the Fifth**

Thank you to everyone who has given  
over and above your usual offering, to  
help pay down the church's debt. So far  
in 2017, we have received \$8,080 in this  
special offering. The principal on our  
loan is now \$33,401.20

TFaith on the Fifth offering  
will be received on December 31.



**New Chrismons**

Thank you to all who have made  
new Chrismons for our tree!  
Take a close look.  
They are beautiful!

**SCCM Needs**

Canned Meat  
Tuna, Chicken Spam Salmon

## Worship Opportunities

### Longest Night Service: December 10 at 5:00 pm

The Longest Night Service is a time to recognize that Christmas can be a bittersweet time of year. The constant refrain we hear about getting together with family reminds many people of what and who they have lost, or what they have never had. The anguish of broken relationships, the insecurity of unemployment, the weariness of ill health, the pain of isolation, the acute or lingering grief over the death of loved ones- all of these can make us feel alone and melancholy amid the festive season. The deepening darkness as we approach the shortest day of the year hence Longest Night Service, only compounds these feelings.

The Longest Night is a service of healing and wholeness designed to acknowledge the many and varying emotions of the Christmas season. We seek to give voice to the pain as well as to the joy of Christmas through Scripture reading, prayer, music and reflection. Come and pray for yourself or others who are hurting this season.

Please invite friends and neighbors to join you.

### Children's Christmas Pageant Christmas Eve Morning

10:00 am

Worship will be joy-filled this morning  
as the children bring the story of the nativity to life.

Please note the time change!

### Christmas Eve Evening

7:00 p.m.

Carols, the Christmas Story, Communion, and Candlelight,  
as well as a special Christmas story for the children.

Worship is for all ages!



## Online Giving

Some changes have been made to our Online Giving page. You may be required to re-enter your profile. Other than this one time inconvenience, it is as easy as before!

## Poinsettias

Would you like to put a poinsettia in the sanctuary in honor of or in memory of a loved one? The cost is \$15 per plant which will be wrapped in foil and include a bow. Your name and the name of your loved one will be in the bulletin December 17 and 24. You can pick up your poinsettia on Christmas Eve. Please have your request in by NOON on Wednesday, December 6.



## OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE

### Military Bible Sticks

These small, personal listening devices are preloaded with the Audio New Testament and selected Psalms. No commentary is provided; just a reading of Scripture. Bible Sticks are provided to military chaplains in every branch of our armed forces who give them to troops upon request. Currently chaplains are requesting up to 2,000 each week.



A gift of \$25 provides a Bible stick to one service member and includes a card that offers free MP3 Bibles for spouses and children. Again, those are sent only if the service member requests them. If every FPC family gave one Bible stick, think of how many people could be impacted. If you would like to donate a Bible stick, please make your check out to FPC and put Bible Stick in the memo line. We will receive donations through December 10.

**Senior Angel Tree:** Thank you to all who adopted a Senior this year. Please have your gifts to the church no later than noon on Tuesday, December 5.

### White Christmas Offering

It is a tradition for our congregation to receive a love offering at our evening program the Sunday before Christmas Eve. This offering goes to one or more individuals or families in our church family or in the community who need a little extra help or encouragement this Christmas. The recipients are confidential. Please speak to the pastor or one of your elders to submit a name for consideration. If you are in need this Christmas, please let Julie know.

### Christmas Joy Offering December 24

*Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!*

—2 Corinthians 9:15

The Christmas Joy Offering celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ, the truly “indescribable gift,” as well as the gifts of church leaders—past, present, and future. Out of gratitude, we give. A gift to the Christmas Joy Offering helps provide financial assistance to current and former church workers and their families in time of need. It also provides much needed assistance to our future racial ethnic church leaders while they discover and pursue their professional goals at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges. Please be generous.

### Community Table Saturday, December 30

Volunteers are needed to help cook, serve and clean up!

What better way to celebrate Christ's birth than to serve our neighbors in need. Please contact Beth Lewis, [bethplewis@yahoo.com](mailto:bethplewis@yahoo.com), 704-773-9078 if you can help.

## ***Let every heart prepare him room...***

**Children Ages 3- 5<sup>th</sup> grade** will explore the story of Jesus' birth and continue to prepare for the Christmas Pageant during Children's Church in December. Please make sure your children are at worship for rehearsals. Children are encouraged to bring friends to Children's Church so they too can participate in bringing the story of the nativity to life.

**Youth** will creatively explore the Christmas story during Sunday school while enjoying fresh made waffles!

**Adults** will continue to explore the Gospel according to Mark.

### **Advent Bible Study: Feasting on the Word**

Wednesdays 5:30 – 6:10 p.m. in the Glendale Thompson Classroom.

December 6, 13, & 20. Take time to slow down amid the hectic pace of the season and reflect on God's word. We will listen to Scripture and see what shimmers for us. Together we will ponder how God's word is leading us as we prepare to celebrate the birth of the Christ child.

**Advent Devotionals** are available on the table near the ramp door. Advent calendars for families are also available. If you prefer online, subscribe to *Follow the Star at d360.org*. The music is usually wonderful so be sure to turn your speakers on!



December 1 Emry Lowder  
December 11 Tom Jennings  
December 13 Jackie Beeker  
December 14 Stephen Braswell  
December 20 Mary Boyd Miller  
December 20 Duane Stutler, Jr.  
December 22 Sam HillJennings  
December 22 Sharon Faulkner  
December 25 Roy Holt

### **Here We Go a-Caroling**

The Norwood Ministerial Association churches are joining together to go Christmas caroling. Meet at the Church of the Nazarene at 6:00 pm. We will break into groups and carol in different neighborhoods then come back together for hot chocolate at 7:00 pm. Song sheets provided!



**Happy  
Anniversary!**

Jim & Beth Lewis December 6

## Brown Bag Advent

In this season of glitter and gifts, brightly colored packages begin to accumulate under most of our trees. For others, all their worldly possessions can be contained in a brown paper bag.

This year, turn your “want list” into someone else’s “need list” as we journey to Bethlehem with Mary and Joseph. In view of the great miracle of Jesus’ birth, it is easy to forget the humanity of the Holy Family, that they had needs like you and me...needs that are often unmet for many in our community even today.

Four brown paper bags with tags with instructions are available for you to participate in our Brown Bag Advent. Each week you are invited to read and reflect on the story of Mary and Joseph. Each week you are invited to pause and wonder about one aspect of their journey: What would they eat? Would they be warm? What would they need to care for themselves? What would they need to care for a newborn baby? Each week you will be instructed to fill your bag with items associated with the particular need you have pondered, i.e. Week 1: non-perishable food for the Food Pantry; Week 2: gloves, socks or hats for children at Norwood Elementary School, etc. And of course, you will be invited to pray for those in need in our community.



The instructions are all there! Pick up your bags and tags when you come to worship.

### Silent Partners Needed

A Silent Partner is someone who anonymously keeps in touch with one of our college students by sending a card, cartoon, restaurant coupon, etc. This is not intended to be costly. We just want our students to know that they are remembered and held in prayer. The anonymous nature means no thank you notes are required so for them, it is pure grace. If you would be willing to make a one year commitment to one of our college students, please contact Julie.

### 2018 Stewardship Update

As of November 26, we have received 29 pledge cards totaling \$142,000. The amount pledged is up about 6% over this time last year and some people have just received their pledge cards. Your stewardship committee is encouraged. If you have not yet turned in your pledge card, please do so as soon as possible.

**Please be mindful of your stewardship!** Only contributions received before NOON on December 29 will be posted to 2017. Thank you.

## Coming in January

Due to vacation schedules, your January newsletter will be late arriving.  
So here is a preview of what is to come:

**Leslie Lee and Steve Gretz  
are coming back!**

**This time in a Coffee House setting.  
January 7 at 7:00 p.m.  
Fellowship Hall**

We have come to enjoy this singer-songwriter duo in worship.  
Now hear them in a casual setting as they share not only their  
religious songs, but also others.

Snacks and Beverages will be provided.

Invite your neighbors for this evening  
of good music, laughter, and fellowship.

**January 14:** Norwood's own Nicole Newton will be our guest preacher. Nicole sang at our church several years ago with her husband and Edmund Roush. Now she is returning as a graduate of Wake Forest Divinity School and a candidate for ministry in the PC(USA). Nicole is currently doing an internship at Myers Park Presbyterian Church in Charlotte. What a joy and privilege to be able to welcome Nicole back to our congregation as a guest preacher!

**Presbyterian Women's  
Poor Man's Supper  
Thursday, January 25**

**January 28: Installation/Ordination of New Elders**





## **Prayer List Connection**

Do you ever see a name on the prayer list and think, *Now who is that?* Or forget what the relationship is? You are not alone, as many folks have asked for help with this. The *Prayer List Connection* will refresh all our memories. Folks with chronic needs will be listed for a month in the bulletin. Following that month, we will keep them on the newsletter's *Prayer List Connection* for as long as we are requested to do so. Critical prayer concerns will be added weekly to the prayer list in the bulletin.

### **Members:**

Margaret Tyson, Joanne Morton

**At Home Members:** Jean Barbee, Jeanette Thompson

### **Members in Nursing Homes/Assisted Living:**

**Stanly Manor:** Bonnie Blalock

**Trinity Place:** Margaret Tyson

### **Friends of the Congregation:**

*Kathleen Almond, mother of Johnny Almond*

*Ron "Tinman" Alred, friend of Linda Snead, colon cancer*

*Meg Bowers, breast cancer*

*Russell Bittle, friend of Sharon Faulkner, cancer*

*Kelly Bradley*

*Martha Brazeale, mother of Kaye Tyson*

*Deborah Pinion Burgin, friend of Beverly Johnson and Marion Lisk-Deese, cancer*

*Donna Canestra-Lisk, breast cancer*

*Harry Cohen*

*Nikki Davis, friend of Susan Moss*

*Vicki Diggs, stroke*

*Barbara Fraley, sister of Bill Johnson, Stanly Manor*

*Penny Hathcock*

*Madison Hatley, brain tumor*

*Emily Holt, daughter-in-law of Roy Holt, stage 4 breast cancer*

*Joe Huneycutt, Bill Johnson's cousin, bull accident*

*Kyler Jones, grandson of friend of Sharon Faulkner, brain cancer*

*Carla Kimrey*

*Linda Kirkwood, sister of Mike Carlis, blood cancer*

*Randy Lee, stage 4 cancer on Hospice*

*Trey Lincoln, death of his grandmother*

*Eloise Lowder, aunt of Nathan Lowder, cancer*

*Anne Ruth Smith Luther, friend of Marion Lisk-Deese, cancer*

*Donna McCormick, mother of Alice Carlis' childhood friend, breast cancer*

*Paul McLeod*

*Soundra McRae, friend of Jana & Nathan Lowder, cancer*

*Bryanna Medlin, nine-year old with cancer*

*Nyoka Myers, teen paralyzed in car accident*

*Tony Owens, cancer*

*Linda Parker, step-sister of Susan Moss*

*Joan Phillips, sister of Tom Garner*

*Barbara Pigg, friend of Jana & Nathan Lowder, cancer*

*Alva Polson, sister of Wayne Deese, lung cancer*

*Harvey Lee Safrit, friend of Alice Carlis, cancer treatment*

*Corbin Sikes, cousin of Evan Faulkner, leukemia*

*Marlene Smith, sister of Susie Lisk, light stroke*

*Angela Tyner, friend of Susan Moss*

*Beth Vanterguard, friend of Joan Garner, cancer*

### ***Church Directory***

**Minister:** Rev. Julie Hill, juliehill203@gmail.com; cell 704-904-7261

**Music Director:** Johnny Almond, johnny@mgcca.com

**Secretary:** Paula Blake, office@norwoodfpc.org or paulablake@windstream.net

**Custodian:** Marie Byrd

**Nursery Attendant:** Gloria Lopez

**Youth Coordinators:** Alice Carlis, Kirk Wallace

**Session:** Clerk of Session, Kristie Wallace

Class of 2017: Duane Stutler, Jeff Russell, Kristie Wallace

Class of 2018: Vera Kaye Coble, Sharon Faulkner, Mitchell Edwards

Class of 2019: Jana Lowder, Mason Crump, Alice Carlis

**Elders of the Month:** Jeff Russell and Mason Crump

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