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THE COLUMNS

First Presbyterian Church, Waynesboro, VA

**January 2025, Volume 63, Issue 1**

*First Presbyterian Church of Waynesboro is a community-minded*

*congregation living out the love of Christ as we serve one another with*

*humility, gentleness, and patience through God’s grace.*

*15  Toward evening the disciples approached him. “We’re out in the country and it’s getting*

*late. Dismiss the people so they can go to the villages and get some supper.”*

*16  But Jesus said, “There is no need to dismiss them. You give them supper.”*

*17  “All we have are five loaves of bread and two fish,” they said.*

*18-21  Jesus said, “Bring them here.” Then he had the people sit on the grass. He took the*

*five loaves and two fish, lifted his face to heaven in prayer, blessed, broke, and gave the*

*bread to the disciples. The disciples then gave the food to the congregation. They all ate*

*their fill. They gathered twelve baskets of leftovers. About five thousand were fed.*

*Matthew 14:15-21*

*When in doubt, always quote scripture. This is not one of the rules I have painstakingly collected over the years,*

*but perhaps it should be. Last month, we began with insights into basketball; for May, we are diving back into*

*the New Testament for illumination.*

*We are conditioned, I think, to look at the miraculous as magical, the theological equivalent of alchemy. Just as*

*the medieval alchemist sought to turn lead into gold, and thus enrich themselves without labor, we look at*

*miracles at least in part, as labor-saving plot devices: healing without the effort of treatment; gifts that eliminate*

*the need for impossible choices; rescue that makes of us passive recipients of grace. But, in the words of yet*

*another of my rules, God is not a magician; what we call miracles are signs of God at work in our midst - and*

*God hates to work alone.*

*In the feeding of the multitude, the disciples recognize a need - the crowd is getting hungry and the day is*

*mostly gone. This is a real problem, they know, but the best they can come up with is to send the crowds*

*back to town, where they might find some supper. But Jesus has something else in mind; not just pushing*

*the problem down the road, but actually doing something about the hunger of the people. He asks what*

*food is available, and is told, 5 rolls and 2 cooked fish - the lunch of a well-prepared young man. Jesus*

*then does the miraculous, but the miracle isn&#39;t magic- Jesus does not make everyone feel full, or have*

*manna fall from the heavens. The miracle happens through the work of the disciples. It is the disciples*

*who organize the people, getting them to sit down in an orderly fashion; they who oversee the distribution*

*of the loaves and fishes, making sure everyone is fed; even making sure the leftovers are collected. And*

*that, friends, leads us to Rule #10:*

Dear sisters & brothers in Christ,

During the 12 days of Christmas, which will have practically passed by the time you read this issue of the Columns, I hope and pray that you have found abundance.

As the English Christmas carol suggests, the gifts of Christmas tend to build on each other. In the song, the total number of gifts given - from day 1 to day 12 - is 364: only one gift short of the number of days in a year.

I wonder if the gift of Christmas is cumulative. Not in a manner driven by gift accumulation - who can afford 11 pipers piping, anyway? - but by the upbuilding of our spirits. Jesus is much more than a partridge in a pear tree. And also, like that original gift of a bird in the song, the incarnation of God, Emmanuel, is the starting point for abundance in our faith. Jesus is the gift from which all good gifts flow. That is still true for us, as we revert back to our pre-Christmas routines at school, at work, at home.

As Epiphany dawns, and we linger at the manger just a little longer, I encourage you to let Jesus be, for you, a multiplier in 2025. A multiplier of love, joy, peace, patience, generosity, goodness, faith, gentleness, and self-regulation - all fruits of the spirit.

In the name of Emmanuel, God-with-us, happy new year!

-Samantha





A musical notes and snowflakes

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**JANUARY MUSIC NOTES**

Beginning the New Year with Gratitude

As we embark on yet another new year, we reflect on the many ways in which we are richly blessed at First Pres. We are thankful that FPC is content to trust us to provide music for services on Sunday morning. We are also comforted by the relationships we have been able to build, from those Roger knew growing up in Waynesboro to those acquaintances made more recently.

Hardly enough can be expressed about the immense thanks we feel towards those who make up the choir. They commit time and energy, make themselves available and enhance the worship experience of those who attend FPC, either in person or virtually. Over the years, we have welcomed members and been saddened by their departure. The continued commitment of the choir deepens the worship experience for everyone.

We remain appreciative of the support of the music program and the various concerts and musicians who have played at FPC. To a person, each musician has commented on how wonderful it is to play in the sumptuous Sanctuary. It is one of the finest 500 seat “halls” in the country! With that in mind, we are grateful for the creation of the First Friday Organ Concerts and Light Luncheons. These programs have become a staple for many in Waynesboro and beyond, providing the opportunity to hear the beautiful sounds that emanate from the 1893 Woodberry and Harris pipe organ. The added bonus is the delightful luncheon afterward. Several folks have helped provide for these luncheons to ensure that those in attendance enjoy fellowship with others who appreciate the music.

We are thankful for not only the fabulous organ, but also the lovely Boston piano and double harpsichord in the Sanctuary. These instruments enhance the worship experience by allowing us to faithfully execute centuries of sacred music!

And finally, we are most grateful for the people who make First Presbyterian Church the spiritual home it is. Thanks to the congregation for attending services each week and participating in the worship experience. Thanks to the choir for enhancing the service with their joyful music.

May your 2025 be filled with blessings –

Roger and Kimberlea Daggy

**NO FIRST FRIDAY ORGAN CONCERT IN JANUARY**

**Next Concert is Friday, February 7– 12:15 p.m.**

**followed by a light repast in the Barksdale Room**



**MISSION/OUTREACH NOVEMBER 2024**

* Ordered and received food from Blue Ridge Area Food Bank November 5 and 19. Volunteers assembled 20 pantry boxes for each order.
* Maintained temperature logs for refrigerators and freezers.
* Food Banks were held November 7, 14 & 21.
* Purchased eggs, bread, and margarine for Food Bank weekly.
* Updated weekly shopping list for extra options.
* Completed pantry inventory and report: Served 74 individuals and 24 households. In the year 2024 over 1415 individuals and 400 households were served
* Received 50 lbs. of ground beef from a farmer in Harrisonburg.
* Delivered Advent Calendars to the Preschool.
* Collected cereal for Food Bank.
* Next Disciples’ Kitchens are January 16 and March 31.
* Donated 35 pair of socks, 11 hats and 11 pair of gloves for Christmas for Disciples’ Kitchen.

. --Cynthia Hoover, Mission Chair

**COLLECTING CEREAL FOR FPC FOOD BANK**

**COLLECTING NON-PERISHABLE ITEMS for**

**WAYNESBORO HIGH SCHOOL FOOD BANK**

**Healthy snacks like granola bars and grab-and-go items**

Two women wearing knit hats

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**A loyal client of the Food Bank made some**

**Cute winter hats for Cynthia and Mary Scott**

**Preschool News!!**

Our Christmas program was a HUGE success this year. We had so many parents, grandparents, friends that came to watch and support everyone, I couldn’t have asked for a better outcome for our children!! We are already heading into the second half of our school year and are excited to see what exciting new things there are waiting for us. We are already planning so many activities with visitors coming to do presentations for our preschoolers. A huge thank you to everyone who help make this a success for our children!

A child and child standing in a red room

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A group of children on stage

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A child playing with paper and buttons on a table

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A group of children singing in front of a organ

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**EPIPHANY**

**Sunday, January 5, 2025**

Epiphany is the celebration of God’s manifestation of self-revelation to the world in Jesus Christ. In particular, we celebrate the revelation of God’s promise and purpose to the nations of the world, as the magi came from the East to worship to the Christ child, and God’s covenant of grace is extended to all who believe the good news of Christ Jesus. The symbolism of light is important: not only because of the star that guided the magi, but as it relates to the bright dawning of God’s self-revelation in Christ.

**An excerpt from the Companion to the Book of Common Worship (Geneva Press, 2002 p. 94-95):**

The word “epiphany” (from the Greek *epiphaneia* or *theophaneid*) means “appearance” or “manifestation” of God, and has roots in the word for sunrise or dawn. In ancient times, an epiphany meant either a visible manifestation of a god or the solemn visit of a ruler venerated as a god.

For Christians, Christmas marks the coming of God to us; Epiphany celebrates the appearance of the Lord in the midst of humanity. The Christmas stories of the birth of Immanuel declare the divine entry; Epiphany extols the revelation of God to the world in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

In our celebrations of Christmas and Epiphany we rejoice in the dawning and the arising of Light in darkness….Epiphany not only discloses the Savior to the world but also calls the world to show forth Christ, to be witnesses to God’s true Light. The timeless mystery of the incarnation, God in flesh, leads us forth to show and tell of Christ as God’s gift of grace and salvation to all persons. Some call this ongoing epiphany the work of Christmas.

(from the pc(usa) website)

**A Letter from Nancy**

As I am writing this, the election has not yet taken place. No matter who wins, I hope that we as a people of faith, will always rely on our faithful God, for “God alone is Lord of the conscience,” says the Westminster Confession and our Book of Order. (F3.0101)

The same Book of Order reminds us that “the unity of believers in Christ is reflected in the rich diversity of the Church’s membership.” (F1.0403). No matter for whom we have voted, no matter how we disagree about matters, I hope we can remain united in the love given to us by the Holy Spirit at our baptism.

Rev. Peter Marshall, a Presbyterian minister, was chaplain to the U.S. Senate 1947-1949. Below is one of his prayers for unity.

*“O God, we pray for a broader vision of the needs of humanity, and a deeper compassion to fill those needs, for the planting of seeds of concern for all humanity in our hearts; for a tapping of the wells of generosity.*

*May we live together as people who have been forgiven a great debt.*

*May we be gentle, walking softly with one another.*

*May we be understanding, lest we shall add to the world’s sorrow or cause to flow needless tears.*

*May we be as anxious for the rights of others as we are for our own.*

*May we be as eager to forgive as we are to seek forgiveness.*

*May we know no barriers of creed or race or sex, that our love may be like Yours – a love that sees all people as Your children and our kin.*

*May we be ministers of humanity. Amen.”*

May we, indeed, be ministers – all of us – of peace and love given to us through Jesus Christ. No matter how the election turns out, we are all called to be peacemakers, as followers of the Prince of Peace.

(Associate General Presbyter Nancy Meehan Yao printed in the November *Shenandoah Press* newsletter)

**SESSION HIGHLIGHTS**

Session held a Stated Meeting on December 17, 2024.

* The meeting was opened with a time of reflection and prayer.
* Session approved, with regret, of the transfer of Deane F. Powers, Jr. and Carol Stein Powers to Zion Evangelical Church effective December 1, 2024.
* Preschool: Christmas program December 19. One aide has been dismissed. Staff lunch was held. Praise and thankfulness for Director Tami Hemp.
* Session approved a 3% raise for non-ordained staff effective January 1, 2025.
* Session decided to cancel the Christmas Buffet.
* Cynthia gave a Mission/Outreach Report (published elsewhere).
* P&M: No quote received yet for cleaning of gutters. During the last move the pulpit was broken and the Barksdale Room door cracked. Moving the heavy and unwieldy risers for programs is a problem. The Symphony needs to be contacted regarding its contract.
* Session approved the serving of communion by intinction at the Christmas Eve service. Rev. Coggins will be out of the pulpit December 29; a Hymn Sing will be held at the 11:00 service.
* Presbyterians Better Together – Meeting was held at Westminster PC December 1 attended by Samantha, Jean and Betsy. Churches planning Bread Breakers type activities. Bible Study location will be changed: first Mondays at First Pres and fifth Mondays at Smyrna. Cynthia agreed that FPC could provide a meal for the WARM Shelter the end of January.
* Sale of Church to Fishburne: All elders (as new trustees after incorporation) have signed contract. A Committee needs to be formed to work with Fishburne to manage facilities.
* Session approved Rev. Coggins’ addition to the FPC bank account so that she may obtain a personal credit card on this account.
* Session will hold a meeting on Tuesday, December 31, at 3:00 to make a plan for Stewardship. A meeting will be held Tuesday, January 14, to discuss the Budget. The Stated Session meeting will be held Tuesday, January 21.
* All Session meetings are opened and closed with prayer.

--Betsy Ruehl, Clerk of Session

***PRESBYTERIANS BETTER TOGETHER* BIBLE STUDY**

Once a month some members of *Better Together* churches meet for about an hour for Bible Study. Studies are progressing through the Old Testament as we reacquaint ourselves with some of the characters we grew up with in Sunday School. We relate events to each other and to the modern day world.

The Study is ably led by the personable John Tindall, Director of Christian Education at Westminster PC. Not only is he knowledgeable about the people and situations, but he adds a touch of humor and comprehension with an occasional video.

Location schedule is as follows: 1st Monday – First Pres; 2nd Second Pres; 3rd Monday Hermitage, 4th Monday Finley Memorial, 5th Monday Smyrna. Time: 1:00 (with refreshments)

Come and be prepared to share your knowledge with a group of like-minded individuals, or come, like me, to hear about what you should have learned years ago. It’s fun!

--Betsy Ruehl



LITURGISTS

5 – Betsy Ruehl

12 – Jo Pannill

19 – Bill Pannill

26 – Jean Hashagen

BIRTHDAYS



6 - Michael Griffith

Ann Epes

8 - Bruce Bosselman

11 - Jeannie Hashagen

26 - Samantha Coggins

28 - Celia Daggy

31 – Randy Hypes



**CALENDAR**

Sunday, January 5

11 am Worship

Monday, January 6

1 pm Better Together Bible Study First Presbyterian

Thursday, January 9

2-4 pm Food Bank

Sunday, January 12

11 am Worship

Monday, January 13

1 pm Better Together Bible Study Second Presbyterian

Tuesday, January 14

2:30 pm Session Budget

Thursday, January 16

Disciples Kitchen

6-7:30 pm Food Bank

Sunday, January 19

11 am Worship

Monday, January 20 **OFFICE CLOSED MLK DAY**

1 pm Better Together Bible Study Hermitage Presbyterian

Tuesday, January 21

2:30pm Session Room 212

6 pm - Symphony Practice-Fellowship

Thursday, January 23

2-4 pm Food Bank

Saturday, January 25

3 pm Symphony Concert

Sunday, January 26

11 pm Worship

Monday, January 27

1 pm Better Together Bible Study Finley Memorial

Tuesday, January 28

6pm Symphony Practice Fellowship

Thursday, January 30

No Food Bank

**CHURCH OFFICERS:**

Treasurer – Colleen Cash

Members of Session - Jean Hashagen, Betsy Ruehl

Cynthia Hoover, Mike Cunningham and Bob Miller

A group of people posing for a photo

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Preschool staff gathered for a Holiday Lunch.

Secret Santa gifts were exchanged

We appreciated these ladies and all their hard work

and dedication to the children and church

Patti, Marcie, Lynda, Tami

Katelynn, Carol, Samantha, Lorene, Colleen

Missing Abby & Jean





2025 Giving Envelopes are available inn the church office.

January 6, 2025 is the deadline for 2024 offerings.

