



John's Journal

First of all, a word of thanks for all the good wishes, the prayers, and positive vibes sent my way during and after my surgery on November 11th. For those reading this who

may not have heard, I needed to undergo prostate surgery to alleviate other problems related to that pesky gland! I am truly grateful that there were no signs of cancer. But, removal of the prostate was certainly called for and accomplished.

In the few weeks post-procedure, I have been feeling better, and healing a little bit every day. I am hoping to be back to 100% very soon. I return for my post-op visit with the surgeon on December 18th. Again, thank you for your concerns and prayers.

The end of the year always - at least for me - makes me a little nostalgic as I look over the past year and think about all that has happened. And it has been quite a year.

In January I assumed the role of co-moderator of Salem Presbytery's COM (Commission on Ministry). This has been a worthwhile role in my service to the larger church, as we welcome new pastors to the presbytery, say goodbye to those leaving and those retiring, and lend a helping hand to churches in conflict and churches in transition. I am grateful to be able to serve in this way.

January also saw my participation in the annual conference of the Association of Presbyterian Church Educators (APCE) in Galveston, TX. This is always a highlight of the year for me as I have time with friends and colleagues, and also learn about ways that I can be a better pastor and educator. I served in leadership roles with APCE for many, many years, and beginning at the conclusion of the 2020 event in Little Rock, I will return to service on the Governance Ministry Team. I look forward to serve this amazing organization again.

2019 also saw me continue my service on the General Assembly Special Committee to Study the Reformed Perspective of Christian Education in the

21st Century (the world's longest committee name!). The committee - comprised of folks from across the country and Puerto Rico, meets regular via video teleconference, and gathered for a face-to-face meeting in Montreat in August. We will meet again face-to-face in January for a few days at the Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center near Little Rock, and will hopefully finish up our work which will be presented to the General Assembly next summer.

June was an interesting month as Debbie underwent her hand surgery, which limited our time at the Montreat Music and Worship Conference. But we are grateful that she got her issues taken care of and is healing well.

We were grateful to be able to take some vacation time in July and visit Jackie in Minneapolis, and then were truly blessed to travel with dear friends on our Canadian Rockies train excursion in October.

And so, here we are at the end of another year. What has 2019 brought to you? For some, I know it is heartache as you mourn the loss of a loved one. For others, it is the joy of watching children grow up and learn to be their own person.

And now we turn our eyes to 2020. Will our vision be perfect? Doubtful! As we journey through the Advent and Christmas seasons, may we seek to be the people God wants us to be. Quoting something I saw on Twitter the other day, "*Strive each day to be the reason someone smiles today!*" If we can do that, then the world will be a better place.

I encourage you to be attentive to all our events during this season - from our Advent worship series "*Away in a Manger,*" to our special music presentation on December 22nd, to our usual Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service.

Live each day to the fullest, knowing the God walks beside us each and every day. Let us pray for each other, and for this wonderful church as we finish off 2019 and head with confidence into 2020.

As always, I am grateful to be your pastor.

Grace & peace,

Coming this Advent Special Worship Series



Advent 1: Sunday, December 1st - Matthew 1:20-25, Isaiah 9:2, 6-7 - *Hope*

Advent II: Sunday, December 8th - Luke 2:8-20 - *Peace*

Advent III: Sunday, December 15th - Matthew 2:1-12 - *Joy*

Advent IV: Sunday, December 22nd - Matthew 1:20-24 - *Love*

Christmas Eve: Tuesday, December 24th - Luke 2:1-20 - *O Come, All Ye Faithful*

NOTE: Our choir will present a special Christmas program as part of morning worship on **Sunday, December 22nd**.

Mark Your Calendars



Tuesday, December 24th - 5 pm



Each year we are blessed with a special presentation by our wonderful choir during Advent. Mark your calendars for this year's special music on **Sunday, December 22nd** during the morning worship hour. Chris and the choir are working hard to make our Advent and Christmas celebrations all they can be!



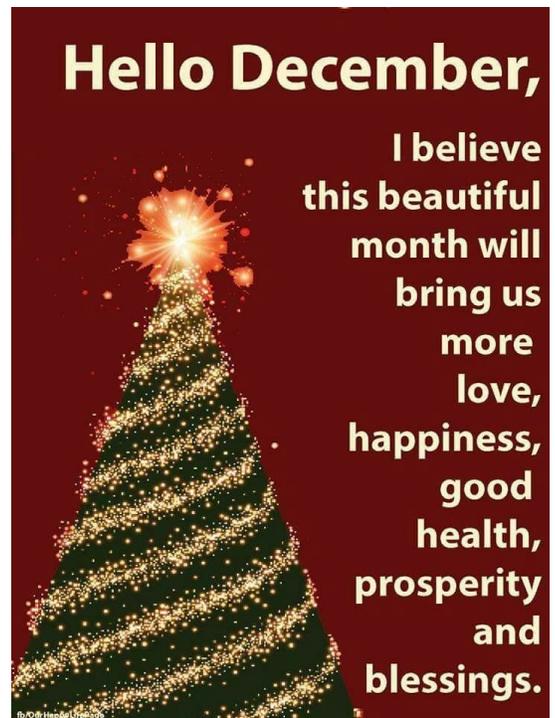
The church office will be closed on **Tuesday, December 24th, Wednesday, December 25th, Tuesday, December 31st, and Wednesday, January 1st** for the holidays.



As is our custom, we will gather as a church family on **December 24th** for our **Christmas Eve Communion and Candlelight Service**. The service begins at **5:00 pm**.

This moving and joyous service includes traditional Christmas carols, scripture readings, prayers, the lighting of the Christ candle, announcement of the birth of Christ, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and the candle lighting.

Christmas Eve is always a special time as we gather with family to celebrate this special time. Take an hour out of your evening to gather for worship as we tell the whole world, "*Joy to the world, the Lord is born!*"





Given by:

Bill and Linda Abplanalp

Diane Long Bullis

Sandra Cook

Lou Crutchfield

Gerald and Sylvia Donley

Sylvia Hayes

Darrell and Judy Holmes

John and Debbie Johnson

Karen Maxwell

Bobby and Joyce Peele

Rick and Nancy Purcell

Christel Schappacher

John & Kim Snyder

Robert and Brenda Sykes

Tracey Troxler

Given by:

Bill & Helen Brown

Gerald & Sylvia Donley

Kim Snyder

Tracey Troxler

In Memory of:

Nana Tharrett; Aunt Hilda Sasse; Bill & Angela Collins; Bill & Theresa Abplanalp

Robert Allen Bullis; Joseph Blair & Anna Bell Long

In loving memory of Kenneth Cook

Robert B. Crutchfield

Mary & Jesse Fogleman; Bettie & Grey Donley; Jerry Donley

Beulah Sanders; Tommy & Steve

Loving memory Mr. & Mrs. A. W. Holmes, Sr.; Jeff & Aylease Bowman

Rev. & Mrs. John S. Johnson, Jr.; Mr. C. Edward Crosland, Jr.; Mrs. Elizabeth Bradley Crosland

Thelma & Walter Winning, Karen's Parents

Bobbie Gayle Peele; Billy Ray Peele

Robert Purcell; Eleanor Purcell; Bolivar Samudio

Willie Schappacher; Sam Schappacher

My never forgotten sister Bobbie Gayle Peele

Gordon & Ora Bowers; John & Mildred Sykes

Benny Crutchfield

In Honor of:

Bobby Peele (for all his contributions); Gerald & Sylvia Donley

Children; Grandchildren; Great Grandchildren

In honor of loving parents Bobby & Joyce Peele & granddaughters Piper, Lila & Grace

Lou Crutchfield



DECEMBER WORSHIP THEMES

December 1st:

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7; Matthew 1:20-25

Hope

December 8th:

Luke 2:8-20

Peace

December 15th:

Matthew 2:1-12

Joy

December 22nd:

Matthew 1:20-24

Love

December 24th:

Luke 2:1-20

O Come, All Ye Faithful

December 29th:

Matthew 2:13-23

Let's Keep



Missed a Sunday? Check out our sermons online!
There are three ways to listen to audio of our Sunday sermons:

- On our website: www.bethanypreschurh.org
- On our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/bethanypresbyterian
- Or by going to: www.buzzsprout.com/9198



*Stewardship Season 2019
November 10, 17, & 24*

... sowing seeds ...

... healing hearts ...

... cheerful charity ...



"For God loves a cheerful giver."
-2 Corinthians 9:7

What a glorious **Consecration Sunday** we had on November 24th, in the culmination of our 2019 Stewardship Season. Our guest brass players and vocalists helped make our worship truly celebratory, and the luncheon was delicious and filling!

It is always a moving moment when worshippers come forward with their Pledge Cards, making their commitment for the coming year. As we move into December, the Session - with input from the Budget & Finance Committee - will be putting our 2020 budget together. To make an accurate prediction of anticipated income for 2020 we need to have all the Pledge Cards in. If you have not had an opportunity to submit your card, you may do so at any time in the church office, or mail it to the church to the attention of Pam Hurt.

Thanks for making our 2019 Stewardship Season such a tremendous success!

December 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 First Sunday of Advent 9:45 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship	2 10:00 AM Circle #1 7:00 PM Circle #4	3	4 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	5	6	7
8 Second Sunday of Advent 9:45 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship	9 7:00 PM Circle #3	10 7:00 PM Session Meeting	11 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	12	13	14
15 Third Sunday of Advent 9:45 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship	16	17	18 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	19	20	21
22 Fourth Sunday of Advent Special Choir Christmas Music 9:45 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship	23	24 Christmas Eve Church Office Closed 5:00 PM Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service	25 Christmas Day Church Office Closed	26	27	28
29 9:45 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship	30	31 New Year's Eve Church Office Closed	1 New Year's Day Church Office Closed	2	3	4

Your Church Staff:

Pastor: Rev. John W. Johnson

Director of Music: Christopher Bagley

Office Administrator: Joy Saleeby

Bookkeeper: Pam Hurt

Elders:

Chip Allen

A. J. Campbell

Randy Cousins

Karen Maxwell

Ron Osborne (Treasurer)

Jean Payne

Nancy Purcell

Ben Russell

Tracey Troxler

Rick Purcell (Clerk of Session)



A Special Thank You

A very special thank you goes to our Elders who are rotating off the Session at the end of 2019. Please express your gratitude to **A. J. Campbell, Ron Osborne, and Jean Payne** who have served faithfully, with good humor, and with unyielding dedication to their calling as an elder. Thanks also to **Ron Osborne**, who is rotating off of his service as Church Treasurer.



The Session met for its regular monthly stated meeting on November 19th. The Session met with the Generosity Team and Staff, and spouses were invited as well as we gathered for dinner at Da Vinci's Table. Here are some highlights:

- Enjoyed fellowship around the dinner table!
- Heard a devotion from Karen Maxwell.
- Received a treasurer's report from the treasurer
- Elders were reminded to bring budget requests for their Ministry Area to the December meeting.
- Heard an update on some of the concerns about our buildings, approved the dissolution of the contract with Jan-Pro Cleaning Service, effective December 1st. A new service has been contacted and will begin then.
- Discussed stewardship issues and preparations for Consecration Sunday.
- Ministry Area responsibilities for 2020 were designated.
- Chris reminded the Session of Brass Sunday on the 24th, as well as special Christmas program on December 22nd.
- Elders-elect were reminded of examination, including Statement of Faith, at the December meeting.

**NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10TH
ELDERS OF THE MONTH FOR DECEMBER
A. J. CAMPBELL AND BEN RUSSELL**



The **Service of Ordination and Installation** of our newly elected elders will be held during morning worship on **Sunday, January 5, 2020**. Please be in prayer for these new officers, as well as the entire Session as a new year begins!



BETHANY ANGEL TREE 2019

This year the Presbyterian Women have decided to again adopt KidsPath and Eldercare families for the Christmas Season. *The Angel Tree is loaded and ready for you now!! Just in time for your "Black Friday" shopping. NOTE – IF PURCHASING CLOTHING – GIFT RECEIPTS ARE GOOD TO HAVE IF POSSIBLE.*

KidsPath

KidsPath is a division of Hospice of Alamance/Caswell. KidsPath provides services to families with children who are experiencing a life-threatening illness. They also provide grief counseling to children who have lost a loved one. KidsPath assists these families in many ways. In participating with our Angel Tree, we help out with Christmas gifts for the sick children and their siblings. This helps the parents who are struggling monetarily from the effects that a life-threatening illness can bring to a family. Often one parent has to quit their job to help care for the ailing child. Traveling to hospitals, overnight stays, paying for food when the child is in the hospital, surgeries, chemo, and overall medical costs are devastating to these families at times. Our generosity helps make Christmas merrier and less stressful for these families facing a crisis with a child.

Alamance Eldercare

Alamance Eldercare provides assistance to Elderly citizens in our area who have very little to no family to assist them. These citizens usually still live in their homes, many of them alone, and have no one to make their Christmas special. In participating in our Angel Tree effort, we help provide these beautiful people who are often overlooked, with some simple Christmas cheer!!!

How does the Angel Tree work?

The social workers who are familiar and are assisting these families interview the families and come up with "wish lists". These lists are turned over to us at Bethany, and we place the items requested on Angels (for KidsPath) or Snowflakes (For Eldercare). Each KidsPath child or Eldercare patron will have **multiple** Angels/Snowflakes represented on the tree.

Don't like to shop? – Donate and we will shop for you!

If you would rather give a monetary donation, and let us do the shopping, please give the money to Tina Patterson, or Brenda Sykes, OR via donation to the church – specify Angel Tree fund - by Thursday, December 12th. Monetary donations will be used to purchase items for unclaimed Angels, Christmas meals for the families, and to assist us in meeting other needs for these families this Christmas!

How do I participate?

1. Choose Angels or Snowflakes from the tree
2. Purchase the item written on the Angel or Snowflake
3. Wrap the gift, and **attach the Angel/Snowflake you chose to the gift** so that we know which item the gift contains.
4. **Please tie the angel/snowflake to the gift so that it is easily removed without damaging the packaging**
5. Return the gift to the Fellowship Hall and place in the designated area **NO LATER THAN SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15th.**

Wrap it Up!!

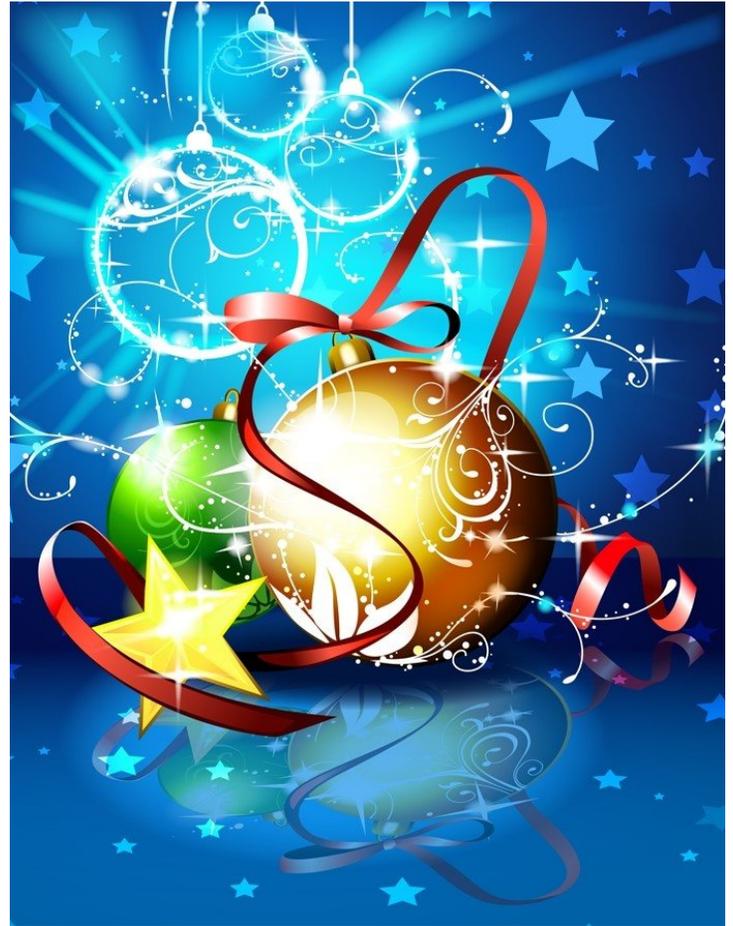
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17TH – at 6:30 pm. Join us in the Fellowship Hall to SORT the gifts, and Wrap any gifts that were shopped for with monetary donations.

Bethany's Memory Tree

The Bethany Memory Tree is a beloved tradition that allows us to remember our lost loved ones during the Christmas season. All ornaments placed on the tree are registered in the Bethany Memory Tree book that is placed yearly beside of the tree.

The Bethany Memory Tree will be placed in the West Narthex during Advent and Christmas. Ornaments may be placed on this tree in memory of your loved ones who have gone before you. Ornaments may be placed on the Memory tree at any time during the Advent / Christmas season

Please fill out a Reg Tag, and attach the tag to your ornament. Also, fill out the white slip of paper so that your memorial ornament may be recorded in the Memory tree book.



In December Darkness

Ann Weems

*The whole world waits in December darkness
for a glimpse of the Light of God.
Even those who snarl "Humbug!"
and chase away the carolers
have been seen looking toward the skies.
The one who declared he never would forgive
has forgiven
and those who left home
have returned,
and even wars are halted,
if briefly,
as the whole world looks starboard.
In the December darkness
we peer from our windows
watching for an angel with rainbow wings
to announce the Hope of the World.*



FINANCIAL REPORT - END OF OCTOBER 2019	
Year-to-date Actual Income	\$128,203.73
Year-to-date Actual Expenses	\$138,484.27
YEAR-TO-DATE SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	-\$10,280.54

You will notice the figures above reflect a deficit in our budget through the end of October. This was expected as the Session did approve a deficit budget at the beginning of the year. The good news is that the deficit is not as big as we had anticipated!

The last two months of the year are historically strong months for giving. Let us work together to see if we can end the year in positive numbers (as we did in 2018)!

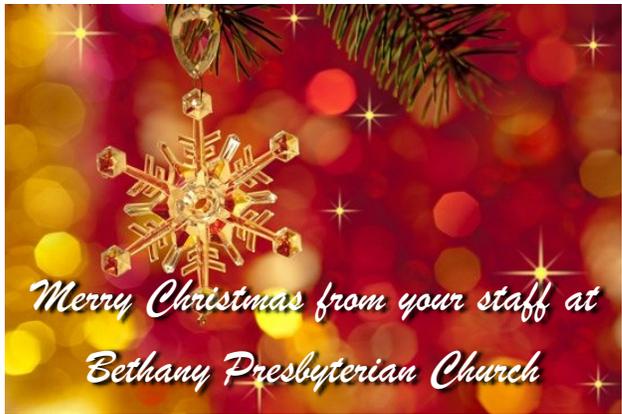
Your generosity to Bethany enables us to continue the mission and ministry of this great church. We are grateful that we can build upon a strong foundation as we move into a bright tomorrow!



UPDATE ON SCOUTING: The fall months of the year have seen a continued rise in participation in our new Cub Scout Program. As of now, there are twelve boys and girls enrolled in our Cub Scout Pack!

The Pack meets each Thursday evening with awards being distributed at the meeting on the first Thursday of the month - usually in the Fellowship Hall. Please know that ALL are welcome to attend the awards presentation to support these children and their families.

A special thanks goes to Rick and Nancy Purcell, and Jean Payne for their leadership and dedication!



John *Chris*

Joy *Pam*

December Birthdays and Anniversaries!

Happy Anniversary to:

Carolyn & Glenn Thompson December 14

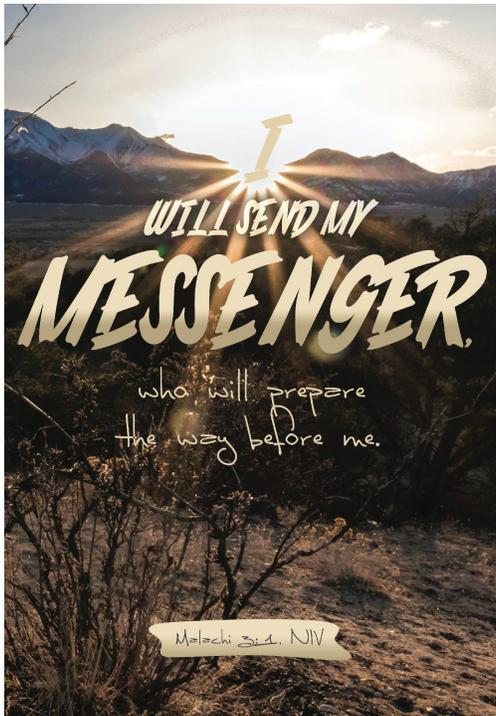
Happy Birthday to:

Anna Osborne December 5
 Henry Flythe December 12
 Brent Dampier December 14
 Erick Russell December 23
 Pam Hurt December 31



Children & Youth Ministries

- **Sunday school for Youth and Children** / Meets on second floor of Education Building at 9:45 each Sunday
- During **Worship**, children are invited to sit in designated pews (front rows on north side) / there are activities provided
- Our **Nursery** is staffed by a professional, paid worker, as well as volunteers each Sunday.
- Watch your calendar and inbox for special activities for our young people throughout the year.



Christian Education Opportunities

The Fellowship Class - Bible study class using our denomination's *Present Word* curriculum.

Fall Book Study (see page 3) - beginning on Monday, September 9th and running for ten weeks we will be studying Brian McLaren's book, "A New Kind of Christianity."

Bethany Prays



Bill Faucette
 Shirley Lane
 Ida Whitney
 Diane Miller
 Jack Cook
 Joan Richardson
 Teresa Wilborn
 Tiffany Tauchren
 John & Ann Sutton
 Peter Slater
 Joey Leake
 Shannon Russell
 Mary Moore

Rachel Poteat
 Jeremy Harden
 Mike Sutton
 Stewart Dillard
 Shelvia Russell
 Ruby Martin
 Katherine Turner
 Jean Berry
 Christy Lutterloh
 Eleanor Thompson
 Nancy Sutton
 Norma Proctor
 Randy Thompson

Barbara Cousins
 Pat Kennedy
 Donna Mitchell-Ayers
 Pete Campbell
 Alex Thomas
 Robert Sykes
 Frederica Beatty
 Glenn Thompson
 Foy Bayliff
 Ritchie Fishburne
 Janie Holt Clapp
 Ben Johnson
 Carol Brooks

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