

The Good News

*"Striving to share Christ's love with all of
God's people"*

December 2025—January 2026



*Westminster
Presbyterian Church*

*3819 Central Avenue
Hot Springs, Arkansas 71913*

Notes from Pastor Carl:

Believe it or not, I used to be the sort of fellow who felt that if you have a schedule you must stick to it; if you plan to be somewhere at a specific time, you do



whatever it takes to be on time. Why did I act that way? I don't know—maybe it's a control issue. My obsession about being on time annoyed Terry, but she and others helped me get over it.

Several years ago I accompanied a mission group from the First Presbyterian Church in Harrison, Arkansas, on a trip to the Navajo reservation in Chinle, Arizona. Our host was the Trinity Presbyterian Church of Chinle. Our young people led Vacation Bible School all week, while the adults did repairs and renovations to the church property. We slept on the floor in their fellowship hall and cooked our meals in their kitchen. At the end of our workweek on Sunday morning we were to gather for worship with the local congregation in their beautiful sanctuary and I was to preach that morning. It is hard enough to preach a sermon to people you don't really know, but it was even more difficult dealing with language and cultural barriers. The service was supposed to begin at ten o'clock in the morning, and according to the order of worship that I had written, the music was to begin at 10:00 straight up. It did not. I was already nervous, but when nothing happened at 10:00 my nervousness increased. When the clock rolled on to 10:30 I was really getting anxious. No one was in the sanctuary. There were some people there, but they were milling around in front of the church, in the parking lot, and in the narthex. By 11:00 I was a basket case, I didn't know what to do, how to invite people to come in and take a seat so we could begin worship—I was totally out of my element—I was totally out of control.

At ten past eleven something remarkable happened—it was as if someone had given a secret signal because suddenly everyone began to move into the sanctuary, to take their seats, and a woman went up and sat at the piano and began to play. The worship service was beginning and I wasn't sure how or why, but with sweat running down my brow and my stomach in knots, I stood to lead God's people in worship. After the service (including my mediocre sermon) I stood at the door of the church and shook the hands of the faithful Navajo Presbyterians. Then one of the elders came up to me and said he had noticed that I looked anxious. I told him I wasn't sure if the worship service was ever going to get started.

Then he told me something very important, *“Here, in this church, worship will not begin until the Chief arrives.”* They were all waiting patiently for the arrival of their chief. A valuable lesson learned—worship will begin when it is time to begin.

This lesson has had a powerful influence on me far beyond the Navajo cultural context, it is a maxim I have come to appreciate and apply to much of life, especially my spiritual life. Things do not always happen when I think they should. Things happen—will happen—when God judges it to be the right time, or as Scripture often puts it, *“In the fullness of time.”* The bottom line is this: I am not in control—God is.

Since that Sunday morning years ago, the lesson has helped get me through some potentially difficult times. It is such a blessing to know that I am not expected to be in control, that I can rest in the assurance of God's providence and God's timing.

The season of Advent, is a season of waiting, and it has begun. And together we will move slowly toward the celebration of our Savior's birth in a stable, in a small town just a few miles south of Jerusalem. The nation of Israel had been waiting for centuries for God's anointed messiah to arrive. And the arrival of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, happened just at the right moment; *in the fullness of time*. It came about when God was ready.

“The Lord is good to those who wait for him...”

Lamentations 3:35

Have a wonderful Advent and Christmas season and I'll be looking for you in church.

Pastor Carl





December Milestones Happy Birthday To:

02 Payton Howell
02 Betty Hasstedt
05 Steven Smith
10 Susan Lascaro
11 Carol Birmingham
13 Bruce Garnett
14 Ginny Garner
17 Zane Puckett
18 Elijah Evans-Hughes
21 Kristen La Madrid
21 Rev. Carl McCormack
24 Cindy Miller
28 Suzy Still
29 Alex DeGrasse
30 Margo Garnett



15 Jeff & Cindy Miller
19 Jim & Sybil Dows
20 Jim & Michele Rubeor
27 John & Pam Royer



January Milestones Happy Birthday To:

01 Larry Stanley
03 Annie Jose
09 Emily Segal
11 Lawrence Grubb
12 Preston DeGrasse
13 Eathon Howell
21 Elute Esole
21 Teke Esole
24 Curtis Wright
28 John Royer
31 Jack Wacaster



*Breakfast
Men of the Church*

Wednesdays

December 3

January 7

8:15 a.m.

Higdon Square Café

Fellowship Luncheon

Our annual Christmas luncheon will be held following worship on December 14. Sign-up sheets for side dishes will be on the table in the narthex. Ham & gravy, with potatoes will be provided. Invite your friends and neighbors that might not have family with whom to share a Christmas meal.



Candlelighting

&

Pizza

The annual Candlelighting service will take place on Wednesday, December 24, at 5 pm.

Following the service, you are invited to share pizza, salad, and good fellowship in the Community Room. If planning to join us for pizza, please call the church office and make reservations by Monday, December 21.



Angel Tree

Once again, the Christian Education Committee is hosting the Angel Tree. We have chosen eight "angels" from the Salvation Army trees and have divided the needs and wants into smaller groups. Our "Gloria" angel will be on display in the narthex beginning November 23. Please take one or more angels and fulfill that need or want. Also, please record which angel or angels you select. All gifts must be returned unwrapped prior to or on December 14 to the church.



Christian Education Committee Report

Six young disciples shared Thanksgiving lunch on November 16 and assembled 100 personal care bags to be distributed during the Sweets on the Street on December 14. Leaders plan for these teens and their friends to meet every Sunday fellowship luncheon is served.

Here's your chance to grant the wish of a 6- to 12-year old child for clothing or toys this Advent. Just retrieve an angel from the "Gloria" tree in the narthex, sign the sheet, and return your unwrapped gift on or before December 14. Advent devotional guides, *Advent 2025* by Jan Turrentine, available to all in the narthex can deepen your spiritual journey this Advent season.

During December, you are invited to read the "feel-good, cheery" brief book, "A Redbird Christmas" by Fannie Flagg. The Book Club will discuss it at 4:30 on Thursday, January 8, in the Community Room with discussion led by Golden Puckett.

If your New Year's resolution is to deepen your faith, join the Adult Disciples Sunday school class at 9:30 in the Community Room as they begin a new study on January 11. Watch for a possible "Celebration of Pets" photos fun time at a winter fellowship luncheon. The Christian Education Committee plans to meet after worship on January 25, 2026.

FINANCIAL/STEWARDSHIP REPORT

Expenses and Revenue	September	YTD
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 25,877	\$ 306,181
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>36,576</u>	<u>307,007</u>
SURPLUS/DEFICIT (-)	\$ (10,698)	\$ (825)

Tithes, Offerings, and Memorials

The Stewardship Committee works very hard to ensure your tithes, offerings, and memorials go where you intend them to go. We need your help to make that happen.

You are encouraged to use the numbered church envelopes that are available through the church office for your tithes, memorials, dollar giving, etc. This assures that we account for it correctly. Also, please write your intention on the "Memo" or "For" line of your check.

Loose \$1 Dollar bills in the plate go toward the Dollar Giving project. Cash in any other denomination goes to the General Offering. If your intention for the cash is different from the above, place it in an envelope labeled with your intention.

We strive to account for your generosity in the way that you intended.

Mike Morrison
Stewardship Chair

Catherine Circle



For the November meeting, Peggy Kipp (pictured at the left), who led the study of Advent Season, brought sewing notions to illustrate the sewing of new life in the birth of Christ.

On Tuesday, December 9, members of Catherine Circle are invited to a potluck luncheon and to assemble gift bags for 32 First Step pre-school students. Just drop in the Community Room between 12:15 and 1:15 to snack and bag. Members may bring wrapped, no-nut candies for this annual project or personal size packages of cookies for the youth project to be held on December 14.

Kay Walsh hosts and at 1:30 will lead the discussion of Lesson 4, "Christmas: A Time to be Born, and a Time to Die."

Circle's January 13, 2026, meeting at 1:30 pm will be led by Janie Russell. Lesson 5 is "Epiphany: A Time to Keep Silence, and a Time to Speak."

Mission/Evangelism



The total of the October Dollar Giving was \$441. With that money, we purchased 48 twin-sized blankets, 48 small throw blankets, and 36 handwarmers. We donated these purchases to Jackson House, Potter's Clay, and Samaritan Ministries.

The total of the PC(USA) Peace and Global Witness offering was \$656. Twenty-five percent of that offering was donated to Lake Hamilton School District's The New Horizon A. L. E.



On October 31, the volunteer team of Mary Lynn Cole, Steven Smith, Karen Wacaster, and Tommy Waddell prepared and distributed 150 lunches for the Jackson House lunch program.

Due to the government shutdown and holiday season being near, we acknowledge that more people will need food assistance. Therefore, our committee decided to donate \$2000 to Jackson House from our *Missions Funded from Bequests* to support their food supplies to help those in need.

The committee decided the recipients of the 4th Quarter Mission General fund are:

- \$250 to Ouachita River Correctional Unit Chaplain Fund for Christmas
- \$250 to University of Ozarks for student enrichment
- \$250 to Potter's Clay
- \$250 to Tuggle Clinic for homeless care

Our annual Mitten tree will be up in the narthex during the Advent Season. Please help decorate the tree with new mittens, gloves, hats, mufflers, scarves for children and adults. The donated items will be delivered to Jackson House for them to include as a part of their Christmas gifts.

On December 21 and subsequent weeks, PC(USA) Joy Offering will be received. This offering will be used for providing comfort to church leaders, building up the future of the church, and supporting leadership development.

December and January Dollar giving is designated to purchase small space heaters for donating to Jackson House.

Our committee is grateful for generosity and caring hearts for others throughout this year. God bless all of you.

Decorating the Church





Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 8:15 Men's Breakfast 12 Noon Bible Study 4:30 Chancel Choir 5:45 Bell Choir	4	5	6
7 9:30 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Worship/ Communion	8	9 Catherine Circle 1:30 pm Community Room	10 12 Noon Bible Study 4:30 Chancel Choir 5:45 Bell Choir	11	12	13
14 9:30 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Worship 11:30 WPC Sr. High Youth Group (grades 9-12) 11:30 Fellowship Luncheon	15 Session Stated Meeting 6:30 pm, Community Rm	16	17 12 Noon Bible Study 4:30 Chancel Choir 5:45 Bell Choir	18	19	20
21 9:30 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Worship	22	23	24 Office Closed 5:00 Candlelighting 6:00 Pizza, Community room	25 	26	27
28 10:30 a.m. Worship	29	30	31			

JANUARY 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Office Closed 	2	3
4 9:30 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Worship/ Communion	5	6	7 8:15 Men's Breakfast 12 Noon Bible Study 4:30 Chancel Choir 5:45 WPC Bell Choir	8	9	10
11 9:30 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Worship Elders Installation	12	13 1:30 Catherine Circle Community Room	14 12 Noon Bible Study 4:30 Chancel Choir 5:45 WPC Bell Choir	15	17	
18 9:30 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Worship 11:30 Fellowship Luncheon 12:15 WPC Youth	19 Office Closed in ob- servance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	20	21 12 Noon Bible Study 4:30 Chancel Choir 5:45 WPC Bell Choir	22 Newsletter items due	23	24 Session Retreat 8:30—3:00
25 9:30 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Worship	26	27	28 12 Noon Bible Study 4:30 Chancel Choir 5:45 WPC Bell Choir	29 Newsletter to be Mailed today	30	31

Pastor
Rev. Carl McCormack

CRE, Pastoral Care
Susie Wright

Organist/Choir Director/
Handbell Choir Director
Kristen La Madrid

Administrative Assistant
Billie Wetzler

Custodian
Jack Davis

Mother's Day Out Director
Anita Dickson

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Lectio *nary*



December 7—Isa. 11:1-

10 and Ps. 72:1-7, 18-19; Rom. 15:4-13;
Matt. 3:1-12

December 14—Isa. 35:1-10 and Ps. 146:5-10 or
Luke 1:46b-55; James 5:7-10; Matt. 11:2-11

December 21—Isa. 7:10-16 and Ps. 80:1-7, 17-19;
Rom. 1:1-7; Matt. 1:18-25

December 24—Isa. 9:2-7 and Ps. 96; Titus 2:11-
14; Luke 2:1-15 (15-20)

December 25—Isa. 62:6-12 and Ps. 97; Titus 3:4-
7; Luke 2:(1-7) 8-20; Isa. 52:7-10 and Ps. 98;
Heb. 1:1-4 (5-12); John 1:1-14

December 28—Isa 63:7-9 and Ps. 148; Heb. 2:10-
18, Matt. 2:13-23

January 4—Jer. 31:7-14 and Ps. 147:12-20; Eph.
1:3-14; John 1:(1-9) 10-18

January 11—Isa. 42:1-9 and Ps. 29; Acts 10:34-43;
Matt. 3:13-17

January 18—Isa 49:1-7 and Ps. 40:1-11; I Cor. 1:1-
9; John 1:29-42

January 25—Isa. 9:1-4 and Ps. 27:1, 4-9; I Cor.
1:10-18; Matt. 4:12-23

