



Getting Ready:

Members of LexPres volunteer outdoor decorating crew hard at work on Monday 11/20.
 Clockwise from foreground: Bess Melvin, Kinsley Coffey, Andy Coffey, Jason Melvin, Buddy Bryan, and Mike Strickler. Scroll down for more, including Buddy's amazing hat.

Monthly Worship info

December 3, 2023

Sermon: *Don't Fear the Darkness*
 Old Testament Reading: 1 Samuel 24:1-16
 New Testament Reading: John 1:1-5
 Preacher: Rev. Drew Ditzel
 11am Worship Assistant: Chip Honsinger

December 10, 2023

Sermon: *Creative Darkness*
 Preacher: Rev. Drew Ditzel
 New Testament Reading 1: Matthew 1:18b-24a
 New Testament Reading 2: Luke 1:26-38
 Worship Assistant: Maurine Hauser

December 17, 2023

11 am worship only

Lessons and Carols

December 24, 2023

11 am worship only

Sermon: *Life in the Afterglow*

New Testament Reading:

Preacher: Rev. Drew Ditzel

Worship Assistant: Tom Goodale

December 24, 2023

Christmas Eve Service (5:00 pm and 7:30 pm)

Sermon: *The Stopped Star*

New Testament Scripture: Matthew 2:1-12

Preacher (for 7:30 pm service): Rev. Drew Ditzel

December 31st, 2023

11 am worship only

Worship assistant: Hardin Marion



Advent Theme: In Light and In Darkness

The winter solstice – that day in which there is more darkness than any other in the year – occurs just a few days before Christmas. In this season, we are steeped in darkness, rising and going to bed in it, living in its shapes and contours, studying it from our small oases of light. Metaphors of light and darkness color our understanding of our world and our faith. In words resonant with Christ's arrival, Isaiah prophesied 'the people who walked in darkness have seen a great Light' (Isaiah 9:2 – Kids' Club study scripture on Nov. 19 !). We're taught, often, that darkness is negative, that we are made for 'light,' in many symbolic senses of the word. But in this Advent season, we're examining that assumption – where in our lives and our faith is darkness fruitful, helpful, or necessary? What gives us 'light' and darkness in this and every season? What does scripture tell us about the powerful imagery of darkness and light?

You'll hear about light and darkness in two ways in this Advent season, whose first Sunday is Dec. 3. First, a sermon series will invite us to reflect on the theme. Second, you'll receive an advent devotional booklet with short readings and guided reflections. Households with adults and older youth will receive a pocket-sized booklet, available at church for pickup starting Nov. 26 (or, if you'd like yours in the mail, email Sandra at shayslette@lexpres.org). Households with young children will receive a festive package in the mail with a version made for family, complete with an advent calendar that starts on Dec. 1 (featuring brief, inexpensive, daily activities for families), reflections to be read to all ages, and a coloring/shadow box theater activity. Come dive into the darkness and light of the season with us!

Thursdays Women's Drop-in at Amelia Ditzel's Home

Please drop-in for coffee, tea, muffins and fellowship on the first Thursday of the month at the Ditzels' home. There is no agenda and no need to bring anything – just a time to be together. Stop by for as long or as short as you like after dropping off kids for school, on the way to work, or simply to start your morning. See you at 206 Johnstone St., 7:45-9:45 AM, on Dec. 7.

Save the Date for One Service

On Sunday morning Dec 17th (Lessons and Carols), Dec. 24th, and Dec 31st, we will only have one worship service at 11 am in the sanctuary. There will be no early worship on these Sundays.

Along with the fourth Sunday of Advent at 11 am on Dec 24th, we will have our two Christmas Eve services that evening (5 and 7:30 pm). So yes, if you are concerned you are on the naughty list, you could attend three worship services the day before Christmas!

Rafiki Report – December, 2023

The Changing of the Guard

At Buckingham Palace there is a ritual known as the Changing of the Guard. Every two hours, a new group of guards comes on. They are fresh, energetic and ready for the task at hand. It is that time here at Lex Pres to make a change in terms of reporting Rafiki to the congregation. Tammy Shomo is going to take the Rafiki representative in place of Mary Raine Paxton. The church's commitment to Rafiki supports more than its sponsorship of the orphan, Metsy Tages, with whom we are more familiar. There is the childcare program, which includes day students, the Widows Program RICE, the teacher training program and general support for the African villages where Rafiki is located. Our support is more than monetary. It includes prayer and emotional support, i.e., letters, cards, pictures, etc. Tammy will be overseeing all of this particular mission at Lex Pres. So . . . meet Tammy Shomo.

Tammy, a retired Rockbridge County school teacher, graduated from Bridgewater College with a B.A. degree in Education and later graduated from James Madison University with a Master of Education degree along with a Reading Specialist license. She is the daughter of Martha and

Johnny Huffman and is married to Randy. They have one son, John, who grew up in this church and is currently a junior at JMU. Tammy has served on Session, taught middle school Sunday School, was a member of Lam Handbell choir for many years, and is a member of the church's count team. When not enjoying sporting events with John at JMU, Tammy is either reading a good book or playing a round of golf. Currently, she is serving on the Board of Directors of LGCC, chairs the golf committee as well as serving as the treasurer for the Ladies Golf Association.

Thank you for your faithful support in helping Africans know Christ and raising their standard of living.

Prayer Request: For Tammy, wisdom, energy and joy as she moves into this new job.

Exploring Lex Pres

Are you new to Lex Pres and interested in knowing what we believe, who we are, and where we hope to go? Are you someone who has attended worship for years but desires to make a more formal commitment to this community through membership? Or do you just want to meet some new people around lively discussions of faith and what it means to be Presbyterian?

If you answered yes (or *maybe*, or even *probably not*) to any of these questions, I hope you will consider signing up for a two week Exploring Lex Pres class led by Drew Ditzel. We will meet Dec 3rd and 10th at 9:45 am during the Sunday school hour. While this is the primary step toward joining Lex Pres, there is no expectation that one will join the church upon finishing the class. It is truly a chance to explore together what it means to be God's people.

Questions? Want to sign up? Email Drew (drditzel@lexpres.org).

Life of the Church: LexPres Out and About



Left: Hiking crew on a beautiful day at Lake Robertson –note the artistic use of photographer's shadow; *Center:* We don't know what Buddy has on his head, but Mike will still be seen with him; *Right:* Untangling lights is the most glamorous and highest paid of our decorating tasks.

From the Director of Culinary Ministries, Skip Hess: Red Velvet Cake

The time for Christmas baking is upon us! A popular cake during the holiday season is **Red Velvet Cake**. I've been asked to share this recipe again (editor's note: there's a reason). You can make this cake ahead of time and freeze the layers to be frosted just before you need them.

Ingredients for Cake:

- 1 ½ cups sugar
- ½ cup Wesson oil
- 2 eggs (room temperature)
- 2 oz. red food coloring
- 2 tablespoons cocoa
- 1 ½ teaspoons baking soda
- 1 cup buttermilk
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon pure vanilla
- 2 ½ cups all purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon white vinegar

Ingredients for frosting:

- 1 box confectioners' sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 stick butter
- 1 package (8 oz) cream cheese
- 1 tablespoon buttermilk, half-and-half, or heavy cream

Directions:

Cream sugar and oil with mixer until light in color, then add eggs one at a time, mixing well. Add buttermilk, vanilla, and food coloring (for the bright red color, use exactly a 2 oz. bottle!). In another bowl, sift together cocoa, baking soda, salt, and flour. Add flour mixture slowly, mixing well. Add vinegar last and mix well.

Spray 2 nine-inch round pans with bakers' release spray (PAM for baking). This cake also does well in a rectangular pan (9"x 13") for a single-layer cake. Pour in batter and bake in 350 degree oven for 30-40 minutes, or until toothpick comes out clean. Cool for 15 minutes before removing the cake from the pan.

For cream cheese frosting, use an electric mixer. Cream butter and cream cheese (both must be at room temperature) until smooth, then add vanilla and buttermilk (or half-and-half or heavy cream). Add confectioners' sugar slowly with the mixer on the lowest speed. Adjust frosting by using more milk or less sugar.

For best results, use a crumb coat for the cake. This is a very thin layer of frosting all over the cake, cooled in the refrigerator for several minutes before applying the final coat of frosting. This prevents crumbs and color bleeding.

MUSIC AT NOON ORGAN CONCERTS IN DECEMBER

The "Music at Noon" concert series at Lexington Presbyterian Church will return in December with three concerts on Wednesdays, December 6, 13, and 20. Don't miss these lovely holiday observances!

The program on December 6 will feature Daniel Brinson of Charlottesville, formerly of Lexington, in a program of piano music by Ola Gjeilo and Gwyneth Walker. William McCorkle will offer the other two programs. The December 13 concert, on the church's C. B. Fisk pipe organ, opus 128, will consist of organ music for Advent and Christmas. On December 20, McCorkle will continue his tradition of keyboard improvisations on Christmas tunes.

Calendar of Events

Lectio - Every Tuesday at 10:00 a.m.

Kids Club Staging Event – Every Wednesday, 2:30-4:30 (**cancelled Nov. 22**)

Handbells - Every Tuesday at 5:45 p.m. All are welcome! New day and time!

Choir - Every Thursday at 7:30 p.m.

Nov.

24th – Candlelight processional and community tree lighting – Leaves Oak Grove cemetery at 5:30 p.m.

28th - Family and Children's Ministry committee– 7:00 p.m. –Brady

Dec.

1st– Parade Watch Pizza Party for families– 5:00 p.m. – Dunlap

3rd –Exploring LexPres class – 9:45 a.m. – Dunlap

– Family advent-wreath assembly for kids and parents – post-11:00 a.m. worship – Dunlap

– Senior high (9th-12th grade) youth out to lunch – post-11:00 a.m. worship

5th – Session – 7:00 p.m.–Brady

6th – Music at Noon: pianist Daniel Brinson; music by Gjeilo and Walker - 12:00 noon

7th –Women's drop-in coffee fellowship, the Ditzels' home (206 Johnstone St), 7:45-10:00 am

–Thantastic Thursday, 5:45 p.m. – Christmas Carols with Laura de Maria

8th – Parents' Time Out – 5:15-8:15 p.m.– Dunlap

10th – Exploring LexPres class – 9:45 a.m. –Dunlap

– Congregational Meeting for the purpose of electing Session elders – after 11 a.m. service

–Outreach Committee – noon –Room 113

11th– Prayer Shawl group – 10:00 a.m. – Room 111

12th – Worship Committee – 5:00 p.m. – Brady

–Campus Ministry – 5:30 p.m. – Room 113

13th – Music at Noon: organist William McCorkle, music for Advent - 12:00 noon

Leah-Ruth Circle – 1:00 p.m.

– Preschool Board meeting – 4:30 p. m.

15th – Main St. Lexington Church Open House – 4:00-6:00 p.m., Sanctuary

17th – 9 Lessons and Carols service, 11:00 a.m. (1 service only)

–Joy Luncheon – after 11:00 a.m. service – Dunlap

19th – Property Committee – 5:30 p.m. – Room 113

20th - Music at Noon: pianist William McCorkle; improvisations on Christmas melodies

23rd – Pageant rehearsal for those with speaking parts, 3:00 p.m. – Sanctuary

24th –One morning service, 11:00 a.m.

–Family-friendly pageant and candlelight service – 5:00 p.m.

– Traditional candlelight service – 7:30 p.m.
