

HAPPENINGS

First Presbyterian Church | 1601 Main St., Murray, KY 42071 | (270) 753-6460



Church Staff

Pastor: Rev. Dr. Renee A. Meyer

Clerk of Session: Carol Allen

Treasurer: George Kipphut

Choir Director: Kate Tombaugh

Accompanist: Christy D'Ambrosio

Secretary: Andrea French

Campus Ministry Director: Lisa Polivick

Youth Director: Andrew Green

Nursery Attendants: Lindsay Crafton,
Lexi Bergman

Custodian: Monte Fisher

Office Hours: Monday-Friday
a.m.-12 p.m.; 1-3 p.m.

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From Pastor Renee's Desk

I was reading a blog by a Progressive Christian about the incarnation. For those who are not familiar with it, Progressive Christianity is a type of Christianity, much like Evangelical Christianity is a type. It has nothing to do with politics or liberalism. It is not referring to progressive political perspectives. These are two very different things. Many hear the term “progressive” and immediately their mind thinks about the debates within the public political sphere. I want to make this distinction clear from the start, so that what I have to say about the incarnation may get a fair hearing.

One of the things I absolutely love about this congregation is that we have a variety of theological perspectives. We can give voice and honesty to them, and not feel alienated as a result of them. I can openly say “this is where I am right now and I understand this idea/theology this way.” We are able to listen to one another and support one another as we grow spiritually on both our individual and corporate journeys of faith.

So here is what I recently read. “Yesterday, I passed a church sign that proclaimed Christmas was the story of a baby born to die. It seemed a macabre, odd way to wish passersby a merry Christmas. Apparently, though, quite a few Christians root the story of Jesus’ birth in his death, as if they are determined to nestle the cross into the manger’s hay, right next to Jesus.”

1. Henson, David. “Born to Die?: Why the Cross Doesn’t Belong at Christmas,” Why an Incarnation?, www.patheos.com/progressive-christian/topics/proggod/why-an-incarnation

Join Us!



Men's Breakfast

Every Wednesday
Morning at 7 a.m.

Dec 6, Rudy's

Dec 13, Cracker Barrel

Dec 20, Crossroads

Dec 27, Hih Burger

Lunch Bunch



Every Thursday at 12 p.m.

Dec 7, Culver's

Dec 14, Backyard Burger

Dec 21, Mugsy's

Dec 28, Big Apple

That particular understanding may be your perspective and there is absolutely nothing wrong with that. Hear me say that please! But I want you to know that there are other theologies about the incarnation and the cross. I certainly think there is salvation in the cross—but how I use the term “salvation” is quite different from the traditional view. I will save that for Good Friday! However it is certainly possible to understand the cross in the traditional view, and still understand incarnation to be more than simply a way to understand the atonement (Jesus’ death).

Many Christians understand Jesus’ death as the most important idea within Christianity. I once thought that myself. However, right now, I believe the incarnation to be the most critical theology about Jesus. You may remember me saying from time to time that God created us fully human and fully good. There are no qualifications in this description. We were made good, period. So if we want to get in touch with our best selves then we need to plumb the depths of our humanity, our full humanity. The first creation story in Genesis says that we were made in the image of God. That divine image is rooted in relationship—relationship with God, with one another, and with all of creation.

Jesus, too, was fully human. I think Jesus was able to consistently sink into his humanity and be fully and completely as God intended. Some say he had a superior God-consciousness within his humanity. He was able to sink deeply into his humanity and as a result be so in touch with God as to be Immanuel, God with us.

Thanks to the ministry of Christ, we have a model that we can imitate. Jesus demonstrated what it means to live a God-infused life and it is a model that we have the capacity to replicate. We do have the capacity to love as Jesus loved while he walked the earth. We have the capacity to be selfless, compassionate, empathic, loving, giving, and welcoming to all. We have the capacity to work tirelessly for peace and nonviolence. We have the capacity to transform systems of domination into systems of freedom, fairness, and equity. We have the capacity to love the earth and all the creatures in it. How do I know we have the capacity for all these things? Because people are already doing them, that’s how! When we do any of these things what we are doing is investing in relationships—relationships among people and a relationship with the created world that presses us to see it

as that which God also called “good.” The creation accounts charge humanity with “subdue the earth” and “have dominion over the animals.” Subdue in the sense that we must tame the chaos a bit in order to transform it into a place that produces life. We must be careful here though. There is life, and there is market-driven excess.

None of us lives up to Christ’s example all the time. That is why community is so important. We must do it together. We have power in numbers, because when some of us momentarily (or longer) fail, then there are others who take up the slack and hold us accountable at the same time.

May you have a Blessed Advent and Christmas as you ponder the beauty and power of the incarnation, Immanuel—God with us.

Shalom, Pastor Renee



Murray Calloway County
Need Line

Need Line Update

Thank you for supporting our annual cranberry sauce drive for Need Line's Christmas Basket Program. At the end of November, we have already come close to meeting our goal of 300 cans!

The last day to turn in cans will be Sunday, December 3, so we still have time for one final push! Visit <http://www.needlinefoodproject.com/> to learn more about Need Line and how it helps our community.



Renee and Jerry's Annual Open House December 9, 12-2 p.m.

Please come out to our house at 631 Oaks Country Club Road on Dec. 9 anytime between Noon-2:00 p.m. Please come hungry!! We are so happy to be able to host the church family in our home once again. There will be food, desserts, and Renee’s famous Wassail! Stay for as long as you would like. Remember, the wassail goes fast so if you want a cup of it you had better not wait until 1:30 because it’s usually gone by then. This is our gift to you, so please do not ask us if you can make anything for it—the answer is NO! All you need to bring is you!



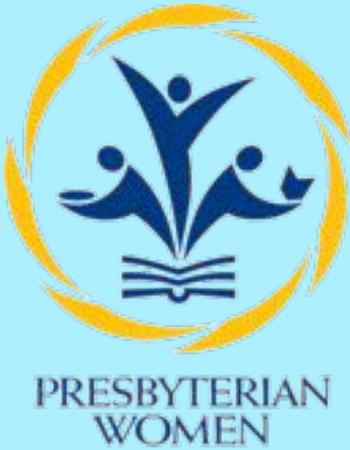
Holly Berry 2017

We would like to thank our Presbyterian Women, Men, and all of our phenomenal volunteers who worked hard to pull off another successful fundraiser!

It was fun getting into the spirit of Christmas with our friends and we raised funds that will be used to support our community-wide backpack program, which serves young children through the donation of weekend food, when there otherwise might not be anything else to eat at home.

Pictured above and at right: Everything has been set up and is beautifully displayed the evening before Holly Berry.





Hello, Presbyterian Women! December is another busy month for us and, as a reminder, we are not holding our usual Brown Bag Lunch this month. Now that Holly Berry is over, we have switched gears and have started to assemble our backpack sacks! This special program helps pre-school/school-aged children by providing much-needed nutrition over the weekend, when there otherwise might not be anything else at home to eat. Teachers discreetly place the food packs into the child's backpack before going home for the weekend.

We still have two more workshops left:

Tuesday, December 5, 5 p.m. Pizza served at 5 p.m., assembly begins at 5:30 p.m.

Wednesday, December 13, 1 p.m.

Each assembly will take approximately a couple of hours. We will immediately deliver the back pack sacks to the following locations in our community: Calloway Pre-School, Calloway Family Resource Center, Murray Family Resource Center, Murray Head Start.

If you would like to get involved with this wonderful community project, please contact Ann Stanley (270-753-8747) or asjstanley33@twc.com for more information.

Pictured right: Volunteers assemble backpack sacks in the Fellowship Hall on November 29, 2017.





Financial Report

From the Stewardship Committee

Thank you to all who have kept up with donations to both our church and to our Building Fund during 2017. We are on schedule to retire our mortgage by late December of this year!

- 2017 income as of October 31 — \$139,079
- 2017 expenses as of October 31 — \$149,354
- Remaining Mortgage Balance as of October 31 - \$12,050

As a reminder, please remember to fulfill your 2017 pledges by the end of this year.



Clerk's Corner

Submitted by Carol Allen

Stated Session Meeting Nov 21, 2017

Action taken by Session

- ♦ Session received Sarah Locke into active membership by reaffirmation of faith.

GIVE BLOOD

You can make a difference.



American Red Cross

Save the Date!

American Red Cross Blood Drive:

**Thursday, December 14, 12:30-5:30 p.m.
FPC**

Christmas Cantata Dec 17

Submitted by Kate Tombaugh

The FPC Choir will be presenting its Christmas Cantata, "The Advent of Hope, the Birth of Peace" by Robert Lau and Stephen Andrews, during the 10:45 a.m. service on Sunday, December 17. Please invite your friends and family to join us for this special musical service celebrating the Advent season and Christ's birth!





Buckhorn Christmas Tree

Submitted by Cindy Barnett

If you have been in the Narthex lately, you might have noticed a little Christmas tree beside the sign-up table. This humble little tree has a mighty purpose: to help support the abused and neglected children of the Buckhorn Children's Home in eastern Kentucky. Our church supports Buckhorn through financial contributions. Members are encouraged to make a suggested donation of around \$5-\$10 (or however much or little members choose to give), which is used to purchase Christmas presents for these precious children. This year, our list of names includes 67 children, which is double the amount from last year. You are invited to visit the Buckhorn Tree in the narthex and leave a monetary gift there for a special child. The tree is decorated by the church youth, and each ornament represents a child in need. Simply take an envelope from beside the tree, put a donation in the envelope, and place it in the basket underneath the tree. These donations will help support the children at Christmastime.

To learn more about the Buckhorn Children's Home, and how they are working to make a difference, please visit: <http://buckhorn.org/who-we-are/>.

The Group

Submitted by Kathie Fleming

The Group Event for December is scheduled for Sunday, December 10, at 5 p.m. You are invited to our pot luck appetizer and dessert meal at our home, Don and Kathie Fleming, 80 Haynes Creek Drive, Murray. Please sign up on the table in the narthex. We will have a Dirty Santa gift auction with gifts of approximate \$10 value. This has proven to be great fun in past years! Questions? Call Kathie Fleming at (270) 759-1145.



New Church Directory: Coming Soon!

Have you made your appointment yet? LifeTouch will take pictures of all of our families and members on the following dates and times: December 5, 6, 7, from 2-9 p.m. each day. Each individual/family will receive a complimentary 8x10 photo, as well as a free Church Directory! You will have the opportunity to purchase additional photos as you please. Please arrive on time for your appointment. Family pets are welcome!



Advent Party at First Christian Church: Lunch, Cookies & Crafts

*Submitted by Rev. Dr. Ruth Ragovin,
First Christian Church*

On Sunday, December 10, from 12-2 p.m., First Christian Church will be hosting an Advent party for children and youth with old fashioned Christmas cookie baking, crafts, food, etc. We will be supplying everything and invite you to encourage your children and youth to attend (and maybe some adults too to help with some of the stations). It's going to be a fun time and a great way to get in the spirit of Christmas!

When: Sunday, December 10th from 12 p.m. to around 2 p.m.

Where: Fellowship Hall of First Christian Church, 111 N 5th Street, Murray, Kentucky

We'll Be: Eating lunch together, making crafts, baking and decorating cookies

Remember to wear clothes that you can get covered with flour and cookie dough! Please bring as many friends as you would like and get ready to have a blast.

- Questions? Call Nancy Dycus at 270-978-1900 -

Dorothy McKenzie & Dorothy Moore Circles

The Dorothy McKenzie and Dorothy Moore Circles will meet together at church on Monday, December 11, at 1 p.m. New women are always welcome to attend. We are a friendly bunch!

Beth Belote Circle

The Beth Belote Circle will meet at Debbie Burgess' home on Thursday, December 14, at 6 p.m. Any woman is invited to enjoy food and fellowship, even if she has not yet read the material. Debbie's home is located at 1710 Audubon in Murray.

Operation Christmas Child: Elves on a Mission

Submitted by Marcie Hobbs

Volunteers from First Presbyterian Church and First Christian Church gathered on November 15 to prepare shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child. Donated gifts and necessities were packaged into nice little parcels, which will eventually be delivered to needy children around the world.



Pictured below: Volunteers work at various stations, ensuring each shoebox is packed with care and ready to be shipped to its final destination far, far away.





Soup For The Soul

Submitted by Ann Stanley

Do you know about Soup For The Soul? It is Murray's "new" Soup Kitchen, which opened in June of 2015, and is located at 411 Maple Street. Remarkably, it runs entirely on donated food. With the help of volunteers, Soup For The Soul fights hunger in our community one plate at a time. Our next time to serve at Soup For The Soul is Monday, January 15. If you would like a chance to serve others, meet some new people from church, and feel good at the same time, let me know, and I'll get you signed up! Give me a call 753 - 8747 or email asjstanley33@twc.com.

Second Annual Doughnuts and Cider Social

Submitted by Val Heath

Please join us for spiced cider and doughnuts!

Sunday, December 17

10:15-10:45 a.m.

Church Narthex



Birthdays

- Marcie Johnson, Dec 1
- Rocky Long, Dec 3
- Joan Adams, Dec 6
- Morgan Randall, Dec 12
- Charlotte Gregory, Dec 25
- Donald Fleming, Dec 25
- George Kipphut, Dec 28
- Elizabeth Gilliam, Dec 28
- Debbie Hixon, Dec 30

DECEMBER

Anniversaries

- Melinda and Russ Wall, Dec 19
- Barbara & Harry Conley, Dec 28
- Laynie & Chris Mitchell, Dec 28

Alternative Christmas Gift Market

Open in Session Room: December 10, 17

Submitted by Deanna Wolf



If, like me, you are hearing Christmas bells ringing in the distance, you may have already let out a groan of anticipated overload. Not to fear! We can help you ease one part of your Christmas chaos. Your Outreach Committee is again sponsoring an Alternative Christmas Gift Market. Here's your opportunity to easily buy gifts for some of the toughest people on your list...the ones who don't want or need ANY thing in the world, but who you love, respect, admire, like and want them to KNOW that. We will have a Christmas catalog of charities, some old friends and some new comers, from which you can choose an alternative gift of a charitable contribution to give to those tough folks. It's the gift that gives twice! We will have a variety of choices so you can pick the one that would be most meaningful to your giftee. Please view the Alternative Christmas Gift Market booklet to learn more about all of your choices. Happy shopping, friends!

Youth Group & Wednesday Night Live

December Schedule:

Dec 6: 5:30 p.m. Youth Group at FCC.

Dec 10: 12-2 p.m. Advent Party at FCC. Lunch, cookies and crafts!

Dec 13: 5:30 p.m. Youth Group, MOTA House, Dirty Santa. Bring a wrapped Christmas gift for the gift exchange. Bring some dessert to share.

Dec 21 (Thursday): 7 p.m. Youth Group to help with The Longest Night Winter Solstice Service at FCC

Dec 27: No Youth Group (Christmas Week)

Youth Director: Andrew Green; 270-978-1527; andrewgreen12@gmail.com.



Winter Solstice Service

Longest Night - Service of Light

Thursday, December 21

7:00 p.m.

First Christian Church

Is the Christmas season a difficult time for you because you are lonely, depressed, grieving, have recently lost a job or experienced a significant loss such as a separation or divorce? Or do you just need a time of solitude? Come and bring your pain and grief to a special candlelit service of music, scripture, and words of hope.

Refreshments will be served following the service.





Prayer Concerns

*“Blessed be God, because God has
not rejected my prayer
or removed God’s steadfast love from me.”--
Psalm 66:20*

Church Members and Regular Attendees

Lanette Thurman	Passing of husband, Bill
Tim & Tonie Belcher	Passing of sister, Karen
Bev Reuter	Recovery from bronchitis, pleurisy, good health to finish radiation
Billy Mitchell	Recovery from fall and possible stroke
Lexi Rainey	Seeing Neurologist
Eva Hopkins	Health Issues
Adelaide Goselin	Recovery from recent illness
Sallie Guy	Recovery from surgery
Juli McClain and Family	Passing of her father, Dan
Cheryl Pittman	Foot (nerve) pain
Sue Cochran	Neuropathy treatments
Dennis Mills	Recovery so he may return to work soon
Maryann Mitchell	Hospice House
Cindy Barnett	Wisdom for helping her daughter
Warren Thomas	Home
Paul Shaw	Declining health due to Parkinson’s Disease

Mary Lynn Christensen	At Brookdale
Sal Matarazzo	Congestive heart failure
Rosemary Moore	Health issues
Barbara Simons	Health issues
Jo Martin	Recent heart attack

Family and Friends of the Congregation

Family of Karen Belcher

Betsy Wall (Russ' Mother)	Passing of her friend, Jewell Tucker
Sam Dean	(Joe Paul Dean's Brother, Autism)
Liam Corusey	Former Choir Intern
Corky Broughton	Recovery from knee replacement surgery
Sherry (Sue Cochran's Sister)	Leg pain, complications from a fall
Niko	Testicular cancer (spread to lungs, brain)
Laura	Strength and direction during a difficult time
Bruce and Katie Pittman	Recovery from automobile accident
Laura and David Mason	Recovery from automobile accident
Terri Prince	Lung cancer and chemo
Murray Wall	Recovery from surgery, divorce
Edna Davis (Pastor Renee's Friend)	On Hospice care
Family of Mildred Valentine	
Family of Betty Shepperson	
Family of Sally Wright (Todd's Mother)	
Tabitha & Junior	Pittman's family
Sandy Cunningham	Pastor Renee's mother, severe macular degeneration