

First Presbyterian Church
1169 Clark Street, SW
Covington, GA 30014



Time Sensitive Church News
Please Do Not Delay

Nonprofit Organiza-
tion
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Covington, GA
30014
Permit No. 32

See our website at: www.fpccov.org

The deadline for the January 2021 "First Press" is December 15, 2020. Please submit your articles and information to the church office by email: admin@fpccov.org or by dropping off your copy to the church office, neatly printed or typed or on a flash drive. Thanks!

Rebecca Bates	12/1
Dennis Hooten	12/2
Sarah Gregory	12/2
Trent Blankenship	12/4
Luke Gregory	12/7
Laurel Ardis	12/8
Dot Schaeffer	12/10
Ellis Dunbar	12/11
Brad Phillips	12/12
Louly Hay	12/15



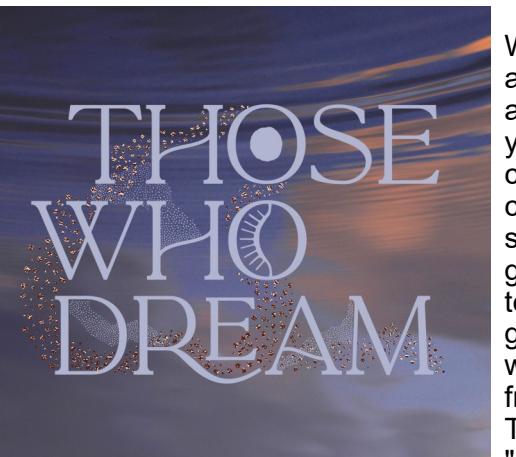
Palmer Wilson	12/16
Rodney Pruner	12/25
Don Wade	12/28
Sherry Brasher	12/28
Douglas Hicks	12/28
Dan Walden	12/29
Jodi Atkins	12/31

If your birthday has not appeared on our monthly list, please notify us of the **full date** and we will add it to our data base so that when your next birthday rolls around, we will be able to help you celebrate!

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, COVINGTON DECEMBER 2020

FIRST PRESS

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS EDITION



We all have dreams. Our dreams encourage us to wonder, to imagine, to dance, and to explore. Recently, Kately, our eight year old, asked me to hang up a dream catcher in her room. "Mommy, a dream catcher catches all of my negative dreams so that while I am sleeping I only have good dreams," Kately shared. I asked her to share with me what she understands is a good dream. "Good dreams are dreams where I am singing, playing with my friends, and everybody loves one another." This Advent we will be those who dream "good dreams" as we anticipate Christ

coming into the world. As we enter into this holy season, I invite you to consider your dreams through the dreams of scripture. Do you have a dream? How might God's dream for our world be born in and through you this Advent? In this special edition of our church newsletter, we have provided a variety of ways we can dream good and holy dreams! May it be so!

- Neeley

Advent Devotionals:

Advent means arrival. It was Advent 2014 when I was pregnant with Paisley. Waiting with the expectation of the Christ Child while being pregnant with Paisley, was a deep holy experience. The excitement, the glee, the hope, the watching day and night, the expectant prayers: this church family is what Advent is. A time of anticipating and celebrating Christ's birth into our world. It is in this time of waiting we are called to engage in personal reflection and communal discernment. During the four weeks of Advent, we hope you will join us in our holy waiting. Provided for you in our enews (our church weekly email newsletter) will be a link to download your own copy of our Advent Devotional. Hear these words offered by Sanctified Art:

"Psalm 126 opens with the line: "When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream."

What does it look like to live as those who dream? How can we embody and bring forth God's dreams? How do we dream of a better world when our current one feels harrowing and disorienting?

The prophets, the psalmists, John the Baptist, Mary, Elizabeth, Joseph, Simeon, Anna, the shepherds and the Magi—they were all dreamers. They received, discovered, and responded to God's dreams for the world. In Advent, we step into the mystery and awe of God's dreams and pray they shape our reality.

This devotional is for the dreamers in all of us—those who dream of a deeper connection with God and those who dream of a better world. It's for those who dream of comfort and for those who have given up on their dreams. It's for those whose dreams have been crushed and for those who show us that dreams take time. And so, as you walk through these prompts and readings day by day, may you dream alongside prophets and angels, Mary and the Magi. Together, may we seek and sow God's dreams for our world."

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STAFF

Neeley Rentz Lane
Senior Pastor
Neeley@fpccov.org

Kimmy Briggs
Director of
Family Ministries
kimmy@fpccov.org

Peni Kehoe
Church Administrator
admin@fpccov.org

Krista Firkus
Choir Director
Kfirkus42@gmail.com

Alice Walker
Organist
awalker.atl.pres.5@gmail.com

Danielle Schubert
Nursery



First Presbyterian
Church
1169 Clark Street, SW
Covington, GA 30014
(770)786-7321
Fax (770)786-6596
www.fpccov.org

SPECIAL ON-LINE CONCERT

2020 Advent/Christmas Duet Recital

by Alice Walker and Becky Ramsey



Sunday, November 29, at 7:00 PM,

Alice Walker and Becky Ramsey

will present a

Duet Recital of traditional Advent/Christmas Carols

The recital will be available at the

Covington First Presbyterian Church website: FPCCOV.org

Watch for information about a Zoom Watch Party for the Premiere!
(beginning November 29 and continuing through the Christmas season)

*Please mark your calendar and share this email invitation with your family and friends,
as well as with your parishioners!*

Prayers from the Pews

For the season of Advent we will lean in to the art of poetry. We will explore poems written by Sarah Are, "Those Who Dream: Poetry Prayers." You are invited to engage the dreams of scripture with Neeley on Tuesdays at 4pm on Facebook. Poetry Poems will be provided for your personal spiritual discipline of prayers and reflection. The Poetry Poems will be posted each week in the comment section of Prayers from the Pews.

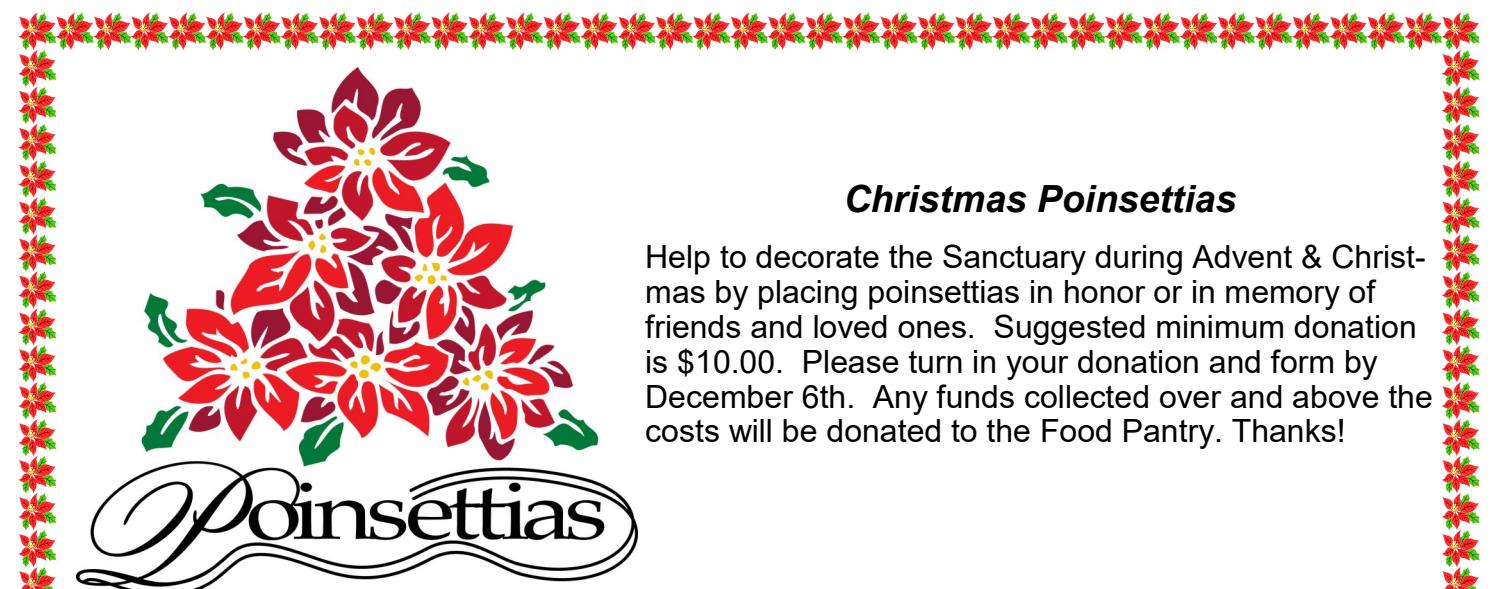
MEMBERS OF SESSION

Class of 2020
Doug Bolton
Stan Hall
Cindy Moon
Bob Tabb

Class of 2021
Jay Lanners
Warren Liem
Pam Stillerman
Donna Weesner
Cy Wolverton

Class of 2022
Aubrey Evans
John McCarthy
Stephanie Scarborough
Trista Hooten Wilson

SHARING YOUR BLESSINGS



Christmas Poinsettias

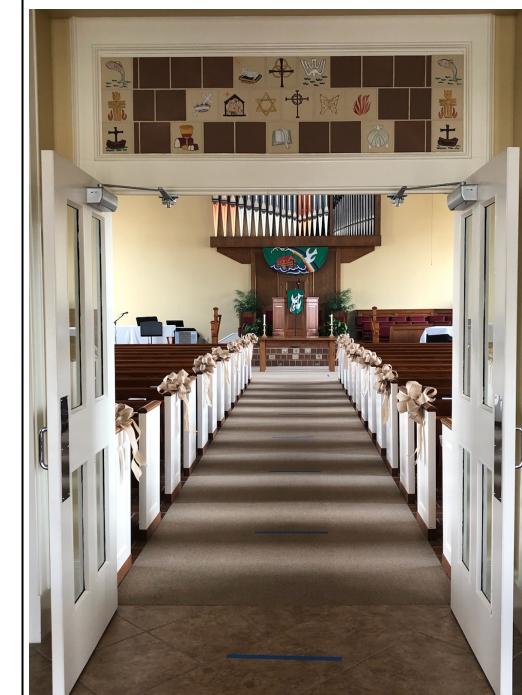
Help to decorate the Sanctuary during Advent & Christmas by placing poinsettias in honor or in memory of friends and loved ones. Suggested minimum donation is \$10.00. Please turn in your donation and form by December 6th. Any funds collected over and above the costs will be donated to the Food Pantry. Thanks!

Name of donor _____

In Honor of _____

In Memory of _____

Cash or Check attached _____



"Opening Doors" Stewardship Campaign

"Everyone should give whatever they have decided in their heart. They should not give with hesitation or because of pressure. God loves a cheerful giver." *2 Corinthians 9:7*

On Sunday November 8th we celebrated Commitment Sunday. To date we have received 43 Commitment Cards as pledges to our 2021 ministry at FPC. Last year we had 69 households who committed to support FPC. To sustain our ministries in the coming year we ask that you prayerfully consider how each of us, while "Opening Doors", can share all that God has blessed us with during these unprecedented times. Please think about all the doors we can open as we give through our Time, Talents and Treasures. Through your gifts we can show that everyone is "Loved, Valued and Welcomed" through our doors. Please send in your Commitment Card. You may also email your commitment to: admin@fpccov.org.

Blessings to all from your Stewardship Team, Darcel and Dana

CHRISTMAS LOVE GIFTS FOR OUR STAFF



November 16, 2020

Dear Members and Friends of First Presbyterian Church, Covington:

Each year during the Christmas Season, we at FPC, Covington, like to show our appreciation and gratitude to our church staff members who give so much of themselves on our behalf throughout the course of each year.

We ask for your participation in this effort by making a contribution to a special fund that we establish annually for this purpose. You may contribute in several ways: leaving your contribution in the FPC offering plate, bringing it by the Church Office, or mailing it to the Church. Please ensure that you label your check and/or your envelope, "Staff Love Gift" so that it will end up in the right place. It would be helpful if your contribution were made in a separate check, rather than making it a part of your regular contributions to FPC. You may also give on-line through REALM or by texting to 73256, enter FPCCOV as your message, click to send. Follow the prompts and use "Love Gift" as the fund. If you aren't able to enter a fund, please email admin@fpccov.org to notify us of your gift to the fund.

Please make sure that your "Staff Love Gift" reaches the Church by Sunday, December 20, 2020. Your generosity is much appreciated, in helping us to show our love to our devoted Church Staff Members.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Tabb".

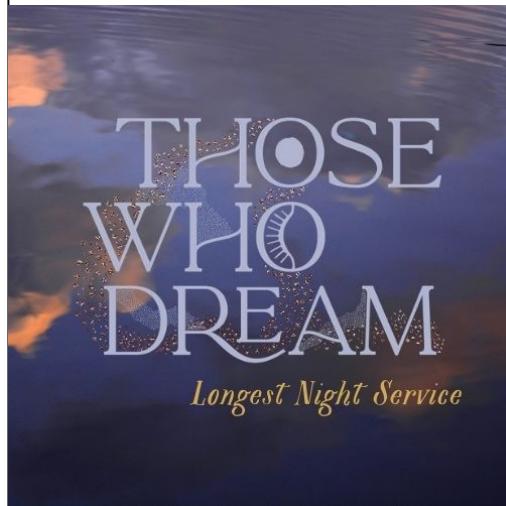
Bob Tabb
For the Finance Team

1169 Clark Street, SW, Covington, GA 30014-2314
Church Office: 770-786-7321 Email: admin@fpccov.org

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

Sundays in Advent

Advent 1, November 29, Advent 2, December 6, Advent 3; December 13, Advent 4, December 20.
All Services are at 11:00am and require reservations by Friday at 4:00pm



Longest Night Service

Date: December 21st 6:30pm
RSVP: Dec. 21 at 4:00pm

There's an Advent tradition within Western Christianity of inviting people to come together for the Longest Night, a night around the time of the winter solstice, when there are more hours of darkness than light. It's a time to come together for prayers and laments, to mourn the losses and griefs of the year, to let the tears flow for the hurting places in our own lives, as well as for our country and our world. Known also as "Blue Christmas,"¹ a Longest Night Gathering is a safe and sacred space to share anguish, to plead with God to remember us, to pray for justice and restoration, even to hope against hope, through our doubts and tears and fears, that "God will set things right all over the earth."² (A Sanctified Art, LLC) You are invited this Advent to hold space for the needed collective breath of lament and hope as a church family. We will gather in-person and on Facebook Live.

Christmas Eve Worship

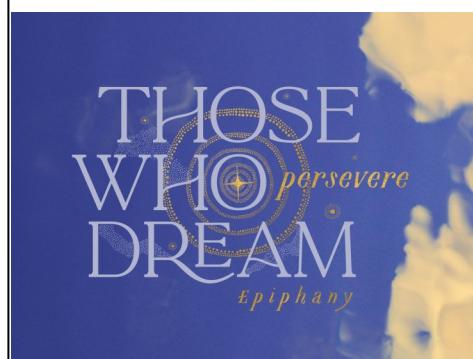
Date: December 24th 5pm and 630 pm
RSVP: Dec. 24 by 12:00 noon

Location: We will worship outside on the lawn in front of the sanctuary entrance. Please dress accordingly. We invite you to bring a chair for your comfort and a lighter for your family. We will be following our Health Team COVID-19 guidelines.

This Christmas Eve we will gather around the manger to hear the story of Christmas. The Christmas Story ignites us to engage all the senses of our imaginations as we wonder this night each year. We will see the joy in welcoming the Christ Child through the eyes of one another. We will smell the crisp air of Christmas as we worship outside together as a Christmas people. We will hear the familiar sounds of scripture as we read Luke 2. We will delight in the words of comfort and hope heard throughout the playing of Silent Night. We will touch the light of hope born to us as we light candles. Church family, we acknowledge and lament with you that our Christmas Eve service will look and feel different this year. Please know your church staff and worship team are imagining together to provide a worshipful and safe experience. We encourage you to hear the good news, Christ will be born anew to us this Christmas! We will gather with Christmas hope!



Epiphany Sunday



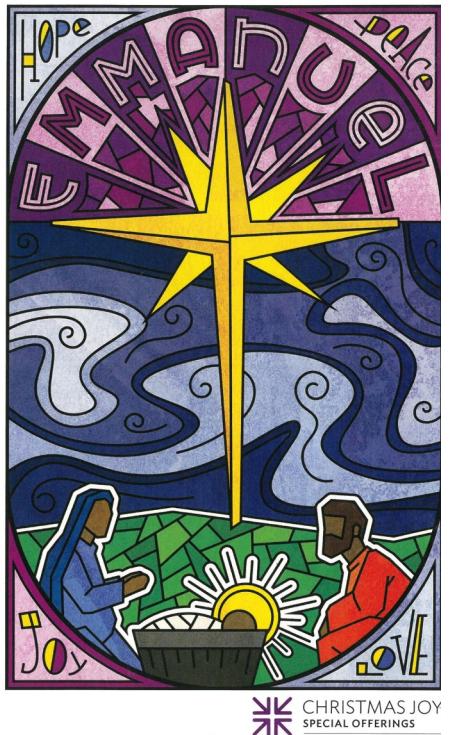
We will celebrate Epiphany Sunday on January 3, 2021. Epiphany Sunday is when we celebrate the Magi bringing gifts to Jesus. In the Gospel of Matthew, we read the Magi followed a star in the East to find baby Jesus in the manger. Therefore, this year we will participate in a prayer practice of "Star Words". Receiving a Star Word on Epiphany is a growing practice in the Protestant tradition. This word is to be a word of intention for us in the new year. We trust that God uses multiple ways to guide us and speak to us. Star words are one such lens that might provide us a way to look for God in our midst, both actively and in hindsight. We trust that it is often easy to miss God in our daily

midst. Having an intention word to consider both in present days, as well as to reflect on at the end of the year, allows for us to see God in ways we may not have seen God before. This is the greatest gift. Worship participants in person and virtually will receive a Star Word. If you are not worshipping in-person on Epiphany Sunday, January 3, please email Neeley to receive your Star Word! neeley@fpccov.org

Angel and Salvation Army Gifts

FPC has many traditions remembering those less fortunate so they may enjoy Christmas feeling love and the true meaning of the birth of Jesus. As usual the Angel trees have been placed in the narthex. This allows plenty of shopping days prior to the date of delivery to Health Care Centers and the Salvation Army. Remember when selecting an Angel please record your name by that person's name on the provided clip board. All gifts should be placed under the tree by December 17th. The Nursing Home Resident gifts should be wrapped and the angel tag taped to the box; the Salvation Army cards should be attached to the gift, but NOT wrapped. Gifts received later will be delivered by the person contributing the gift. Again the Witness Team appreciates your participation another year.

If you are not attending worship in-person, you may call the church office to set up a time to come and pick out an angel gift during the week and/or to return one. If office hours are not convenient or you cannot come in person you may also call Doug Bolton to ask about a time or for someone to text or email you an angel so you can shop.



God is with Us: Christmas Joy Offering

The Christmas Joy Offering is collected during the Advent/Christmas season each year. It is used in two ways. The first is to help past and present church leaders in financial crisis. The Assistance Fund is administered by the Board of Pensions. The second is to help students to learn and grow in faith at Presbyterian related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. Fifty percent of the offering goes to each fund. FPC will have the opportunity to share in this offering on the 3rd and 4th Sundays of Advent. Please label your check "Christmas Joy" and if you use REALM the fund will be "Christmas Joy" also.

see our website at:
www.fpccov.org

Community Food Pantry

The Food Pantry has been closed during this pandemic for the last few months. The Food Pantry has helped during this time by ordering food from the Atlanta Food Bank and then delivering it to the First Methodist Food Pantry. Your continued help has been truly appreciated. They hope to re-open in early 2021 after some renovations. Monetary donations and donations of any non-perishable food items are welcome. If you wish to give a check or on-line through Realm, put Food Pantry in the memo space or chose it for the fund on Realm.



Bernice Bailey is the Director, (770-786-3048).

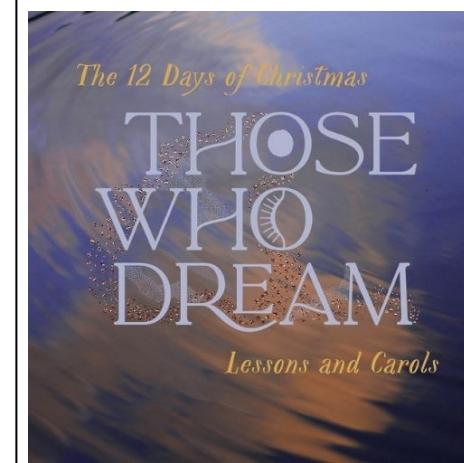


CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

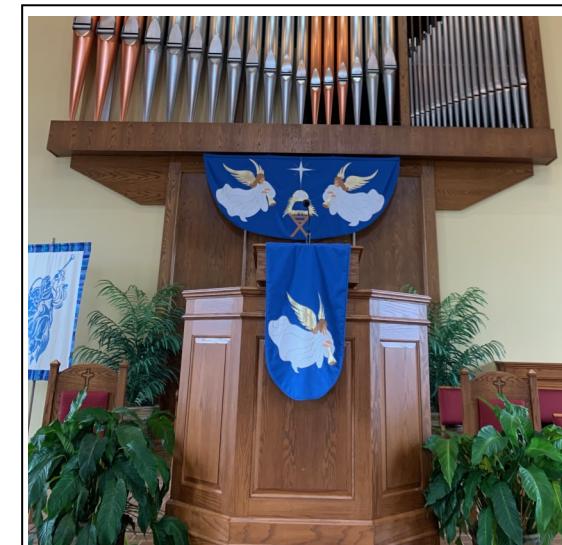
Advent literally means "coming" or "arrival." During the season of Advent, we celebrate Christ's coming into the world and watch with expectant hope for his coming again. The four weeks of Advent present an opportunity for us to, personally and communally, prepare for the birth of Jesus and look with hope for Christ's return. To help mark the season of Advent the Christian Education Team is making available several resources for use at home. Be sure to check out the FPC website to find the following:

- Ideas for making your own Advent wreath
- Readings for lighting an Advent wreath at home
- A devotional geared towards youth
- A family Christmas pageant script
- Ideas for celebrating Advent as a family
- Ideas for the season of Christmas and Epiphany

In addition, all of our Sunday School classes, for children, youth and adults, will focus on traditional Advent texts. We hope you'll find these resources meaningful as we mark this important season of the church year! If you have any questions about the available resources, please contact Kimmy (kimmy@fpccov.org).



The 12 Days of Christmas is the time between the birth of Christ (December 25 or Christmas Day) and the coming of the Magi (January 6 or Epiphany). This year, in celebration of the 12 Days of Christmas, we will offer special recordings of traditional Scripture readings and some of our favorite Christmas carols! Each day, beginning Christmas Day, you can find these readings and carols from our church family on our Facebook page and website. We hope they bring you a spirit of joy and a reminder that Christmas is more than just a single day on the calendar!



Why Blue Paraments?

During Advent, our sanctuary is adorned with blue paraments. Blue represents the expectant hope of Christ Jesus to be born anew in us. Blue is the color of the predawn sky, the color that covers the world in the dark, cold hours before the dawn. It is meant to inspire us in the hope of faith, and to encourage us to keep watch for the promised light of Christ, changing night into day, and darkness into light. As the color associated with Mary, blue reminds us that during Advent the church waits with Mary for the birth of Jesus.