

**The First Presbyterian Church
of Washingtonville
The *Good News*-Letter**

December 2024 & January 2025



From The Pastor

Dear Friends,

Advent is the beginning of the church year. As I look back on the year that is coming to an end, I thank God for how far we have come. We have finished the roof and ceiling project in the hall. We have built on the relationship with the Washingtonville Events Committee that began last year with the storyteller event in October and continued with a breakfast with the Grinch last year, and has continued through several town events and two coming events this December. We have participated in the Holy Cow survey and learned that we are intensely interested in clarifying our vision for our future. We have made some decisions about committing to taking care of the building, and have updated the heating system. And we have clarified that even if we somehow need to get along without our building, we want to continue as a Presbyterian Church in Washingtonville. This past Sunday we exercised our versatility and good humor when our substitute accompanist came down with Covid and we sang all the worship music acapella. These signs of progress are good reasons for giving thanks.

Although we are grateful for the signs of hope for the future, that doesn't mean we can see clearly what it contains. Joseph and Mary, their heads and hearts filled with dreams and messages from angels, packed for a day trip to Bethlehem that might possibly stretch to a week if the baby was born while they were there. They didn't know they would be going straight to Egypt as refugees. And when they did go to Egypt, they had no idea that king Herod would die soon and that they would be able to return within weeks or months rather than years. They did have faith that the baby would live to become all that the angel promised. So, they went on in faith, living as a family in whatever places God intended for them. Like Jesus's family, we go on in faith, trusting God to lead us as we live into our hope.

Please come to worship during Advent. We will be finding fresh ways to share the hope, peace, joy and love of the season as we tell the familiar stories from the Gospel of Luke. Also, please stop by the church during Victorian Whoville and enjoy the brand-new sight and tastes of the food trucks that will be set up in the parking lot from noon until after the parade. And, please join us on Saturday December 14 for Wreaths Across America at the cemetery, followed by the warmth and cheer of the congregation's Christmas party and potluck lunch. It will be a fun and joyous time to reconnect with God Who gives us all newness of life. See you in church!

Peace and Joy,
Martha

Prayer for December/January

Gracious God, thank You for the great gift of the incarnation of Your Son. Help us to move beyond our thoughts of scheduling and Christmas lights and long lists of things to buy and complete, and on to thoughts of the wonder of Your love. Amen.

Worship Ministry

It seems like we blink, and it's December! It is such an exciting time of the year with all the beautiful decorations and everyone in a festive mood. It can also be a very stressful time for many. But we have to remember the reason for the season – the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ.

Advent begins with the lighting of the first Advent candle on December 1st and celebration of The Lord's Supper. The Christmas Season has begun.

Each Advent Sunday we will have our Advent candle lighting portion of worship and the weekly creation of our Nativity scene, culminating on Christmas Eve on **Tuesday evening, December 24, at 8:00 p.m.** Christmas Eve will be our traditional candlelight service with several readers/candle lighters participating. Our delightful No Strings Attached Puppets will also make an appearance, and children (of all ages) will have the chance to ring the Rainbow Bells. Thank you everyone who participates – we couldn't do it without you!

Looking ahead to January:

- Happy New Year!
- We will be celebrating the Lord's Supper on Sunday, January 5.
- Epiphany of the Lord begins Monday, January 6.
- The Baptism of the Lord is January 12.
- The Ecumenical Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will be observed January 18 through January 25.

With the holidays upon us, we really need to be diligent and stay healthy so we can continue to be together.

Blessings of Christmas and the New Year,
The Worship Committee

December 2024

First Presbyterian Church

1						7 Josef's Cleaning Service 7:00 PM Dr. Bob's Group
8 9:30 Worship, Lord's Supper 11:30 LCWM 8:00 PM A.A.	9 7:30 PM Dr. Bob's Group	10 7:00 Troop 416	11 8:00 PM A.A.	12 9:30 AM Bible Study 11:00 AM Choir 7:00 N.A.	13	14 Josef's Cleaning Service FPC's Potluck Luncheon 7:00 PM Dr. Bob's Group
15 9:30 Worship 11:30 LCWM 8:00 PM A.A.	16 7:30 PM Dr. Bob's Group	17 7:00 Troop 416	18 8:00 PM A.A.	19 9:30 AM Bible Study 11:00 AM Choir 7:00 N.A.	20	21 Josef's Cleaning Service 7:00 PM Dr. Bob's Group
22 9:30 Worship 11:30 LCWM 8:00 PM A.A.	23 7:30 PM Dr. Bob's Group	24 8:00 p.m. Candlelight Christmas Eve Service	25 Merry Christmas! 8:00 PM A.A.	26 9:30 AM Bible Study 11:00 AM Choir 7:00 N.A.	27	28 Josef's Cleaning Service 7:00 PM Dr. Bob's Group
29 9:30 Worship 11:30 LCWM 8:00 PM A.A.	30 7:30 PM Dr. Bob's Group	31 New Year's Eve 7:00 Troop 416				

January 2025

First Presbyterian Church

			1 Happy New Year!	3	1	4 Josef's Cleaning Service 7:00 PM Dr. Bob's Group
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First Presbyterian Church
of Washingtonville

Session Moderator
Rev. Martha Carlson

Clerk of Session
Deborah Chedister

The Session
Nancy Bruscano 2024
Lois Dunikowski 2024*
Mark Chedister 2025
Debra Van Regenmortel 2026
Bobbie Trager 2026*

Board of Deacons
Peggy Wright 2024*
Jorus Beasley 2025
Hanora Sullivan 2026

*indicates second term

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Presbytery of Hudson River
www.hudrivpres.org

December Birthdays



7 Missy Taylor
17 Peggy Wright
18 Rev. Edd Carlson
25 Jesus Christ

January Birthdays

5 Nancy Popoloski

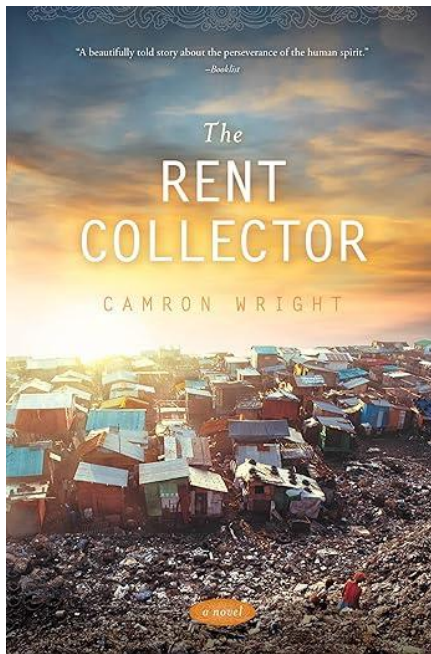
**FPCW'S ANNUAL
CHRISTMAS PARTY**
Saturday, December 14

POTLUCK LUNCHEON
GAMES
YANKEE GIFT SWAP



THE SAVVY SOULS SISTERS OF SYNTAX

“The Rent Collector” by Camron Wright



Survival for Ki Lim and Sang Ly is a daily battle at Stung Meanchey, the largest municipal waste dump in all of Cambodia. They make their living scavenging recyclables from the trash. Life would be hard enough without the worry for their chronically ill child, Nisay, and the added expense of medicines that are not working. Just when things seem worst, Sang Ly learns a secret about the ill-tempered rent collector who comes demanding money--a secret that sets in motion a tide that will change the life of everyone it sweeps past. *The Rent Collector* is a story of hope, of one woman's journey to save her son and another woman's chance at redemption. It demonstrates that even in a dump in Cambodia--perhaps especially in a dump in Cambodia--everyone deserves a second chance.

The Savvy Soul Sisters of Syntax are reading this book for their January meeting.

Questions at Christmas

Read: Matthew 16:13-21

“But what about you?” [Jesus] asked. “Who do you say I am?”
Matthew 16:15

Well before the calendar flips to December, Christmas cheer begins to bubble up in our northern town. A medical office drapes its trees and shrubs in close-fitting strings of lights, each a different color, illuminating a breathtaking nighttime landscape. Another business decorates its building to look like an enormous, extravagantly wrapped Christmas present. It’s difficult to turn anywhere without seeing evidence of Christmas spirit—or at least seasonal marketing.

Some people love these lavish displays. Others take a more cynical view. But the crucial question isn’t how others observe Christmas. Rather, we each need to consider what the celebration means to *us*.

A little more than thirty years after His birth, Jesus asked His disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” (Matthew 16:13). They gave responses others had given: John the Baptist, Elijah, maybe another prophet. Then Jesus made it personal: “Who do *you* say I am?” (v. 15). Peter replied, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God” (v. 16).

Many will celebrate Christmas without a thought about who the Baby really is. As we interact with them, we can help them consider these crucial questions: Is Christmas just a heartwarming story about a baby born in a stable? Or did our Creator visit His creation and become one of us?

Insights

Who was Matthew, the writer of the gospel by the same name? Matthew (also known as Levi) was one of Jesus’s twelve disciples. Prior to Jesus’s call, Matthew served as a despised tax collector (9:9). Tax collectors were particularly loathed because they exacted taxes from their own people, the Jews, to pay the Romans (the oppressive rulers of Israel). And they often collected far more than required. Matthew wrote his gospel primarily to the Jews to prove that Jesus is the Messiah (Savior), the eternal King. We see Matthew’s emphasis clearly in today’s passage. When Jesus asked His disciples about His identity, Peter declared, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God” (16:15-16). Alyson Kieda

Reflect & Pray

Father in heaven, may our Christmas celebrations this year,
whether lavish or small, honor the Messiah who came to redeem His creation.

Who do you say Jesus is?

Our Daily Bread

With blessings of love from the Nurture Ministry

Calendar of Prayer for our Congregations and Leadership

The endorsed calendar of prayer is a way for us to be united. It's an awesome responsibility and gift to pray for one another. To make our offering on behalf of one another. Each member congregation, staff member, elected servant leader, ministry team, and mission commitment of our Presbytery is represented:

Gilead PC Carmel, World AIDS Day/Presbyterian HIV Awareness Day, First Church Hamptonburgh Campbell Hall, Human Rights Day (12/10), For Faith Parish Bethel, Brewster PC, Commissioned Ruling Elders, First Church Beacon, First Church Bedford, Smithfield PC Amenia, First Church Ancramdale.



Newsletter articles for the
February 2025 issue is due
before **January 20!**

Call Cynthia at 845-496-3814 or send an email to firstpres@frontiernet.net
to share your news with our church family.



First Presbyterian Church
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