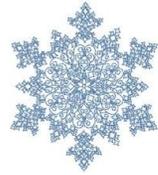


January 2024



First Impressions

Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church
Staunton, Virginia
January 2024



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 New Year's Day— church offices closed	2	3 9-11 Pastor Jeff— sermon prep	4	5	6
7 11am Worship Sanctuary FB Live	8	9 5pm Session Meeting (L)	10 9-11 Pastor Jeff— sermon prep	11	12	13
14 11am Worship Sanctuary FB Live	15	16	17 10am- Home Goods Pantry 9-11 Pastor Jeff— sermon prep	18 Newsletter Deadline- February	19	20
21 11am Worship Sanctuary FB Live	22	23	24 9-11 Pastor Jeff— sermon prep	25	26	27
28 11am Worship Sanctuary FB Live	29	30	31 9-11 Pastor Jeff— sermon prep			
26						

Letter from the Pastor

Interim Focus Point #6?: Wonder

Happy New Year! Over the past few months, I have introduced the 5 Interim Focus Points that congregations work on during the interim period:



1. History
2. Leadership
3. Mission
4. Connections
5. Future

These are wonderful emphases for us to reflect upon during this transitional period of interim ministry. But as I mentioned during our time together back in August, I'd like to introduce one more Focus Point for us: *Wonder*.

Why is wonder so important for churches experiencing transition today? And what is it anyways? **I am speaking to the human recognition of the holiness within a place or experience that draws the attention of the individual to larger presence and movement of God.**

(cont. on p. 2)

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Rev. Jeff Binder, Interim Minister

Letter from the Pastor

(cont. fr. p. 1)

Interim Focus Point #6?: Wonder

Many scholars note the transition away from wonder within popular society today; even within the church as we discuss what is most important moving forward. We oftentimes feel obligated to create the perfect program, process, or statement, but we neglect the spiritual and mystical side to such experiences. Yes, we can talk all day long about church membership numbers, finances, and property. But what makes us uniquely Christian is how we are led by nothing less than the very Spirit of God in Jesus Christ!

*When was the last time you took a moment to be quiet and present with the world around you?
When was the last time you simply listened for God's voice?
When was the last time you experienced wonder in the presence of the divine?*

With this new year, let us invite this sacred experience within the life of First Presbyterian once again. As we continue to assess our present realities, and envision our future, may we be reminded that first and foremost, our experience is a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings. We are invited into wonder.

In Christ,

Pastor Jeff

Church News

Installation of New Elders

New Elders will be installed during Worship on Sunday, January 8. These include: Chuck Lendermon, Stephany Morgan, Barbara Richardson, Bret Ritchie, and Hugh Sproul. We hope you can join us!

Thank You to the Decorating Team!

Many Thanks to the decorating team for making our lovely sanctuary glow during Advent: Charlie Trumbo, Pastor Jeff, Amanda Avery, Dick & Sherry Cox, Molly Cox, Susie & Chuck Lendermon, Sue Ann McAllister, Mary Meade, Barbara Richardson, Martha Tillen, and Scott & Sharon Wilson.



Church News

Home Goods Community Pantry Wednesday, January 17



Our Home Goods Community Pantry will be open on Wednesday, January 17. Financial and product donations are always welcomed.

There is a donation basket outside of the sanctuary for your convenience.

Thank you to those who have already donated. Your generosity is greatly appreciated!

Church Office Closed Monday, January 1



The church office will be closed Monday, January 1 for the New Year's holiday. We hope everyone has a healthy and happy New Year!



January Birthday List

4	Louisa Dixon
10	Robert Mackay
11	Opal Homan
13	Paul Goble
18	Nancy Hall
22	Joseph Harman
24	Lynn Coyner
31	Pamela Fox
	Denise Lowman



Church News



There will be a Session meeting Tuesday, January 9 at 5:00pm in the Library.

Church Attendance for Past Month - 2023

(in person and online)

November 19—In person: 21	Online: 5
November 26—In person: 34	Online: 4
December 3— In person: 27	Online: 2
December 10—In person: 40	Online: 6
Average Worship Attendance for Past Month: 35	

Newsletter Deadline for February 2024

The deadline for submissions for the February issue of First Impressions is **Thursday, January 18**. Please submit any info you would like to include by then. Thank you!



Presbyterian Women—Winter Break 2024

Presbyterian Women will not meet in January or February of 2024. Their meetings will resume in March of 2024.

Church News

You Are Invited to Share Your Thoughts!

With the month of January and the new year brings a new opportunity for First Presbyterian to begin to envision our next chapter in ministry and mission. But before we start making plans for the future, it's important to know who we are today. Session, in partnership with the Presbytery, has agreed to participate in the *Conversations* on-line survey assessment in order to have a formal process for collecting member feedback regarding the life, interests, and hopes of First Presbyterian. This survey is anonymous, easy to fill out, and hopefully fun! It is very important to get as many of our active church members to provide feedback as possible.



All members and friends are invited to participate with this survey beginning on January 7, 2024! You will be sent an email from the church with a link to fill out the survey on-line. If you would prefer a hard copy survey to be filled out, please let Heidi, Pastor Jeff, or Susie Lendermon know, and we will be sure to get one to you. All surveys need to be completed and turned in by **January 31st**.

Following the survey completion, Session will first meet with a presbytery representative to interpret the initial results. Later in February, we will hold a town hall meal and conversation to go over our results as a church, as we will also discuss possible steps moving forward. Stay tuned!

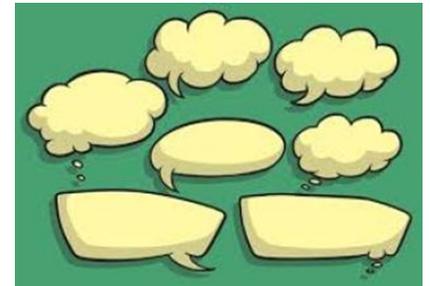
Below is a brief description of the survey itself:

Conversations was created in a collaborative effort among Holy Cow! Consulting and small congregation specialists from Presbyteries, Episcopal Dioceses, ECLA Synods and other regional associations around the country.

Church News

You Are Invited to Share Your Thoughts!

This benchmarked assessment is designed especially for pastoral transitions and strategic planning in congregations with less than 35 persons in worship either in person or online. Data tells us over and over again, that small congregations can be vital systems doing Christ's work in the community and the world. Taking the time to be intentional about next steps is essential for these congregations.



This assessment instrument that can help you as a leader measure the level of satisfaction and energy in the congregation.

- Discover where members would like to go in the future.
- Get a read on important aspects of your congregation's organizational culture.
- Gauge readiness for change.
- Assess the perceptions of members in key areas of the congregation's ministry.

Questions/comments, contact Pastor Jeff or Susie Lendermon at any time!