

# First Presbyterian Church

South Charleston, West Virginia

"Everyday...is the day the Lord has made— Rejoice! and be glad in it!"

*PresbyPress*

DECEMBER 2024

## Christmas Eve Service



TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24<sup>TH</sup>

6:30 pm Candlelight Worship Service

508 2nd Avenue • South Charleston WV • 25303 • [fpcscwv.org](http://fpcscwv.org) • 

### A Christmas Prayer

May the blessing of joy abide within you;  
May the blessing of peace rest upon you;  
May the blessing of love flow out through you;  
May all the blessings of the Lord be yours  
at Christmas and in the new year!





## A Note from Your Pastor:

December is upon us again...it seems, "Just like that!" But we have been preparing for this time of Advent, as we enter into the Advent season each year. It is the time that we wait for our savior to come. We will light candles...one by one...until the waiting will be no more.

As I was growing up, we had Advent calendars that we would share the opening of each window. With 3 kids, I would get to open the window every third day. The anticipation of that alone was a joy to me. And when I think about that, I know that each day in December can hold as much joy as I had as a child...just waiting for each day.

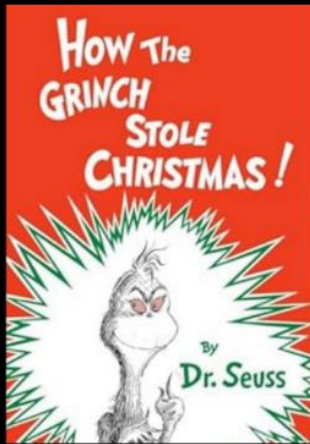
We also hold the comfort of the waiting season with the decorations that we put up. In our household, they don't all go up in one day; so, we prolong the fun and anticipation across several scattered days. The nutcrackers always go up first; they sit in the bay window all crowded together. For our family, the season of Advent now begins...once the nutcrackers are in their places, Christmas is coming.

Hold onto your traditions, identify them, and then take comfort in the waiting. Each week at church we light another candle...one more candle closer to the eve of Christmas! Take the excitement of a child and multiply it – because God loves you...that much!

There is a special place in our hearts for the hymns we sing during Advent and Christmas. If you have a special song that you would like to be a part of our services, send me an email. Let us fill the air with praise and singing this year, as we expectantly wait for the coming of our Savior this Christmas.

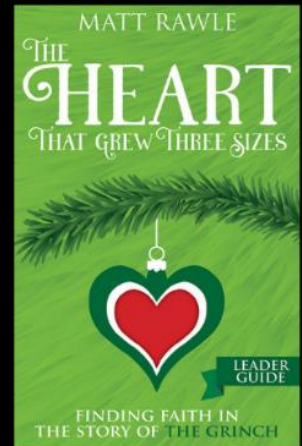
Merry Christmas to you all,  
Grace and Peace...Pastor Ginna





# Advent Series

Pastor Ginna  
First Presbyterian Church  
Facebook Live



Nov 26, 27, 28 Tues thru Thurs 10:00 a.m.  
Dec 3, 4, 5 Tues thru Thurs 10:00 a.m.  
Dec 10, 11, 12 Tues thru Thurs 10:00 a.m.  
Dec 17, 18, 19 Tues thru Thurs 10:00 a.m.



## Highlights from Children's Church this Advent Season

Each Sunday at Children's Church the children have a Bible-based lesson, they play a game, work puzzles, make a craft, and have a snack. Here is what they will be learning about during Advent:

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent – December 1<sup>st</sup>

### **The Christmas Tree & its Christian Significance**

We will learn about the Christmas Tree, its ornaments, and we will decorate our tree.

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent – December 8<sup>th</sup>

### **Help the Shepherds find the Christ Child**

The children will work puzzles to find clues to lead the shepherds to the Baby Jesus.

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent – December 15<sup>th</sup>

### **The Wise Men Follow the Star**

The children will create a news documentary about the Three Wise Men.

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent – December 22<sup>nd</sup>

### **Celebrate the Birthday of Jesus**





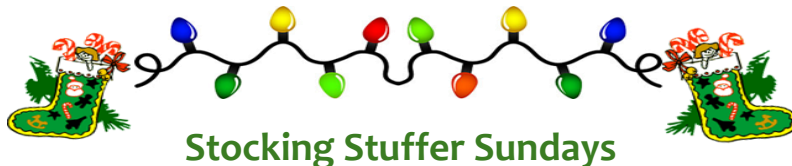
## Christmas Food Baskets Update

*Your love at work in our community!*

You are invited to help assemble Christmas Food Baskets for 50 families of our community Friday, December 20, at 6:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Food Baskets will be given out on Saturday, December 21, starting at 8:00 am. If you would like to help assemble and/or distribute the baskets, please join us as we share in the joy of giving this Christmas!

Thank you to all who have contributed to our Christmas Basket missions project. Your support of Christmas Baskets through your generous time and financial contributions has allowed us to raise \$3,800 this year. We especially want to thank all those helping hands who assisted with the luncheons, who have signed up to provide Christmas presents for children, and those who are helping us collect and organize the baskets. As always, we could not do any of these things without your love and support.

Thank you for spreading the love of Christ this Christmas! **Merry Christmas!**



### Stocking Stuffer Sundays

**Stocking Stuffers for Heart & Hand and the Sojourner's Shelter** will be collected on three Sundays, December 1, December 8, and December 15. These are to be small, unwrapped items, placed under the Christmas Tree in the Sanctuary. If you would like to make a donation, Becky Nelson will do the shopping for you! She will also deliver the items to Heart & Hand and Sojourner's Shelter in plenty of time for Christmas. Help us put a warm, happy glow on some child's face! **Give today!**



### A Gift for the Church Staff

You may wish to make a special financial gift to show your LOVE for the members of our faithful Staff of First Presbyterian. Donations will be divided evenly among all the staff as a Christmas gift from the church. You may place your contribution in the offering plate or church office no later than December 15<sup>th</sup>. Thank You!



## Presbyterian Women's December News

It's once again time for our monthly Circle/Bible Study. We will gather at 2 pm, on Thursday, December 12, at the home of Carol Bryan, 123 Fourth Avenue, South Charleston. Becky Nelson will present our Bible lesson this time on another fascinating woman in the Bible. We have such a wonderful time at our monthly Circle meetings and it is always so nice to each other. We hope you will join us.

### **PW December Mission Project: Crossroads Men's Shelter & Veteran's Center**

The Presbyterian Women are collecting tee shirts, boxers, and socks (sizes Large and X-Large) for the Crossroads Men's Shelter in Charleston and the Veteran's Center. A collection box for donations of these items has been placed in the Parlor. Deadline is December 15.



## Missions Committee Hosts Covered-Dish Luncheon Sunday, December 15<sup>th</sup>

Please join us for a wonderful luncheon after the worship hour on Sunday, December 15. This event is hosted by the Missions Committee, who will provide fried chicken as our main course.

Please bring a covered dish or dessert to share with everyone.

Come and enjoy a delicious meal and share lots of warm fellowship and Christmas joy with your family and friends at church!



## All Are Welcome!

Bring your favorite board game, jigsaw puzzle, card game, etc., and join us in the Mizpah Room each Friday afternoon, from 1:00-4:30 pm.

Contact Nancy Bennett for more details.





**CHRISTMAS JOY**  
SPECIAL OFFERINGS  
CHURCH LEADERS—PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

*We will receive the  
Christmas Joy Offering  
during worship on Sunday,  
December 22<sup>nd</sup>*

## **Prepare the Way: The Perfect Gift -- Isaiah 40**

Where have you seen hope recently? We see hope in the faces of each of us gathered here in worship. We feel hope through signs of mercy and grace shown to those in our communities during this busy season. We show hope through acts of loving kindness. We know of hope in the face of a child or an elder whom we love and trust. We trust in the hope of the Christ Child, for whom we prepare a way so he can prepare a way for us to know the fullness of God's love.

There is hope all around us while we wait during this season of Advent.

Every year, the Christmas Joy Offering, one of the four churchwide Special Offerings of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), combines thousands of congregations' gifts to bring hope through education and emergency assistance.

Three Presbyterian-related schools that equip communities of color (Menaul School in Albuquerque, New Mexico; Presbyterian Pan American School in Kingsville, Texas; and Stillman College in Tuscaloosa, Alabama) provide a transformative education for students all around the globe. These jewels in the Presbyterian crown prepare the way for students from every walk of life to be active, compassionate and informed citizens of the world. Beyond their schoolwork, these students live together in a supportive intentional community where they prepare the way for one another through acts of generosity, mission, and service. In their lives together, students experience the love of Christ that we all meet anew at Christmas.

Like the schools and colleges that equip communities of color, the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions prepares a way of peace and flourishing for church workers in times of financial crisis. This program provides life-giving and critical assistance in the most tender moments of church workers' lives, like health or housing instability. The prophet Isaiah tells us that God is a bringer of comfort as we make the paths straight by offering food to the hungry and satisfying the needs of the afflicted. Jesus, the Light of the World, brings hope, so we can do just that through our receipt of the Christmas Joy Offering to support this vital assistance program.

Our gifts to the Christmas Joy Offering make all of this preparation possible. These gifts will combine with others from congregations throughout our denomination to do our part to repair the world and ensure that every person — whether they be a high schooler, college student or church worker — has the tools they need to flourish. Your gifts prepare the way for the God we know in Jesus Christ, the child whose birth we will celebrate soon. Thank you for all the ways that you give.

### ***Let us pray~***

*O God, may that little child born in the manger show us your ways of peace this day and every day as we prepare the way for his reign in our world once more. In his name, we pray, **Amen.***



## First Presby South Charleston Looking forward to 2025!

Let's start 2025 strong! No matter how big or how small, your gifts to First Presby are always appreciated. If you have already made a pledge for 2025, thank you! For those who plan to do so, there is still time to respond as we work to plan the 2025 ministry budget. You may complete your pledge by returning the Commitment Card you received by placing it in the collection plate during worship or dropping it off in the church office. Commitment Cards are also available in the sanctuary pews and the church office.

Thank you for your ongoing prayerful and financial support of First Presbyterian South Charleston and all its ministries. We are grateful for you!

Bob Lilly, Administration & Stewardship Chair



## Decorating the Church for Christmas



Many churches invite their members to help prepare the church for Advent and Christmas. Some call the event the “Hanging of the Greens.” Pine or fir branches, holly, pinecones, candles, colorful cloth or ribbons, and an Advent wreath are used for decorations. A tree with Chrismons hanging on it is often placed somewhere in the sanctuary. Some churches add a new decoration to the sanctuary every week during the season.

The custom of displaying a Nativity scene in the chancel dates from the early 1600s. The tradition started in Germany.

It is thought that the first Nativity scene – in which live animals and people representing shepherds and wise men gathered at an outdoor manger – began with St. Francis of Assisi around the year 1220.



We would like to thank **Becky Nelson** and **Mary Sue Smalley** for leading the charge to decorate our church for Advent and Christmas. We thank all the “elves” who stayed after church on Sunday, November 28, to assist Becky & Mary Sue. As always, the church is absolutely beautiful!



*“Cents-Ability is one way that families, congregations, and presbyteries can support the*

*battle against hunger and poverty. Everyone is invited to contribute 5¢ at every meal. Funds are used to support local hunger ministries, as well as national and international projects through the Presbyterian Hunger Program.”*

The next offering will be received on **Sunday, December 15.**

Start collecting your 5¢ per meal each day. Please remember people who are less fortunate by donating to this, and all Cents-Ability offerings.



## Food Donations for Heart and Hand

We continue our support of the Food Pantry at Heart & Hand during the month of December. Here are the items specifically requested by Heart & Hand for the month of December:

- Dec 1 Peanut Butter
- Dec 8 Rice & Beans
- Dec 15 Rice-a-Roni, Mac & Cheese, Instant Mashed Potatoes
- Dec 22 Ravioli, Spaghetti-O’s, Beefaroni, Spaghetti & Meatballs,
- Dec 29 Soup

## Heart & Hand News

### Foster Bed Program

Heart+Hand Outreach Ministries is proud to announce our latest initiative aimed at providing new twin size beds and bedding for families with foster children. Recognizing the importance of having a personal space to call their own, especially during the challenging process of a home study for DHHR, we are committed to ensuring that every child feels comfortable and safe. Through the generous sponsorship of churches, clubs, and community members, each complete bed/bedding setup, costing \$250, is made possible. This initiative not only fulfills a practical need but also extends a message of care and support to foster children and their families. At Heart+Hand Outreach Ministries, we believe that every child deserves a nurturing environment, and we are honored to play a part in making that a reality.

To apply for a bed, please call social services, at 304-744-6741.

### Ring Bells for Children in Need at Riverwalk Kroger!

The holiday season is fast approaching, and what better way to embrace the spirit of giving than by coming together as a community to make a difference in the lives of children in need?

We cordially invite families, students, churches, and groups from all walks of life to join us at the Riverwalk Kroger in South Charleston for a heartwarming event that promises to fill the hearts of both givers and recipients with joy.

**Please contact Tom Titus to sign up to ring bells for Heart & Hand!**



Our very own Debbie & Joe Fuller Ringing the Bells at Kroger!



## The Light of Life

By Heidi Hyland Mann

Most sand comes from coral and rocks that get ground into tiny grains. But in a few places, like some beaches of Japan, the bits of sand are shells or skeletons that once housed single-celled organisms. A magnifying glass reveals their star shape: a rounded middle and five or more spines, like a sea star.

These unique creatures live on undersea reefs and share their interior with algae called diatoms, which convert light into carbohydrates and oxygen through photosynthesis. The star points let light into the exoskeleton; in turn, diatoms produce energy to feed them both. When these organisms die, the star skeletons wash onto beaches, protecting the islands even after their own lives end. Our amazing God designed astounding creatures!

This same Creator made us able to take in light from Christ. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me ... will have the light of life" (John 8:12). When we receive his light, it becomes in us the "energy" we need to do good: to love others, care for people in need, appreciate nature — including star sand! — and give glory to the Artist of this entire incredible world.



## First Presbyterian Church

508 Second Avenue  
South Charleston, WV 25303  
PHONE: 744-2333  
FAX: 746-9948

### **Ministers:**

#### **EVERY MEMBER OF THE CONGREGATION**

Ginna Taylor, *Pastor*  
Mary Ellen Logsdon, *Master of Music*  
Collin Nelson, *Worship Assistant*  
Becky Smith, *Office Manager*  
David Smith, *Custodian*

### **Office Hours:**

7:00 AM - 3:00 PM  
Monday through Thursday

### **Pastor's Hours:**

9:00 AM - 12:00 PM  
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

### **E-Mail Addresses:**

[pastor.ginna.fpcscwv@gmail.com](mailto:pastor.ginna.fpcscwv@gmail.com)  
[becky@fpcscwv.org](mailto:becky@fpcscwv.org)

### **Web Address:**

[fpcscwv.org](http://fpcscwv.org)

### **WIFI Network:**

1stPresby SC – Guest

### **WIFI Password:**

PresbyGuest

### **Elders on Session:**

Hersha Brown	Bob Lilly
Sarah Clemente	Mark Lovin
Cheryl Eary	Rick Smith
Joe Fuller	Owen Walker
Bill Kimmons	

## NUTURING FAITH IDEAS from the Presbytery of WV

*Please use these suggested scriptures, questions, and activities to help you explore your faith.*

### **December 1 – First Sunday of Advent: Read Luke 21:25-36**

As we enter this Advent Season, our Scripture passage speaks of signs of the coming of the Son of Man in a cloud with power and glory. How do you visualize this scene depicted in the Scripture passage? Draw a picture with your family to depict His coming?

### **December 8 – Second Sunday of Advent: Read Luke 3:1-6**

As John the Baptist was sent to prepare the way for Jesus, so must we prepare ourselves for Jesus. This is a time of hope and preparation. During Advent, reflect on what preparations you are making in your life and in your heart for the coming of Jesus. The way must be prepared in your heart for Jesus' coming; only then will you see the true salvation of God.

### **December 15 – Third Sunday of Advent: Read Isaiah 12:2-6**

December is a wonderful time of year, but it is also a very busy time with shopping to do, presents to wrap, trees to decorate, and more. During all this, we must remember, first and foremost, that Jesus, the Son of God, is coming soon to bring joy and salvation into this world!!! Salvation is the gift for all of us!!! So, despite all the other distractions of this season, remember to put the coming birth of the Savior at the top of your priority list.

### **December 22 – Fourth Sunday of Advent: Read Luke 39-45**

When Mary greets Elizabeth, her unborn child recognizes that Mary is pregnant with Jesus and leaps for joy in her womb. Do you know Jesus? Do you recognize when Jesus enters your presence and, if so, do you leap for joy? Jesus was sent because God loves each of us and God's mission is to bring hope and salvation to a troubled world. Take some time and reflect on our world and how Jesus gives you hope even during our bleakest moments.

### **December 29 – First Sunday of Christmas: Read Colossians 3:12-17**

Christmas is here. Christ has come!!! Now we must take the time to think about what that means: to love one another; to forgive; to be compassionate, kind, and faithful, in short, to live our lives following the example Jesus set to the best of our abilities. So, this Christmas, put away old grudges, forgive those who have wronged you, be compassionate and kind to all, especially those less fortunate, and remember to always give thanks to God through Jesus for all these gifts this Christmas!

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## Look Upon Love

*By Martin Luther*

Let us then meditate upon the Nativity just as we see it happening in our own babies. I would not have you contemplate the deity of Christ, the majesty of Christ, but rather his flesh. Look upon the baby Jesus. Divinity may terrify people. Inexpressible majesty will crush them. That is why God took on our human flesh and blood, that God should not terrify us but rather that with love and favor God would console and comfort us.

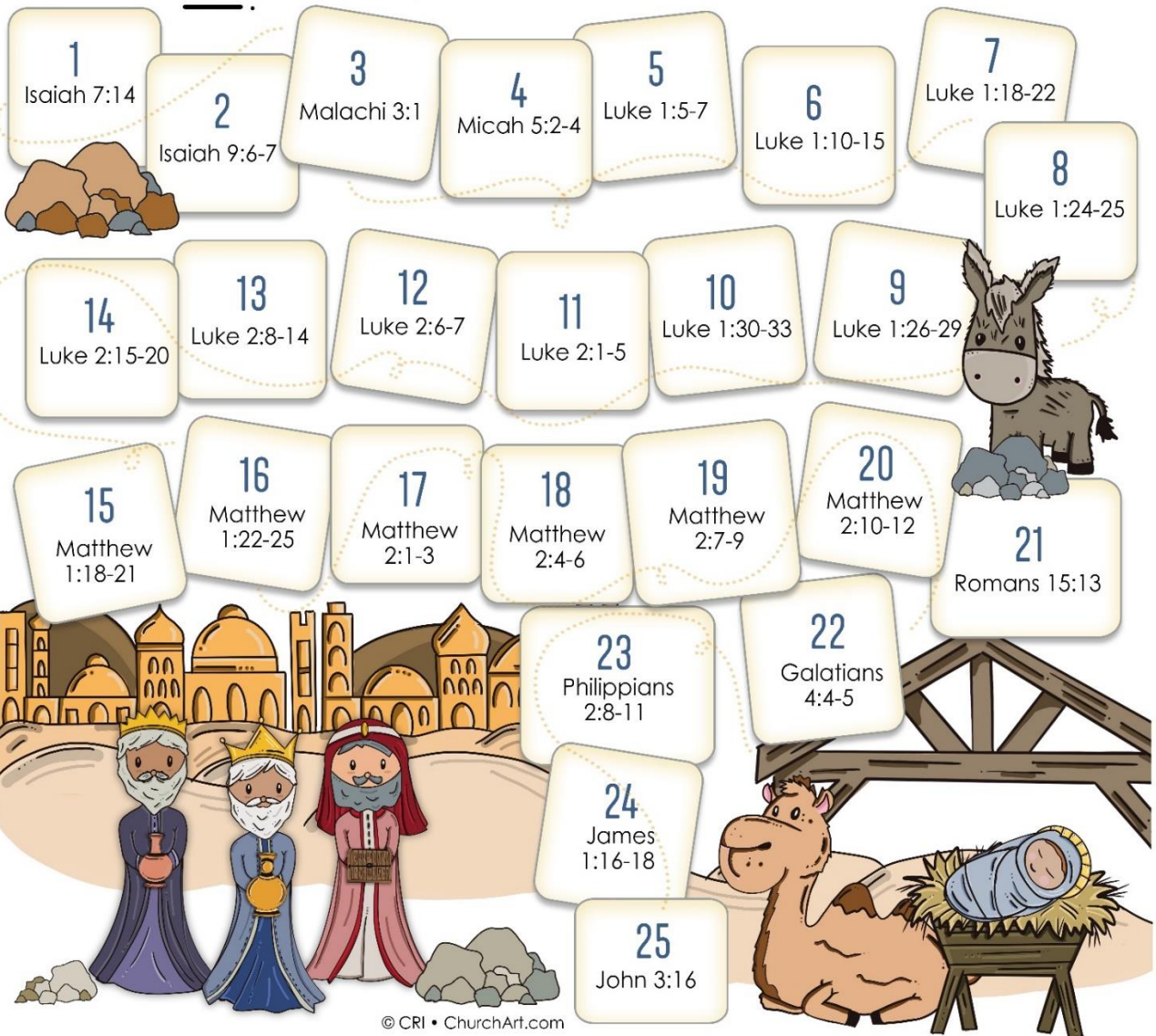






# A CHRIST-CENTERED CHRISTMAS ADVENT READING PLAN

Explore the true meaning of Christmas as you travel through God's Word. Discover God's promises he fulfilled through the birth of His only Son, the **KING OF KINGS.**



1 Isaiah 7:14	2 Isaiah 9:6-7	3 Malachi 3:1	4 Micah 5:2-4	5 Luke 1:5-7	6 Luke 1:10-15	7 Luke 1:18-22
8 Luke 1:24-25	9 Luke 1:26-29	10 Luke 1:30-33	11 Luke 2:1-5	12 Luke 2:6-7	13 Luke 2:8-14	14 Luke 2:15-20
15 Matthew 1:18-21	16 Matthew 1:22-25	17 Matthew 2:1-3	18 Matthew 2:4-6	19 Matthew 2:7-9	20 Matthew 2:10-12	21 Romans 15:13
22 Galatians 4:4-5	23 Philippians 2:8-11	24 James 1:16-18	25 John 3:16			



# advent CALENDAR

Perform a random act of kindness



two

Donate food to a local food bank

Have a coloring contest



four

Buy socks for a homeless shelter



5 Watch a favorite holiday movie

Make or buy a new Christmas ornament



Let someone go in front of you in line

seven

Decorate a gingerbread house



eleven

Help wrap a Christmas present



thirteen Leave a happy note for someone to find



Have a game night in your PJs

14

Make paper snowflakes



Take cupcakes to your local fire department



Build a snowman out of cotton balls

9

10

Drink hot cocoa



17

Make Christmas cards



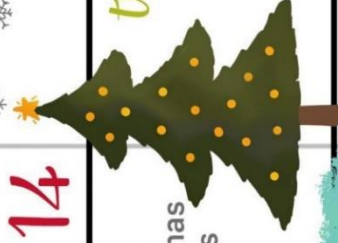
Bake Christmas cookies



Sing Christmas carols

twenty

Take a family photo in front of the Christmas tree



Read your favorite Christmas story

21

22

Take a car tour of your local light displays



Deliver Christmas cards to your neighbors



23

Watch or attend a Christmas Eve service

twenty-four

Read the Nativity story



25

# Kid's Page Puzzle!

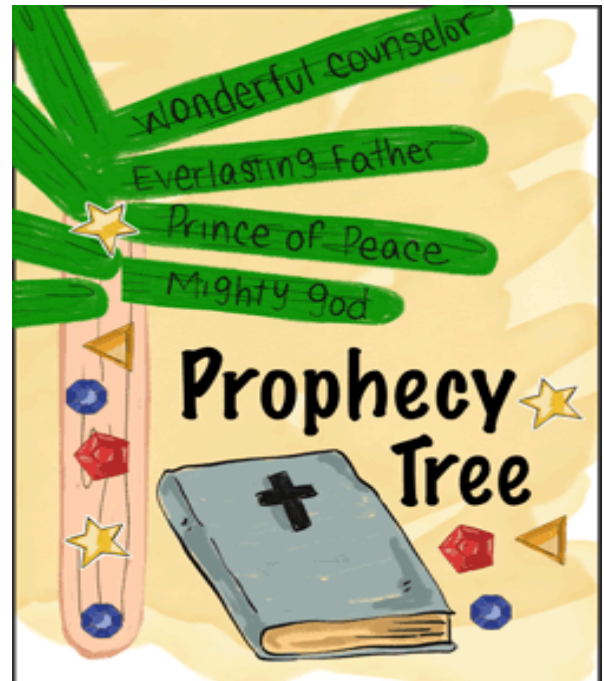
The word list contains the angel's Christmas message to the shepherds. Fit those words into the crossword squares. Then write them on the correct lines below to complete Luke 2:10-11, NIV.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
e																												

- |     |      |       |         |
|-----|------|-------|---------|
| be  | baby | that  | today   |
| do  | been | this  | afraid  |
| all | born | town  | Christ  |
| for | find | will  | cloths  |
| has | good | bring | manger  |
| joy | Lord | David | people  |
| not | news | great | Savior  |
| you | sign | lying | wrapped |

" \_\_\_\_\_ . I \_\_\_\_\_  
 24 26 1A 5 3A 8 13 18  
 of \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_  
 4 27 16 9A 1A 2D 7 15  
 \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ a \_\_\_\_\_  
 12 28 23 20 22 10  
 \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ ; he is \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_." Luke 2:10-11, NIV  
 3D 8 19 10

Answer: "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:10-11, NIV.



Make this Christmas craft to display special names for Jesus.

**What you need:**

- Large wooden craft stick
- Small green wooden craft sticks
- Scissors
- Ruler
- Bible
- Permanent marker
- Craft glue
- Optional: star stickers or craft jewels

**What you do:**



1. Place the large stick on a table vertically, like a tree trunk.
2. Cut the green sticks into pieces that measure 4", 3½", 3" and 2½".
3. On each green stick, write a name for Jesus from Isaiah 9:6 — Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Write small or ask an adult for help.)
4. Use a dot of glue to attach each green stick to the large stick, like tree branches.
5. Decorate your Christmas tree with stickers or jewels.





## Wishing Happy December Birthdays to....

Dec 1 Amanda Fuller	Dec 23 Mark Lovin
Dec 9 Blair Taylor	Dec 25 Sharon Titus
Dec 12 Tina Amburgey Dorsey	Dec 28 Penelope Clemente
Dec 18 Von Carter	Dec 31 Cathy Burdette
Dec 19 Beau Luzier	Emily Smith
Dec 20 Bob Cruickshank	

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>1</b> <i>First Sunday of Advent</i> 9:30 Sunday School <i>In person/conference call</i> 10:00 Chancel Choir Practice 11:00 Worship <i>In person/online</i> 7:00 Al-Anon	<b>2</b> 6:00 Worship & Music Committee Meeting	<b>3</b> 7:00 Committee Meetings	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> 1:00 pm – 4:30 pm Senior Game Day Mizpah Room	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> <i>Second Sunday of Advent</i> 9:30 Sunday School <i>In person/conference call</i> 10:00 Chancel Choir Practice 11:00 Worship <i>In person/online</i> 1:30 Youth Fellowship 7:00 Al-Anon	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> 6:00 Stated Session Meeting	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> 1:00 pm – 4:30 pm Senior Game Day Mizpah Room	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> <i>Third Sunday of Advent</i> 9:30 Sunday School <i>In person/conference call</i> 10:00 Chancel Choir Practice 11:00 Worship <i>In person/online</i> 12:00 Covered-Dish Luncheon 7:00 Al-Anon	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> 6:00 pm Pre-K Christmas Program & Reception	<b>20</b> 1:00pm – 4:30 pm Senior Game Day 6:00 pm Christmas Basket Preparation	<b>21</b> 8:00 am Christmas Basket Distribution
<b>22</b> <i>Fourth Sunday of Advent</i> 9:30 Sunday School <i>In person/conference call</i> 10:00 Chancel Choir Practice 11:00 Worship <i>In person/online</i> 7:00 Al-Anon	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>  6:30 pm Candlelight Worship Service (Church Office Closed)	<b>25</b> Merry Christmas! 	<b>26</b> (Church Office Closed)	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> <i>First Sunday of Christmas</i> 9:30 Sunday School <i>In person/conference call</i> 11:00 Worship <i>In person/online</i> 7:00 Al-Anon	<b>30</b> (Church Office Closed)	<b>31</b> (Church Office Closed)	<b>Jan 1</b> <i>Happy New Year!</i> (Church Office Closed)	<b>Jan 2</b> (Church Office Closed)	<b>Jan 3</b> 1:00 pm – 4:30 pm Senior Game Day Mizpah Room (Church Office Closed)	<b>Jan 4</b>