

St. Andrew Presbyterian Church

www.standrewpresbyterian.org 301-223-8887



December 2025



Rooted in Love, Grounded in Grace, Growing for God

Dear Friends,

As we close out this year, we Presbyterians have had a vibrant impact in our society. In these columns, we have looked at what makes Presbyterians so unique and impactful in our society.

One of our rallying cries out of the Reformation was *Sola Scriptura* which means Scripture Alone. Sometimes organizations like the church can add rules and regulations that do not conform to their founding documents. We as a church have a set of founding documents—they are the Scriptures. For us, the Scriptures are the set of rules and responsibilities for the church.

Previously to the Reformation, the church began to add extra items that were not in the Scriptures and then were treated as Scripture. This watered down the Scriptures and then elevated human doctrine. The end result is that the church is not nearly as effective nor as powerful.

We Presbyterians believe in the rule of the Bible since it is the Word of God. As such, all that we do and who we are is informed through the Word of God. If a doctrine or an action does not conform with the Bible, we should not abide by it. If a doctrine or an action is not mentioned in the Bible, then we may proceed with it as long as it does not water down the power of the Word of God.

The manner in which this has power is found in the Christmas story. We know that Matthew's gospel shares the story of Joseph while Luke's gospel shares the story of the Nativity through the eyes of Mary. We know as we pair up the Old and the New, that the birth of the Messiah/Christ was prophesied long before Jesus was ever born. Since we are a people of the Book, we can have confidence that we are sharing the truth as God has shared this with us!

When we share our faith in love with those we know and those we don't, as we share in love, we demonstrate to others that we as a people are rooted in love, grounded in grace, and thus growing for God.

In Christ's love,

Pastor Mark



Pastor Mark Vacation

Will be on vacation from **December 26—January 2**. If you have an emergency, please contact the church office or your Deacon.

Book Club

Will be meeting on **Tuesday, December 2, 7:00 pm** in the Friendship Hall. We will be reading "Saving Shallmar", by James Rada. This is a true story how the Christmas Spirit came to a small coal town in Western Maryland.

The Washington County Consort

Will play at St. Andrew on **Sunday, December 7, at 3:00pm**. All are welcome to attend and be blessed by the variety of recorder music.

The Presbyterian Men

The Presbyterian Men will meet on **Tuesday, December 16 at 7:00 pm**. There will be a Bible Study, fellowship, and prayer.

Newly elected Elders and Deacons

Will be installed on **Sunday, December 21, at both services**.

Lord, how can I live
your joy this day?

Library

It is our busiest and most joyful time of year. I hope you can find the time to enjoy one or more books below as you celebrate the birth of our Savior.

The Purpose of Christmas – by Rick Warren who reminds us to "remember the reason for the season," taking readers back in time to the most wonderful story of all—the birth of the baby Jesus.

The Jesus Chronicles – Matthew's Story (book 4) by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins. This biblically inspired fourth book tells the story of Matthew. His story shows us how the true Messiah changed the life of one man, and forever altered the course of history.

The Christmas Dog – by Melody Carlson. Betty Kowalski isn't looking forward to the holidays. She just can't seem to find Christmas in her heart. This book is a timely yet gentle reminder that God can work miracles through something as seemingly insignificant as a little brown dog.

The Story of the Other Wise Man – by Henry Van Dyke. Immerse yourself in the enchanting world of Henry van Dyke's timeless classic, "The Story of the Other Wise Man". First published in 1895, this beloved tale explores themes of faith, sacrifice, and the enduring power of love.



December Word Search

You can pick up your copy of the December Word Search in the parlor by the December Newsletter. Please turn your paper in to the church office, with your name on it so that we can high light you in the January newsletter.



Sunday School

If you haven't joined a Sunday School Class yet, come and join us. Here is a brief overview of our Sunday School Program. All students from Grade 5 and below meet in the sanctuary at 9:45 for a brief opening. (all other classes go directly to their Sunday School class at 9:45). During this time, we recite the Pledge to the Christian Flag and to the Bible, have a devotion, and a time of prayer. We also take up an offering. We use our Offering to support 2 sponsored children from the organization, Compassion International. We also send money to Samaritan's Purse, a relief organization that provides food, water, medical supplies, etc. to the neediest areas of the world. Part of the money is used for church and local needs. At 10:00 the students are dismissed to their classes.

We have 3 Adult Classes for you to choose from:

**** Seekers Class:** This is an in-depth study of the Bible. They are studying the book of II Thessalonians. The class meets in the Legacy Hall and is taught by Pastor Mark and Hank Hemphill.

**** Study in Paul:** This class is studying the Life of Paul. They are using curriculum from Beth Moore. This is a DVD and book study of the life of Paul. All books are provided by the class. They meet in the Friendship Hall. The class is taught by Jason McDonald.

**** Voyager Class:** This is an interactive class that chooses a book to read and to discuss together. This fall the class is reading and discussing the book Living With Confidence In A Chaotic World. The book is by David Jeremiah and talks about having hope in uncertain times. All books are provided for the class. The class meets in the conference room.

Each month we like to highlight the importance of attending Sunday School. This information is taken from the pamphlet **27 Reason Why You Should Attend Sunday School**. Rodney Pry, the Director of the PA State Sunday School Association, shares this information in the pamphlet that he wrote.

This month we would like to highlight Sunday School Helps People Learn the Importance of Gathering together with others for Worship and Learning.

"And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are all called to live in peace. And always be thankful." (Colossians 3:15)

Can a person be a Christian without joining or attending a church? Some years ago the *Wesleyan Christian Advocate* magazine responded to this question with the following answer: "Yes, it is possible. It is something like being:

A student who will not go to school.
A soldier who will not join the army.
A citizen who does not pay taxes or vote.
A salesman with no customers.
A tuba player without an orchestra.
A parent without a family.
A football player without a team.
A bee without a hive.

Coming together for fellowship, worship and learning with others in the church and Sunday School should not be seen as an option. It is God's plan for us, His children, and His will for us as we interact with others and Him.

In Deuteronomy 31:12, God gave this command to Moses, *"Call them all together men, women, children, and the foreigners living in your towns so they may listen and learn to fear the Lord your God and carefully obey all the terms of this law."*





Why did God issue such a command? Was it only for God's benefit? Certainly not! God wanted the Israelites and us to learn about His Word and how to live by it each day. And that is the message that He wants each of us to hear today!

Sunday School Reaches Out!

This month the Sunday School's offering will go to support the projects of Samaritan's Purse. The children are placing a sticker on the poster illustrating the various needs they would like their offering to go towards, clean water, feed a family feed a hungry baby, providing life saving medical equipment, etc. Thank you for bringing in your Sunday School offering to share the love and hope of Jesus to those in need.

Sunday School Snippets

Here is what is going on at Sunday School:

Toddler Class: The toddler class has been learning about how God created us to be big, strong and courageous. Congratulations to **Stella McDonald** and **Alma Twum-Barimah** for their great attendance.

Pre-K Class: The class has been studying about how to be a good friend and the ways that Jesus is a good friend to us. Congratulations to **Luka Bearese** and **Nova Vinson** who have been very engaged and helpful in class. Congratulations to **Nova Vinson** for memorizing Proverbs 17:17. *"A friend loves at all time."*

K/1st Grade: Our class has been doing different stories in the Bible. However, there is the central theme of family and friends. We circle together to pray for the opening.

K/1st Grade Cont: I am encouraging each child to add a small prayer for someone. **Emilee Bearese, Lachlan Bearese & Michael McDonald** are very close to memorizing their verse. All the children are enthusiastic about studying the Word of God.

2nd & 3rd Grade: Our class has been learning about living "God's Way." God loves us so very much and knows what's best for each of us, so it's truly the right way to live!

"Your Word is a lamp for my feet, a light for my path" (Psalm 119:105)

Through Moses, God gave us the 10 Commandments to teach us how to live (Exodus 19:1-20-21). By choosing to obey these laws, we show God just how much we love and trust Him.

We also learned that God has so graciously blessed us with many talents. The Israelites used their talents for God to help build the Tabernacle (Exodus 25:1-9 and Exodus 35:4-36:7). In the same way, we should use our talents for God...and in doing so, we too bring Him so much joy.

"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give." (II Corinthians 9:7)

I'm delighted to recognize the following students for showing their steadfast devotion to Jesus.

Addi Majeski

*Lovingly shows her compassion for others in bringing forth her prayer concerns and joys.

*Shows her kindness by helping out her fellow classmates and me.

Nikolai Bearese

*Endearingly shares how he asks Jesus to come into his heart daily.

*Boldly proclaims that he does this to push Jesus deeper and deeper into his heart.

Thomas Twum-Barimah

*Always shows us how he cherishes God's Word by sharing his knowledge of Bible Stories.



**2nd & 3rd Grade Cont.:**

*Created an awesome artistic profile of Jesus with a crown of thorns (King of all Kings)

Excellent work class, I'm so grateful for you all.

4th -5th Grade: An idol is anything more important to us than God. In Exodus 20:22-24. The Lord told Moses to tell the people: "You have seen for yourselves that I have spoken to you from heaven: *Do not make any gods to be alongside me; do not make for yourselves gods of silver or gods of gold.*" "Make an altar of earth for me and sacrifice on it. Wherever I cause my name to be honored, I will come to you and bless you." "Worship the Lord your God and serve him only. (Luke 4:8).

God wants to live in us. "Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them (Exodus 25:8.) As the Israelites wandered in the desert, they often failed to appreciate that God was with them. *I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.* (Ephesians 3:16-17)

We can follow God when others don't. In Numbers 13 and 14, Moses sent out twelve spies to look at the promised land and the people living there. Ten of the men did not trust the Lord to be with them. As a result, the Israelites wandered in the desert for forty years until all of that generation died. "Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve." (Joshua 24:15).

Trusting God takes Courage. God chose Joshua to lead the Israelites. In the book of Joshua, we find stories of spies, battles, victories, and defeats. But most of all, it is the story of one man's deep and total trust in God. "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go (Joshua 1:9).



Middle School Class: In October, we looked at what the Bible is, how it is structured, why we read it and how to read it. We talked about truth and how to determine what the truth is. We played the game two truths and a lie to illustrate this. The idea of the game is to state three things about yourself, but with one of them being a lie. You state them to the class and the class has to figure out which one is a lie. Lots of fun trying to figure it out. The idea here is how do you figure out the lie. What clues do you use? In the same way, we can apply these ideas to beliefs. How can you tell what is true and what is a lie? How can we use the ideas of the game to help us figure out what is true and false about religious beliefs? How do we know what we believe is true? We looked at what other religions believe and what Christians believe. Lots of good questions and discussion were had!

High School Class: We are doing a video and book study entitled "Feed The Dog." This is a study on Spiritual Disciplines. Congratulations to **Abby Boppe** who had perfect attendance in the month of October. Special recognition goes to **Abby Boppe, Anne McDonald, Will McKinley and Izzy Telemeco** for their great participation in class.

Adult Christmas Party

Monday, December 8, 6:00 pm.

Please bring a finger food and a wrapped gift ranging from \$7-\$10 (No gag gifts, please) This is such a great evening of food, fun, fellowship, and exchanging gifts throughout the evening. Hope you can join us. Please sign up if you plan on attending.





Youth Group

The Youth Group will meet on **December 7**.

The Youth Group will have the lead roles in the Living Nativity. Come and see our youth as they portray Mary and Joseph, the Three Wise Men, the Innkeeper, Isaiah, the Centurion and many other parts! **Practice will be on December 14** beginning at 6:00pm after the Christmas Choral Concert.

Come meet a favorite Biblical Character. This event has been moved to January. Watch your newsletter for further details!

Friends!! We would love for you to invite your friends to Youth Group! What a better gift to give to a friend than the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ! If you bring a friend, both you and the friend will receive a candy bar. You can invite that friend two separate times for the friend to be a friend for our contest. If the Youth Group invites 25 friends by the end of May, we will have a very special road trip!!

The Youth will serve at the REACH shelter on Tuesday, December 23. We will meet at the church at 4:30 pm to prepare the meal. We will transport the meal to the shelter and then serve the meal to the residents. We will be done and back to church around 8:15 pm. The shelter has age requirements so we can only take youth who are 14 and older. If you have any questions, ask Pastor Mark.

Living Nativity

Saturday, December 20th, and Sunday, December 21, 6 pm & 7 pm both nights. Come and see our youth as they portray Mary and Joseph, the Three Wise Men, the Innkeeper, Isaiah, the Centurion and many other parts!

Birthday Party for Jesus

Everyone is invited to come to the Birthday Party for Jesus on **Sunday, December 14, noon**. We will have a delicious lunch provided by the Fellowship Committee. There will be games and crafts for the kids and fun activities for the adults. We may be having a special guest come, Sunshine the Christian Clown. The highlight of the party will be making a birthday card for Jesus and singing Happy Birthday to Jesus.

We will also be doing a candy/cookie exchange that day. If you are able, please bring 2 to 3 dozen cookies and or a bag of wrapped candy. Every family will be going home with a delicious plate of Christmas treats.

Please sign up by **December 10**, if you plan on attending. Hope you can join us for a Birthday Party for Jesus.

CPR/First Aid Class

We are offering a CPR/First Aid Class on **January 4th after the 11:00 service**. Lunch will be provided for everyone. This is highly recommended for all people working with children and with the youth of our church. We will be having a certified trainer, Missi Renner, be our instructor for the day. Please sign up by **December 28th** in the parlor if you plan on attending.

Heal Our Patriots

On November 9, after both services, the Presbyterian Women collected donations for "Heal Our Patriots". A total of \$400.00 was received. Thank you so much for your generosity and support of this ministry.



Helping Hands

Will be meeting on **Thursday, December 4, from 10:00-noon**. Lunch will be provided for everyone. This will be the last of the year. We will be starting up again in January.

Supper Club

Come and join us at the Western Sizzlin' at **5:30 pm on Monday, December 29**. It is always a fun night with great food and fellowship. Please sign up in the parlor if you plan on attending.

Friday Potluck Luncheon with Friends

Friday, December 19th, at noon.

The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts (BISFA) Cantata Choir is select group of high school singers who perform advanced repertoire written for treble voices. Designed for BISFA students who demonstrate strong vocal technique, musicality, and dedication, the ensemble focuses on developing blend, tone quality, and musicianship through a wide variety of styles, from classical choral works to contemporary selections. With an emphasis on artistry and collaboration, the group performs at concerts, community events, and festivals, representing the school with professionalism and excellence while fostering a supportive and creative environment for its members.

Please bring a dish to share, and join us Friday, December 19, at noon.

Treasurer's Report

General Fund

October Income	\$ 33,609.93
October Expenses	\$ 38,356.76
Operating Income	\$ - 4,746.83

Acolyte

Are you or the child in your life interested in serving as an Acolyte? You can now add your name to the sign up sheet in the parlor indicating the service dates and times you are available. The current sheet is for September through December and will be updated on a quarterly basis going forward.

Please see **Stephanie Ragland** if you have any questions.

Mission Committee

December is a month of giving and committee member, Debbie Kinzer, sees that it holds true. Twenty "Care Bags" are put together with items women and children can use. Ten of the bags will be delivered to the Salvation Army's Women and Children's Shelter. The remaining ten bags will go to CASA. Twenty-four backpacks stuffed with school supplies, Christmas gifts, and stuffed animals will go to three Williamsport schools, Williamsport Elementary School, Springfield Middle School, and Fountain Rock Elementary School.

The backpacks will be given to less fortunate children in these schools. Much appreciation goes to Debbie, who has always handled these projects for the committee and our church.

The Community Catalyst Outreach committee, CCO, will also be giving this December. They will be overseeing the preparation of a meal at the REACH Shelter on December 23rd. The youth group will assist by serving the meal. This helps to fill a huge need for the Hagerstown area shelter.





St. Andrew Presbyterian Church **Mission Statement**

The St. Andrew Presbyterian Church is a congregation of people who trust and obey Jesus Christ. As such, we the members, are the body that carries on His mission today. Therefore, we intend to:

1. Provide opportunities for people to know and care for one another;
2. Worship and celebrate life in ways that are meaningful and satisfying, and which glorify God;
3. Conduct an education program that helps people of all ages to increase their knowledge and understanding of faith in Jesus Christ;
4. Relate to our world community in such a way as to show that we care and to alleviate human need;
5. Say and do those things which will let others know that being a part of the Christian community is good news and that they are invited to join;
6. Maintain and use church facilities in such a way as to show our regard for Jesus Christ;
7. Develop human and financial resources to carry on our mission
8. Develop leaders and an organization that will help us accomplish our mission.

Thursday Night Bible Study

Pastor Mark will continue the Bible Study on **Thursdays in December**. The topic will be one of Paul's letters--Ephesians. **We will meet on December 4, 11, and the 18th.** Come and enjoy a time of fellowship and a deepening of your Christian faith.

Joy Offering

The Joy offering will go to CASA. It will be collected **Sunday, December 21st.**

Congratulations to those who completed the **November Word Search**.

Have fun with this month's Word Search. The Word Searches are located in the parlor by the newsletter. When completed, please place it in the office on the Secretary's desk. Please have them turned in by the 15th, make sure your name is on the Word Search

Melanie Beckley
Scott Beckley
Cora Carson
Kathy Carter
Kenny Carter
Courtney Corkery
Taylor Faith
Zachary Faith
Janet Hiett
Debbie Kinzer

Melissa Lake
Jill Lampton
Christopher Lunsford
Debbie McCauley
Mark Mummert
Linda Reid
Rayetta Schindel
Allison Yoder
Tom Young

Holiday Gift Cards - **Give and Give Back!**

The holidays are almost here! Spread the joy and support St. Andrew by purchasing Martins or Weis gift cards.

When you shop with these cards, St. Andrew receives 5% of every purchase - an easy way to give back while you shop!

Denominations: Martins: \$25, \$50, \$100, \$250 Weis: \$25, \$50, \$100

Gift cards make perfect presents for family, friends, or someone in need.

Available each week after the 8:30 a.m. service and before the 11:00 am. Service.

*Please see Stacy MacMillan, Mo Thériault, or Mary Beth Alphin to purchase yours today!





December 2025



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 <i>7 pm Book Club</i>	3	4 <i>10-12 Helping Hands</i> <i>Shepherd's Table</i> <i>7 pm Bible Study</i>	5	6
7 <i>8:30 am Worship</i> <i>9:45 Sunday School</i> <i>11:00 am Worship</i> <i>Noon Sandell Open House</i> <i>3:00 pm Washington County Consort</i> <i>6:00 pm Youth Group</i>	8 <i>6:00 Adult Christmas Party</i>	9 <i>10 & 7 Women's Bible Study</i> <i>5:30 pm Coordinating Team</i> <i>6 pm CCO</i>	10 <i>6:30 pm Handbells</i> <i>7:30 pm Choir</i>	11 <i>7 pm Bible Study</i>	12	13
14 <i>8:30 am Worship</i> <i>9:45 am Sunday School</i> <i>11:00 am Worship</i> <i>Noon Birthday for Jesus</i> <i>4:30 Choral Fest</i> <i>6:00 pm Living Nativity Practice.</i>	15	16 <i>7 pm Presbyterian Men</i>	17 <i>6:30 pm Handbells</i> <i>7:30 pm Choir</i>	18 <i>7 pm Bible Study</i>	19	20 <i>9:30 am Christmas Caroling at Homewood</i> <i>6 & 7 pm Living Nativity</i>
21 <i>8:30 am Worship</i> <i>9:45 am Sunday School</i> <i>9:45 am Coffee Hour</i> <i>11:00 am Worship</i> <i>6 & 7 pm Living Nativity</i>	22 <i>5 pm Community Children's Meal</i>	23 <i>Youth at REACH</i>	24 <i>5 & 7 pm Christmas Eve Service</i>	25 <i>Merry Christmas!</i> <i>Pastor _____</i>	26 <i>Mark _____</i>	27 <i>Birthday Party</i> <i>On _____</i>
28 <i>10:00 am Worship</i> <i>Vacation _____</i>	29 <i>5:30 Supper Club</i> <i>_____</i>	30 <i>_____</i>	31 <i>_____</i>			



Christmas Bazaar

What an amazing Bazaar Weekend we had just a few short weeks ago! With SO MANY volunteers pooling their talents, we have had amazing success! As of this writing, we have brought in over \$7,400 (before expenses), much of which will be donated by the Presbyterian Women to various charitable organizations. But even more importantly, we have again demonstrated to the community that St. Andrew is a great place to be, and where God's Spirit prevails along with fun, fellowship, varied talents...and great food!

"Thank You" seems inadequate to express my appreciation to all of you who were part of our success! No matter how big or small your role was in putting on this event, or whether you worked "up front" or "behind the scenes", your participation is truly appreciated. Some jobs included:

- * praying for us throughout the year, and particularly during Bazaar Week
- * donating items for our gift, thrift, or craft areas
- * working tirelessly all year as part of the "bazaar crew", creating unique crafts
- * running errands and/or fixing things, as needed
- * publicizing our event either by distributing flyers, contacting radio stations, sharing information with a friend, or using your Facebook influence to get the word out
- * helping to move tables, chairs, or signs during set-up and/or clean-up
- * emptying boxes and setting up our displays the week prior and repacking boxes the week after
- * moving items in and out of the storage shed and setting up/taking down Christmas trees
- * making numerous trips up and down the stairs to bring items up from the basement,

and then taking boxes back down after the event

- * making soup and/or sweet treats for our bake sale, or donating food items for use by our talented kitchen crew
- * donning a red apron (or a Santa or Mrs. Santa suit!) as a Bazaar Worker during the sale
- * working in the kitchen to create amazing meals

And of course we can't forget the customers! Without you, all our other efforts would be in vain! And as you probably already know, you still have an opportunity to purchase additional treasures from our hallway display between now and Christmas!

While our Bazaar is sponsored by the Presbyterian Women, it is truly a church-wide ministry and is a product of many people of all ages working together, each with their own talents and abilities, and ultimately, all to the Glory of God! I can't thank you enough!

Blessings,
Marcia Davis, Bazaar Chair



Your Input is Welcome!

We welcome your input for our newsletters. Please place all submissions in the church office, by the **15th of each month.**



St. Andrew Presbyterian Church
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