

St. Andrew Presbyterian Church

www.standrewpresbyterian.org 301-223-8887

January 2026

Rooted in Love, Grounded in Grace, Growing for God

Dear Friends,

As we begin this new year, we Presbyterians have had a vibrant impact in our society. In these columns, we will look at what makes Presbyterians so unique and impactful in our society.

We Presbyterians believe in the rule of the local church. We are incarnational in our leadership. As Christ came to walk among us, so we choose our leaders from among our own. We choose Elders and Deacons from our own membership. Church members are chosen to serve in this fashion: The first thing that must happen is for a person to be an active member. This comes from desiring to attach oneself to the ministry of the church and then to declare that by joining the church. You can join by approaching me who will then initiate the process.

The second item that needs to occur is that the person is active in the life of the church. The Session along with the congregation appoints a Nominating Committee which then puts forth names of those who may be able to serve as either an Elder or a Deacon.

The third item that needs to occur is that the Congregation votes on the people who have been called by the Nominating Committee. Once the vote is a yes, then those who are called will engage in a period of instruction. They then are examined by the Session on four areas: Personal Faith, Knowledge of Theology, Knowledge of the Constitution, and Duties of the Office.

After they are examined and approved, they are able to take office. We publicly welcome them as they answer the questions put forth in the Book of Order. It is a blessing to know that we have a congregation with talent enough to be able to run the ministry of the church.

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



Scriptures

January Scriptures

Ponder on it. Meditate on it. Allow it to speak to you.

Verses are for the full weeks of January, beginning on Sunday, January 4th.

Epistles Sunday	The Law Monday	History Tuesday	Psalms Wednesday	Poetry Thursday	Prophecy Friday	Gospel Saturday
Rom. 1-2	Gen. 1-3	Josh. 1-5	Ps. 1-2	Job 1-2	Isa. 1-6	Matt. 1-2
Rom. 3-4	Gen. 4-7	Josh. 6-10	Ps. 3-5	Job 3-4	Isa. 7-11	Matt. 3-4
Rom. 5-6	Gen. 8-11	Josh. 11-15	Ps. 6-8	Job 5-6	Isa. 12-17	Matt. 5-7
Rom. 7-8	Gen. 12-15	Josh. 16-20	Ps. 9-11	Job 7-8	Isa. 18-22	Matt. 8-10



**Happy
New Year**



Membership Support

Happy New Year! Is getting more involved with church one of your New Year's resolutions? There are many benefits to being part of a church family. Our monthly articles will highlight them.

We are supported by others. "When we get together, I want to encourage you in your faith, but I also want to be encouraged by yours." Romans 1:12 (NLT) Being part of a community of believers can provide comfort, friendship and support during life's good and bad times.

Perhaps you'll join a committee to encourage and support their ministry. Committees meet on the 2nd Monday of every month, September through May. To learn more about our committees, ask Pastor Mark or check the website.

On January 18 during the coffee hour, we'll celebrate our 18 new members who realized the benefits of being part of our church family: **Alexina Twun-Barimah, Lily South, Maggie McDonald, Jim and Marguerite Clay, Harold McCauley, Martha McNeil, Ginny Mongan, Christian Mowl, Heather Rivera, Vivianne Mohamad, Freddie Johnson, Jr., Coty Henson, Tyler Leisure, Reid and Dani Keplinger, Zaine Beaver, and Shirley King.** If you are interested in membership, please talk to Pastor Mark.

Other ways to connect with our church family include participation in Helping Hands, Sunday School classes, and Bible Studies, which are offered at various times. Choose those that work for you!

You'll find many opportunities to support others and be supported by our ministry in this newsletter and weekly bulletins.

Holly Place

Holly Place was established to target low-income seniors with limited resources who could not afford alternative care systems.

The Presbyterian Women support Holly Place as one of our local missions.

Holly Place Wish List

This is an updated list of items Holly Place needs. The Presbyterian Women collect items each month and deliver them to Holly Place. There is a featured item each month, but you can donate anything on this list at any time. Please place your donations in the tub located in the lobby labeled Holly Place. Thank you for your generosity.

January:	Air Freshener
February:	Storage Bags, Gal. & Qt. Size
March:	Dishwasher Detergent
April:	Trash Bags (13 & 33 Gal.)
May:	Furniture Polish
June:	Floor Cleaner
July:	Batteries (AAA, AA, 9V)
August:	Aluminum Foil

PW Holly Place Angel Tree Ministry

We would like to thank everyone who participated in our Angel Tree Ministry by purchasing Christmas presents for the residents at Holly Place. Your continued support of Holly Place monthly item donations and the Angel Tree ministry is a blessing from God and greatly appreciated.

We will no longer be collecting plastic bottles. Thank you for all of your efforts to make this program a huge success!





Sunday School

With the new year we often make New Year Resolutions. Why not make attending Sunday School a New Year's Resolution if you haven't done so already. We have classes for all ages, including 3 Adult classes:

**** Voyager Class:** Is an interactive class. The class decides what book they would like to read and to discuss. They are currently reading Living With Confidence in a Chaotic World by Dr. David Jeremiah. This class meets in the Conference Room.

**** Seekers Class:** Is taught by Pastor Mark and Hank Hemphill. This is an in-depth Bible Study. They are currently studying the book of Psalms. This class meets in the Legacy Hall.

**** The Travels of Paul Class:** Is taught by Jason McDonald. The class is using a DVD series by Beth Moore and are studying the travels of Paul. This class meets in the Friendship Hall.

Sunday School Snippets

Here is what is going on at Sunday School:

Toddler Class: The toddler class is studying the birth of Jesus and how God favored Mary and Joseph.

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: We have been studying how Christ is the head of the church. (Ephesians 5:23) During the month of December the class has been doing a lot of Advent activities, and have been ➔

K/ 1st Grade cont:

talking about the birth of Jesus. The students have been learning about the importance of prayer. As they pray in class, they pass a cross around. Congratulations to **Luka Bearese** and **Nova Vinson** for memorizing their Bible verse for December.

2nd & 3rd Grade: The second and third grade Sunday school class studied Joshua 5:13-6:27.

We learned to follow God's plan even when it doesn't make sense. Because Joshua and the Israelites obeyed God's plan, they were able to win the battle of Jericho.

I am honored to recognize the following students:

Addi Majeski enthusiastically shared that the Birth of Christ was in the beginning of The New Testament.

Michael McDonald who attended our class one week, and so tender heartedly exclaimed that "God is my hero."

Nikoali Bearese so wonderfully employs his God-given talent performing in the Nutcracker.

Thomas Twun-Barimah cleverly stated that 9 divided by 9 is one, but Jesus is the only ONE!

That is the answer to everything!
I'm so proud of you all!

4th -5th Grade: In December we have been studying the following themes:

Message Delivered: Jesus Came to Save Us. In Bible times engagement was as legally binding as marriage. So, when Joseph learned that Mary was pregnant, he would have to divorce her. But Joseph was a compassionate man and did not want Mary to be disgraced." In Matthew 1:18-2:12 and Luke 2:6-20 God sent his angels to make it clear that Mary was carrying his son. ➔



4th-5th Grade Cont.

The angel said,) "You are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21). We can depend on God in every situation. The Hebrew people were called out of Egypt and protected; Jesus the promised Messiah followed the same route "out of Egypt" and he was protected from King Herod's plan to kill him. The Magi were told by God to return home by another route and not to return to King Herod. What, then, shall we say in response to these things? "*If God is for us, who can be against us.*" (Romans 8:31)

Jesus is able to meet all our needs. As we know Jesus performed many healing miracles. One of the best-known stories in the New Testament is his feeding of 5,000 plus. Jesus told the people that they needed to believe in Him as the one sent from God, but they were more interested in what he could do for them. Then Jesus declared, "*I am the bread of life, whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.*" (John 6:35).

The light of Jesus helps us to see the truth. Jesus healed a blind man on the Sabbath. Ironically, the religious leaders who thought they were experts on the law were blind to the fact that only the son of God could make a man see. Jesus said to the people, "*I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.*" (John 8:12)

Middle School Class: Lots of fun and interesting lessons for November 2025! We did one of my favorite things.... play with Legos. You might be wondering how playing with Legos could possibly be worked into a bible lesson, but we did. Each Lego piece represented a building block of our lives. The challenge was to use these building blocks to construct something of ours

Middle School Class Cont:

that would represent the life you would want to build. Some students built churches and responded that the church would be a focus in their lives. Others built crosses to represent a focus in their lives would be Jesus. We also had a Bible constructed out of Legos to represent a focus on scripture. We looked at the reformation in early November. What was the reformation and why it was important. We did an exercise where the students were charged with sins and were given a chance to be set free from their sins by buying indulgences using Chris Dollars (what I call the Sunday School money). Using this we discussed the ideas of purgatory and what the Catholic faith at the time believed and why. We looked in the Bible to try and understand where these ideas might have come from. We also created our own 95 thesis regarding the injustices at school. Like, too much homework, getting up early, etc. We posted them on the classroom door, but unlike Martin Luther's thesis, no body cared about ours.

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 Telemeoco** for their great participation in class.

Family Game Night

Come and join us for our First Family Game Night of the year on **Saturday, January 10, 6:30-8:00 pm**. Bring your favorite game (s) and a snack to enjoy. Please sign up if you plan on attending.





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 are focusing on how **Sunday School Encourages People to Share God's Love.**

"For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes, Jews first and also Gentiles. This Good News tells us how God makes us right in His sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, It is through faith that a righteous person has life." (Romans 1:16 & 17)

James Russell Lowell once said, "They who love are but one step from Heaven.

When Jesus was asked about which of the commandments was most important, he said, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind. And, love your neighbor as yourself." In other words, for those of us who call ourselves Christians, loving God and loving other people should be the highest priorities in our lives.

After Jesus answered the question about the most important commandment, one of religious leaders tries to justify his own actions by asking Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:29) That prompted Jesus to tell the story of the Good Samaritan.

The example of the Good Samaritan, someone who was willing to give his own time, money and genuine concern for another person should serve as our example,

too. In fact, when Jesus completed His parable, he gave the religious leader and us this command, "Now go and do the same!"

Sunday School's primary purpose is about teaching persons of all ages about God, His Word, the Bible, and His will for each of their lives. But, Sunday School is also about developing close personal relationships with others and then working together in service to God and other people. If you are looking for a way to be of greater service to others and to God, go to Sunday School.

Congratulations to the following students for great Sunday School Attendance for the month of November : Please note there were 5 Sundays in the month of November.

Toddler Class:

*Alma Twum-Barimah
Stella McDonald*

Pre-K Class:

*Brentley Vinson
Nova Vinson*

K/1st Grade Class:

*Michael McDonald
Bryan Twum-Barimah*

2nd and 3rd Grade Class:

*Addi Majeski
Thomas Twum-Barimah*

4th and 5th Grade:

Kohen Dayhoff

6th-8th Grade:

*Maggie McDonald
Alexina Twum-Barimah*

Teen Class:

*Abby Boppe
Brody Hemphill
Jeremy Hemphill
Anne McDonald*



Thank you kids and to the parents/grandparents who bring you to Sunday School each week for making Sunday School such a top priority.

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.

The Session

After careful consideration and planning by unanimous vote, Session has made the difficult decision to eliminate the Youth and Young Adult Ministry Coordinator position effective at the end of the year 2025. This decision was not made lightly, and reflects Session's ongoing efforts to realign our resources and programs to best serve our growing church community. We are in the process of determining the best staffing fit for our congregation and ministry.

Stewardship

January 4 is scheduled for a time of celebration (with Pastor Mark dancing a jig for meeting our goal of 100 pledges.

The total number of pledges as of December 23 is 79 totaling \$ 281,114.00.

What a blessing! Thanks to all who generously support our ministry financially through pledging or other ways. We are confident God will provide the volunteers and resources needed to maintain our vibrant ministry. Every Sunday is a celebration of God's Grace!

Book Club

Come join us **Tuesday, January 6, 7:00 pm**. for our monthly Book Club. We will be discussing the book, Saving Shallmar by James Rada. This is a true story on how a small mining town in western Maryland felt the love of the Christmas spirit in the midst of a very difficult time.. Pick up a copy and come join us.

The Presbyterian Men

The Presbyterian Men will meet on **Tuesday, January 20 at 11:00 am and at 6:00 pm for dinner, and 7:00 pm for Bible Study**. The evening Bible Study will be at the home of Jeff Telemeco, 10618 Conner Drive, Williamsport, MD.

Thank you!

To the Sunday School Students for bringing in a special offering for the month of December. We sent the December offering to Samaritan's Purse. The children had a large poster of the many different projects that Samaritan's Purse supports. The children decided to support **Bringing Clean Water to a Community and to Feed a Family**. Thank you children and parents for your Sunday School offering to help the least of these. For more information, look at the poster in the hallway.

Thank you

Thank you to all who went Christmas caroling at Homewood on the 20th. You brought so much love and joy to all the residents in the nursing center. Thank you for taking the time and sharing the love of Jesus to these people. We will be scheduling a BINGO Party soon at Homewood. Watch your bulletins for more details.



Helping Hands

Our first Helping Hands will be on **January 15, 10-noon**. We will be having a Welcome Back luncheon served for everyone. Thank you all for being such a blessing to our church and to the various ministries that you touch through your helping hands and servant's heart. Please note: if you did not get a gift at our last Helping Hands, please pick up your gifts. There are 3 gifts for you in the office on the back counter.

Thank you Helping Hands

Thank you all so much for the generous gift card that you presented to me at the Birthday Party for Jesus. I am so blessed by your kindness and generosity, You all know my favorite store and how much I love to shop. Thank you for making my Christmas so special.

With love, Annette

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.

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

Supper Club

Come and join your church family on **Monday, January 26**, for a wonderful evening at the Western Sizzlin'. We meet at **5:30 pm** and have the whole back room reserved for our church. It is always a great evening of food and fellowship.

Pastor Mark will be on vacation from **January 20 to 28**. If you have an emergency, please contact the church office or your Deacon.

In case of an emergency

There are two exits from the sanctuary. One is the door at the back of the sanctuary and the other is the door on the left at the front of the sanctuary.

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, has also been given. this December. They oversaw the preparation of a meal at the REACH Shelter on December 23rd. The youth group assisted by serving the meal. This helped to fill a huge need for the Hagerstown area shelter.





January 2026



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4 8:30 am Worship 9:45 Sunday School 11:00 am Worship Noon CPR Class 6:00 pm Sunday Night Class 6:00 pm Youth Group Communion	5	6	7 7:00 pm Book Club	8 6:30 pm Handbells 7:30 pm Choir	9 12:30 Blood Drive	10 6:30-8:00 pm Family Game Night
11 8:30 am Worship 9:45 am Sunday School 11:00 am Worship 6:00 pm Sunday Night Class 6:00 pm Youth Group	12 6:30 pm Chrissitan Ed	13 10 am & 7 pm Women's Bible Study 7:00 pm Committees	14 5:30 pm Coordinating Team	15 6:30 pm Handbells 7:30 pm Choir	16 10am—noon Helping Hands	17
18 8:30 am Worship 9:45 am Coffee Hour 9:45 am Sunday School 11:00 am Worship 4:00 pm Tubing 6:00 pm Sunday Night Class	19 6 pm Building & Grounds 7:00 pm Admin/ Deacons	20 11 am & 6 pm Presbyterian Men	21	22	23	24
25 8:30 am Worship 9:45 am Sunday School 11:00 am Worship Noon Meet Bible Characters 6:00 pm Sunday Night Class 6:00 pm Youth Group	26 5:30 pm Supper Club 7:00 pm Session	27	28	29	30 Youth Retreat at _____	31 Camp Joy El _____



The miracle happened! Right in the St Andrew Stable! Actually, four times! Jesus was born in our stable at 6:00 and 7:00 both Saturday 12/20 and Sunday 12/21. And, yes you are correct, the times would be a 6/7. Anyway, not only was the town repopulated by distinguished visitors who came to witness the miracle, but witnesses carried by 86 cars with at least 2 people per car. That is at a minimum 172 people who witnessed the events. Being that many cars had more than 2 people, it is safe to assume we had over 200 people attend.

We attempted to reach even more by live streaming the event, but the Facebook cut us off half way through. We did video each night though. The videos will be posted to the church website in the near future.

As far as distinguished visitors, we had: Mary, Joeseph, baby Jesus and their donkey Larry; three Wise Men from the east; a group of Shepherds and their sheep; many Towns People, Isaiah, a Roman Centurian; The Angel Gabriel; a whole host of Angels; an Inn Keeper and Assistant; a special appearance by Santa Claus and the Grinch! All played by St Andrew Youth and Adults. Over 30 participants each night!

Last, but not least was the support staff that helped take care of all of these distinguished visitors and witnesses. We had a kitchen staff that kept everyone nourished; costume makers and dressers; a photographer to document the events; main character, angel, towns people, and shepherd managers; animal care takers and suppliers: camp fire pit and wood suppliers, fire starters and safety personnel; lighting production managers; promotions personnel for social media, website and flyer handouts; the artistic talent to produce the flyers; and lastly our parking specialists who kept all of the witnesses safe!

A BIG ST ANDREW THANK YOU to all that made this event possible! We could not have done it with out all of your time and talents! Let's do it again next year!

Sincerely,
The St Andrew Stable Manager

 St. Andrew Presbyterian Church
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