



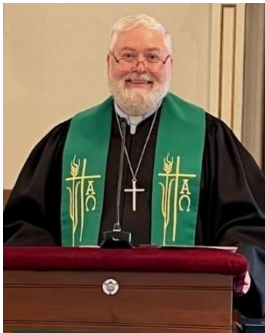
# *In the First Place!*

A publication of First Presbyterian Church, Lancaster

Michael Denney, Pastor

Newsletter for December 2024

Volume 9 Number 10



## **Mike's Musings—**

I pen these words in the early afternoon of Thanksgiving Eve. Cheryl is busy doing last minute things as we wind down the clock for the Thanksgiving holiday. Family, food, and football—can it possibly get any better? But as with every high point, there are always the lows that follow—clean up and leftovers. Alas, we can't seem to catch a break, can we? Anyway, I hope your Thanksgiving holiday was rewarding.

The seasons of Advent and Christmas lie at the threshold. My Advent sermons have been guided by a book by the Reverend Erin Wathen entitled *"Calling All Angels"*. Wathen, an ordained minister with the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, shares stories from angelic appearances throughout the Nativity. In each case, the angel begins with the words 'do not be afraid'. In these hectic holiday moments when stress and tension run high, the message of the angels in each of their appearances in the nativity narrative is about courage and strength—things that may be running a thin just now. I sincerely hope that these sermons will have a positive impact on us all.

Similarly, the Wednesday Bible Study class will venture into a study of Hebrews beginning on December 4. Hebrews is a most challenging book but we shall delve into it with a sense of purpose as we study. We are using Tom Wright's book entitled *"Hebrews for Everyone"*. Wright is a Church of England scholar and the author of many books. Come join us if you can possibly do so.

The month will include a host of special church-related activities as well as all the other obligations that come our way individually. I hope that, in spite of the demands of calendar and clock, we can find a measure of time to calm and refocus. The holidays are not for the faint of heart.

As always during the Advent season, some of our families will be sharing with us in the lighting of the Advent candles. This activity, while short in comparison to most of the events of worship, allows more people to be involved in corporate worship. Worship is far more than the sermon buttressed by a few hymns. No the whole of the hour has been designed to sense the presence of God in as many aspects as possible. Worship is also a sensory experience involving as many of the senses as possible. I pray that our times together are meaningful to you in every way possible.

On a personal note, I have been having some nagging health issues that have some impact on my mobility and most certainly on my sleeping habits. At present I have an MRI scheduled on Monday, December 2, to consider available treatment options. I mention this for two reasons—my gait is quite noticeable and to request your prayers for the next while. Cheryl's help and support has been invaluable during this time. And, as you may have guessed, I am a *lousy* patient.

I look forward to seeing you in worship as often as you are able. Your presence means much!

Grace and peace,

*Mike*

## **In Our Daily Prayers**

- Inez Dyehouse
- Mackenzie Craig Rogers
- James Wiggins
- Robin Karppe
- Calvin Denham
- Read Baierlein
- Danielle Arnold

### **Special Needs**

- Musician Search Committee

### **Walkers Trail—Danville**

- Nancy Compton

### **McDowell Place—Danville**

- Jeanette Aldridge
- Mary Lou White
- Mike Swaffar

### **Our Homebound**

- Nancy Childers

### **Community Ministries We Support Financially**

- Cooperative Parish
- Bluegrass Community Action
- CASA of Garrard County
- Garrard County Arts Council's Summer Arts Camp
- Garrard County Food Pantry
- Garrard County Homeless Coalition
- Garrard Ministerial Association
- Gideons International
- Habitat for Humanity
- Haven Care Pregnancy Center
- Manna Ministry
- Presbytery of Transylvania Unified Mission Program
- UP with Youth
- Urban Village

**Church Elders, Deacons, Officers and Staff**

**Elders:** Donna Arnold, Donna Powell, Joyce Bryant, Joy Fathergill, LeRoy Horn, Joe Leavell

**Clerk of Session:** LeRoy Horn

**Deacons:** Judy Adams, Karen Anderson, Jo Marks, Amanda Marsee, Karen Marsee

**General Fund Treasurer:** Joyce Bryant

**Memorial Fund Treasurer:** Bobby Powell

**Custodian/Groundskeeper:** Jim Bryant

**Interim Organist:** Jim Parrish

**Pastor:** The Reverend Michael Denney

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**December Birthdays and Anniversaries**

Birthdays

December 3—Abby Fathergill

December 9—Mike Bush

December 9—Mike Swaffar

December 18—Nick Marsee

December 30—Cheryl Denney

Anniversaries

December 19—Lita and Joe Leavell

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**December Sermons  
From the Presbyterian Pulpit**

December 1—*“The Sound of Silence”*

First Sunday in Advent

Luke 1:5-25

December 8—*“Speaking Up, Speaking Out”*

Second Sunday in Advent

Luke 1:26-38

December 15—*“What Will People Think?”*

Third Sunday in Advent

Matthew 1:18-25

December 22—*“Sacred Disruptions”*

Fourth Sunday in Advent

Luke 2:1-20

December 24—*“On This Holy Night”*

Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion

Luke 2:1-14

December 29—*“A Story Written for Parents”*

First Sunday of Christmas

Luke 2:41-52

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First Presbyterian Church

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**WONDERFUL WEDNESDAY**

Wonderful Wednesday will be on the evening of December 13. Our guest that night will announced later. Mike’s class will be discussing the story of Boy Jesus on page 32 of the study guide. We hope you can attend.

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The annual Holiday fellowship dinner will be held after worship on Sunday, December 8.

Everyone is invited

but be sure to bring your appetite!!

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The Wednesday Bible Study participants have completed their current study and will begin a series of lessons on the Hebrews on December 4. Over the course of the next few weeks, we will delve into one of the most complex portions of the New

Testament. Tom Wright’s book will provide the basis of our study but we will explore other writers as well. Please come join the fun as we explore.

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We shall gather on Tuesday, December 24, at 5 p.m. for a Candlelight Communion worship. Mike will be sharing a brief reflection on the birth of Jesus and we will celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper as well. The service will be brief yet poignant. Come, let us worship the LORD together.

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**CLASS OF 2027**

Sunday, December 8, we will have the installation service of the Class of 2027 Ruling Elders and Deacons. These women and men are faithful Christians who will serve with honor.

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You are invited to join the festivities on Thursday, December 5, as we decorate the Sanctuary for the holiday season. We need lots of help so we are counting on you. If you have any spare time on that day, come and join in the fun as we bring the holiday decorations to the Sanctuary. See you there!!!

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