



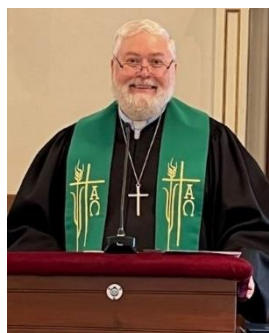
In the First Place!

A publication of First Presbyterian Church, Lancaster

Michael Denney, Pastor

Newsletter for January 2026

Volume 11 Number 1



Mike's Musings—

Happy New Year!! Can you believe that we are here on the cusp of 2026? It seems like we were welcoming 2025 just a short time ago. I hope your Christmas holidays were filled with good and wonderful times. We enjoyed lunch on Christmas Day with two very dear and close friends. Our children and grandchildren gathered to celebrate on Saturday, the 27th. Then on Monday, the 29th, Cheryl and I left for Asheville to celebrate her 65th birthday by enjoying the beauty of Christmastime at Biltmore. Then on Wednesday evening we gathered with some friends to welcome the New Year. Sadly, I gave up about 10 p.m., went home and went to bed. And so the new year came.

We look forward to many things throughout this month, not the least of which will be two special events. I have chosen to focus on Epiphany on the 11th. Epiphany, on the calendar, is always January 6. But it is always good to have this focus as we move into the season of light. We will be choosing our 'Star Words' on the 11th as well. Then, on the 18th, my dear friend, Philip Lotspeich, will be joining us in worship. Philip is the General Presbyter for Transylvania Presbytery. I invited him to come and join us so he could share with the congregation and with the Session about the nuts and bolts of what transpires as my retirement date draws nearer. So please make these two dates a priority.

My sermons from the 11th on to the end of the month will focus on light. Epiphany is all about the light of the natal star. Light is such a powerful element in life; it warms us, it guides us, it nourishes us. Light is a crucial element to our existence. We are told that 'God is light and in God is no darkness at all'. So, let's spend some time talking about the light.

There are a number of meetings and events during January that will occupy time for some of our folk. In addition to Sunday worship, there is Wonderful Wednesday, Session meetings, a Deacons meeting, a visit by the organ tuners for their semi-annual visit, removing the decorations from the sanctuary, and who knows what else. Of such is the life of a church.

One of the things that I have noticed in churches and organizations over my light is the tendency to 'ignore the elephant in the room'. I don't want us to be guilty of that. My retirement date will be here soon and we need not push that aside in the hopes that it might go away. I will be talking about it frequently as the time approaches. Of course it is a topic fraught with emotion, but it should also be one of opportunity. Taking an honest look at the current state of the church, consideration of who you want to become, and seeking God's will for the person who can lead in that direction. So, let us break out our resolve and focus on the tasks at hand so as to be faithful in all things. God will guide...but we must follow. As I have said often, 'This is God's church and God will lead into God's future as God chooses.' So let us be faithful in our discipleship individually and corporately.

Grace and peace,

Mike

In Our Daily Prayers

- Family of Harriet Denham
- Caywood Metcalf
- Charlotte Matthews
- Christine Moyer
- Peggy Derringer
- James Wiggins
- Read Baierlein
- Danielle Arnold

The Willows at Harrodsburg

- Inez Dyehouse

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 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: Kitty Barsotti, Donna Powell, Joy Fathergill, Jim Bryant, LeRoy Horn, Nick Marsee

Clerk of Session: LeRoy Horn

Deacons: Amanda Marsee, Cheryl Denney, Ellen Baran, Jo Marks, Karen Anderson, Karen Marsee

General Fund Treasurer: Joyce Bryant

Memorial Fund Treasurer: Bobby Powell

Custodian/Groundskeeper: Jim Bryant

Organist: Jim Parrish

Pastor: The Reverend Michael Denney

January Birthdays and Anniversaries

Birthdays

- January 16—Nancy Childers
- January 20—Joan Slaughter
- January 22—Donna Arnold
- January 25—Karen Powell

Anniversaries

None

**January Sermons
From the Presbyterian Pulpit**

January 4—“A New Beginning”
Jeremiah 31:7-14

January 11—“When You Wish Upon a Star”
Matthew 2:1-12

January 18—“Guiding Light”
Isaiah 47:1-7

January 25—“I Saw the Light”
Isaiah 9:1-4



As 2026 gets underway, we get back in the swing of our regular activities. Wonderful Wednesday, however, will not meet in January. We will be back on track in February.

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On Sunday, the Reverend Philip Lotspeich, General Presbyterian of the

Presbytery of Transylvania will join us in morning worship and will share with the congregation greetings from the Presbytery and information about transition issues upon Mike’s forthcoming retirement. Following worship, Session will meet with Philip in the Middle Room of Fellowship Hall for a light lunch and discussion.



The Worship Committee will meet on Sunday, January 11 at noon. All members take note.



We extend our deepest sympathies to Donna Arnold in the passing of her cousin, Harriet Denham. Her funeral service was Saturday, January 3, at Stanford

Baptist Church. Harriet and her husband, Calvin, were well known and much loved here at First. May God bless all who mourn.



The Session of First Presbyterian will meet for its first meeting of 2026 in the Middle Room of Fellowship Hall on Monday, January 19, at 7 p.m. All Ruling Elders are asked to attend.



A recent tradition unfolding at First is the selection of ‘Star Words’ during the season of Epiphany.

Star Words are selected sight unseen with trust that God will speak in various ways to each one through that word during the ensuing year. We will select our words on Sunday, January 11.

