

What's First

at
Second Presbyterian Church
December 2025

Our Vision

*As members of Second Presbyterian Church,
We gather in worship;
We grow in God's Word;
We serve in Jesus' name.*

Session:

Moderator

William C. Seay, Jr.

Clerk of Session

Bettie Guthrie

Class of 2025

Alice Martin

Class of 2026

Carl Guthrie
Beverley Coleman

Class of 2027

Bettie Guthrie

Committees:

Building & Grounds

Carl Guthrie

Finance/Stewardship

Office & Personnel

Garland Harrison

Outreach

Carole Ellis
Kimberly Jones

Worship/Education

Alice Martin



Berlin's iconic Brandenburg Gate reopened this month in 1989. It was the first time since 1961, the year the former

Soviet Union erected the Berlin Wall, separating East Germany, the then separate Communist country, from West Germany, a free, democratic nation. Mikhail Gorbachev, the last Soviet leader, knew economic and political reform was inevitable. Hungary soon opened its borders. Many East Germans soon crossed to freedom in Austria. The Berlin Wall's destruction was also announced as well. Finally, the Brandenburg Gate was unlocked. More Eastern Germans walked to their freedom in West Berlin. Tearful family reunions immediately followed. An oppressive regime was ending. Its evil spirit had destroyed itself. Humanity had won, after all.

The world has sadly experienced more crises since those days: 9/11, the 2008 Economic Depression and of course, COVID-the global pandemic that is still amongst us despite vaccination success. Nonetheless, we have overcome these past struggles. And we presently continue to do so. We also prevail-become champions, in other words. We know this to be true when God uses life challenges to make us stronger, wiser, as well as most importantly, more appreciative of his greatest gift-Love.

Yet we prevail in love best when we open our own gates-our heart gates-and allow Christ's merciful, compassionate love to take over. Once begun, Jesus becomes king of our hearts by cleansing us. He then guides us through our own heart gates to love and strengthen others -particularly strangers. Those different, in fact, are usually most needy for love. And they often prove themselves our better, godly neighbors and friends. They are God's disguised blessings to better train us in Christ's way-loving!

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK - Continued

Therefore, let's commit this Christmas and henceforward to washing our hearts more in Jesus's love, walk through our heart gates, and not be strangers to strangers. How? By loving them as Jesus came to love us all-and does still. It is the only way we will ever prevail.

Merry Christmas!

"Blessed are those who wash their robes to be worthy of the tree of life and therefore enter through the city gates." (Revelation 12:24).

William C. Seay, Jr.

PRESBYTERIAN MEN: Carl Guthrie, Moderator

Christmas Potluck Luncheon Sunday, December 14, 12:30 p.m.

The Annual Christmas Potluck Luncheon will be held on **Sunday, December 14, 12:30 p.m., sponsored by the Presbyterian Men.** Please bring your favorite vegetable or salad dish to share. The meat, rolls, and dessert will be provided. Please sign up in the church office or call (804) 732-6531. Come and enjoy fun, food, and fellowship. All are welcome!

December Birthdays

3 Linda Pittman
Jon Shaffner
5 Suzanne Groux
Dorothy Riggan
10 Mona Ellis
12 John Barras
Beth Iselin
Carroll Hathaway



17 William McCray
22 Margaret Graham
23 Grace Eloise Fitts
24 Brian Dean Moore
26 Marian Kropp
28 Mark Stevens
31 Beverley Coleman

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING & WHITE GIFT

“Prepare the Way” Isaiah 40

Sunday, December 14, 2025

A cherished Presbyterian tradition since the 1930's, the Christmas Joy Offering is one of the four special offerings designated by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA). The Offering helps students at racial ethnic schools and colleges develop their gifts and find their calling. It helps families of active and retired church workers to meet unexpected needs.

The Christmas Joy Offering will be received on **Sunday, December 14 at 11:30 a.m.** At this service we will bring our offerings of non-perishable food items for our White Gift program, which helps local families through the DCU Hope Center.

These items may be placed in the baskets in the back hall. Money donated to the White Gift will be used to augment the work of the White Gift program.

Please prayerfully consider your contribution to both the Joy Offering and White Gift Program at our **December 14** service. Offering envelopes will be provided in the bulletins.

WORSHIP and EDUCATION COMMITTEE: Alice Martin, Chair.

December will be a busy month. We all look forward to this festive time of the year when we celebrate the birth of baby Jesus. Our Crismon tree will be decorated, the Advent wreath will be placed with its candles to remind us of this special season, the choir will fill the sanctuary with beautiful music, memorial poinsettias will fill the pulpit area, and candles and greenery will add a beautiful touch to the decorations. All of this is without a doubt, wonderful as we continue these traditions we love so much, but the most important part will be YOU being together with fellow members as we celebrate the birth of Jesus.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Memorial poinsettias will again fill our church and this year we are asking to give them “in honor of” as well as “in memory of.” Please let Becky know by **Dec. 5** the names to be listed in the bulletin. Poinsettias will be placed in the sanctuary on **Friday, Dec. 12.**

CHRSTMAS EVE SERVICE

Wednesday, Dec. 24 at 5:00

Communion will be served

OUTREACH

Carole Ellis and Kimberly Jones

PRAY FOR:

CHURCH FAMILY AND FRIENDS - Bill and Mona Ellis, Eva (Becky's niece), Susan Crew, Thelma Kirkland, Keith Snavely, Jack Schoeb, Dorothy Riggan, Wayne Tucker, Liam Clegg (Guthrie's grandson), Amy Rush and Whitney Palmore.

World and Community - Victims of Hurricane Melissa, Holy Land, Ukraine, Victims of Typhoon in the Philippines.

"The key to a well-led life lies in the extent to which we help others. It is our enduring legacy."
Coach Joe Gibbs

ADVENT CALENDAR SUGGESTION FOR DCU FOOD COLLECTION AND OUR BLESSING BOX:

December 1 - box of cereal Dec. 13 - canned beans
December 2 - peanut butter Dec. 14 - box of crackers
December 3 - stuffing mix Dec. 15 - package of rice
December 4 - boxed potatoes Dec. 16 - package of oatmeal
December 5 - macaroni and cheese Dec. 17 - box of pasta
December 6 - canned fruit Dec. 18 - spaghetti sauce
December 7 - canned tomatoes Dec. 19 - chicken noodle soup
December 8 - canned tuna Dec. 20 - tomato soup
December 9 - dessert mix Dec. 21 - can corn
December 10 - jar of applesauce Dec. 22 - can mixed vegetables
December 11 - canned sweet potatoes Dec. 23 - can carrots
December 12 - cranberry sauce Dec. 24 - can green beans

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

OCTOBER 2025 FINANCIAL REPORT

	October	Year to Date
Income	\$ 5,905.00	\$113,045.50
Expenditures	\$11,831.11	\$123,718.79
Losses	-\$ 5,926.11	-\$ 10,673.29





PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN: Alice Martin, Moderator

Christmas is coming and our Presbyterian Women are busy with all the wonderful projects to make this a joyful holiday.

Operation Christmas Child – 17 boxes have been filled with surprises for children to make their Christmas special. “Thank you” to all of you who helped make this project a success.

Salvation Army Christmas Stockings will be in the back hallway to pick up and fill with various items. Warm socks, crayons, markers, puzzle books, knit caps and scarves, cards, sunglasses, small toys, etc. are great to fill a stocking for a child. The return date for filled stockings is **Sunday, November 30**.

December Circle Meeting: The Morning Circle will meet on **Dec. 2 at 10:30** for our usual business meeting and Bible study. Then we will stay to enjoy our **CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON!** Please plan to come. The more the merrier!!

PW DECEMBER MISSION PROJECT: Gloria Summers, Mission Chair.

WHITE GIFT PROJECT

In December PW is asking you to help with the “White Gift” project by writing checks and bringing canned or packaged foods to give to the Downtown Churches United Hope Center. The joy of giving is in the air, and we thank you for your continued support of our PW projects!



A MESSAGE FROM THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

(An excerpt from “Minute for Mission” 11/02/25)

This year’s theme for our Stewardship Campaign is **Sharing God’s Love in Ministry & Mission** and our scripture is taken from 1 Peter 4:10 “As each of you has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God”.

For those of you that have already made your pledge, we thank you. But for those that are still considering what level of support you can give, here are some things to consider:

- God is the owner of everything, and we are His caretakers of the gifts He has entrusted to us.
- Stewardship is not just about money, but about responsibly managing all aspects of life, including time, abilities and material possessions.
- Giving is a joyful response to God’s love and generosity and should not be perceived as a reluctant duty.
- A big part of stewardship is service to others, as our scripture suggests, using one’s gifts and talents to serve the community and the world. *This certainly includes encouraging one another!*
- Stewardship also involves spiritual disciplines such as prayer, reading the Bible and worshipping God.
- Stewardship is rooted in scripture, such as Jesus’s parable of the talents in Matthew 25, which illustrates managing the gifts one has been given.

We would ask that among all the things we are prayerful about, pray for our church, which will celebrate 175 years of serving God, this community and beyond in 2026.

On behalf of this year’s Stewardship Committee, Alice Martin, Beverley Coleman and Mark Stevens, we want to thank you for your prayerful consideration this Stewardship Season.

Thank you and may God continue His blessings upon us all.

Your Stewardship Committee

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	1	2 10:30 a.m. Morning Circle & Christmas Lunch	3	4	5 Names in the Bulletin for Memorial Poinsettias	6
7 2 nd Sunday of Advent 11:30 a.m. Worship	8	9	10 12 noon. "What's First" Deadline for <u>January 2026</u>	11	12 10:00 a.m. Poinsettias Delivered Sanctuary Decorated	13
14 3rd Sunday of Advent 11:30 Joy/White Gift Offerings Received. 12:30 Christmas Pot-Luck Lunch	15	16	17	18	19	20
21 4 th Sunday of Advent 11:30 a.m. Worship	22	23	24 Christmas Eve Church Office Closed 5:00 Christmas Eve Communion Service	25 Merry Christmas Church Office Closed Christmas Holiday	26 Church Office Closed Christmas Holiday	27
28 1 st Sunday of Christmas 11:30 a.m. Worship	29 Church Office Open 9-12 noon	30 Church Office Open 9-12 noon	31 Church Office Open 9-12 noon	<i>December 2025</i>		

**Second Presbyterian Church
419 W. Washington Street
Petersburg, Virginia 23803**

Address Change Requested

ANNOUNCEMENTS



MEMORIAL and IN HONOR OF POINSETTIAS

Those who wish to provide poinsettias for our sanctuary during the advent season are to call the church office by Friday, December 5. Plants must be at the church by 10:00 a.m. on Friday, December 12.

2026 OFFERING ENVELOPES – Offering envelopes will be available in the back hall during December. We encourage you to pick these up before Christmas so that you will be ready for January 2026. It will be helpful if you can deliver envelopes to neighbors and family members who are not present during December.

ANNUAL STATEMENTS BY REQUEST – Annual statements on giving will not be mailed except by special request. If you desire a statement, let Becky know by January 15, 2026.