



## Ministry Spotlight: En-Core Volunteers

The En-Core volunteers had great fun serving the school families at SAS's recent Thanksgiving Luncheon. The school staff, parents and children all enjoyed eating together, and the children loved the dance period that followed. Here are a few snapshots of the festivities. If you would like to join the volunteers with En-Core, please contact LaVerne at 678-429-0411 or email [laverne@sapctucker.org](mailto:laverne@sapctucker.org). For more pictures, please see our [Facebook Page](#).



## From the Pastor

That first Christmas Eve of the pandemic was surreal. I took this picture late on the evening of December 24, 2020. Everyone else in my house was asleep except my curious old cat, Harley, who you can see peeking out on the left side. It felt so strange to be home watching our pre-recorded worship service with candlelight and communion from home. I put a nice cloth on our coffee table. I lit the candles on the set of German angel chimes that are older than I am and the other two sets I bought the winter before when our youth group went to the Christkindl Market. I had red wine in a real glass and a small loaf of honey wheat bread from Outback Steakhouse. One of the beautiful things about the way we did pre-recorded worship was that I didn't always know what was coming. We planned worship together, but David Lukens edited it all on his own. So, when I heard Kjersti Lukens' voice singing "O Holy Night" during communion, it touched me. I have always felt a special connection to that song, but in 2020, the words "the weary world rejoices" hit me differently. Nine months into the pandemic, with racial reckoning across the country and political uprising, the world *was* weary. How could it rejoice?





Acknowledging that the Christmas season is often an emotionally charged time when we can feel many things deeply at the same time, the women behind Sanctified Art describe this year's theme:

"Joy is often a companion to many other emotions. We can feel joy in addition to feeling many other things at once: grief, anticipation, anxiety, excitement, disappointment, and exhaustion. Perhaps many of us live with the myth that joy is not something we deserve—or that it is wholly out of reach. But our joy is rooted in the truth that we belong to God. Can you tether yourself to that deep truth? You deserve to feel joy—fully. The world needs your joy, even if you are weary. Our joy is better when it is shared."



This theme, of course, alludes to a line in the familiar Christmas hymn, "O Holy Night," which has an interesting history. The song was originally written by a French poet who was an atheist, and the music was supplied by a Jewish composer. The hymn was later translated into English by an American Unitarian minister. In the 1800s, it became a popular hymn for Christian abolitionists due to its justice-focused language in verse 3. Like Mary's song, the hymn reminds us that justice and joy belong together. Sometimes our joy is an act of resistance. And so, this Advent, we will hold space for our weariness and our joy. We will seek a "thrill of hope" in our hurting world. We will welcome joy—even and especially if, like the prophet Isaiah, we cry out for comfort (Isaiah 40:1). In this weary world, may we find many ways to rejoice.

This year, you can observe Advent with the following:

- a daily devotional with scripture, poetry prayers, visual art, coloring, written reflections, action, and journaling prompts
- a calendar for children and families (and anyone else who wants one)
- daily posts on the church's Instagram and Facebook pages

I hope you will join us this advent season and for our special Christmas Eve worship services as we ask the question of ourselves and our community: *How does a weary world rejoice?*

-Camille

**How does a weary world rejoice?** An Advent series in Luke's Gospel

December 3 - Advent 1 We Acknowledge Our Weariness Luke 1:2-23   Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19	December 24 - Advent 4 We Sing Stories of Hope Luke 1:39-45 Luke 1:46b-55   Luke 1:67-80
December 10 - Advent 2 We Find Joy in Connection Luke 1:24-45   Isaiah 40:1-11	December 24 - Christmas Eve We Make Room Isaiah 9:2-7   Luke 2:1-20
December 17 - Advent 3 We Allow Ourselves to Be Amazed Luke 1:57-66   Psalm 126	December 24 - Christmas Eve We Make Room Isaiah 9:2-7   Luke 2:1-20



## Light of Grace Presents: The Christmas Story

Light of Grace invites all of you to be our guests for the 2023 Christmas Story on December 10th, 4:00 pm, in the Sanctuary at St. Andrews.

Light of Grace is a ministry for adults with special needs. They sing, sign, dance and share the love of Jesus wherever they go. You won't want to miss this special event!

## Vital Congregations Initiative December's Congregational Survey

The last Sunday in November we culminated our month-long reflection on St. Andrew's history and legacy with a Service of Commemoration & Celebration. It was a wonderful time of testimonies and reflections on St. Andrews' past ministries, and a lights ceremony of recommitment to be Christ's light in the world. You can view the Heritage Sunday service on our YouTube channel, and the Table Timeline Exhibit on display through the month of December in the Parlor.



This month we turn to stage #3 of our Vital Congregations Initiative -- an examination of who we are as a particular church in this present moment, at this specific location. On Sunday, December 10th the congregation will participate in the main mechanism for our self-assessment – an in-church congregational survey. As part of the morning worship, all present will complete the paper survey, which will then be compiled and analyzed by the PC(USA) Research department. An online version of the survey will be made available for one week for members absent on the 10th. Every accommodation will be made to assist members needing help with either version. We need everyone to participate in our self-assessment, that we might have a clear picture of who *we say we are*, and how we view our own vitality. May the Spirit motivate us all to participate fully and transparently in this phase of measuring our vitality.

## Worship Service for the Weary

Wednesday, December 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm.

Around the Firepit located near the shed at the back of the West Parking Lot, near the office building

As we approach the longest night of the year, we will pause to honor those who struggle, and through scripture, prayer, silence, and candle-lighting, we will bear witness to the light that has come, and is coming, into the world. This brief service will create a safe and sacred space to lament and grieve the many losses we've experienced in this year and



years past. All are welcome.

## Lessons and Carols

December 17, 6:00 pm

Lessons and Carols is a candlelight worship service of Scripture and music to celebrate the Lord's birth. This service involves carols for choir singers, instruments, handbells, and the congregation. A Christmas

cookie celebration will follow in the Fellowship Hall. Please bring a batch of your favorite cookies to share if you wish to. Also, bring your friends and neighbors to enjoy the service and celebrate the good news of Christ's coming.



## "Skivvies & More" Collection

We are collecting items for the men at Clifton Sanctuary Ministries



December 10th -

17th. White t-shirts, boxers & briefs in sizes M-XXL are needed (No socks this year). Other items requested this year are adult backpacks, shower shoes, wallets and gloves. Please bring your donations of new, unwrapped items to the collection boxes in the narthex or outside the office door in the courtyard. Thanks in advance for your support of Clifton Sanctuary Ministries this Christmas!

- White t-shirts and boxers/briefs in Size Med-XXL (no socks)
- Back packs
- Wallets
- Gloves
- Shower shoes

## Montreat Retreat

The annual adult retreat to Montreat is set for Tuesday April 23 thru Friday April 26th, 2024. We will again be staying at William Black Lodge. The week will be all about MUSIC...so if you love music, love to sing, love to listen to music and appreciate the history behind church music this week is for you! Ed Weaver will be leading the discussion on Everything You Wanted to Know about Hymns (*But were afraid to ask!*)

What makes a hymn a hymn? Where do they come from? Why do we sing them?

Join us at the Adult Retreat at Montreat in April for a journey

## SAPC Staff

### Pastor

Rev. Dr. Camille LeBron Powell (ext 106)  
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### Coordinator of Congregational Vitality

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### Director of Music

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### Director of Older Adult and Caregiver Ministries

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### Director of St. Andrews School

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### Office Manager

Gretchen Perkins (ext 102)  
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### Financial Administrator

Helen Hoang (ext 104)  
[finance@sapctucker.org](mailto:finance@sapctucker.org)

Visit our website

NETWorks Good Neighbor Christmas Shop- last few days!

NETWorks' Christmas Shop is back in person this year!

through hymns ancient and modern.

A separate email will be sent out on the cost for the retreat. A deposit of \$50.00 to hold your spot will be due in early January.

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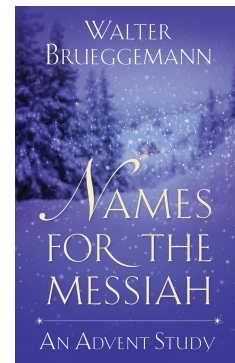
We will have donation bins in the Narthex and in the breezeway by the office from through December 3rd. Please bring your donations of new, unwrapped toys. [Click this link](#) for the list of most needed items.

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### Advent Book Study

The book, *Names for the Messiah* by Walter Brueggemann will have two options for study. You can join on Zoom on Thursdays at 7PM, or on Saturday mornings at 10AM, in person in the meeting room. There is also an option to go out to lunch afterwards.

[Click this link](#) to join the group on Thursdays at 7:00 pm.



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### Sunday Mornings Together Class

This Sunday School class will be studying the book, *Advent in Plain Sight*. This is a daily devotional that will be discussed each week during the Sunday School hour, beginning December 3rd.



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### New Bible Study Group Forming in January

by Arch Baker

An extended study of the Bible book of Revelation will be held at SAPC, in the meeting room, beginning January 7, 2024 at 2:00 p.m. The recorded instruction by Bruce Gore lasts for about an hour with discussion, moderated by Arch Baker, to follow. Bruce Gore is a seminary faculty member with extensive experience in the Reformed Tradition.

The class will take an in-depth historical-analytical approach to Revelation exploring the history of interpretation and history of tradition aspects of the book. Gore's presentations are informative and engaging and will help the class to understand why the book was written and what it says to modern-day study. We will begin with a video presentation of the various interpretations (some absolutely bizarre) of Revelation.

Our ultimate goal is to understand the book as it would have been understood by its first readers/hearers. If you want to prepare, you can begin by reading the books of Daniel and Ezekiel in the Bible. See you at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday afternoon, Jan. 7th. If you miss a session or two, that's OK as Bruce always reviews each previous section.

This is going to be fun!

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### New Member Spotlight

Join us in welcoming new members to St. Andrews! Scott Johnson joins us by transfer of letter from the Church of the New Covenant, and the Chen family (Fernando, Kayla and Flora) joined by reaffirmation of faith.

### Giving

Online giving applies to your pledge just the same as a paper check. Secure online contributions can be made by clicking [this link](#), or checks can be mailed to: SAPC, 4882 Lavista Rd, Tucker, GA 30084



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### December Birthdays

- 3 Marsha Ashby, Curtis Morse
- 6 Amelia Pattillo
- 8 David Barnhart
- 11 Edward Forrester
- 12 Francine Elle, Marco Compton
- 13 Peggy Benedict
- 15 Jackson Powell
- 17 Teresa Maloney
- 21 Peter Shenkman
- 23 Jane Thomas
- 24 Mary Jentoft
- 26 Judy Cook
- 28 Mary McCowen

### December Anniversaries

- 21 Walter & Gwen McDuffie
  - 29 Curtis & Heather Morse
- 

### Upcoming Events

#### December

- 3 1st Sunday of Advent
  - 10 Light of Grace - The Christmas Story. 4 pm
  - 17 Lessons & Carols 6 pm
  - 20 Longest Night - A Service for the Weary 6:30
  - 24 4:30 Cocoa and Crafts  
Worship at 10 am, 5:00 pm and 11:00 pm
  - 25-29 Church Office Closed
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### Service Opportunity

Want to be more involved in Sunday worship? SAPC's Worship Ministry is looking to add lay readers. Lay readers participate by reading a prayer for illumination and an assigned scripture passage on a rotating basis. For more information or to join our group of readers, please contact Carol Gordon at [carol.gordon587@gmail.com](mailto:carol.gordon587@gmail.com) or call (770) 564-0900 or text (404) 316-8675. An upcoming training session is being planned for late January, so please do not hesitate if you feel uncertain. You would be so welcome.

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### Ushers

Ushering on Sunday mornings is a great way to help folks feel welcome at St. Andrews. If you are interested in helping, or would like more information about being an usher, please contact [Debbie Brilling](#).

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### Presbyterian Women

The Presbyterian Women are meeting on December 12th at 10:00 am in the Meeting Room and on Zoom. All the women of St. Andrews are welcome to attend. [Contact Judy Cook](#) for more information about the Presbyterian Women.

The PW is continuing to collect adult diapers, poise pads, maxi pads, and tampons at meetings and in the Narthex for NETWorks Cooperative Ministries.

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### Our Advent & Christmas Webpage

Back by popular demand, we have a page on our website dedicated to all of our events and services for Advent and Christmas!



## En-Core December Meeting

We'll end our volunteer activities for 2023 preparing Christmas cards for the school families. En-Core volunteers will gather Friday, December 8th for a bit of holiday cheer, and to address the cards. If you'd like to donate holiday greeting cards to be sent to the St. Andrews staff and families, please drop them off at the church office by Thursday, December 7th. For more information contact LaVerne at 678-429-0411 or email [laverne@sapctucker.org](mailto:laverne@sapctucker.org).

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[Click this link](#) to see the page.

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## Alternative Gift Market

North Decatur Presbyterian Church is hosting their annual Alternative Gift Market featuring many free-trade items this Saturday 12/2 from 10:00 am - 3:00 pm.

## Tucker Tree and Menorah Lighting

Tucker's annual celebration has been moved to the parking lot at the Tucker Rec Center on 12/2 from 5-8pm due to rain. Main Street Theatre will be doing a skit, and there will be Mr. and Mrs. Santa, bouncy houses, cookies, cocoa, and food trucks!

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## Notes from the Session

The Session met twice on November 19, 2023. A called meeting was held in-person in the Meeting Room at 11:15 a.m. to welcome new members. Scott Johnson joined by transfer of letter from the Church of the New Covenant, and Fernando and Kayla Chen by Reaffirmation of Faith. We welcome them, and look forward to working together at St. Andrews.

Our stated session meeting was held by Zoom at 1:00 p.m. In addition to times of prayer, the Session approved the following motions:

- The session approved a motion to accept Jim Connor's resignation from the Session, with our thanks for his service.
- A motion to add a new Presbytery Policy for Paid Family Medical Leave for Pastors to the SAPC Operations Manual as a Policy of the Session was discussed and approved.

Moving to items for discussion, the proposed 2024 budget as approved by the Management Ministry was presented by J. Thomas, Treasurer. After thoughtful discussion of changes that might be needed to facilitate new projects founded on the work of the Vital Congregations Initiative, the budget was approved as presented. Moving forward, the Session will monitor any new budgetary changes needed and make adjustments to the working budget as needed and approved.

D. Brillling led a discussion about the need for additional Communion servers during the Advent season. Several Elders volunteered to serve on specific dates, and others volunteered to serve as needed for other dates.

Since our last meeting, members were asked to contribute to the timeline of SAPC over the past 60 years. Our timeline now shows when members joined the church, as well as many examples of past activities and memories. As we take the next steps of visioning, the timeline will continue to be available for viewing in the church parlor. If you have not had time to look at it, please do spend time to review all the adventures of our past as we continue to plan for our future together.

## PDA: Disaster Relief and More

Did you know that Presbyterian Disaster Assistance responds to more than just tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, fires and

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Call 800-872-3283

floods? They also aid refugees and asylum seekers, as well as respond to incidents of public violence, like mass shootings.

When you are not sure what to do besides offering thoughts and prayers, supporting PDA is a way to do more. [Click here](#) to contribute directly to their efforts. To send a check, please designate where you want your gift to go on the memo line and mail to: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
P.O. Box 643700  
Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700

The code to designate gifts to the humanitarian response in Ukraine is DR000165.

The code to donate to hurricane relief, including Hurricane Ian is DR000194

[Click here](#) to donate online

Text 'PDA' to 20222 to donate \$10

**St. Andrews Presbyterian Church**

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