



Ministry Spotlight: News from St. Andrews School



On Sunday, February 9, 1969, the session of St. Andrews Presbyterian Church voted unanimously for the following motion: *Based upon the results of a survey, a weekday Kindergarten be established at St. Andrews Presbyterian Church beginning in the fall of 1969.* The intention, according to the session minutes, was that the school be self-sustaining and at the end of each school year, "an amount of up to \$500.00 be retained in the Kindergarten treasury, and all excess money be turned over to the Church Treasurer for use in current expenses." A lot has changed in the more than 55 years since the session took that vote. What hasn't changed is the mission at the heart of the weekday Kindergarten that we now know as "St. Andrews School" (SAS):

To provide families in our community with a quality program that is convenient and affordable. To foster a safe, nurturing, Christian environment that will be conducive to learning for young children by providing an age-appropriate curriculum program, which will allow each student to learn at his or her ability and level. Our staff will strive to provide both educational and fun activities that will promote a program enriched with literacy, social, emotional, cognitive, physical, intellectual, and creative abilities. To promote a partnership with our parents and families with the highest level of integrity and professionalism.

In August of this year, the session voted on a revised constitution for the school and adopted a three-phase plan to rebuild, modernize, and ensure the long-term viability of the school. Since then, Debbie Brilling, a current member of the church session, has accepted the job of Interim Chair of the St. Andrews School Board. The other voting members of the newly reconstituted school board include Kayla Chen, Kjersti Lukens, Cindy Weimer, Robbie Floyd, Jenna Scott, and one representative from the church's Management Ministry.

The Board is pleased to share some updates and improvements that have already begun or are on the way:

- **Facility Improvements Completed:** Roof replacement, HVAC upgrade, privacy fence on playground, and removal of old playground equipment.
- **Updates in Progress:** upgraded phone systems, fingerprint door locks (that will improve security and streamline drop off/pick up), and a redesigned website.
- **Communications:** Ongoing use of the Brightwheel application for communication between school and families, launching a quarterly newsletter from the SAS board to the school, and sharing news and information with SAPC through the Lamplighter.
- **Tuition Adjustments:** As part of the SAS Board's initial review of our financials, including the recent expiration of some grant funds that were previously available and maintaining our commitment to provide affordability without sacrificing quality, new tuition rates will go into effect in January 2025.

This is a challenging and exciting time for the church and school to remember that we are not separate organizations but one in mission. The relationship between the school and church has already been strengthened through the Encore ministry. We hope you'll join us for worship on Christmas Eve at 5 PM, where several SAS children and their

families will take part in worship leadership (see the separate article about the return of the pageant below). School families are also getting involved in planned fundraisers to support infrastructure upgrades and ensure the long-term success of our school. Board members have surveyed comparable programs nearby to look at how competitive SAS is, what sets us apart, and how we can better meet the community's needs while providing a safe, welcoming, and high-quality education for each child in the school. One of the immediate challenges for the school is money to do all the things needed. The SAS board is inviting school families and stakeholders to support the school through end-of-year giving. For more information about how to give, [click here](#). As we continue to work together, support one another, and join God in doing some new things with the school, we ask for your continued prayers and support.

With Hope and Gratitude,

Camille



From the Pastor

One of the things I love about this congregation is how beautifully God quilts ordinary people together into something useful and beautiful. Unlike weaving, where sometimes the individual strands are hard to see or distinguish from one another, you can usually identify the distinct pieces that go into the larger piece. Each Sunday, during the welcome in worship, I say, "We welcome all of each of you." I know it's a grammar teacher's nightmare, but it's significant. The invitation is to bring all of who you are to church, not to try to blend in or leave part of yourself at home. It's like the stoles that have become a beloved and meaningful symbol at St. Andrews, made of neckties with paisley, cartoon characters, stripes, the 1996 Olympics logo, jack-o-lanterns, and more. Each piece, each person, is important, and together, God quilts the pieces, the people, into something more significant than the sum of the parts.

Some quilts are exquisite works of art that seem fit for a fine art museum. Some are simple grids of T-shirts meant to cover a Twin XL college dorm room bed and carry some of home with them. Quilts have been used for physical protection, comfort, ceremonies, abolition, family heirlooms, advocacy, and more. The medium of quilting is an ancient craft that has been dated back as far as 3400 BCE and continues today. Quilting is a medium that transcends cultures, regions, and time but is a craft rooted in community and storytelling.

The women behind Sanctified Art were inspired by the visual concept of quilting while working on this year's Advent theme because it "feels like a blanket wrapped around you, providing warmth and comfort as you begin again. Like a quilt formed by scraps of old fabrics and meaningful family items, this worship series stitches together the ancient scriptures and reminders we need to hear again and again." This year, our Advent theme is "Words for the Beginning." Advent is a season of beginnings and endings, and with these time transitions come anxiety, excitement, uncertainty, and hope. These words are meant to be blessings that can feel like a warm quilt wrapped around us, giving us comfort and courage for what lies ahead, reminding us of *who* we are and *whose* we are. The folks contributing to this year's theme describe it like this:

As the calendar year comes to a close, a new church year rushes in. Christ's birth ushers us into new ways of living and loving—and yet, we feel the weight of many things coming to an end. The world as we know it spins madly on.

We have crafted an Advent series filled with blessings, with the words we need to hear again and again as we begin a new season. We imagined the words Mary would speak to her newborn son. What scriptures and stories would she impart to him? What lessons would she teach him as he grew? And so, our weekly themes may feel like the lessons we teach to children, but in reality, these are lessons we continue to learn and relearn as adults. We invite you to enter this Advent season as if you are entering a sacred new chapter, holding fast to the reminders that will bolster you for the journey ahead.

In many ways, pregnant Mary was surrounded by endings—large and small, personal and political. And yet, Mary proclaimed hope in a God who was and is making all things new. As we also move through new personal and political chapters, may these words for the beginning renew us and remind us of the ways we are called to live out our faith. No matter what you are facing, no matter what this new day brings, let love be your beginning.

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This year, you can observe Advent with the following:

- a daily devotional with scripture, poetry, visual art, hymns, written reflections, and journaling prompts
- a colorable calendar for children and families (and anyone else who wants one)
- a photo-a-day calendar
- 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 receive the blessings of *Words for the Beginning*.

Camille



DECEMBER 1
YOU ARE A BLESSING
LUKE 1:26-38 | ISAIAH 43:1-7

DECEMBER 8
WE CAN'T GO ALONE
RUTH 1 | ECCLESIASTES 4:9-12

DECEMBER 15
DO THE GOOD THAT IS YOURS TO DO
LUKE 5:7-16 | ISAIAH 58:9B-12

DECEMBER 22
HOPE IS WORTH THE RISK
MATTHEW 1:18-25 | LUKE 1:46-55

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS 2024

DECEMBER 24
LOVE KNOWS YOUR NAME
LUKE 2:1-20 | ISAIAH 9:6

DECEMBER 29
DON'T FORGET TO LAUGH
LUKE 2:10 | MATTHEW 2:10

JANUARY 5
THE ROAD ISN'T STRAIGHT
LUKE 5:7-16 | ISAIAH 58:9B-12

WORDS FOR THE BEGINNING
St. Andrews Presbyterian Church

Treasurer's Report

Jane Thomas, Treasurer

In October, our income was \$24,740, and our expenses totaled \$33,044.95. Year to date, our income is \$370,357.75 and expenses are \$366,997.36. So, we are in the black by \$3,360.39.

SAPC Staff

Pastor

Rev. Dr. Camille LeBron Powell (ext 106)
camille@sapctucker.org

Coordinator of Congregational Vitality

LaVerne Byas-Smith (ext 109)
laverne@sapctucker.org

Director of Music

David Lukens (ext 118)
[dlukens@sapctucker.org](mailto:dulukens@sapctucker.org)

Associate Director of Music/Organist

Edward Weaver (ext 118)
ejweaver@bellsouth.net

Director of Older Adult and Caregiver Ministries

Pat Baker (ext 111)
pat@sapctucker.org

Director of St. Andrews School



Christmas Joy Offering

We will take the annual Christmas Joy Offering December 1st in worship. This offering goes to

support the past, present, and future leaders of the PC(USA), supporting leadership development for communities of color, and providing support for Presbyterian church workers in their time of need. Please put Christmas Joy on the memo line of your check. If giving online, please select Mission and put Christmas Joy in the notes section.

Lonnelle Bruce (ext 120)
sasdirector@sapctucker.org

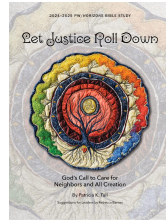
Office Manager
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Financial Administrator
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[Visit our website](#)

Presbyterian Women

The PW continue their study *Let Justice Roll Down* by Patricia K. Tull. All of the women of St. Andrews are invited! Contact Judy Cook with any questions about the Presbyterian Women. The next meeting will be Tuesday, December 17th at 10:00 am, in the Meeting Room. We hope to see you there!



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

GIVE NOW

through the Presbyterian Mission Exchange

St. Andrews presents "The Nativity" on Christmas Eve by LaVerne Byas-Smith

"The Pageant is back, and we are so excited!" exclaims Phyllis Bearden, about SAPC's upcoming Christmas Eve Family Service. A member of the committee producing this year's pageant, Phyllis directed SAPC's last few pageants held in the years before the pandemic. This year's production, "The Nativity," marks the return of the tradition. Like before, children costumed as biblical characters progressively build the iconic manger scene. But in this new iteration the action will be narrated by scripture readings of classic "Christmas" passages from Luke and Matthew; and children's musical selections, complete with hand movements, will punctuate the drama.

Bernadette Angelo, another pageant coordinator, shares Bearden's excitement. "We have angels, shepherds, wise men and even toddlers as barnyard animals, and of course Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus!" An actress herself, Bernadette appeared last spring in "Death By Chocolate" at Main Street Theatre. She along with her husband, Pat, joined SAPC last year and immediately identified the Chancel Choir, and En-Core (the church ministry managing the pageant), as her ministry activities. The Christmas Eve Pageant grew out of the En-Core-sponsored "Music Class," held every other Thursday at St. Andrews School. "We've been introducing songs for the pageant, along with other classic preschool songs since September," says En-Core volunteer music teacher and church Office Manager, Gretchen Perkins.

SAPC's Christmas Eve Family Service is designed for families with young children whether church members or friends and neighbors from the community. This year we've intentionally recruited St. Andrews School children – preschoolers ages two to five -- as pageant participants. Many accepted and fill about half of the acting roles. Church members' children and grandchildren, generally school-age, fill the remaining roles. And church youth and youth alumni will serve as stage assistants. Narrators will include several school parents as well as

church members. "It's a multi-generational, community-wide event!" emphasized Pastor Camille, herself an En-Core volunteer.

"We're building community across generations, while also strengthening our ties with the school community," explains LaVerne Byas-Smith, En-Core coordinator and member of the pageant committee. The pageant is another means to welcome school families into our ministries and activities, even if not necessarily church membership. "As our church membership grows older, we're proactively seeking opportunities to invite young families into our community. Like our annual free Back to School Carnival, the pageant is a way to extend love and hospitality to the community around us, and a means to get to know and become known to our neighbors. We've got a lot to offer families seeking a service-oriented, multi-generational, faith-based community."

All are welcome to the 5:00 pm Christmas Eve Family Service and presentation of "The Nativity." Join us and invite your family and friends to attend, then come back later that night for the Candlelight Service at 11:00 pm.

For more information, or to volunteer to help with the pageant, [contact LaVerne](#).



Older Adult and Caregiver Ministries

by Pat Baker

As we look at this past year and into the future of the Older Adult and Caregiver Ministries, I'm contemplating some new things for 2025 to make the ministry more worthwhile for the seniors and caregivers at St. Andrews and our surrounding neighbors. I'd love to have input from the congregation, so I will be having a meeting in January for those interested in helping me brainstorm. Please put your thinking caps on and watch for further details in early January. Thanks! Pat Baker

The words of wisdom below from Missy Buchanan seem to fit the holiday season as well as what has been going on with our church family...REFLECT and BE INSPIRED!

Divine Interruptions

I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And Who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

Isaiah 6:8. NIV

Not long ago I stumbled on a patch of rough ground and fell into a heap on the hard terrain. Dazed and aching, I lay there afraid to move while a thousand thoughts raced through my mind. *Did anyone see me? Will someone help me? Can I reach my cell phone? Did I break a hip? Will I have to have surgery?* In a matter of seconds, life turned topsy-turvey. O God, the wilderness of late life is pot-holed with disruptions.

I barely overcome one disruption before another appears in my path.

Some disruptions—like a health scare, a fall, a loss—shake me to the core. Others are just irritating moments that interrupt my routine. Oh God, I am learning that late life also has divine interruptions—the kind Jonah experienced when you sent him on an assignment to preach on Nineveh. Like Jonah, I am often resistant to your callings that disrupt the routine of my life. As I turn to go in the opposite direction, I conjure up a litany of excuses—Not at my age. Not with my arthritis problems. Not with weak eyes and hearing loss. Maybe I could have done it when I was younger but not now. It is just too late.

Lord, your holy interruption is relentless. You chase me down again and again. You interrupt my comfort with a constant nudging to follow your call in these later years. In this wilderness of aging, give me the courage to say, "Here I am, Lord."

To help you discern what God is calling you to do in this season of late life, reflect on the following questions.

- How are you currently experiencing the Spirit's persistent nudge?
- What are you feeling prompted to do?
- What is causing you to push back against a feeling or inner voice?
- In what ways might you be trying to protect your own comfort?

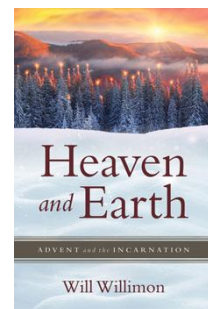
Prayerfully consider your answers, then ask yourself if you are responding to God's call with stubborn rebellion or with faithful obedience. Perhaps God is asking you to model a gracious acceptance of a caregiver's help when you have pridefully resisted it in the past. Maybe God wants you to embrace your fear of technology so you can participate in an online Bible Study or become a church officer. It is possible that God is encouraging you to write your life stories as a testimony of your faith to younger family members (a great thing to do during the holiday season).

Open yourself to the nudging of the Holy Spirit. Instead of becoming frustrated when your comfortable routine gets uprooted, learn to obediently accept divine interruption as an invitation to do something new. God still calls you to grow and serve others. Listen carefully. Accept the call by saying, *Here I am, Lord.*

FROM DRY BONES TO LIVING HOPE: Embracing God's Faithfulness in Later Life by Missy Buchanan

Advent Study

Everyone is invited to join the Sunday Morning Together class during Advent to study Will Willimon's *Heaven and Earth: Adventure and the Incarnation*. Discussions start Sunday, December 1st. Join us at 8:45 in the Meeting Room. Copies of the book are available for \$10.00. [Contact the office](#) or [Mike Bearden](#) to reserve your copy. The study begins this Sunday with the first chapter, "Meanwhile."



The Christmas Story by Light of Grace

Join us on Sunday, December 15th at 4:00 pm at Light of Grace's performance of the Christmas Story. The angels will dance – the choir will sing and sign – and the Scriptures will be recited by the members of Light of Grace, a ministry for persons with Special Abilities.

Lessons and Carols & Christmas Cookie Reception

Sunday, December 22nd at 6:00 pm, we will have Lessons and Carols in the Sanctuary. 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. This service is followed by a Christmas cookie reception in Heffner Hall. So, gather up your best cookie recipes and start saving cookie tins. Any extra cookies from this evening will go to first



Advent Book Study
*Heaven and Earth:
Advent and Incarnation*
by Will Willimon
Sundays at 8:45 am

ADVENT WORSHIP  SUNDAYS 10 AM

Light of Grace presents
The Christmas Story
December 15, 4 pm

Lessons and Carols
December 22, 6:00 pm

CANDLELIGHT SERVICES  DECEMBER 24 5 PM & 11 PM

Worship services, Light of Grace, and Lessons and Carols will be streamed online: [YouTube.com/@sapctucker](https://www.youtube.com/@sapctucker)

For more information, please see our website, [sapctucker.org](https://www.sapctucker.org)

Clifton Sanctuary Ministries

There are spots available for upcoming dates to bring food to Clifton. For more information or to sign up, [click here](#). This ministry is a very easy thing to do while maintaining your social distancing since meals are dropped off on Clifton's front porch after calling ahead to let them know when you are coming.



A group gathers on the 4th Sunday of each month after worship to make lunches for Clifton. If you are interested in helping, [contact Phyllis Bearden](#).

Our congregation feeds the men at Clifton Sanctuary Ministries on the fourth Sunday of every month.

Fidelis Sunday School Class

Everyone is welcome to join the Fidelis Sunday School Class, which meets at 9:00 am on Sunday mornings in the Library, and on [Zoom](#) (password fidelis).

The class uses *The Present Word* series of books. This Fall, the study theme is "Worship in the Covenant Community," and in December the focus is Jesus, the Heir of David. [Contact Deanna Hall](#) for more information.

Revelation Bible Study

We are going through Revelation verse by verse. Please join us in the youth room Sundays at 2:00 pm, as we delve deeper into the material by Bruce Gore, facilitated by Arch Baker. Everyone is welcome!

December Birthdays

- 3 Marsha Ashby, Curtis Morse
- 6 Amelia Pattillo
- 8 David Barnhart
- 11 Edward Forrester
- 12 Francine Elle
- 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

Eyeglasses Collection

By Deanna Morrow Hall

In the September issue of The Lamplighter, the Caring for Creation Team announced that we would collect all kinds of eyeglasses during October. Thanks go out to our Office Manager, Gretchen

Perkins, for emptying the container each week to prepare for the next week's donations. Deanna will transport the eyeglasses to the Walmart Vision Center in Tucker. Here are the results.

Units	Number
Plastic rims w/ case	19
Metal rims w/ case	6
Plastic rims w/o case	8
Metal rims w/o case	5
Sunglasses (2 pairs + 1 clip-on + 3 pairs of lenses)	6
Empty cases	20
Frames w/ temples but missing one or both lenses	1
Lenses w/o frames	6 pairs
TOTAL	71

Many Tanks!

Thanks go out to all who helped with Brunch Church and the Hanging of the Greens last Sunday.



Hurricane Helene and Milton Response and Relief

Here are four ways you can give and make a difference:

- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance has already deployed National Response Teams to Florida, North Carolina, and Georgia to support the congregations and communities affected by the storms. If you would like to contribute a financial gift to support PDA's immediate and long-term work to help these areas rebuild and recover, you can [give here](#)
- The Montreat Conference Center and surrounding areas have suffered significant damage. Montreat is a special place to many in our congregation. It's where we've held retreats and sent

youth to conferences for years. Your gift to the Montreat Hurricane Relief Fund will directly support relief efforts in this beloved community. For updates and to donate [visit their website](#).

- Black Mountain Presbyterian Church, located between Cherry Street downtown and the Montreat gate, has power. The congregation is actively serving as a relief station, providing meals, water, power, and respite for those in need. You can contribute directly to help them continue this vital work [here](#).
- Pray: Please continue to pray for all those affected by Hurricane Helene and Milton—the families, communities, and relief workers. Pray for healing, strength, and resilience in the weeks ahead.

St. Andrews Presbyterian Church

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