

Experience the

MANY WONDERS

of Christmas

The
FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
C.HURCH
WEST CHESTER, PA



Advent and Christmas at First Presbyterian Church

10 AM

*Family
Christmas Eve*
Children's Christmas
Story

7 PM

*Traditional
Christmas Eve*
Chancel Choir and Brass

5 PM

*Contemporary
Christmas Eve*
Worship Band

10 PM

*Communion
Christmas Eve*
Contemplative with
Communion

Dear Church Members and friends,

It has been a faith-filled and life-giving fall here at First Pres. From our Kick-Off Picnic, new sermon series, and our 50 Year-Member Homecoming, to our incredible Trick-Or-Treat Event and State of the Church Address. We are seeing increased growth and engagement here at First Pres, which we give all thanks to Christ for. We now move into the season of Advent, a season not just for programs and Christmas Eve services, but for waiting. A season for reflection, prayer, and worship, as we anticipate the the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The birth of Christ is the pinnacle wonder of Christmas and the season of Advent, but the Many Wonders of Christmas are all around us, and not just in the season of Advent. They are found in the many instances that First Pres seeks to love its neighbors, they are found in those moments of worship where you feel the true presence of God in you and in our community of faith, they are found in the sound of our Columns Classic Christmas concert and in the voices of our children singing their hearts out; they are found in our youth finding community and belonging here at First Pres, and they are found in the many friendships and homes of our church.

In just over a year as your Senior Pastor I have seen the many wonders of Christ at work in this place. But, so often the many wonders of Christmas are relegated to Christmas, and we become inundated and distracted by all of the “things” of this world that keep us from recognizing the wonders of Christ at work in our lives and in the world.

This Advent, and in this Christmas season, I want to invite all of us to approach this season differently, to approach it with eyes, ears, hearts, and minds wide open to the many wonders of Christ that we might see.

But the angel said to them,
“Do not be afraid, for see, I
am bringing you good news
of great joy for all the
people: to you is born this
day in the city of David a
Savior, who is the Messiah,
the Lord. This will be a sign
for you: you will find a child
wrapped in bands of cloth
and lying in a manger.”

Luke 2:10-12

I cannot guarantee what it is that you will see, but I can guarantee that God is at work in our world, and that by the power of the Spirit you will indeed see something. May our openness to the Many Wonders found in the season of Christmas transform us so that we might continue to be open to the Many Wonders of Christ found in all times and in all places.

I invite you to join us for all of the wondrous events, fellowship opportunities, and worship services this Christmas Season. And together, I look forward to experiencing the Many Wonders of Christmas brought about by the coming of the Savior of the World, Jesus Christ.

In Anticipation for the Many Wonders of Christmas,

Pastor Andrew



I join Andrew in wishing you the peace of Christ as we enter this Advent season. It has been a joyful year at First Pres: the building hums with the energy of worship, music, and mission, the sounds of children and youth, and the smells of home cooking. Beyond our walls, you are engaged in the work of caring for our neighborhood and for each other. It is a gift to be part of this vibrant community of faith.

We all know that the holidays are an especially challenging season for many. While we speak of celebration and the light that comes in the darkness, please know that you are not alone this season - Andrew and I, along with so many others in your church, are a phone call away.

With abiding hope,

Pastor Caroline



COLUMN CLASSICS PRESENTS

Candlelight

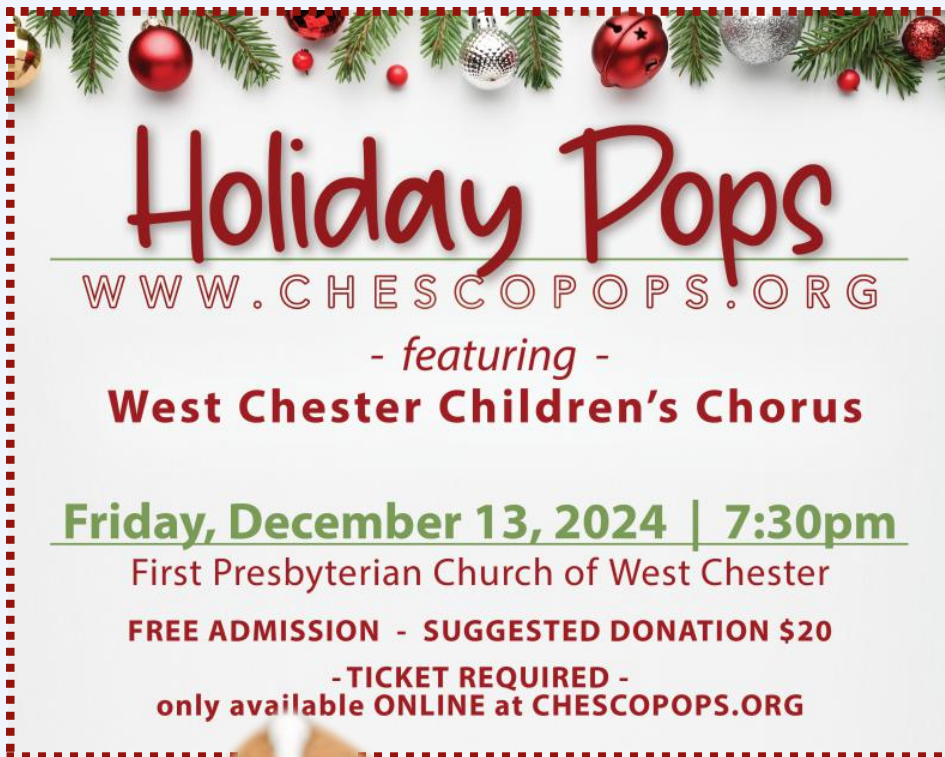
CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Sunday, December 8 | 4 pm

FEATURING

CHANCEL CHOIR
CELEBRATION SINGERS
MINER STREET BRASS
SOLOISTS FROM WCU
CAROL SING ALONG

RESERVE YOUR SEAT [HERE](#)



Holiday Pops

WWW.CHESCOPOPS.ORG

- featuring -
West Chester Children's Chorus

Friday, December 13, 2024 | 7:30pm

First Presbyterian Church of West Chester

FREE ADMISSION - SUGGESTED DONATION \$20

- TICKET REQUIRED -
only available **ONLINE** at **CHESCOPOPS.ORG**

Cookies & Carol Singing

Do you have a favorite Christmas carol that you hope gets sung in church every year? Come on Thursday, Dec. 12 at 7pm for a warm and cozy Carol Sing! Bring a plate of Christmas cookies if you'd like, come in your Christmas jammies (all ages!) and enjoy an hour or so of festive singing together.





Deck the Halls

On **Sunday, December 1**, First Pres will be a hive of holiday happiness! We have a fun morning planned for all ages. There will be one worship service at 10am that day, and then immediately following, there are several options for you to come enjoy the Christmas spirit!

Decorate the Church for Christmas

Help us deck the halls by decorating First Pres for Christmas. We are especially in need of a few people who are able to climb ladders to hang some items. If you're able to help, please reach out to Beth Congdon-Martin (congdonmar@aol.com).

Kids Advent Party

Preschool - 5th graders are invited to gather in Room 216 for some start of the holiday season fun, including games, snacks and more. Parents are not required to stay with their children for this party but are welcome to join the fun if desired. If you are willing to help with this party, please talk to Sara Pantazes.

Christmas Wreath Making

This will be our fourth year of the popular wreath making workshop. Adults are able to decorate a freshly made wreath from a tree farm in Elverson. We'll have plenty of decorations for you to make a one-of-a-kind wreath that will last the season. This will take place in Fellowship Hall. Registration and payment (\$15) is required for this event; sign-ups are on the church website.

Youth Hot Chocolate Making

All students in 6th-12th grade and their families are invited to join us for a fun morning of preparing the youth Christmas Fundraiser! Meet in Social Hall to make jars of hot chocolate to sell to support our youth ministry. Check out the sign-up link on the youth email and social media to see what you can bring.

All are invited to a
West Chester Community

THANKSGIVING *dinner*

Wednesday, November 27, 11:30am

To RSVP or bring a dish to share, click [here](#)

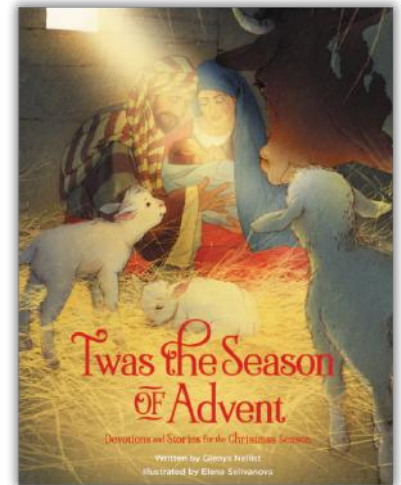


Family Advent Devotional

Gather your little ones close and discover the joy of Advent this year! Every family is invited to take home a copy of *T'was the Season of Advent* next time you are at church and let the book guide you in exploring the Christian meaning of this season with your children.

This beautifully illustrated storybook tells a little bit of the Christmas story each day of December and comes with an activity packet for more fun if desired.

These books were purchased for First Pres and Bucket School families and are available for pick-up in Fellowship Hall. If you would like an additional copy for a young family in your life, please talk to Sara Pantazes.

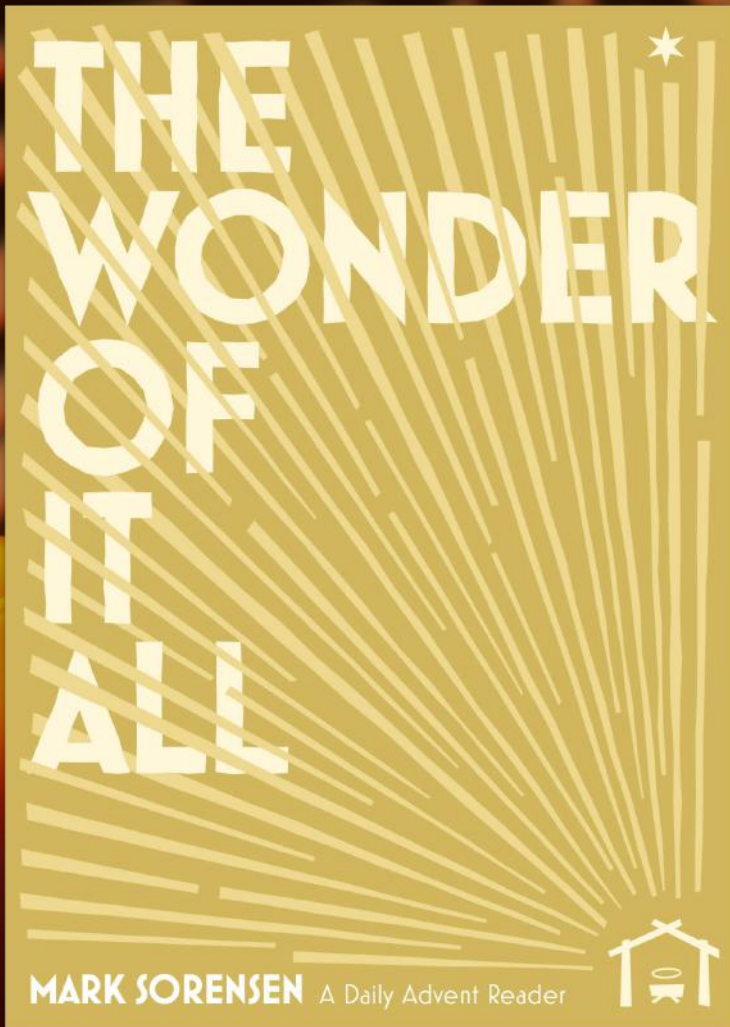


Moms' Group Party

Christmas time is here and we are celebrating with a get together and gift exchange! If you are a mom with babies to teenagers, please join us for our Christmas gathering.

Our party will be on **Sunday, December 15th at 4:00pm at Mary Hambleton's home**. For details and to sign up to attend please contact contact [Mary Hambleton](#) or [Liz Single](#)

Advent Devotional



Watch your inboxes every morning this December for a daily email containing an Advent devotion titled *The Wonder of It All*. Each day, we'll dig into the wonder-filled Christmas story found in Matthew and Luke's gospel and look at those in the nativity story. Where did this story meet them, and where does it meet us, today?

We will also offer a weekly time to reflect on these devotions, the wonders we are finding in them, and share our Advent reflections together. All are welcome to gather on Wednesdays from 6:30 - 7:30 pm on Zoom. Talk to Sara Pantazes to join.

Winter, **FIRST PRES YOUTH SCHEDULE**

December

Hot Cocoa Fundraiser:

December 1st 11am-12pm

December 8th 3:30-5:30pm

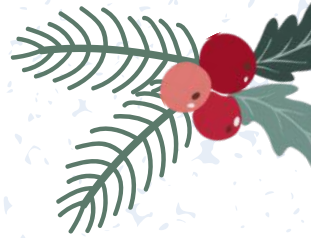
December 15th & 22nd 10-11am

Youth

Christmas Party:

December 22nd

4-5:30pm



January

MLK Day Hangout

January 20th 11-1pm

Youth Ice Skating

January 12th 2-3:30pm

February

PA Lentin's Party

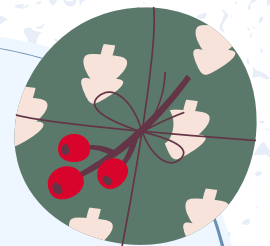
February 16th 4-5:0pm

Winter Refresh Retreat

February 28th-March 2nd



Weekly Programs



Youth Group

Every Sunday 4-5:30pm

Middle School

Bible Study

Every Sunday 9-10am

Confirmation

Sundays 5:30-6:30pm

High School Bible Study

Every Wednesday

7-8:30pm

Winter, **FIRST PRES YOUNG ADULTS** **SCHEDULE**

Young Adult Christmas Party:
Monday, December 23rd 7-9pm

Young Adult Movie Night:
Friday, January 10th 7-10pm

Young Adult Winter Retreat:
March 14th-16th

**Young Adult
Small Group**
EVERY Monday
7-8:30pm



Dear First Pres Family,

Seasons' Greetings and Warm Winter Wishes to All! Our youth and young adults have had a busy and fruitful season! Thank you all for your support of our young people at First Pres. We appreciate your prayers as our youth continue to commit to growing in their faith.

This Fall we met weekly for Bible Studies, youth group, and small groups. We engaged in a variety of fellowship events such as our Breakaway Middle School Retreat, High School Fall Retreat. Puppy Adoption Event, Halloween Party, and much more.

We would love for you to support our youth ministry by participating in our Hot Cocoa Fundraiser. All proceeds will benefit youth service projects, youth trips, and special youth programs! Buy a jar of cocoa or two at the Candlelight Christmas Concert and on Sunday between services on December 15th and 22nd

We would love your prayers and support!

Blessings,
Emily

**Hot Cocoa
Fundraiser**
\$10 per Jar



**Get the
perfect
holiday
gift &
Support
our
Youth!**

HOT
cocoa

Purchase on December 8th at the
Candlelight Christmas Concert and
on the 15th, and 22nd at church!

Youth Group Fall 2024



Bible Studies & Youth Group

Dog Adoption Service Project



Middle & High School Fall Retreats



Halloween Party & Fellowship Events

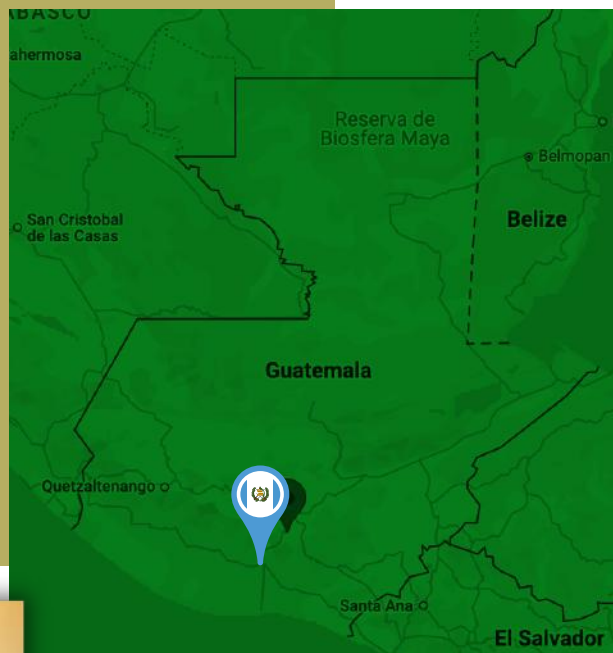
Good News from Afar



"I just returned from Ghana and was able to personally install a plaque on a well recognizing First Presbyterian Church for their donation to our work. This well was drilled in the community called Chaiso.

It is located in Nkwanta South District in the Oti Region of Ghana in West Africa. The well depth is 130' and helps to serve a population of 1,815 people. Please tell the mission committee and the congregation thank you for helping us serve those in the greatest need. May God continue to bless your efforts to reach out with the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

*Let it flow,
David Powell
President, Lifetime Wells International"*



Our team returned from their beautiful visit with our brothers and sisters at Getsemani Church. This picture is with Pastor Gladys wearing the stole we gave her. This was taken after worship - it was a communion service - called La Santa Cena. We plan to have a gathering in January for the team to share their stories with us - more details coming soon!

The Giving Tree



Thank you to the congregation for your early gifts supporting the Pocopson Home and Migrant Ministry.

The Giving Trees hold the wish lists of the six other organizations

First Pres supports at Christmas:

Napthali, North Star, MCHC, West Chester Food Cupboard, the Domestic Violence Center, and Migrant Ministry.

We will also have tags to support emergency housing assistance and our Wednesday Lunch Program.

Two trees hold gift card/financial donations only;
one tree on the left has specific gift requests.

Gifts (please wrap/bag) and gift cards are due back December 14.

Christmas Poinsettias

A beloved First Pres tradition, poinsettias bring the sanctuary to life as we approach the sacred night of Christmas Eve. Each year worshippers are invited to donate a flower in honor or memory of a loved one. The names of these loved ones will be included in the Christmas Eve bulletin. The cost this year is \$20, and the deadline is December 8th.

To give, please visit the giving tab of the website and choose "Poinsettias" from the drop-down menu. You can also fill out one of the pew cards or email the church office at office@firstpreswc.com.



Support during a difficult season

Service of Comfort and Joy

December 19th @6pm in the Chapel

Advent is a time of waiting, but it can also be a time of grief as many feel the weight of the loss of family and friends who are no longer with us. Join us for a service of comfort and joy as we sing, pray, receive comfort from the Holy Spirit and one another, and rest in the joy we have that the savior of the world will meet us in our grief.

Care Through the Holidays: Stephen Ministry

Each of us has times when we are lonely, grieving, hurt, or in need of care, and the holidays can be a particularly challenging time for people who are already experiencing grief, loneliness, or strained relationships.

First Pres has a group of extensively trained Stephen Ministers who care for those who are facing life challenges. Whether grieving the death of a loved one, separated or divorcing, homebound, unemployed, grappling with a new diagnosis, adjusting to the birth of a child, or experiencing many other kinds of life difficulties, the care of a Stephen Minister may help bring Christ's healing.

To learn more about Stephen Ministry at First Pres, contact Pastor Caroline Cupp or visit www.firstpreswc.com/stephenministry

Looking ahead...

SCHOOL'S OFF DAY CAMP - MLK DAY

Are you a working parent wondering how to occupy your elementary aged children when they have the day off for MLK Day this January? Wonder no longer! First Pres is excited to offer our very first School's Off Day Camp on **Monday, January 20, 2025**. Childcare for kindergarten - 5th graders will be offered from 8:30 am - 4:00 pm at First Pres. You bring your children and their lunches, we'll provide the care and fun. This is also a great chance for children to bring a friend! Children must register to attend and space is limited. Contact Sara Pantazes with any questions.

Attention Church Members: Are you willing to give a half or full day of your time and energy to play with the kids during School's Off Day Camp? This would be a fantastic way to support the church's outreach to our neighborhood and community and show care to its families. Talk to Sara Pantazes for more information.

PARENTS' NIGHT OUT - JAN 10

Join other parents of kids 0-18 for food, fellowship, and a low-key evening out!

WOMEN'S RETREAT - FEB 21-22

All women are invited to an overnight retreat at the historic Inn at Leola Village. This elegant inn will host us February 21-22, 2025 for a wonderful time of growing in faith and especially friendship.

The theme for this retreat is Finding Your People. Beginning with the idea that God designed us to exist in relationship, we'll look at the current friendships in our lives, consider what helps and hinders building intimate friendships, and walk away with practical ideas to grow in the areas we each need or want to grow. Whether you feel confident in your friendships or are deeply longing for more, there will be encouragement and wisdom for all.

More details and a sign up can be found [HERE](#); the sign up deadline is November 30.



**FAMILY
MUSIC
BINGO**

Join us for this family night out filled with friends, kid-friendly music, and the thrill of yelling bingo!

PRIZES | FOOD | FUN

Friday, February 7 from 6 - 8 pm

First Pres, Fellowship Hall

The poster features a yellow background with a sunburst pattern. It includes icons for bingo balls (19, 35, 7), a calendar, a location pin, and a group of people.



**Save the Date for
VBS & Music Camp!**

Week of August 11-15, 2025

 VBS from 9 am - noon

Optional add-on: Music Camp from noon - 4 pm 

Talk to Sara Pantazes for more information.

The poster has a gradient background from light pink to yellow. It features a bee icon and musical notes.



Christmas Season Calendar

day	date	time	event	location	page
Friday	Nov 22	7 pm	Young Adult Friendsgiving	Off-site	9
Saturday	Nov 23	9:30 am	Hanging of the Greens	Off-site	
Sunday	Nov 24	6 pm	Worship Night	Chapel	
Wednesday	Nov 27	11:30 am	Community Thanksgiving	FH	6
Sunday	Dec 1	10 am	Single Worship Service	Sanctuary	
		11 am	Deck the Halls		5
Sunday	Dec 8	4 pm	Candlelight Christmas Concert	Sanctuary	4
Thursday	Dec 12	7 pm	Carol Sing & Cookies	FH	4
Friday	Dec 13	7:30pm	ChescoPops Holiday Concert	Sanctuary	4
Sunday	Dec 15	4 pm	Moms' Group Christmas Party	Off-site	6
Thursday	Dec 19	6 pm	Service of Comfort & Joy	Chapel	13
Sunday	Dec 22	4 pm	Youth Christmas Party	Youth Rm	8
Monday	Dec 23		Young Adult Christmas Party	Off-site	9
Tuesday	Dec 24	<i>Christmas Eve</i>			
		10 am	Family Service		
		5 pm	Contemporary Service		
		7 pm	Traditional Service		
		10 pm	Communion Service		
Sunday	Dec 29	10 am	Single Worship Service	*No Sunday School	

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