
DECEMBER 2024

The Messenger

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER
OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



224 East Mobile Street
Florence, AL 35630
256-764-2081
office@fpcfloreance.org

<https://www.fpcfloreance.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/FPCFlorence>

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A MESSAGE TO THE CONGREGATION

Dear Friends,

As we enter what has become known as “the holiday season,” I would be remiss if I didn’t remind you this is also the “holy days season” as well. For the next four weeks our focus will be on celebrating the season of Jesus’ first Advent. Of all things, it was in the form of a human, a baby no less, our Creator God chose to dwell among us. Revealing His will and purpose for His creation.

Through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, God has shown us we have a role in the fulfillment of His plans if we choose to accept His invitation to join Him in this grand adventure. To guide and direct us on this journey we have Jesus as our role model and the Holy Spirit as our strength.

But during this season we also cast an eye towards the horizon as we anticipate God’s second Advent, or His second coming. We await the return of Jesus. But this time we wait for him to arrive as the Son of Man in all his power and glory. His goal in this second Advent will be to gather his own at the end of time.

I hope during this holiday season you will still find time to enjoy the holy days of this season. The Advent study offered by your Christian education committee would be a wonderful way to celebrate these holy days.

I wanted to give you an update on our Interim Pastor search. Our first approach did not produce the results we had hoped. So, your Interim Pastor search team has filled out the Ministerial Discernment Profile necessary to get our search posted on the national database. We are in the final stages of that process. Once our profile is posted we will start receiving matches and take it from there.

Please keep our search team in your prayers.

As for my status as your bridge interim. I will continue to serve you monthly until a full time interim has been called. One other thing. I keep using the title “interim pastor.” You will also hear the title “transitional pastor” tossed around as well. They are the same thing. You should know by now the Presbyterian penchant for renaming things multiple times. It’s what makes us so special.

I am glad our newest staff member Tammy Spake is finally on board and working with our youth. If you haven’t had a chance to meet Tammy, I hope you will soon. I look forward to working with her in the months to come.

Finally, my office hours are mainly on Tuesdays. I’m here at the church mostly all day on Tuesday. But please know I am available 24/7. If you have any questions or concerns or suggestions, please let me know. I’m very good at keeping confidences. It helps to have a faulty memory.

I am looking forward to celebrating this Advent and Christmas season with you. See you Sunday.

Grace and Peace,
Taylor

MONDAY, DECEMBER 2 6:00 pm

Winter Shelter Interest Meeting Home Free Haven

(formally Room In The Inn)

Monday, December 2 @ 6:00 pm/Library

If you are interested in volunteering this year or just want to learn more about our involvement, please attend this meeting.

See Bonnie Wallace for more information.

HOME FREE HAVEN

OUR MISSION IS TO PROVIDE SHELTER, SUPPORT, AND HOPE TO OUR UNHOUSED NEIGHBORS IN THE SHOALS.

STAY CONNECTED

Text or Call
(256) 284-2487



facebook.com/homefreehaven
contact@homefreehaven.org

WINTER SHELTER

November 15th - March 15th

EVERY THURSDAY, FRIDAY, SATURDAY, SUNDAY

PLUS "EMERGENCY NIGHTS" WHEN TEMPS DROP BELOW FREEZING.

We partner with local churches to offer a warm place to sleep, along with dinner, breakfast, showers (when available), and essential supplies and resources. To ensure everyone's safety, all guests must complete the intake process before boarding the bus to the designated church for the night. The following morning, guests will be driven to the designated drop off location at 116 S. Royal Avenue.

INTAKE TIME	LOCATION
ARRIVAL - 4:30 PM DEPARTURE - 5:30PM	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="font-size: 2em; margin-right: 10px;">➔</div> <div style="text-align: left;"> <p>THE HELP CENTER 621 S. COURT STREET FLORENCE, AL 35630</p> </div> </div>

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3

5:30 pm Session Coordinating Committee/Appleby

6:00 pm Stated Meeting of Session/Meade

Last meeting of the year! We need everyone in attendance as we conclude business for the year.



TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3

ALL SAINTS COLLEGE MINISTRY is hosting a reception for the UNA choir after their performance at First Pres on **Tuesday, December 3 at 7:00 pm.**

Plates and baked goods will be provided.

We are looking for volunteers to bring finger foods and people to meet & greet the college choir students.

Sign-up sheet is located in the front office foyer.

Contact Randy Pettus for details.

School of the Arts Department of Music



SING THE HOLIDAYS

featuring the UNA Choruses

December 3, 2024 | 7:00 p.m. | First Presbyterian Church



College of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering
University of North Carolina

Admission is FREE

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4

5:00 PM Children's Christmas Program
Practice/Fellowship Hall
Meal will be provided.



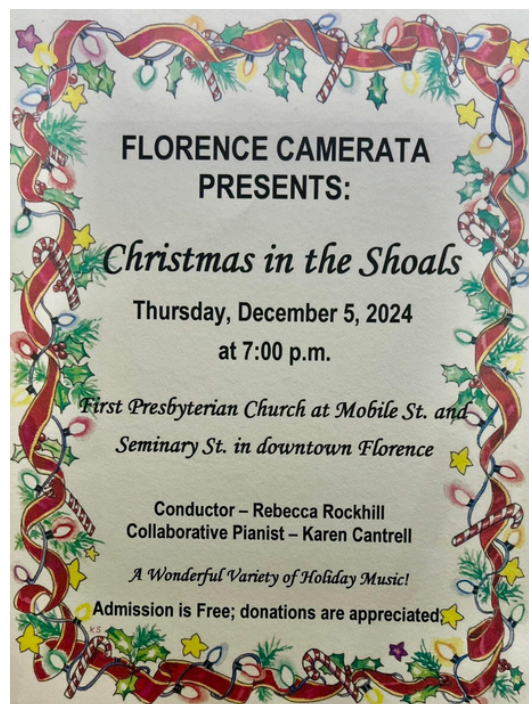
WEDNESDAY DEC. 4, 11, 18

5:30 PM Youth at Trinity Episcopal Church



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5 7:00 PM

Florence Camerata Concert
Sanctuary



FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6 5:30-7:30 PM

Christmas Program Dress Rehearsal
Fellowship Hall
Meal will be provided





CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Sunday, December 8

5:00 pm

Fellowship Hall

!!!!!! RSVP for the catered meal!!!!!!

Contact the church office, sign the sign-up sheet in the foyer, or use the online link (click the picture to the left) or

<https://www.fpcflorence.org/event-details-registration/childrens-christmas-program>

Join us for a night of fellowship, food, and a wonderful production of our youth & children!



MONDAY, DECEMBER 9 DEADLINE

It's time to order **Christmas Poinsettias!**

The last day to order is Monday, December 9. The cost is \$20 per poinsettia, garland, or wreath. Please fill out a card and place it in the offering plate or drop it by the church office. Make your check payable to First Presbyterian Church.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10 COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Last committee meeting of the year!

There is still business to be attended to, so make every effort to attend this month's meeting to ensure plans for next month are ready.

4:00 pm Congregational Care/Appleby

5:00 pm Christian Education & Nurture/Library

5:15 pm Worship/Meade

6:00 pm Engagement & Fellowship/Meade

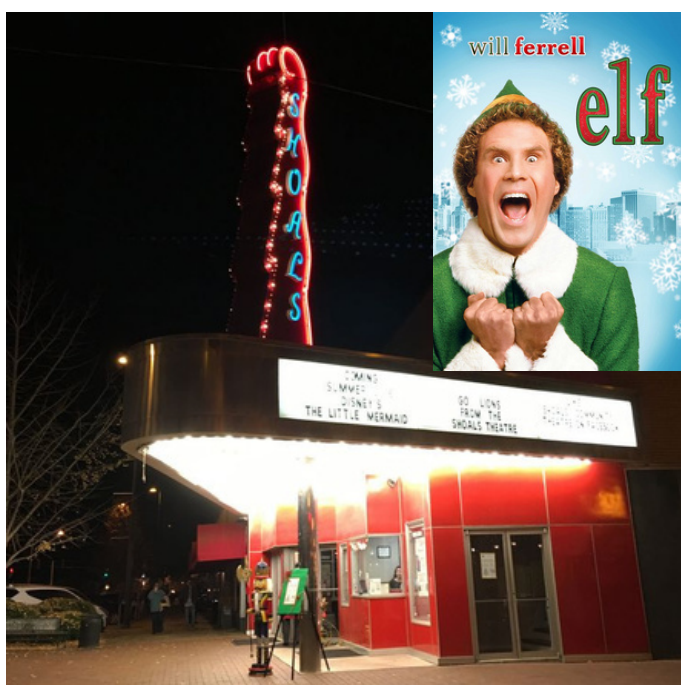
Mission/Appleby

Stewardship/Library





ADULT CHRISTMAS CANTATA
 Sunday, December 15
 11:00 am Worship Service



MOVIE NIGHT
 Tuesday, December 17
 Time to be announced

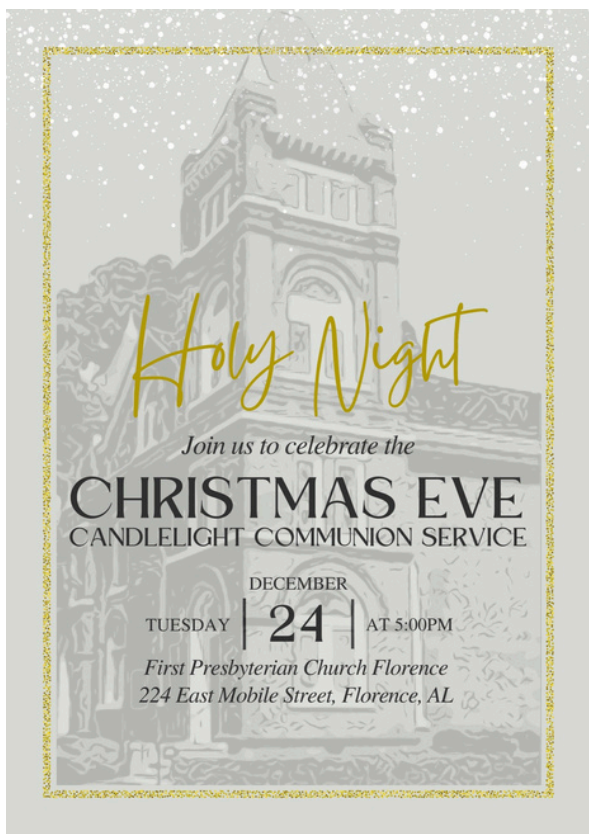
Downtown Youth hosted Church wide MOVIE NIGHT- December 17th, **we will have the entire theater rented out for a showing of ELF. \$10 per person to attend (AND get snacks and drinks).** If cost is a problem, please contact Tammy. We would love to have a big turnout for this fun event.



MEN'S BREAKFAST
 Wednesday, December 18
 7:00 am
 Meade Conference Room
 Study topic "Questions Jesus Asked"
 led by Greg Foust



YOUTH CHRISTMAS PARTY
 The Boiler Room
 Wednesday, December 18
 Time to be announced



CHRISTMAS EVE
 COMMUNION CANDLELIGHT
 SERVICE
 Wednesday, December 24
 5:00 pm



Jack Mann,
 All Saints College Ministry



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY



CHILDREN'S CHOIR PRACTICE

Join us as we prepare for the Children's Christmas program on **Sunday, December 8 at 5:00 pm.**

Christmas Program Practices will be on Sunday mornings (9:45 am) during children's choir and Wednesday nights (Dinner will be provided for the kids!)



Practice dates:

Wednesday, December 4 @ 5:00-6:30 pm

Friday, December 6 (PNO dress rehearsal.) 5:30-7:30 pm

Sunday, December 8

January - July 2025 Events

Jan. 11 - High Point Climbing/Huntsville

Jan. 24 - Cookie Decorating

Jan. 25- Fundraiser for the animal shelter

Feb. 7 - PNO with Emily Cooper's Art Studio

Feb. 22 - Family Soup Kitchen

March 4 - Fat Tuesday Art Auction

April 4-5 - "Shoals Forest School" Bonfire & Camping trip

April 13 - Palm Sunday Celebration

April 20 - Easter Egg Hunt

May 11 - Mother's Day Performance

May 18 - Pool Day / End of School Party

June 14 - River Day/Kayaking

July 15-17 - Vacation Bible School





Tammy's office hours:

Monday Trinity 9-12; Rivertown Coffee 4-6

Tuesday First Pres 9-12; Rivertown Coffee 4-6



Wednesday night at Trinity at 5:30pm

- December 4th... regular meeting
- December 11... **NO** Downtown Youth
- December 18... Christmas Party at The Boiler Room 5:30-7:30, details to follow.



Sunday... SNL

- December 1- Tammy's House at 5:00 pm
- December 8- We will meet after the Children's Program upstairs in the Youth classroom for a service project! Pick up is 7:30, or parents are welcome to join!
- December 15- Tammy's House at 5:00 pm
- December 22 - **NO** regular SNL meeting
- December 30- **NO** regular SNL meeting

Downtown Youth hosted Church wide MOVIE NIGHT- December 17th, we will have the entire theater rented out for a showing of ELF. The cost to attend (AND get snacks and drinks) will be \$10 each. If cost is a problem, please contact Tammy. We would love to have a big turnout for this fun event.

Thank you to all who helped make Friendsgiving a wonderful experience.



Parent Survey



Youth Survey



ARCHIVAL ANECDOTES

Notable Florence First Presbyterians

John Jackson Mitchell

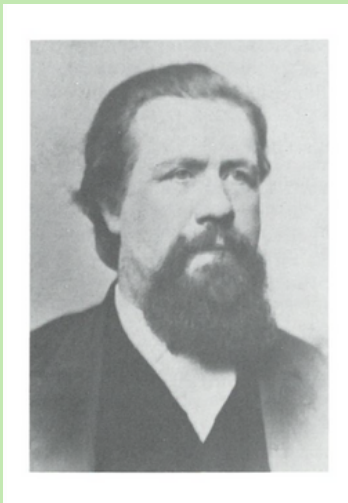
On the west wall of our sanctuary is a beautiful stained-glass window, created by the Payne-Spiers Studio in New Jersey, given in memory of John Jackson Mitchell and Etoile Hurd Mitchell. When this window was dedicated in 1943 Dr. D.W. Hollingsworth said, “this window expresses the spirit and service of Judge and Mrs. Mitchell...There stands Christ in the foreground blessing little children, suggesting the service nearest their hearts.” Judge Mitchell taught Sunday School for 33 years, Mrs. Mitchell for 45 years.

John Jackson Mitchell, the son of Dr. W.H. Mitchell and Martha Jackson Mitchell of the Forks of Cypress, was a Florence native. He graduated from The University of Mississippi and received a law degree from Cumberland University in Lebanon, Tennessee. After graduating he returned home and bought The Florence Gazette from James Irvine. For a time, he was publisher and editor of the newspaper. He then entered politics; served in the state legislature, and was appointed Probate Judge, a position he held for two terms. In 1904 Judge Mitchell ended his political career and devoted his life to the First Presbyterian Church and to the Associated Charities of Florence. The Exchange Club listed him in their Book of Golden Deeds. He served on the Eliza Coffee Memorial Hospital board for many years along with his friend and associate, Dr. D.W. Hollingsworth. Because of their years of service, the ECM annex was named for them – The Mitchell-Hollingsworth Annex.

Judge Mitchell was a large landowner. Among his holdings was a stretch of land from the UNA campus to Lelia Street. Here he created the first subdivision in Florence. He and his family lived nearby at 450 Wood Avenue. This lovely house has remained in the Mitchell family for several generations. Today it is the home of his great grandson, Uhland Redd III and his wife, Josephine, who are devoted members of our First Presbyterian Church congregation.

Judge and Mrs. Mitchell are buried in the Jackson Cemetery at the Forks of Cypress.

Jane Shipper, Archives



October Session Minutes

Called Meeting of Session October 22, 2024

Unfinished Business

- Dixie Carter gave a brief report on the Be Renewed Campaign. She informed the Session that she would be glad to take anyone who wanted to go on a tour of the new building after the Session meeting. Unfortunately, she forgot when the meeting was over.
- Randy Pettus reported on the activities of the Thriving Congregations committee.

New Business

- The Session was presented a revised Facilities Use Policy. After some discussion, it was decided to again table a decision until more information was included.
- Harland Dodson and Dr. Todd reported on the October NAP meeting.
- The Session voted to approve combining the November and December stated meetings; the new date for the stated meeting is December 3, 2024.

Moderator's Report

- Dr. Todd informed the Session that the Fraser family has asked for the approval of the baptism of Alice June Oberlin, granddaughter of Rachel Keith Fraser, on December 22, 2024. This was approved.

November Committee Minutes

Christian Education

No Moderator Notes

Congregational Care

No Moderator Notes

Engagement & Fellowship

- Chili Cook-Off & Bingo Night – Saturday, November 16 – 4:00/6:00 – Fellowship Hall Please bring your best chili recipe and cornbread. Let the games begin!
- Christmas Program/Fellowship Hall – Sunday, December 8 - Dinner @ 5:30 – Show

Mission

No Moderator Notes

Stewardship

No minutes

Worship

Special Services:

- November 24th is Christ the King Sunday and Dixie will organize the cornucopia set up on November 23rd.
- Choir Christmas Service is December 15th
- Advent families are being asked by Joni. She needs to find two more. She has Dodson's and the Speaker's.
- The Christmas Eve Service will be at 5:00 p.m. and Taylor will get the readers for Lessons and Carols.
- The Moore wedding was approved by the session for October 11, 2025

Worship (continued)

- Taylor will be out December 8th and is working to get someone from the Presbyterian Children's home to preach.
- The Advent Candle will need to be put up before December 1st.
- We will put the Christmas trees up on November 24th after church.
- The trees will be taken down by January 12th.

New Business:

- The Children's Service will be Sunday and we are asking the session for approval of Soundtrack. Mary Lynn and Patty Redd 1st and 2nd the proposal. This will be done by email.
- Rachel Pitt's granddaughter will be Baptized on December 22nd.
- Application received for a wedding for Mary Elizabeth Hall for November 22, 2025. This was approved by the worship committee. They will get counseling from their own minister. This wedding will go to Session for approval. Joni will contact her about getting a letter from them for approval for Dr. Tom Whatley to perform the service.

December Committee Schedule

Tuesday, December 3 5:30 pm Session Coordinating meeting/Appleby
6:00 pm Stated Meeting of Session/Meade

Tuesday, December 10

4:00 pm Congregational Care/Appleby
5:00 pm Christian Education/Library
5:15 pm Worship/Meade
6:00 pm Engagement & Fellowship/Meade
Mission/Appleby
Stewardship/Library

All committee minutes are due Tuesday, December 17 at 4:00 pm

Thank You

*Thank you for your prayers and support
during my brother's illness.*

Your understanding and compassion have been a blessing.

Tom Gillis

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

USHERS: Tom Frith and Libba Sherrod

December 1/First Sunday of Advent/Communion

Liturgical color: **White**

Acolyte: **Maggie Marbury**

Advent Readers: **Harland & Dianne Dodson**

Reader: **Emily Reaves**

Flowers: **Nancy & Dave Marbury**

December 8/Second Sunday of Advent

Liturgical color: **Blue**

Acolyte: **Ceil Marbury**

Reader: **Alissa Richardson**

Advent Readers: **Edward, Katherine, Judson, and Tillar Speaker**

Flowers: **Carolyn & John Tate**

December 15/Third Sunday of Advent

Liturgical color: **Blue**

Acolyte: **Henry Morgan**

Reader: **Marcus Rice**

Advent Readers: **Sarah Kelley & Taylor Johnson**

Flowers: **Poinsettias**

December 22/Fourth Sunday of Advent

Liturgical color: **White**

Acolyte: **Tillar Speaker**

Reader: **N/A**

Advent Readers: **N/A**

Flowers: **Poinsettias**

December 29/First Sunday of Christmas

Liturgical color: **Blue**

Acolyte: **Virginia Moor**

Reader: **N/A**

Advent Readers: **N/A**

Flowers: **N/A**

Happy Birthday



2 Laura Marbury

3 Tosha Frith

6 Marcus Rice

10 Tom Gillis

15 Hayes Ellis

16 Elizabeth Carter

16 Reba Hamm




17 Katherine McClure

25 Patty Redd

21 Layne Young



December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 6 pm Home Free Haven meeting Library	3 5:30 Session Coordinating 6:00 Stated Meeting of Session 7 pm UNA Collegiate Choir Concert/Sanctuary	4 5 pm Children's Christmas Practice 5:30 Youth @ Trinity 5:30 Handbells 6:15 Choir	5 7 pm Florence Camerata Concert Sanctuary	6 5:30-7:30 Parents Night Out/Dress Rehearsal	7 12-1pm Soup Kitchen
8 9:00 Coffee Cafe 9:45 Children's SS Youth Bible Class Adult SS nursery 10:30 Choir Practice 11:00 Worship nursery 5:00 Meal & Children's Christmas Program/FH after Youth Sunday Night Live/3rd floor	9 10:00 Caring Place Grief Support Group/Meade LAST DAY TO ORDER POINSETTIAS 	10 12:00 Shoals Ministerial Alliance/Meade 3:00 Staff meeting/Library 4:00 Congregational Care/Appleby 5:00 Christian Ed/Library 5:15 Worship/Meade 6:00 Engagement & Fellowship/Meade Mission/Appleby Stewardship/Library	11 NO Youth meeting 5:30 Handbells 6:15 Choir	12	13	14 12-1pm Soup Kitchen
15 9:00 Coffee Cafe 9:45 Children's SS Youth Bible Class Adult SS nursery 10:30 Choir Practice 11:00 Worship Adult Christmas Cantata nursery 5:00 Youth @ Tammy's House	16	17 3:00 Staff Meeting/Library 4:00 COMMITTEE MINUTES DUE ?? Movie Night @ Shoals Theater	18 7 am Men's Breakfast  ?? Youth Christmas Party @ Boiler Room 5:30 Handbells 6:15 Choir	19	20	21 12-1 pm Soup Kitchen
22 9:00 Coffee Cafe 9:45 Children's SS Youth Bible Class Adult SS nursery 10:30 Choir Practice 11:00 Worship nursery NO Youth meeting	23	24 5:00 PM Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service 	25 <i>Merry Christmas</i> 	26 Church Office Closed	27	28 12-1 pm Soup Kitchen
29 9:00 Coffee Cafe 9:45 Children's SS Youth Bible Class Adult SS nursery 10:30 Choir Practice 11:00 Worship nursery NO Youth meeting	30	31				

Prayer List



Art work by Morris Cracraft

Hospitalized

Homebound/Nursing Home/Rehab

Katrina Kelley

Penney Griffin, Lauderdale Christian Nursing Home

Sara Elizabeth Doss, at home

Phillip Mackey, Mitchell-Hollingsworth, son of Jane Mackey

Church Members in need of prayer

Family of Chuck Gillis, brother of Tom Gillis

Rich Larkins

Kelly Larkins

Phyllis Nofzinger

Cynthia Briand

Michael Hasty

John Palme

Nancy Palme, cervical spine injury

Family & Friends in need of prayer

Jeff and Nancy Peck Bowling, mission trip to Moldova

Grace Carter, car accident, friend of Joni Willingham. Her parents are Bob and Marsha Carter

Jim Gough, cancer, son of Jane Gough

Bill Lupton, brother of Allison Lupton, undergoing treatment for blood cancer

Family of Clay Holden, friend of The Marbury's

Cora McCluskey, mother of John McCluskey

Marna McCay, cancer, friend of Tom Gillis, sister of Kerry Shapiro

Kerri Putman, Glioblastoma brain tumor, friend of Candace Lewis

Randy Perkins, cancer, brother-in-law of Jo Lynn McClure

Ken Patterson, cancer, father of Rhonda Tyree

Edna Carter, sister of Mary Young

Roger LaBiche, friend of Kelly LaBiche-Larkins

Ed Smith, father of Wilder Smith