



4900 Kaplan Drive, Raleigh NC 27606
919-851-4713

CONTACT

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Preparing the Way of the Lord

Luke 1:68-79

In a world of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and text messages, we are continuously drawn into messages from a variety of sources. People walk around with smartphones that submerge them into a swarm of conversations, solicitations and headline captions all calling for their attention. During Advent, we are bombarded with messages that tell us to “Get ready for Christmas!” More often than not, this means to prepare your postal and electronic Christmas greetings, to schedule our tours of Cary, Crabtree, South Point and North Hills Mall. It’s an urge to buy the latest gift wrapping paper, deck the halls, and to catch the recent holiday blockbuster on the silver screen.

Before we get caught up in the frenzy, let us focus on the real meaning of “getting ready for Christmas.” To prepare for Christmas is to intentionally prepare for the coming of Jesus Christ! It is to open our hearts, minds and souls to the mystery of God becoming one of us. This is the whole point of Advent that consumed the thoughts of Zachariah and Elizabeth. They had presented their infant, John, in the temple to be circumcised. Suddenly, the Holy Spirit overtakes Zachariah and reveals to him that their long awaited son will be “a prophet of the Most High” and will “go before the Lord to prepare the way for the coming Messiah.”

In those days, there were no billboards, no radio stations nor television commercials to clutter their minds. But, I am certain that there were countless other forms of distraction that challenged Zachariah’s attention from the central message. Fear, doubt, rejection and isolation were constantly bombarding this couple’s well-being. Who would believe that this message was anything more than an ego trip, an attempt to make-up for the years of shame for being childless? Moreover, who could even imagine that this couple would play such a critical role in salvation history? After all, they were just ordinary people like you and me. Just as Zachariah and Elizabeth had a vital role in preparing the stage of human history for the first coming of the Lord (the birth of Jesus), you and I are also a part of the supporting cast. The church is called to prepare for Christ’s second coming.

Dear Lord,

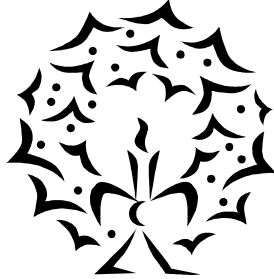
Help us to focus on this call as we seek to do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly before our God. Empower us to embody this message as we love and care for the least of these.

Shalom in the Name of the Coming King - Jesus the Christ,
Bruce

Hanging of the Greens

Sunday, December 8, 5:00 p.m.

Please join us as we mark the Advent season with a meaningful worship service, Hanging of the Greens. We will prepare the sanctuary and fellowship hall for this special season through music, readings, and placement of the greens and poinsettias. A reception in the fellowship hall will follow the service and will include an alternative gift fair. Each family is asked to provide finger-food for the celebration. You may bring your food item to the kitchen before the service. Please invite neighbors and friends to join us as we celebrate Advent!



Deck The Halls! And Un-Deck The Halls!

We welcome anyone and everyone wishing to help put up, lights, and decorate our church from 9:00 a.m.—11:00 a.m. on Saturday, December 7. Come get in the holiday spirit! Thank you. Also, please join the Worship Committee on Saturday, January 4, 2014 at 9:00 am to remove the Christmas decorations from the church. We look forward to seeing you there!

—Worship Committee

Christmas Tree and Wreath Arrival

Christmas trees and wreaths that have been ordered from WBPC are arriving and should be picked up in the WBPC parking lot either on Friday, November 29 from 4:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. or on Saturday, November 30, from 9:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. Payment should be made at time of pickup. Checks for trees should be made out to WBPC with "Christmas Tree" in the check memo line. For wreath payment, please write a separate check to AWCDC (oriceeds will go to the Avent West Children's Mentoring program).

WBPC Transitions to Artificial Greenery

Several months ago, the Worship Committee made a decision to begin using artificial greenery in the sanctuary and other common areas during the Advent season, at the request of several members of our congregation who suffer from allergies related to the fresh pine greenery we have used previously.

Research shows that freshly cut trees can breed mold spores. The spores grow all over the tree and are released into the air, where they're inhaled into the nose and lungs and may trigger allergy symptoms, as well as asthma.

The Worship Committee prayerfully considered this request and felt we wanted all of our church members and friends to be able to enjoy the beauty of the advent season in our sanctuary. We have purchased high quality artificial trees which we feel certain will display our beautiful Chrismon ornaments and provide for a beautiful and allergy-free advent season for all!

We will continue to have our live poinsettias in the sanctuary for all to enjoy as these plants do not produce airborne pollen or molds like the trees.

—Worship Committee



Christmas Eve Candlelight

Communion Service

Tuesday, December 24
5:00PM in the sanctuary
(Infant nursery provided)

WBPC Poinsettia Order Form



You may make a donation of \$10.00 to request a Poinsettia in memory of or in honor of a loved one. Gifts of Poinsettias will be recognized in a December worship bulletin. If you would like to remember or honor a special friend or relative, please complete this form (please print neatly) and return it with your donation to the church office by **Sunday, December 1**. Make checks payable to WBPC. Please write *Poinsettia* in the check memo line.

Given by _____ Phone # _____

In Memory of (1) _____ (2) _____

In Honor of (1) _____ (2) _____

Number of poinsettias requested: _____ x \$10.00 each = \$ _____

Paid by ___check ___cash

Neighborhood Caroling

Wednesday, December 18, 6:00 p.m.

Join in a Christmas caroling stroll through the neighborhood surrounding WBPC. Please invite your friends and neighbors to join us. This is for the young and the young-at-heart of all ages.

From 6:00 – 6:45 p.m., we'll meet at the church for a meal of pot-luck soup in the Fellowship Hall. Bring your favorite soup to share. At 6:45 p.m., we'll head out for caroling. Wear your walking shoes. Song sheets will be available. Bring a flashlight, and you'll not miss any of the lyrics. We will serenade some of our nearby church members, and afterwards return to the church to warm-up with cookies and cider.

For more information, please contact Janet Cherry 851-4713 x 16 or music@wbpresbyterian.org

Schedule a Visit by Christmas Carolers

If you would like a visit by the Christmas carolers on Wednesday, December 18, contact Janet Cherry. Visits will be between 7:00 and 8:30 p.m. There will be several caroling routes, some walking and some driving. Let us know if you would like us to drop by and sing in the Christmas season at your home.

Additional Choir Rehearsals

Sunday, 12/8 Hanging of the Greens

- 3:30 – 4:00 Chancel Ringers rehearsal (sanctuary)
- 4:00 – 4:30 Chancel Ringers and Chancel Choir combined rehearsal (sanctuary)
- 4:30 – 4:50 Chancel Choir rehearsal (music room)
- 5:00 p.m. Worship service begins

Sunday, 12/15 Morning Worship

- 9:00 – 9:30 a.m. Chancel Ringers rehearsal
- Chancel Ringers play in morning worship.

Tuesday, 12/24 Christmas Eve

- 4:00 – 4:45 Chancel Choir rehearsal
- 5:00 p.m. Worship service begins

Thank You to our many Musicians

Throughout the year, we are blessed and inspired by the musical talents of so many of our church members. Especially at Advent and Christmas our musicians work extremely hard to prepare and share their gifts. I am always so appreciative of their time and efforts. When you see any of the good Christian folk who participate in our choirs, please give them your thanks and appreciation as well.

—Janet Cherry

Sunday School Christmas Music

In December, Sunday School for ages 3 – grade 2 will begin with Christmas music. Beginning at 9:30 a.m., we will meet in the music room to sing carols and holiday songs for a few minutes.

Recently Your Session

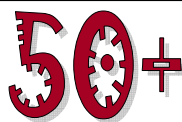
- Approved calling of Congregational Meeting on Oct. 13 for the purpose of electing 2013-2014 Nominating Committee
- Discussed annual budget for 2014
- Approved commissioners to October 26th Presbytery Meeting
- Received Thank You letter from Alamance Children's Theatre for donation of tables and chairs
- Heard update from Nominating Committee on officer search
- Approved child baptism for November 24th
- Approved Joe Matthews as substitute preacher for Dec 1st
- Heard update from Worship Committee on use of artificial greenery in Sanctuary

Meals on Wheels in December!

WBPC's next delivery dates is Monday, Dec. 30, 11AM. Will you join me by taking a route? Call Marcia Bennett, 919-851-3992.

All WBPC Women Are Invited!

You are invited to the Presbyterian Women Christmas Luncheon at Olive Garden, 1809 Walnut St., Cary, for a delightful fellowship luncheon, 11AM, on Tuesday, December 10. Call Marcia Bennett, 919-851-3992, and I'll save you a seat!



Friday, December 20

Meet in the parking lot at 9:15AM for breakfast at Farmer's Market Restaurant, and then a tour of NCSU Hunt Library.

Food Bag Challenge Items of the Week

(Can't bring a whole bag? Bring one item each week!)

- December 1 - canned meat
- December 8 - mac and cheese
- December 15 - canned carrots
- December 22 - applesauce
- December 29 - powdered milk



Extra December Challenge: Bring December food bag items to Hanging of the Greens on December 8, so that they can be delivered before Christmas!

Happy Birthday

Clarine Lynn	1
Shelby Townsend	2
Frank Bennett	4
Sean Croom	5
Grace Odum	6
Charlotte Cassel	8
Kiersten Hall	8
Andy Kotnik	11
Connor Bayne	12
Nathan Cummings	13
Jo Gilmore	15
Ronny Pittman	16
Moriah Hall	18
Art Chard	19
Noah Milchuck	19
Carolyn Esbenshade	23
Edith Crawford	27
Elizabeth McClellan	27
Teri Padgett	27
Alexa Craven	28
Randy Thomson	28
Jeanne Alderson	29

Breakfast: Sunday, December 8



The Men of the Church will prepare and serve breakfast on December 8. (As they do every month on the 2nd Sunday of the month). Breakfast begins at 8:45 a.m., join in the Advent fun and don't miss the most important meal of the day!

Thank you Men of the Church!

Children's Chapel Schedule

December 1 (No Children's Chapel)

December 8

The Story of Job

Storyteller: Carol Parker

Greeter: Noah Milchuck

December 15

Ezekiel, The Prophet

Storyteller: John Bayne

Greeter: Grace Odum

December 22

Jonah

Storyteller: Phyllis Fann

Greeter: Carolyn Esbenshade

December 29 (No Children's Chapel)

PRAYER CONCERNS

MEMBERS: Joyce Barbour, Kaye Byrd, Miranda Johnson, Daisy Lowery, Eva Reopelle, Mary Jane and John Roberts, Bill Smith, Dot and Jimmie Smith, Peggy Stevens, David Townsend, Mac Winslow

FAMILY/FRIENDS: Lauren Bridges (friend of Pat and Brenda Byers), Fay Cherry (mother of Janet Cherry), Peggy Freeman (sister of Kaye Byrd), Wendy Ratley (sister of Leslie Adams), Hazel Smith (mother of Jimmie Smith), Lauren Snyder (granddaughter of LouGene and Jim Hemphill), Mary Kay Subeh (niece of Greg and Shirley Griffith), Valeria Tyndall Taylor (cousin of Mary Williams-Kotnik), Jay Tognoli (cousin of Peggy Stevens)

CRABTREE VALLEY REHAB: Richard Lentz

DUKE HOSPITAL: Tom Yorke

ABBOTSWOOD: Margaret Pittman

UNIHEALTH/THE OAKS: Betsy Roberts, George Blum

THE COVINGTON: Annie Woodruff

BRIGHTON GARDENS: Jo Gilmore

*Congratulations to **Barbara and Mike McIntire** upon the birth of their grandson, Owen Liles McIntire, on November 7.*

Sympathy extended to:

***Janet Cherry** upon the death of her father on October 30.*

***Mac Winslow (and Blythe, William, & Alex)** upon the recent death of Mac's grandfather.*



Thank you!

Thank you so much for all the love and concern you have shown my family and me during my Dad's illness and death. Your cards and flowers, kind words and prayers have been such a comfort during a difficult time. I am grateful to have such a caring church community. —*Janet Cherry*

Greetings from the Children's Chapel group!

We have had a great start to the church year with several new faces joining us in our worship. Our stories have come from the old Testament with many of them using the desert box that we have in our room. They have loved hearing about the Creation, Noah, Sarai and Abram, as well as learning about the church calendar. Ask these children what the church colors are and when we see them during the year as well as where we see them in the sanctuary! Which one is too hot to touch? Which color means 'getting ready'? They love sharing what they know!

Feel free to join us in the Chapel any Sunday except the first Sunday of each month when they remain with their families to share in communion.

Please contact Judy Shelton with any questions you might have about the program.

Provide Relief to the Philippines

Super Typhoon Haiyan left monumental devastation when it struck the central Philippines on November 8. Reports indicate severe destruction, with damaged roads and buildings, downed power lines and telecommunications, and flooded villages. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance is working in collaboration with its mission partner, the National Council of Churches in the Philippines, and other members of ACT Alliance to respond to this crisis. Initial response includes the provision of nonfood items, material resources, drinking water, emergency-shelter kits and cash-for-work-programs. WBPC's gifts of over \$3,000 to One Great Hour of Sharing on Easter Sunday enables PDA to respond rapidly when crises occur. PDA is asking for people to give, act and pray. Share your financial blessings by contributing online at pcusa.org, or by designating gifts to DR000012-Philippines by mailing a check to PCUSA, PO Box 643700, Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700. Please pray that through the response of the faith community, the people and communities affected by Typhoon Haiyan and those offering assistance have their needs met and be reminded of the hope and compassion that are found in Christ.

Stewardship Update

Your Part is Indispensable! If you have not already submitted a pledge card for our 2014 general budget, we pray you will do so very soon; you can make a world of difference! Summary on General Pledges received thus far: \$251,746 or 66.84% of budget pledge goal.

Year-end Giving

2013 gifts must be hand delivered to the church office or post marked no later than December 31, 2013. Any contributions delivered or postmarked after December 31, and any checks dated January 2014 will be credited to 2014 contributions. Please clearly indicate 2013 or 2014 on the memo line of your check.

DECEMBER FINANCIAL REPORT

	<u>OCTOBER 2013</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
Pledges	\$ 26,306.01	272,909.57
Open	1,328.80	16,914.64
Church School	280.00	1,104.60
Total Offering	27,914.81	290,928.81
Prior Receipts		10,221.52
Expenses	<u>33,965.38</u>	<u>306,817.02</u>
Net Total	\$ (6,050.57)	(5,666.69)

Thank You for Being an Angel

If you chose a name from the angel swag, please return **wrapped** gifts with the angel tag on the outside to the narthex on Sunday, December 8. Suggestions would be educational games, toys, and supplies. Suggested price range: \$20-\$25. We thank the Board of Directors for AWCM for providing us with this opportunity.



The church staff wishes you a very merry Christmas. It is a joy to work among you and we are grateful for the opportunity.

-Betty, Bruce, Janet, Santi, Van, Dave, Mollie and Bobbi

Church Staff

Betty Connette (x11)

Pastor

betty@wbpresbyterian.org

Bruce Grady (x17)

Associate Pastor

bgrady9039@aol.com

Janet Cherry (x16)

Music Director/Organist

janet@wbpresbyterian.org

Santi Matthews (x10)

Administrative Assistant

santi@wbpresbyterian.org

Van-Anthoney Hall

AWS Worship Leader

vananthoney.h@gmail.com

Dave Grace

Youth Fellowship

3030.dave@gmail.com

Mollie Tucker

Youth Fellowship

Bobbi Cross (233.9967)

Preschool Director

wbpdirector@gmail.com

Church Office

919-851-4713

Hours: Monday-Friday 9:00AM-2:00PM

Office will be closed 12/25, 12/26, and 1/1.