

First Presbyterian Church
515 Court St.
Portsmouth, VA 23704-3605

Pastor: Rev. Kerry Knox Westerwick

FIRST PRES

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December, 2010

KERRY-GRAM

Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world. James 1:27 - 2:1

I've long been a fan and modest supporter of microloan enterprises. These tiny loans, often as little as \$25, are lent to people in underdeveloped pockets of the world to establish and sustain cottage industries. These loans transform lives in substantial ways, helping the borrowers achieve economic independence. Once the borrowers are able to repay the loan, often the money is "paid forward" extending the loan to another person.

Supporting microloans can be a gospel practice - a more excellent way to follow Christ's command to love one another. As the Christmas season approaches, consider alternative giving. Make a gift to one of the organizations below (or another of your choosing) and serve your neighbors in a meaningful, loving way. I suggest using [Charity Navigator](#) to evaluate your choice.

[Charity Navigator is an on-line site that works to advance a more efficient and responsive philanthropic marketplace by evaluating the financial health of over 5,500 of America's largest charities. It will help in deciding which charity you want to support. -Ed.]

Microloans:

[Kiva - loans that change lives](#)

[The Acumen Fund](#)

[buildOn](#)

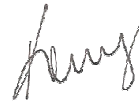
[Freedom from hunger](#)

Supporting Cottage Industries:

[Ember Arts](#) - Acholi Beads - Uganda beads made by the Acholi Tribe

[Emerge Global](#) - empowering Sri Lankan girls (10-18) who have survived abuse

[Active Blessing](#) - a "ministry to the abandoned" orphans and X child soldiers of Uganda



JOY TO THE WORLD!

THE LORD HAS COME!

LET EARTH RECEIVE HER KING!

LET EVERY HEART

PREPARE HIM ROOM

AND HEAVEN AND NATURE SING!

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

We mourn the death of FRANK JENNINGS, who passed away on November 27. Frank was a loving friend to many who had the pleasure of knowing him. A loyal and supportive member of our First Presbyterian family, Frank was strong in his faith and a leader in the congregation. He was especially fond of children and delighted in their friendship. Frank had a sunny outlook and his booming voice could be heard in the halls of our church: "Beautiful Day!" We shall miss him, and we pray that the Holy Spirit will comfort his family.

CALENDAR of EVENTS for ADVENT and CHRISTMAS

These are the events planned. Others may be added.

- 12/5: Church wide Christmas Celebration [see details below]
- 12/7: PW decorates Chrismon tree.
- 12/11 PW Christmas luncheon.
- 12/15: Church Christmas Dinner
- 12/19: Lessons and Carols [11:00 Worship]
- 12/24: Christmas Eve service with communion
- 12/26: Youth tell the Christmas story (11:00 Worship)

REJOICE! REJOICE! CHURCHWIDE CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

On SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2010, the whole church will celebrate Christmas. No early service or Sunday school class sessions on this date.

A breakfast will be served at 9am, followed by the program. *All classes* will participate in a program of carol singing, prayer, and decorating the *live tree* in the social hall. Sunday School class members young and old will come forward by class to place their ornaments

on the tree. The ornaments will be symbolic of:

- The animals that will live together in peace, [wolf & lamb, leopard & kid, calf & lion, cow & bear].
- Light – stars, candles, etc.
- Names of Jesus [Wonderful counselor, Prince of Peace, etc.]
- Blooming desert – flower blossoms

The crowning touch will be a garland made by the youth, after which the tree will be illuminated.

All ages are encouraged to participate. You don't have to be a member of a Sunday School class to take part—you just need to bring your best Christmas spirit and an ornament to hang on the tree!!

Sunday school teachers, please have your class make ornaments during the class sessions leading up to this Sunday, so that all will be able to take part.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

December 11 at 11 am, the PW will hold their Christmas celebration and luncheon. ALL women of the church are invited. The program around the Chrismon tree will include special music. The luncheon will feature soups and salads.

REMINDER FROM THE SHEPHERD COMMITTEE

If you are a Shepherd, and plan to be out of town, or otherwise unavailable for more than a couple of days, please contact Paul Butler, Shepherd Coordinator, at 393-1398, or butler.alicepaul@verizon.net, so that your Lambs can be contacted, should the Shepherd list be activated.

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The Session has called the annual meeting of the congregation for January 23, 2011 for the purpose of receiving the annual report of the congregation and approving the terms of call of the pastor.

GIVE/GET A RIDE

This program exists for members who need a ride or who are available to give a ride.

IF YOU NEED A RIDE, whether it's to the church, or to a medical appointment, please call Mary Myers at the church office, or call Agnes McFadden at 399-3190.

They will need 2 days' advance notice to make arrangements.

IF YOU CAN GIVE A RIDE TO SOMEONE WHO NEEDS ONE, please call Mary or Agnes to let them know of your willingness and availability.

ALSO, PLEASE PRAY FOR THIS PROGRAM and all those who participate in it.

LEARNING THE PRACTICE OF WORSHIP

All children 7 years old and above are encouraged to remain in worship for the entire service. Worship is indispensable as part of our lives and the development of young people as Christians. Thus, we all desire the children of our congregation to learn the practice of worship and become familiar and comfortable with the worship experience. This is difficult without being present during the service. Children 6 and younger will continue to be welcome in the nursery. Also:

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR NURSERY

We need volunteers to attend to our littlest disciples. If you feel called to this ministry, please contact Laura McCrary at 484-7607.

OASIS

Serving a hot and nutritious breakfast to the folks at Oasis is a very important ministry of our church. Various church groups are scheduled to take turns performing this service.

If you wish to take part, you can volunteer by calling the church office or by making it known next time your Sunday School class or other group is scheduled to serve. Also, please remember this ministry in your prayers.

MEALS ON WHEELS

This important mission to our community requires just a few hours each month. Meals are delivered by volunteers from the First Presbyterian Church family on the third Thursday. It means a lot both to the recipients of the meals and to the ones who deliver the meals. The Meals on Wheels program is always in need of volunteers. If you would like to volunteer, please contact the church office.

HOMELESS SHELTER

The Shelter at 1st Presbyterian for 2011 will start on Sunday, April 10, and run until Saturday, April 16. More details will be coming. Please put this on your calendar and plan to offer your help.

ODU CAMPUS MINISTRY MISSION TRIP

The Old Dominion University campus ministry is in the process of planning their International Spring Break Mission Trip to Roatan, Honduras. First Presbyterian, Portsmouth, has pledged to help them.

On SUNDAY, JANUARY 9, 2011, after our 1100 worship, we will host a FUNDRAISER LUNCHEON to raise money toward the cost of the trip. The ODU students will prepare the food, set up tables and chairs, serve, and clean up. At the lunch they will ask for donations and will give a short program about what they will be doing on their trip.

Please plan to join them for lunch and make a donation toward this worthy cause.

SESSION ACTION ITEMS

The Stated Meeting of the Session of First Presbyterian Church of Portsmouth, VA was held in the fellowship hall on Monday, October 18, 2010. The Moderator, Rev. Kerry Knox Westerwick, declared a quorum and called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM.

The Moderator led a study of: Chapter 5 of the book, *Becoming a Blessed Church*.

Session Actions (cont'd).

Church Roll: The Pastor and Clerk of Session have begun looking at the church roll. A list was compiled of potential transfers to inactive roll. The list was given to Gwen Brown, Alfred Fry and Linda Hackworth for their input. The process will continue as responses are received.

Committee Reports

Christian Ed – report was received from Pat Sparks.

Grounds – report was received from Clara Spanos.

Pastor's Report – received from Rev. Westerwick

Personnel – Kay Kidd reported that she had a conversation with the church secretary about her change in work schedule.

Presbyterian Women – Alice Butler, PW Moderator, reported that PW circles are meeting and holiday events are being planned.

Stewardship & Finance – Diane Griffin reported that Consecration Sunday will be on October 31, 2010. There will be a congregational lunch following the 11:00 AM worship service. The lunch is covered dish with fried chicken provided by the committee.

Treasurer's Report – the Financial Report for September 2010 was received from the Treasurer, John Hackworth, circulated and commented on.

Welcome Ministry – report was received from Kendall Rhodes.

Approval of Minutes – the minutes of the Congregational Meeting of September 19, 2010 and the Stated Meeting of September 20, 2010 were approved with minor editorial changes.

Old Business:

· **Welcome Ministry Tote Bags** - the bags have been purchased and received and are being used as gifts to visitors. Others from the church may be interested in purchasing a bag. A **Motion was made and approved** that the tote bags be available for purchase for \$12.00 each.

Bag of Chips – the Peace, Love and a Bag of Chips Ministry has gone very well. Thirty-eight were served on Sunday.

New Business:

Ministry Focus – the pastor asked the session to look at the new Ministry Focus proposal and to bring questions and comments to the next meeting.

Endowment Funds – Mike Broadhurst requested that available Endowment Fund monies be transferred back to the Endowment Committee so that they may be reinvested. The session concurred with the Endowment Committee request.

Joint Meeting of Session and Diaconate

The annual joint meeting was held on Monday, November 29, 2010 at 7:00 PM. There will not be a meeting of either the session or the diaconate in December.

During the joint meeting of the session and diaconate the new process of commitments to ministry was discussed. In January, the officers will commit to overseeing a ministry of the church for the year 2011, providing spiritual support for the people serving the varied ministries of the congregation.

Following the joint meeting, the Session met separately.

The Session has called the annual meeting of the congregation for January 23, 2011 for the purpose of receiving the annual report of the congregation and approving the terms of call of the pastor. Annual reports from each reporting group are due no later than January 5, 2011. Email is preferred. Each reporting group is asked to name a hymn that best reflects the year of service. These will be sung during worship on January 23.

The Session sustained the examinations of Jennifer Patgorski and David Turner for the office of Deacon; and Diane Turner, Paul Butler, and Gail Pittman to the office of Elder. These officers will be installed during the worship service on **January 16, 2011**.

Gail Pittman was elected as Clerk of the Session and John Hackworth as Treasurer of the church, both for calendar year 2011.

MUSING: WHY DO WE CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS?

WHY DO WE celebrate Christmas these days? There are different reasons, many having little, if anything, to do with God's plan for our salvation. Some have more to do with economics than with religion. Some are based more on receiving than on giving and on spending money rather than saving souls.

"TRADITION" AND SOCIAL considerations, more than actual need dictates how our society marks the occasion. Stores and streets are decorated. There are thousands of Santa Clauses but relatively few nativity scenes. There's lots of "seasonal" music, very little of which even refers to the manger of Bethlehem, angels and shepherds, or the Christ child. These things all celebrate society's traditions—rather than Christianity's.

WE ALL DEPLORE this, of course, and yet in many ways we also play into it. We go along with downplaying—or flat denial—of the religious meaning of Christmas while complaining about it. We may try valiantly to keep the baby in the manger while filling it with presents, but often Christ gets crowded out of Christmas or covered up with wrapping paper and bows. We give presents and food to the needy in the spirit of love – and that's a good thing. However, it also misses the point of celebration.

THERE'S AN OLD popular song, one phrase of which says, "You can't have one without the other." Not to trivialize Christmas or Easter, but the same is true here: we can't have one without the other. Without Christmas, there would be no Easter; without Easter there would be no Christmas. We wouldn't celebrate either of them, because there'd be nothing to celebrate.

THINK ABOUT IT. "Jesus" was a fairly common name in Palestine, and the Romans crucified people frequently. The birth and death of a simple carpenter would have gone unnoticed. There would have been no followers to record his deeds and sayings. There would be no Disciples, no Apostles, no Gospel. There'd be no such thing as a Christian faith or church. We wouldn't even be known as Christians. We probably wouldn't even know each other. Our lives would be different. The whole world would be different.

IF CHRIST HAD not been born human, his resurrection and triumph over death would have little meaning – no real connection – for us as humans. God lived among us as a poor and lowly human. If he had come as a rich and powerful king, his claim of divinity wouldn't have been unusual in an era when emperors and kings regularly claimed to be gods. The manger where he was laid as a newborn and the tomb where he was laid as a crucified man both were borrowed. He couldn't even claim the swaddling cloth or the burial wrappings as his own.

GOD STILL WOULD save humankind in some way, because he is God. He said there would be a Messiah, so there would be. God keeps his word. Sin and death had corrupted God's perfect creation, and God was going to set things right. God had a plan. His plan is the reason we celebrate both Christmas and Easter.

"GOD LOVED the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life." When Christians celebrate Christmas and Easter, we celebrate God's merciful love. The baby in the manger symbolizes that love – but the story is not complete without the Risen Savior. You can't have one without the other.

MAY GOD GRANT YOU A BLESSED AND VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Lane Pittman

DEADLINE FOR NEWSLETTER

Articles or information to be published in the newsletter must be submitted to the Editor by the 25th of the previous month. Submissions should be sent to Lane Pittman:

US Mail: 614 Chandler Harper Drive
Portsmouth, VA 23701
Email: slp4149@aol.com
Phone: 757-405-3554

WALK FOR H.O.P.E.

The First Presbyterian walkers for the Walk for H.O.P.E. raised \$265 for PARC. Thanks to all for your support. For more information on PARC (Portsmouth Area Resources Coalition) please visit their website www.parcinc.org

COLD WEATHER GEAR

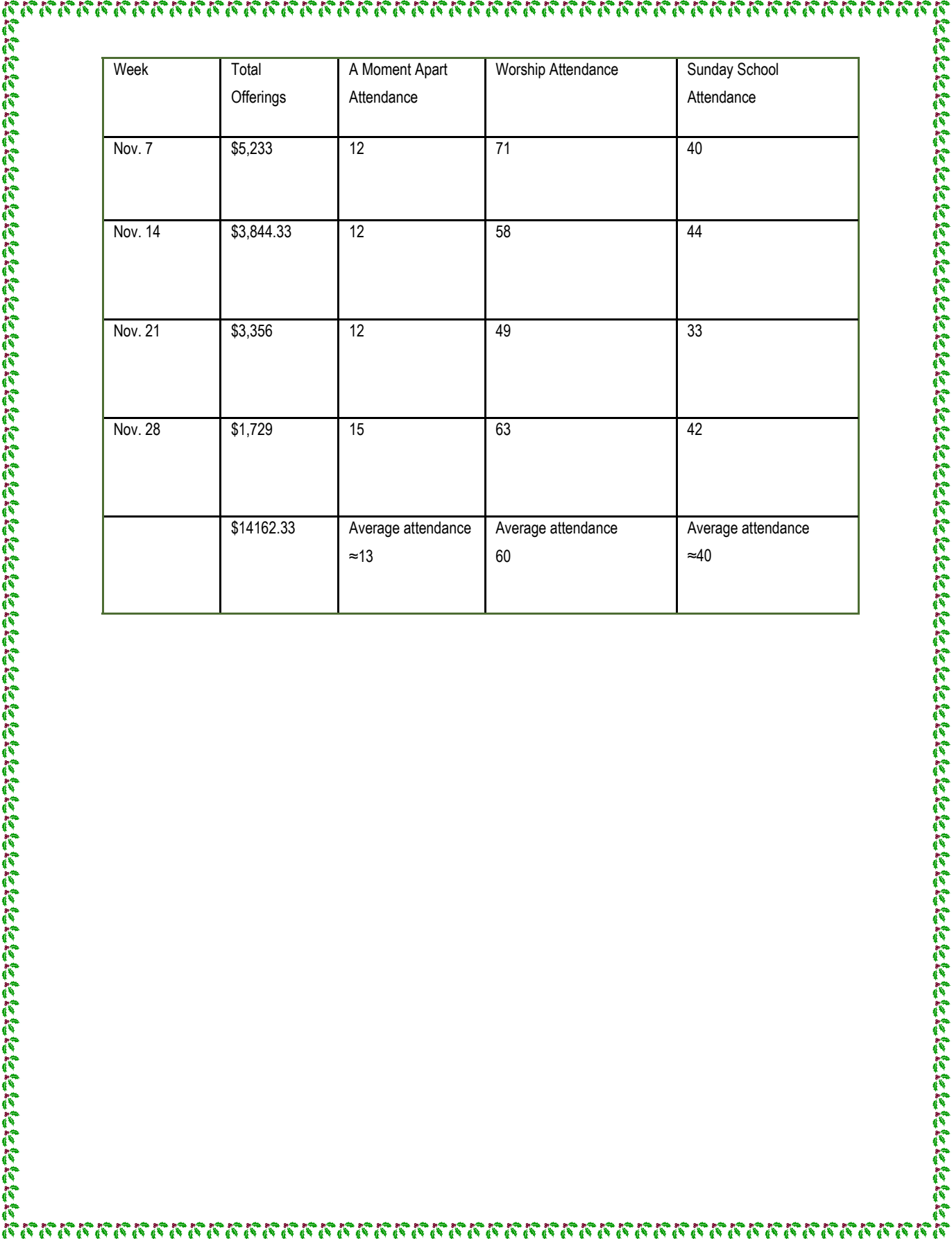
In loving memory of Beverly Dawson (Susan Fay's mom) we will be collecting hats, gloves and scarves for Portsmouth Volunteers for the Homeless. The collection began in November and runs until the end of the year. We are looking for both men and women adult sizes. A box can be found in the Fellowship Hall for you to drop off your donation. Thank you in advance for your support!

GIVING NOTIONS

Do you collect sample- or travel-size notions such as shampoo, soap, lotion, and such? Often, pharmacies will have these available. Or, they might come in the mail. Also, when you travel over the coming Christmas holiday, you may have a chance to pick up such items in hotels/motels. Did you know that there are baskets at the church to collect these items for use at the P.A.R.C. shelter? The collection baskets are located in the Friendship Sunday School room and at the entrance to the Sanctuary in the Education Building. This provides an inexpensive – often free – way to donate to a worthy cause.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

2	Kathy Goolsby Kaitlin Hackworth
3	Frances Spires
5	Audrey Regan Fuss
6	Rose Council
9	Rebecca Porter
12	Margaret Glynn Jay James Vicki Goolsby
18	Chuck Powell Michael Broadhurst
20	Ed Powell
21	Pat Sparks Dylan Wilson Shannon Brown
22	Earl Griffin
27	Sean Taylor
28	Elizabeth Pond Riley Winkler Stephen Deller
29	Duff Green Porter IV
30	Ian Forbes Taylor



Week	Total Offerings	A Moment Apart Attendance	Worship Attendance	Sunday School Attendance
Nov. 7	\$5,233	12	71	40
Nov. 14	\$3,844.33	12	58	44
Nov. 21	\$3,356	12	49	33
Nov. 28	\$1,729	15	63	42
	\$14162.33	Average attendance ≈13	Average attendance 60	Average attendance ≈40