



*SPRING HILL
MESSENGER
December 2023
January 2024*

Holidays

You probably know this, or at least you could figure it out with not much work. Holidays began as holy days. Holy days were saints' days. As countries gradually secularized, holy days became holidays. I giggle; yes, at my age, I can still giggle; when I hear about people becoming angry when someone says, "Happy Holidays," rather than Merry Christmas. I'm not laughing at the anger. I am amused that there is anyone who cannot see the connection between holidays, holy days, and Christmas. I like to be inclusive. I like including more holy days in my greeting than only Christmas.

I am writing this the week of Thanksgiving. I am looking forward to spending time with my extended family: both of my brothers and their families. One of my brothers married a woman who is one of eight siblings. Most of her extended family will also be gathering. Most of my generation have grandchildren. There will be a large crowd. Everyone brings something. The group texts deciding who will bring what, have been fun to read. There have also been some comments about the most hated Thanksgiving dishes. Of course, there has also been discussion about green bean casseroles.

At several of these Thanksgiving gatherings in the past, we all sat down for dinner and everyone had the opportunity to say for what we are thankful. That exercise may begin with funny or silly things, but eventually we get serious. Someone is thankful for Aunt Marty's ham. Someone for my potato salad. We all laugh. Then we hear, "Thank you for the gift of three babies born in six months." "Thank you for Uncle Gary recovering from pneumonia." "Thank you for Mary's new knee." Then someone says, "Thank you that we are safe and have more than enough. Please be with all of those who don't have enough and who live in fear." It's like a door opening. People start praying for others because there is so much need. We recognize our abundance and ask God to help us be gracious and giving.

In my family, years ago, we started the tradition of making donations to charities that mean the most to us, in honor of each other. We realized that in this world we have more than we need, and we can share with others out of our abundance.

The older I become, the longer my list of holy days becomes. I remember the days my sons were born. I remember the day Sally and I met. I remember my Mom and Dad's birthdays. Days become holy because of relationships. I read about the death of former First Lady Rosalynn Carter. In the article I read was a comment from a reporter who had interviewed President Carter years ago. The question posed to him was, "After winning the Noble Peace Prize and being elected president, which is the best day of your life?" President Carter replied, "The day I met Rosalynn."

Happy Holidays.
Peace.
Cary

Dear SHPC Friends,

Our theme this Advent is “How Does a Weary World Rejoice?” This phrase is taken from the hymn, “O Holy Night.” The hymn goes:

O holy night, the stars are brightly shining,
It is the night of the dear Savior’s birth;
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
Till he appeared and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn;
Fall on your knees, Oh hear the angel voices!
O night divine! O night when Christ was born.
O night, O holy night, O night divine.

When I hear this hymn, I am always transported to Christmas Eve services here at Spring Hill Presbyterian. Each year, this hymn is sung at the evening service. Sometimes a soloist, sometimes a trio—it reminds me of the power of Christ’s birth. The singers change each year—the singers are rarely the same and yet, it is something so powerful and enduring to hear those voices harmonize and individually proclaim the hope, justice, and joy of Christ’s birth. “A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices”—we often don’t think of hope and thrill together—but I love this image of a jolt of hope. Hope comes when we need it but least expect it, awakening us to the reality that God is with us. We are not alone. Surprise! A baby is born.

We are weary. We are weary from bad news, heartache, illness, grief, and sorrow. We are weary—overextended in this season. We are weary, and yet through Christ this weary world rejoices. A seed of hope is planted within us. We wake up to joy. This Advent, I hope we can hold space for both weariness and joy. We seek “a thrill of hope” in our hurting world.

How does a weary world rejoice? I like to think we rejoice day by day, with God’s help. We rejoice in our singing—especially together as we sing the familiar hymns of Advent and Christmas and on Cantata Sunday, December 3 and with our children and youth, December 10. We rejoice lighting one candle at a time as we watch for our Messiah. We rejoice in our preparations, collecting pine, holly, magnolia, and decorating our Sanctuary December 9 at 9:00 am at Adventfest. We rejoice in telling the story in worship and especially at Lessons and Carols, December 17. We rejoice in our study, reading our Advent devotional and through acts of love through Advent calendars and the Alternative Gift Market. If you are looking for hope and joy in this weary world, I hope that you will come here, to church—together we find it through Christ, in Christ, with Christ.

Grace and Peace,

Anna

Farewell Luncheon for Cary

December 17th Following Worship



The Fellowship and Personnel Committees invite everyone in our church family to a luncheon to celebrate and thank Cary before his departure at the end of the year. If possible, please bring a salad of your choice. Drinks and cake will be provided.

We are anticipating a large crowd. If you plan to attend PLEASE RSVP in one of these ways: by calling the church (251-342-1550), by emailing (marcia@springhillpresbyterian.org), or by signing up on sheets in the church narthex or back hallway.



Ruth Fitzgerald receives Life Member Award from Presbyterian Women (PW)

Each year on PW Sunday, a member of our congregation is recognized for her (or his) outstanding leadership and faithful service in various areas of the church's work.

On October 29, 2023, Ruth Fitzgerald was honored with a standing ovation by the congregation as she was named this year's honoree! The announcement is always a fun surprise for the entire congregation. Previous Life Members, are pictured below along with Ruth. There was a donation given to the church in Thanksgiving and Honor of Ruth from her family; Tom Fitzgerald, Jessica & Mark Browning, Katherine Browning, Les Agnew and William Agnew.



AdventFest

On Saturday, December 9 AdventFest will start at 9:00 am. Adventfest is the day where we create Advent wreaths and decorate the Sanctuary. Many hands make light work, so please let us know if you are willing to help collect greenery, make a wreath on December 9! This event is intergenerational, so children and youth are an important part of this event. You can sign-up in the hallway.

Children's and Youth Nativity Play, Sunday, Dec. 17

On Sunday December 17, our children and youth will be in their own special nativity play. No dress rehearsals necessary! We ask that children and youth show up at 9 am to pick costumes and practice. We will meet in the Sanctuary. Our big show will be at **9:40 am in the Sanctuary**. Adults, leave Sunday school a little early for this fun and festive event! If you are interested in a particular part, please see Susan Tomlinson.



In the Moon of Wintertime

Cantata Sunday

Dec. 3, 10:30 a.m. worship

presented by

The Chancel Choir, Chamber Orchestra, and Soloists

with Readings of Scripture and Poetry

Into a world longing and raging furiously,

the Christ-Child comes - bringing justice, beauty, joy, and peace.

Music by

Bach, Handel, Saint-Saens

Folk carols from France and England

“The Huron Carol”- the first hymn written in Canada - for the Huron people

Epiphany Star Words:

Jan. 7-Jan. 28 you are invited to receive a “Star Word.” A star word is a word that we invite you to use as a guiding word throughout the year to follow, reflect on, and ponder. Much like the Wise Men followed the star in the sky, we hope this word will help you to reflect and see where God is calling you. You can receive a star word in worship at the tree in the front or in a basket in the hallway. This year, we have had many requests for time to talk about our star words. **We will plan to have a Star Word check-in where people can gather in small groups to share about their word on Feb. 25 at 9:00 am.**

The use of star words, is a prayer practice connected to Epiphany and the new year that has been growing in popularity in Protestant churches for nearly a decade now. There are many reasons behind this tradition. First, we know that the Magi followed a star, which ultimately led them to Jesus. Therefore, we too use all the resources we have available to us—including creative prayer practices and intentional words for the new year—to move closer to Jesus.

Secondly, we trust that God uses multiple ways to guide us and speak to us. Star words are one such lens that might provide us with a way to look for God in our midst, both actively and in hindsight.

Finally, we trust that it is often easy to miss God in our daily midst. Having an intentional word to consider both in present days, as well as to reflect on at the end of the year, allows for us to see God in ways we may not have seen God before.

By not looking or sorting through the star words at their selection, we practice the spiritual task of receiving. It is not we who are in control in this moment. Instead, we trust that God is present, and we let go of our desire to cultivate or control. We hope you will join us in the spiritual practice of selecting a star word in January!



“Christmas is coming and the geese are getting fat”, a fact that I care nought about. What I do care about is cancelled stamps. For a refresher reminder, there is a labeled collection box for stamps located in the Mission Room. Tearing off affixed canceled stamps from envelopes, leaving a minimal ¼ inch border on all 4 sides, and dumping the stamps into the labeled box is recycling at its easiest. I take the stamps, trim, prepare, and send them to a volunteer enterprise in Florida which packages and sends them onward to stamp brokers in Asia. The monies from sales of these tamps are then sent to a Christian publishing house in Argentina which prints Sunday School materials for emerging churches in South and Central America.

This mission program amazingly generates a yearly average of more than \$50,000 and has been in existence since 1972. 2021 marked the milestone of a cumulative earnings of greater than \$1 million for the mission work. Stamps are collected by persons representing organizations from all over the USA. We are one of many but an important entity.

- Janie Sims



FAITH JOURNEY STATEMENTS FROM THE NEW OFFICERS

The following are edited and condensed from a few of the statements the new officers made at the November session meeting.

This church family welcomed me. I got involved. Through my membership and involvement here I have deepened my personal Bible study and reading, grown in my ability to understand the scripture and better show what that looks like in my everyday life. Amid all the strife in our world, being on this campus, I get the feeling of safety, security and a feeling of comfort that makes the noise of world would like to engulf me in seem a good bit less.

The Bible has come alive as a story of real people of faith, with all of their human weaknesses, making their journey, even as we are today – open to experiencing those places and events in our lives in which the boundary between heaven and earth is so thin that we can sense the divine.

This is what I believe. I am a beloved child of a loving and benevolent God, as is everyone else on this earth, and because of God’s mercy, and compassion, there is nothing I have to do to earn God’s love or salvation. That wonderful gift of grace, mercy and compassion causes me to, in turn, thankfully serve God by trying my best to live in caring community with all others on this planet, my human family.

Shortly after moving to Mobile, we joined SHPC. For over fifty years, the ministry of SHPC has changed my life. I now know that I am a hopeless sinner. Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross has washed me clean and through his grace and mercy I will one day join Him and my family in heaven.

I’m not sure when my faith journey began, but I do know that the “holy catholic church” has been my guide and teacher, a whole cloud of witnesses. My prayers are more like talking to God than conversations and are often spoken out loud at surprising moments. I am most comfortable and enjoy prayers when experiencing the wonders of God’s creation. I don’t believe I have ever really heard the voice of God speaking to me but have certainly experienced the results of prayer. I occasionally even say a prayer of thanks for unanswered prayers.

This new class of officers will be installed in January 2024.

Elders – Knox Boteler, Dale Hair, Frank Dagley, Judy Stout, Barkley Shreve, Molly Wagner.

Deacons – Melissa Root, Andrew Morvant, Fay Phillips, Linda Madsen, Cindy Campbell.



GIVE TO OTHERS & HONOR YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

... by “shopping” SHPC’s ANNUAL ALTERNATIVE GIFT MARKET (AGM) form in December which features representative gifts of hope, benefitting support agencies in our local community and the world beyond.

Agencies selected for our 2023 ALTERNATIVE GIFT MARKET

Victory Health Partners

Wings of Life

Penelope House

McKemie Place

Home of Grace

Family Promise

Heifer International

The Presbyterian Mission Agency (PCUSA)

Over the last seven years, our annual AGM average giving has been \$10,000. Let’s top that this year by honoring loved ones and giving Christmas gifts to others via our Alternative Gift Market.

AGM forms will be available in December in the hallways, narthex, church office, bulletins, and via an e-news link. Gift selections and donations may be made any time prior to December 31 by submitting your gift order form and attached donation check in the offering plate or sending them to Susan Richardson in the church office. Gift cards for you to send to honored friends and family may also be obtained in the narthex, church hallway, or church office.

John I:16 - “From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.”



POINSETTIAS will be part of the decorations in the sanctuary for the Advent and Christmas seasons. If you would like to donate a poinsettia in honor or memory of a loved one please call the church office (251-342-1550), email Marcia Wear (marcia@springhillprsbyterian.org), or sign up on the sheet in the hallways or the narthex. The cost is \$25.00, and the deadline is December 15. These plants will be taken to home-bound members in the name of the church.



GIFTS for CHILDREN & SENIOR ADULTS

“It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

DELIVERY HELP NEEDED!

Angel gifts are due in the church parlor by Sunday, December 3. Each gift should be wrapped and labeled with the recipient's name and angel #. **If there are multiple gifts, please enclose them all in a large, durable, heavy duty, reusable holiday shopping bag.**

Please use the GREEN angel card as the bag's tag so that the bag is clearly marked with the recipient's name and angel #.

We will deliver the gift bags to Catholic Social Services on Monday, December 4. If you have about an hour of time that morning, a vehicle with cargo space, and you can help load and deliver bags on 12/4, please contact Vera Lynn Sheets -call/text 251-454-6846; sheetsvl@aol.com.

Youth Ministry

Look below to see what else is happening this month! And don't forget to sign-up for our Montreat trips. The deadline is Dec. 1.

Date	Youth Sunday School at 9:00 am in Youth Room, Bullard Building	Confirmation at 9:00 am in Confirmation Room (Bullard Building)	Youth Choirs, Alphabet Generations, and Youth Group Schedule
Dec. 3	1 Corinthians 1:3-9 with Sarah Katherine	Review Session and Mentor Discussion (IMPORTANT)	Youth Christmas Party at Church (Caroling and Dirty Santa) 3:00-5:00 pm; Choir at 5:00 pm
Dec. 10	Mark 1:1-8 with Sarah Katherine	What is Sin and How Do We Turn From It?	Saturday, Dec. 9: Church -Wide Advent-Fest, 9:00 -11:00 am
Dec. 17	Christmas Pageant with Allison	No Class, BUT Mentors must be finalized.	TBA: Christmas Break Fellowship Event
Dec. 24 and 31	No Class	No Class	No Choirs, Alphabet Generations, or Youth Group Jan. 6-7: Youth Lock-In at SHPC

Children's Ministry

Date	Children's Sunday School at 9:00 am Upstairs Bullard	Children's Church during Worship	Children's Choirs/Alphabet Generations/Dinner
Dec. 3	Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 & Worship 101 with Linn and David Ayers	Cantata Sunday (No Children's Church)	Choirs at 5:00 pm, No Dinner
Dec. 10	Luke 1:26-38 & Worship 101 with Linn and David Ayers	Jesus is Born! with Buff Brown, Cecile Brown, Ken Brown Jr.	Children Sing in Worship at 10:30 am
Dec. 17	Christmas Pageant in the Sanctuary	Good News! with Lynn Hennig & Emma Powell	
Dec. 24 Dec. 31	No KidsLead: Christmas Break	No Children's Church: Christmas Break	Dec. 24: Children Sing at 4:00 Service

Adult Educational Opportunities

Sunday Mornings at 9:00 am

CONVERSATIONS WITH SCRIPTURE

This Winter and Spring, Conversations with Scripture returns with four new short series topics. This discussion based, small group class will meet at 9:00 am on Sunday mornings in the Parlor. Starting January 7, we will explore "Honoring Sabbath". For more information, contact Daniel McGough.

BIBLE DISCOVERY CLASS

Meet in the Conference Room at 9:15 on Sunday mornings and uses the PCUSA curriculum "Feasting on the Word" which studies the lectionary passages for each week. This class is for adults of all ages.

ALPHABET GENERATIONS

Meet in the Bullard Building at 5:00 PM on Sunday evenings. This class is for people in their 20s to early 50s. After the study, adults and their families are invited to stay for dinner at 6:00 pm.

Lessons and Carols
December 17

Christmas Services

December 24 @ 10:30 am

Christmas Eve Worship

December 24 @ 4:00 pm



Current Issues Schedule for December, 2023

Let's Close-Out the Year with Inspiring Conversation!

Dec. 3 – View and discuss a compelling, short video from Interfaith Power and Light showcasing how Arizona and our neighbor state of Georgia have transitioned to renewables and modernized their power grid to make it more secure and responsive. What could Alabama replicate? (Dale Hair)

Dec. 10 – The entire June, 2023, issue of "Presbyterian Outlook" focused on Gun Violence and how people of faith can help stop this uniquely American epidemic. Can we have an impact? How? Be ready to discuss the recommendations put forth. (Molly Wagner and Dale Hair)

Dec. 17 – "Twinkle, twinkle, little star." All are invited to share our experience with our STAR word from 2023. What impact did it have on you? (NOTE: If you have forgotten your STAR word, you can come with a word that you think has been important to you this past year.) Class will be abbreviated so all can attend the Children's Christmas Pageant in the sanctuary.

Dec. 24 – Informal sharing about the holidays. Join us for fellowship and cookies.

Dec. 31 – No Sunday School

SANCTUARY FLOWERS



Once again it is time to make our sanctuary bloom. If you have volunteered to donate flowers on the Time and Talent forms, please contact Ann Magee 251-232-2646 or email: cabmagee861@gmail.com, to reserve a date. Dates are already filling up for 2024. Each week we need members to contribute between \$50.00 to \$75.00 in memory or in honor of a loved one. We want to keep fresh flowers displayed for all to celebrate the goodness that God provides in our lives. If you would consider donating, please contact Ann Magee.



WE REJOICE with Matthew & Ashton Hennig on the birth of their daughter Callen Creel Hennig on November 7, 2023. Callen is the granddaughter of Jerry & Lynn Hennig and the great granddaughter of Carol Sumrall.



THE PRAYERS and sympathy of the congregation go out to Harvie & Margaret Jordan on the death of his mother, Judy Jordan, on November 21, 2023.

Memorial

Paul Macon

From

Christine & Jeff Conrad

Statement as of October 31, 2023

Total Annual Budgeted	\$ 765,766
Year-to-date Received	\$ 607,973
Other Receipts	\$ 39,108
Total Receipts	\$ 647,081
Benevolences	\$ 43,425
Salaries and Services	\$ 392,030
Programs	\$ 27,523
Office Expenses	\$ 22,181
General and Plant Services	\$ 229,857
Other	\$ 20,625
Total Expenses	\$ 735,640
Excess Receipts over (under)Expenses	\$ (88,558)

Prayer List

Coco Anderson, Barbara Beach, Cammie Belue, Janet Clarke, Donna Masso Cook, Jamie Crawford, Sherry Coats, Sallie Connell, Edith Cox, Rhen Druhan, Chrisy Ennen, Ruth Fitzgerald, Mary Lee Franks Sheryne Massa Glicksman, Dean Graves, Gwen Greer, Ann Hafner, Bill Harris, Jackie Martin Haskew, Lauren Henson, Linda Langston, Bill Layfield, Steve Ledbetter, Kay Korb, Lynn Martin, Marilyn Michel, Margaret Miller, Betty Minto, Robert Modica, Mary Owen, Janie Sims, Margie Spaulding, Pat Stoll, Carol Sumrall, Gayle Underwood, J.P. Van Hook, Johnny Walton, Babs Warren, Ann Wilson, Andy Wharton, Ronnie Wright and all our military members: Susanna Hedrick, Ashton Rubio, Stuart Rubio.

December 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2 AA
3 Worship - Cantata	4 Outreach	5 Committees	6 PWCT Chancel Choir Spring Hill Ringers Al Anon	7	8	9 AdventFest AA
10 Worship	11	12 Session Diaconate	13 Day Circle Chancel Choir Night Circle Al Anon	14	15	16 AA
17 Worship Lessons & Carol Reception for Dr. Cary Speaker	18	19	20 Congregational Care Chancel Choir Al Anon	21	22	23 AA
24 Worship 10:30 Family Candlelight Worship @ 4:00	25 Christmas Holiday 	26 Office is closed	27 Al Anon	28	29	30 AA
31 Worship						

January 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Office closed 	2	3 PWCT AlAnon	4	5	6 Youth Lock-in AA
7 Worship- Installation of Officers	8 MSC	9 MSC Committees	10 Day Circle Night Circle Chancel Choir AlAnon	11	12	13 AA
14 Worship Sweets & Signing (PW)	15 MSC Office closed	16 MSC Session Diaconate	17 Congregation- al Care Chancel Choir AlAnon	18	19 	20 AA
21 Worship Communion Youth Singers	22 MSC	23 MSC	24 Chancel Choir Spring Hill Ringers AlAnon	25 Newsletter Deadline	26	27 AA
28 Worship Youth Singers	29 MSC	30 MSC	31 Chancel Choir Spring Hill Ringers AlAnon			