



JUBILATION

Merry Christmas!

December 2021

Legacy

would take place at First Presbyterian Church on August 12, 1950. Her parents were charter members of North Kannapolis Baptist Church, so her decision to marry at Don's home church – a choice she describes as the first example of “submitting” to her husband – was not an easy one. Having become a Christian and been baptized around 11 or 12 years of age, 1950 is also the year she and Don rededicated their lives to Christ. They followed Don's motto: “whatever and wherever” the Lord would have them be, they wanted to serve.

Iris Efird met “some of the sweetest and dearest Christians [she'd] ever known” when she agreed that her wedding to Don Efird, Sr.



Married 71 years before Don's passing, Iris learned early on that Christ had to be a partner in their marriage. She recounts one morning when she was upset at Don, angry that “men always think they have to have their way.” Once he left the house, she went to her Bible, and did something she rarely did – she opened it randomly, attempting to find a verse that would vindicate her. Instead, she found Genesis 3:16, which read, in part: “thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.” (KJV) Not liking that message, she flipped again, landing on Romans 9:20: “Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?” (KJV) Having been “rebuked” twice, she accepted God's Word and asked both Him and Don to forgive her. She understands that it would be foolish to think everyone would be of like mind all the time. After all, she adds, “If everyone was like me, it would be a dull, dreary world.”

Soon, after their marriage, Iris herself became a member of First Presbyterian. She was almost immediately asked to act as an advisor to the Youth, which included the likes of Tony Sherrill, Bob and Shirley Faust, and Jean Bost. When Don joined the Gideons in 1954, she was “involved from day one.” And even though she had just stepped down as chairperson of the Women's Council, in 1961 she agreed to help launch the now-iconic tradition of “The Last Supper” presentation.

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CELEBRATE



The First Presbyterian Women's Council hosted a Fall Lunch Gathering on October 2nd. Ladies enjoyed a lunch on the patio and had fun with Kay Yates' handbell exercise. Attendees were inspired by Roxanne Spencer's reflection on the story of Esther.



The Men's Fellowship enjoyed a cookout on October 7th, with a time of devotion led by Pastor Eddie. Their next gathering will take place in January. Bring a friend and join them!



First Pres had a great team of walkers for the CROP WALK on October 10th. 38 individuals walked, and our church team raised \$1,160 in donations to combat hunger.



Thanks to all those who worked to clean and beautify our church buildings and grounds! Teams worked on Oct. 23rd and 30th trimming shrubbery, weeding flower beds, and pressure washing; as well as cleaning, polishing, and organizing in the Narthex, Sanctuary, and Fellowship Hall. Look for more opportunities to help in the coming months!



We praise God for beautiful weather and a great turnout at our Fall Fun Fair!

All ages enjoyed delicious food and treats, fun games and challenges, and inspiring music from The Efird Family. A huge THANK YOU to all who helped set-up, assist with games, serve, and clean-up!



Youth and their families

enjoyed a time of fun and inspiration at Wake Forest University's Church Day!



First Presbyterian Church is blessed to officially welcome Pastor Eddie and Roxanne Spencer!

Eddie was installed as Pastor during an evening service on Sunday, November 7th. A reception in the Spencers' honor was held immediately following the service in our Fellowship Hall.



We Love Shoeboxes!!!

Your generosity helped us reach our goal of 400 boxes packed for children around the world. We are so grateful to all who donated, shopped, organized, and packed! We blessed our shoebox collection on Sunday, November 14th during the worship service. Please continue to pray for our boxes and the children whom God has already chosen to receive them!!!



Craft Night for Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes

yielded 300 lovingly-decorated drawstring bags!

We met our Goal! We were able to pack 300 shoeboxes during our packing party on November 10th. 17 boxes were packed by members of our congregation, while 83 boxes were built online. We'll let you know where our boxes travel!



UPCOMING

The First Presbyterian Giving Tree will be placed in the Narthex beginning Sunday, November 28th. This year, the Missions Team has chosen Kannapolis City Schools and Missionaries Don and Martha Wehmeyer as our recipients. Please take a gift tag from the tree and return your donation by Sunday, December 26th.



The Youth of First Presbyterian will present their Christmas musical, "A Tree Lot Christmas:

Joining Jesus' Family Tree," on Sunday, December 5 at 6:30p.m. in the Sanctuary. Dinner (ham, mashed potatoes, green beans, and a roll) will be served in the Fellowship Hall at 5:30p.m. on a donation basis. Invite your friends and family to join us as our youth lead us to reflect on the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ! Please RSVP using the form in the bulletin or to Ryan Walker.

Join First Presbyterian for the Kannapolis Christmas Parade

on Saturday, December 11 at 6:00pm! This year, our church will sponsor a float themed " 'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus!" Children and youth are invited to ride or walk with us. Volunteers are also needed to staff a hot chocolate / cotton candy stand on our front patio the night of the parade. See Lynn and Shannon Sechler to help with the float, or Roxanne Spencer to help with the church stand.



On Sunday, December 19th, you are invited to go Christmas Caroling with First Pres! We will visit area shut-ins and spread a little Christmas joy with song. Meet at the church at 5:00pm if you would like to participate.



Our Candlelight Christmas Eve Service will be held on Friday, December 24th at 5:00p.m. A special love offering will be collected to benefit the Hamilton Family's fundraising efforts for Greater Europe Mission.



What's Happening in Music Ministry?

ADVENT MUSIC

There is wonderful worship music planned for this advent season! Mark your calendars and invite your friends, relatives and neighbors to these upcoming services!

- The Chancel Choir will be back to sing praises to our God and king!
- Handbells will ring on December 19 and December 24.
- On December 5, a professional string trio will accompany our worship music and guest soloist, Sarah Ann Burke.
- The Men's Ensemble will bring their harmonies back together on December 12, December 19, and December 24.

LESSONS AND CAROLS

Lessons and Carols will be presented as two beautiful services this year. On Sunday morning, December 19, the Old Testament lessons will point us to our need for Christ. And on Christmas Eve, Friday, December 24, the lessons will tell the story of the birth of our Lord Jesus.

HANDBELLS

- The Alleluia Ringers played Glorioso and A Mighty Fortress is Our God beautifully on Reformation Sunday, and are now preparing inspirational songs for Advent worship services.
- Handbell members will attend the annual Bell Tower Ringers Handbell Festival on Saturday, March 19, 2022, in Salisbury.
- Alleluia Ringers is an intergenerational group open to anyone, and so far, we are a group of 13! Come join us on Wednesdays at 6:30 pm!

CHANCEL CHOIR

- Chancel choir recruiting began Oct. 31, and 18 folks have already signed-up!
- 7 members are brand new to the choir!
- The choir is intergenerational and will meet at 9:00 am on Sunday mornings. Come join us!
- Christmas Caroling to homebound members is December 19! This will be an evening of fun and fellowship, so invite a friend to join you!

Christmas Surprise

One of the joys of Christmas is the experience of surprise. This is why we keep secrets, switch names on presents, surreptitiously exchange gifts, and set our iPhone cameras to capture the joy and surprise of opening gifts. Maybe the joy of Christmas surprises originates in the surprising joy of the historical Christmas story.

The first historical surprise of Christmas is the arrival. The eternal Son of God was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of a young Jewish virgin betrothed, but not officially married to, a carpenter named Joseph. His birth took place in a cave likely attended by more animals than people. The announcement of the birth of the Savior of the world was declared to unnamed shepherders, renowned for telling far-fetched stories, and later to a group of traveling Magi, probably Zoroastrian priests and astrologers from Persia.

Amazingly, the shocking details reveal His grace and our joy. God became incarnate - fully God and fully human, to redeem people like us from our sin. Sent from heaven to earth to be among us, not above us, Christ is Immanuel, God with us, God as us. To cease wonderment in the peerless details of the Christmas story is the cessation of its spiritual joy and power in us.

The second historical surprise is Christ's common background. He had a common name, Jesus, or Joshua. He was born in a cold, coarse cave in a small town. After an extraordinary escape from the megalomaniac King Herod and a stay in Egypt as a refugee child, his family returned to Nazareth. He was raised by ordinary earthly parents, Mary and Joseph, in an ordinary Jewish home.

In a world where body-image is an idol and a multi-billion dollar industry, many have imagined Jesus as a strong and handsome man. The only physical picture is what prophecy reveals, and it is not impressive: *"He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to Him, nothing in His appearance that we should desire Him"* (Is. 53:2).

In a world where money is everything, the financial net worth of Jesus is easily discerned in his own descriptive words, *"Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay His head."* (Luke 9:58), The Lord Jesus, sent from heaven, our beautiful Savior, the Craftsman at His Father's side in creation (Col. 1:16), able to turn water into wine and make a few pieces of bread and fish into a banquet feast, voluntarily chose poverty. *"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich."* (II Cor. 8:9)

The third historical surprise were Christ's followers. John the Baptist, Jesus' P.R. guy, was a social misfit; a hell and brimstone preacher of righteousness who ate grasshoppers. His follow-up team was comprised of an impulsive fisherman, two guys whose nicknames were "Sons of Thunder," a Jewish zealot with a proclivity for violence, a man who betrayed his people to make easy money as a tax-collecting agent of the Roman government, seven unimpressive apostles, and other women and men who followed Him. This is the group Jesus called to lead His world-changing Kingdom movement. And the greatest surprise is King Jesus still calls frail, fickle, flawed people like you and me.

The greatest historical surprise of Christmas is the story. The angel announced the story. *"...I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ, the Lord."* (Luke 2:10-11) The eternal Son of God was conceived in the womb of the virgin teenager, born in the town of Bethlehem, escaped as a refugee baby to the region of Egypt was raised in the village of Nazareth, commenced a public ministry in the region of Galilee, was destined for a cross outside the city gates of Jerusalem, and raised from the dead for our salvation. The most surprising story in human history is Good News of eternal joy for all who believe.

This Advent and Christmas season, I pray we will experience the surprising joy of Christ!

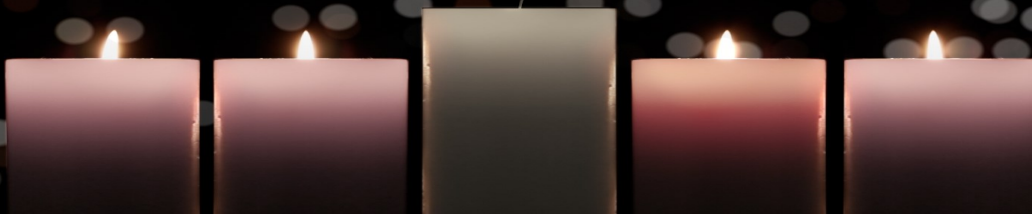
"Joy to the world!

The Lord is come

Let earth receive her King!

Let every heart prepare Him room

And heaven, and nature sing"



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

1	George Maxwell
6	Barbara Hancock
7	Peggy Snider
7	Chance Williams
8	Hudson Craft
10	August Williams
15	Irene Davis
16	Sharon Cranford
16	George Linn
18	Becky Seaford
19	Lily Efird
19	Lynn Sechler Jr.
19	Bill Stricker
27	Katie Satterfield

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

1	Emily Griggs
3	Judy Goodnight
4	Randy Whitley
6	Hank Cranford Jr.
6	Ronald Lisenby
9	Buster Petty Jr.
10	William Baker
13	Susan Baker
19	Karen Pless
24	Debra Dandro
24	Erica Efird
25	Christy Heintz
27	Andrew Baker
27	Peggy Gibson
28	Lindsay Leece
30	Tracy Caskey
30	Eddie Spencer
31	Amelia Caskey
31	Richard Roberts

DECEMBER & JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

12/9	Dawn & Tom Cavin
12/24	Jean & John Bost
12/26	Donna & Randy Whitley
12/30	Lynn & Lee Efird
1/29	Judy & Steve Goodnight

Continued from cover page.

Iris grew at First Presbyterian spiritually because of its members and its leadership. She is grateful for the fellowship of members whom “you can depend on” in a time of need, members that “love the Lord and the people.” Her desire is that First Presbyterian “remain true to the Word,” in the likeness of Proverbs 3:5-6:

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” (KJV)

Iris sums up these verses with the wisdom “trust and obey,” a truth she had to cling to after the passing of her daughter, Iris Anne, at a young age. When cautioned by another not to question God, Iris insisted she absolutely could question God, because “He has the answers and I don’t.” Then and now, she relies heavily on another of God’s blessings – her family – to meet her needs and sympathize. Anytime Iris feels sorry for herself, she counts her blessings, especially her children and the spouses they have brought into the family through marriage; marriages that “only God could [have been] the One to put together.”

Iris is still a fan of Wake Forest University, Don’s alma mater, and still wears his class ring. She jokes that someone else can have it when she dies. But the ring won’t be her only legacy. Recounting her time at First Presbyterian, she points out that the women’s circles of the Church didn’t just start “The Last Supper.” They were active in Bible study and the work of the Presbyterian mission, like caring for orphans in Barium Springs and Banner Elk. And for all the talk about her accomplishments and leadership at First Presbyterian Church, Iris is adamant: “I don’t really care that people know about me....I care that they know about Jesus.” God has shown His faithfulness to Iris in “too many ways” to count. She has been blessed with His guidance, His will, and the willingness she and Don had to follow. And no matter the circumstance, there was always “spiritual help” available from friends. “He has a purpose for our lives,” she says, and points out, “it’s amazing how God can work if we let Him.” What a legacy, indeed!





Poinsettias

are available for purchase from November 21 through December 5. 6 1/2" Pots With Bows are \$12 each. **Deadline to purchase is December 5.** Plants will be placed in the Sanctuary from Sunday, December 12 through Sunday, December 26th, and may be given in honor or in memory of a loved one.

Please fill out the form in the bulletin or contact the church office to purchase.

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