



# CHURCH CHAT

Butner Presbyterian Church

Pastors: Brian Stratton, Dewey Cassell

JANUARY 2025



## A Message From Dewey

Happy New Year!

I confess I have never been a big party person, even when I was younger. I have always sort of envied those people who would go to dinners or parties to celebrate the New Year. We did go to First Night Raleigh to ring in the year 2000, but that was the exception to the rule. These days, I might well just opt for an early bedtime rather than stay up to see the ball drop at midnight, trusting that the new year will come, whether I see it happen or not.

A lot of people really look forward to New Years. It is an opportunity to kiss the past year goodbye – particularly if it was a difficult one - and welcome the new year with the hope of better days ahead. The closing of one chapter and opening of a new one, if you will. Historically, cartoons have depicted the changeover as a withered old man yielding to a bright new baby. Literally, out with the old and in with the new.

On the one hand, the choice of January as the beginning of a new year seems arbitrary, codified largely because of hundreds of years of tradition. And yet most everything we do, including paying our taxes, is based on that tradition. In many respects, the Presbyterian Church follows that same tradition, from making pledges to electing Elders.

The one exception would be the Revised Common Lectionary that we follow for the scripture passages we preach from each week. The Lectionary year begins with Advent, several weeks before the beginning of the calendar year, but

timed to faithfully recall the events that led to the birth of Christ. (The church year begins with a baby, too.) The Lectionary passages that follow in the subsequent weeks tell the story of Christ's earthly ministry leading up to his death on the cross and resurrection at Easter. The selection of passages in the Lectionary is not arbitrary. They are very deliberately chosen to have us read a broad cross-section of the Bible over the course of a year. It is a way to learn something new, something that may help us in our daily lives, while studying something old. It is a way of exposing us more fully to the wisdom of God.

For a lot of people, another tradition is to start out the new year with resolutions, goals to help make the new year better than the last one, learning from the past and applying it to the future. Whether you usually make resolutions yourself or not, I'm going to challenge you to make one for your faith journey.

### **Take the bulletin home.**

Take the bulletin home from Sunday morning and leave it laying out on the counter or dresser or someplace where you will see it. And then when you get a moment during the week, open your Bible and read the passage just before (or just after) our lectionary text. It will only take about five minutes, and it will help you have a better understanding of what happened before (or after) what we talked about on Sunday, expanding your understanding of the stories and parables, and how they can help you have a better day ahead. Think of it as keeping a New Years focus throughout the year.

And I pray your 2025 will be filled with the blessings of God.

~Dewey

# JANUARY Calendar

Wed, 1/1

**HAPPY**  
*New Year*

Sun, 1/5

11 am Communion Worship Service  
Brian Stratton, Michael McFadden

Take down decorations  
After worship service, lunch provided

Mon, 1/6



Sun, 1/12

11:00 am Worship Service  
Brian Stratton, Michelle Osborne

2:00 pm Butner Church Council Meeting  
@ Community Methodist Church

Sat, 1/18

**CHURCH**  
*Clean-up*  
**DAY**



Sun, 1/19

11:00 am Worship Service  
Dewey Cassell, Erma Hudgins

Session Retreat  
In fellowship hall after worship service

Sun, 1/26

11:00 am Worship Service:  
Brian Stratton, Cecil Hudgins

## FOR BETTER OR VERSE

A calendar of Bible verses, one for each day.  
Compiled by Paul Lintern, Joyful Noiseletter

- 1 John 1:1
- 2 Hebrews 1:2
- 3 Acts 1:3
- 4 2 Corinthians 1:4
- 5 James 1:5
- 6 Philippians 1:6
- 7 Romans 1:7
- 8 Revelation 1:8
- 9 Colossians 1:9
- 10 2 Peter 1:10
- 11 2 Thess. 1:11
- 12 Galatians 1:12
- 13 Luke 1:13
- 14 John 1:14
- 15 Romans 1:15
- 16 I Timothy 1:16
- 17 Matthew 1:17
- 18 Ephesians 1:18
- 19 James 1:19
- 20 2 Corinthians 1:20
- 21 Matthew 1:21
- 22 I Peter 1:22
- 23 John 1:23
- 24 I Corinthians 1:24
- 25 Philemon 1:25
- 26 Acts 1:26
- 27 James 1:27
- 28 Luke 1:28
- 29 John 1:29
- 30 Isaiah 1:30
- 31 I Corinthians 1:31



## *Romping with the Pre-K*

I am so grateful for all the support we have received from the church. Our Christmas program went so smoothly this year thanks to Cecil, and a parent commented how much they loved the ability to live stream so grandparents could watch as well. They said it was perfect, they could hear and see all of it!

Erma, Donald and Nancy did a great job of making sure cookies and milk ran smoothly in the fellowship hall after the program.

The students worked so hard, practicing since Thanksgiving, and again, despite several last minute illnesses running through the classroom, they pulled it all together and were adorable as ever up there on stage!

The preschool is on winter break until Jan 6th. We will have a field trip to Pump it Up in Brier Creek that day, and return to normal classes on Tuesday, Jan 7th. We start back with the letter L and ladybugs.

We will learn about how God made each one of us special and unique for letter M week, and one of my favorite themes, Outer Space, will happen the week of the 19th. We are off Jan 20th in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, but will have astronaut camp set up in the fellowship hall for the rest of that week. We will close out the month learning about owls and groundhogs for letter O.

We have a PRTO meeting scheduled for Thursday, Jan 30th in the fellowship hall. It's hard to believe the school year is almost half over!

Thank you again to the church for our generous gift cards for Christmas. We look forward to some time off with family and friends and celebrating the greatest gift of all, Jesus Christ!

Blessings, Susan Zink

Pastors Dewey Cassell (seated, left) and Brian Stratton (seated, right) are surrounded by some of the congregation of Butner Presbyterian Church on December 29th. The congregation was blessed with friends and family as well as special music during worship service.

The service was followed by a Christmas fellowship luncheon that was very fun and the food was delicious.



# Church News

## CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

A brief congregational meeting was held on Sunday, December 29th after worship services. The Session Nomination Committee announced that both Michael McFadden and Michelle Osborne had completed their terms and were both willing to serve again. The congregation voted and approved. Thanks to both Michael and Michelle for their willingness to serve on session again.

## ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON AND WHITE ELEPHANT GIFT EXCHANGE

The annual Christmas luncheon took place after worship on December 29th. It was a large crowd of 17 people who enjoyed an afternoon of fellowship, food, pastor recognition, fun, and a white elephant gift exchange.

## TRUE NORTH FELLOWSHIP

Our renters, True North Fellowship, has dissolved and will no longer rent space from us on Saturday nights. The pastor, Brandon Rhodes, has taken a position as a hospital chaplain in the Tampa, Florida area. We will miss them!

## TAKE DOWN DECORATIONS

We will be taking down decorations after worship service on Sunday, January 5. Pizza will be provided.

## SESSION MEMBERS

The annual session retreat will be held after worship service on January 19th in the fellowship hall. This is a time of church planning for the year.

For session members - please take the time to review the Presbytery's amendments to the Book of Order. The vote to approve will be held on 2/22/25.

## BUTNER FOOD PANTRY

Thirty families received Thanksgiving dinners and forty-two needy families received Christmas gifts from the Angel Tree program.

The Pantry has received its first installment of United Way funding and is currently awaiting approval from the NC Food Bank in order to begin purchasing food from them instead of paying retail prices in local grocery stores.

## ACIM

ACIM is once again receiving frozen meats and other frozen food items and they are sharing their bounty with the Butner Pantry.

Our church goes to ACIM to help pack boxes of food on the first Sunday of each month, however, we will not be going in January. We will instead be taking down our decorations after worship service.

## BUILDING AND GROUNDS

### Church Cleaning

Our next church clean-up day will be Saturday, January 18th at 9:30am. Please consider helping keep our church clean and beautiful.

We currently have housekeepers who clean once per quarter and we are considering other housekeeping options. If you have any suggestions, please talk to Cecil.

### Doors

The Pre-K's back door is in need of repair and the side door, facing D Street needs replacing. We are currently waiting to receive quotes from Kyle Glenn.

## From the Editor



### NEW BEGINNINGS

The Christmas season is over and I'm sure everyone's decorations are coming down and being put away. Michael is putting away his Santa suit and the church will be taking down decorations on January 5th. In the church year (which begins with Advent), we are now making our way from the manger to the cross and I do love the Jesus stories and lessons.

As we went through the Advent season with much hope and expectation, we should approach the new year in the same way. This is a good time to work on maturing our faith. In Dewey's message on page 1, he said that we should take the bulletin home and read scripture just before and just after the lectionary texts. I also say to take home the bulletin, except I would like to challenge you to review the prayer list and spend time in prayer for the people on the list. If you think about it, that's part of "being the light", as we are spending time for the benefit of others. Thinking outwardly, not inwardly. Being a blessing to someone else.

I keep my prayer list on my iPad and I talk to God in the quietness of the mornings with my first cup of coffee. When you have your prayers in print, first of all, you never forget one and secondly, you recognize when a prayer has been answered. Which of course, should prompt you to spend a little time being thankful. This naturally encourages you to make time to pray as you consistently see results. I've had several answered prayers this year, in which I am overwhelmingly thankful. I've also had several unanswered, but I know God is working His plan in response to my prayers and I have to be patient (not one of my virtues). Maybe during Lent,

we should consider coming together as a church for prayer sessions. Let me know if you are interested.

Additionally, I am starting a new feature in Church Chat called For Better or Verse (see page 2). You will find a Bible verse for each day of the month and I challenge you to read that verse each day.

As we work on our walk in Christ with regularly reading scripture and praying, this is also a good time to let go of hurt and anger and focus on showing love to other people. That's probably a little more difficult to do, but as Christians, that is exactly what we are instructed to do. We need to add to our prayer list for the Lord to give us strength and His wisdom!

What will the new year bring us? Heaven only knows. In Jesus, we can approach ALL things in joy knowing that He is in control of all things and he hears our prayers.

May the Lord continually send you to those who need you and to those whom you need.

Happy New Year!  
~Erma



### THE MOOD OF CHRISTMAS



*by Howard Thurman*

When the song of the angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the kings and princes are home,  
When the shepherds are back with their flock,

**The work of Christmas begins:**  
To find the lost, to heal the broken,  
To feed the hungry, to release the prisoner,  
To rebuild the nations, to bring peace among  
people, to make music in the heart.

## THE MOST POPULAR DEMON

The devil appeared to three Pastors and said to them: "If I gave you the power to change something in the past, what would you change?"

The first of them, with great apostolic fervor, replied: "I would like to prevent you from leading Adam and Eve to sin, so that humanity does not separate from God."

The second, a man full of mercy, said to him: "I will prevent you from straying from God and condemning you forever."

The third of them was the simplest and instead of answering the tempter, he knelt down, bowed his head and prayed: "Lord, deliver me from the temptation of what might have been and what was not."

The demon, screaming and trembling with pain, fled.

The other two were surprised and said to him: "Brother, why did you react like this?"

And he answered them: "First, we should never talk to the enemy."

"Secondly, no one in the world has the power to change the past."

"Thirdly, Satan's interest was not to prove our virtue, but to trap us in the past, so that we neglect the present, the only time God gives us His grace and we can cooperate with Him to fulfill His will."

Of all the demons, the one that most holds men back and prevents them from being happy is "what could have been and was not." The past is left to the mercy of God and the future to His providence. Only the present is in our hands. Live today loving God with all your heart.

## Words to Start the New Year

"To leave the old with a burst of song,  
To recall the right and forgive the wrong;  
To forget the thing that binds you fast  
To the vain regrets of the year that's past;  
To have the strength to let go your hold  
Of the not-worthwhile of the days grown old;  
To dare go forth with a purpose true  
To the unknown task of the world that's new;  
To help your brother along the road  
To do his work and to lift his load;  
To add your gift to the world's good cheer,  
Is to have and to give a Happy New Year."

~Robert Brewster Beattie  
*Via Burdetta Huff*



**"And do you, Charles, promise to love, honor, and cherish Susan even during Super Bowl Sunday?"**

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# Do You Know Your Hymns?

Dentist's Hymn .....	Crown Him with Many Crowns
Weatherman's Hymn .....	There Shall Be Showers of Blessings
Contractor's Hymn .....	The Church's One Foundation
Tailor's Hymn .....	Holy, Holy, Holy
Golfer's Hymn .....	There's a Green Hill Far Away
Politician's Hymn .....	Standing on the Promises
Optometrist's Hymn .....	Open My Eyes That I May See
IRS Agent's Hymn .....	I Surrender All
Gossip's Hymn .....	Pass It On
Electrician's Hymn .....	Send The Light
Shopper's Hymn .....	Sweet Bye and Bye
Realtor's Hymn .....	I've Got a Mansion, Over the Hilltop
Massage Therapist's Hymn .....	He Touched Me

**AND for those who speed on the highway:**

55 mph .....	God Will Take Care of You
75 mph .....	Nearer My God to Thee
85 mph .....	This World is Not My Home
95 mph .....	Lord, I'm Coming Home
100 mph .....	Precious Memories

*Give me a sense of humor, Lord, give me the grace to see a joke,  
to get some humor out of life and pass it on to other folks.*