

PULASKI HEIGHTS HERALD

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2019 EDITION

*“Again Jesus spoke to them, saying,
 “I am the light of the world.
 Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness
 But will have the life of life.”
 John 8:12*

Winter Weather Policy

If, in the event of inclement weather this year, the decision should be made not to open the church, we will do four things: we will notify each of the local television stations for postings on their respective winter closings broadcasts; we will modify the message on the church voice mail system to indicate that we won't be open; we will e-mail all of our members; and we will put an announcement on our FaceBook page. So, if you need into the church on an icy or snowy winter's day, please call first and/or check the local television broadcasts of winter closings.

Presbytery of Arkansas

The 140th Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Arkansas will start on Friday, March 1 and go through Saturday, March 2. This meeting will be at University of the Ozarks in Clarksville.



A Word From Ruskin

In the New Testament letter to the Ephesians, we read that the incarnation of God in Jesus happened as part of God's plan to redeem all creation. The good news, we read, is that even before the beginning of time, God chose us as God's own, and the miracle of Christmas is part of God's plan to unite and reconcile us all in Christ in the end.

Of course, when we read the Bible, we are engaged in interpretation. What we hear God saying through scripture depends in part on how we interpret the words we read. Consider, for example, Jesus's proclamation of the kingdom of God. Some biblical passages sound as if God's kingdom is a realm beyond this world; others sound as if it is something that is within this world. Some passages sound as if the kingdom of God is something God is going to make happen in the future;

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others sound as if it is something that already has arrived and is among us even now. What we hear in the phrase, “the kingdom of God,” will depend on how we interpret various passages of scripture.

Also, in our interpretation of scripture, we Christians don’t give equal weight to all Bible verses. For example, we give a different weight to the verse, “For freedom Christ has set us free,” than to the verses, “Greet one another with a holy kiss,” or “Take a little wine for the sake of your stomach.” Moreover, we have a tendency to give more weight to passages that suit our existing concerns, and less to those that run counter to them. For example, if we’re especially concerned with the preservation of law and order in our community, we tend to focus on passages that emphasize obedience to the authorities who rule over us. And if we’re especially concerned to promote social change, we tend to focus on passages that challenge ruling institutions and conventions. Both sorts of passages are in the Bible, and we must find responsible ways of interpreting them as part of the whole of scripture.

Much present-day interpretation of the Bible shies away from the kind of claim that, it seems to me, is being made in the letter to the Ephesians. One is more likely nowadays to hear people emphasizing lasting distinctions such as Christian versus non-Christian, born-again Christians versus not-born-again Christians, the saved versus the unsaved, and so on. Yet, in noting that God chose us for heavenly blessings before we were born, and that it is God’s plan to one day bring together in unity and peace everything God has created, the letter to the Ephesians suggests that such distinctions are destined to become meaningless, since it is God’s gracious intention that, one day, all God’s creatures shall be at peace with God and one another.

It also can be put this way: Much present-day interpretation is focused on our need to do certain things in this life, in order to obtain God’s heavenly favor. Some claim we must join a certain church; some that we must affirm certain beliefs in our heart without reservation; some that we must perform specific acts of commitment with our life. Yet, what we read in Ephesians is this: Long before you and I were born, God already made a decision about our relationship with God, and there is nothing we can do now to change that.

The latter is as pure a statement as you can get, that salvation is by grace alone: God owes God’s favor to no one, and no one can do anything to earn it, for God’s decision about us was freely decided before we were even born. And, yet, that very thought can make us nervous. First, if there’s really nothing we can do about it, how can we ever be sure that God has decided for us and not against us? Secondly, if God already has decided our future, why should we need to be involved in the work and worship of the church in this life?

Consider, however, two things: First, the God who’s doing the deciding here, is the God who has reached out to us through Jesus to declare God’s redeeming grace, love, mercy, forgiveness, and compassion for all humanity. Would such a God ever really give up on working to redeem one of God’s own needy children? Secondly, the church isn’t here to give us a way to affect what God thinks of us. The church is here to give us a place and way to learn and share with others the life and the light that shine into the world through Jesus. Participation in the church is not a way of controlling God’s view of us. It’s a way of learning to see ourselves and to help others to see themselves through the lens of God’s desire and intention that peace with God and with one another shall be our end. That, I believe, is the heart of the gospel that, as the Christmas angel put it, is good news for all the people. It also is good reason to let involvement in Christ’s church shape and guide the brief but precious time that we’ve been given here on God’s good earth.

Ordination/Installation of New Elders

On Baptism of the Lord Sunday, January 13, John Frets and David Harper will be ordained and installed as ruling elders for the PCUSA in the class of 2021. LaWanda Harris and Anne McSwain, who previously have been ordained as ruling elders, will be installed into the class of 2021. At that time, ruling elders Nancy Bateman, Bobbie Nixon, and Jana Speck will rotate out of active service as ruling elders. A heartfelt thanks goes out to Nancy, Bobbie, and Jana for the important contributions each has made to our work as a session, during their past six years of active service as ruling elders.

Lunch Bunch

The Lunch Bunch gathers at 11:15 a.m., the first Thursday of each month, to eat together in a local restaurant of the host or hostess's choice. All are welcome to come be part of this fellowship time. The next Lunch Bunch will meet on Thursday, January 3. Jane Anne Spikes is our host and she has chosen Homer's West at 9700 Rodney Parham. Please contact Jane Anne at 663-8361 with your reservation. We will meet at the restaurant at 11:15am. If you would like to caravan from the church, we will leave from the church at 10:50. Please call the church office so no one will be left behind.

As of the printing of the newsletter, we have no host/hostess for the month of February. If you would like to host the Lunch Bunch in February, please contact the church office. Watch the announcements in the Sunday bulletin for further information.

Friday Bible Study

The winter/spring session of Friday Bible Study will begin on Friday, January 11. Dr. David Dyer is teaching. This session is on The Gospel According to Matthew. It is always a delight to have Dr. Dyer teach. Come at 9:30 a.m. for refreshments and fellowship, with lesson from 10:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. Bring a friend and join the Friday Bible Study.

Annual Meeting & Potluck/Fellowship Meal

The session has called for the Annual Meeting of our congregation to be held following worship on Sunday, January 27, in conjunction with that day's fellowship meal. At this meeting, we will hear session reports regarding the year gone by and prospects for the year ahead; we will vote on the financial compensation paid to our minister; and the floor will be open for members to share insights and/or raise questions regarding any and all aspects of our life and work together as a church. All are encouraged to be in attendance. Visitors are welcome to join us too!

Reaching Our Church Staff

Regular church office hours are Mondays through Fridays, 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The office phone is 663-8361. If you call during regular office hours and we are either temporarily away from the office or already on the telephone, you will get the voice mail. Please leave a message and we will return your call. Now that you know how and when and where to reach our church staff, *do stay in touch!*

Church Office Closings, 2019

The church office will be closed the following dates between now and year's end:

Tuesday, January 1,	New Year's Day
Monday, January 21,	Martin Luther King, Jr.
Monday, February 18,	President's Day
Monday, May 27,	Memorial Day
Thursday, July 4,	Independence Day
Monday, September 2,	Labor Day
Thursday & Friday, November 28 & 29,	Thanksgiving
Wednesday & Thursday, December 25 & 26,	Christmas

The PHPC Choir

The choir practices from 7:15 p.m. – 8:15 p.m. on Wednesday evenings and at 10:15 a.m. every Sunday morning in the choir room. If you would like to join our choir, please just show up at the church at the practice time. New choir members are always welcome.

Sunday School

Sunday School meets Sunday mornings from 9:30 to 10:15. Youth meet in the classroom at the end of the downstairs hallway. The adult class meets in the upstairs classroom between the parlor and the choir room.

The youth class teachers are Marian Dyer and LaWanda Harris. The adult class ordinarily is led by Ruskin Falls. On the first Sunday of each month and occasionally on other Sundays, one of the adult class's other participants serves as teacher, leading the class in a discussion of some topic or subject matter of particular interest to him or her. Serving as teachers the next two months are: on January 6: Becky Lewis; and on February 3: Ray Alexander.

Visitors to our Sunday School classes are always welcome. Come check us out!

January Birthdays

Marian Dyer-2
Beulah West-13
Randy Gates-29

Wanda McConnell-11
Frank Plummer-27
Rudy Gates-29

February Birthday

Jane Moore-2 Johnsy Campbell-17
Anna Cole-18 Grace Cole-18
Neal Cole-18 Pam Plummer-26

Food Manger

In the narthex you will find the “Food Manger,” through which we fill our church’s food pantry and strive to help those in our community whose home pantries are too meager for their family’s needs. You are invited, Sundays (or any other day!) to contribute non-perishable goods to this cause. Monetary gifts are also appreciated. Please label your check “food pantry”. Also personal items such as toothpaste, toothbrushes, bar soap, shampoo, deodorant, toilet paper, etc. are needed and appreciated. A suggestion list can be found in the manger or in the church office.

Stewpot

The 3rd Tuesday of every month is Pulaski Heights Presbyterian Church day at Stewpot. For those of you that don’t know what Stewpot is, Stewpot is based out of 1st Presbyterian Church in downtown Little Rock. This is where a hot meal is served at noon Monday through Friday to those that are hungry. Right now, there are 5 from PHPC that cook/serve on our day and we have 7 as our team. Ideally, we need 10-12 on a team. If you would like to volunteer an estimated 3-4 hours on the 3rd Tuesday of every month to feed the hungry, please contact Jane Anne in the church office. We can always use extra hands.

Stated Session Meetings

The stated session meetings are scheduled for the 3rd Sunday of each month, at noon in room 303. The next stated meeting is Sunday, January 20.

*This is a publication of Pulaski Heights Presbyterian Church
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