



First News

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH | WHITESBORO, NY | NOVEMBER 2025

Countless Gifts of Love

In Luke 21, Jesus emphasizes giving from the heart, not as a legalistic expectation from God. “And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury, and He saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites. So He said, ‘Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all; for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had.’” (Luke 21:1-4)

The wealthy in this passage were legally placing their tithe in the offering plate. In Matthew 23:23, Jesus condemned the Pharisees for tithing seeds of mint, dill, and cumin. For every ten little seeds, they placed 10% or a single seed in the offering. It sounds silly. However, some approach the tithe legalistically, demanding

how much a person should give. Jesus never really stated that we had to “tithe 10%,” but he also never said not to adhere to the Old Testament practice. In reality, in this passage of the widow, he focused on giving from the heart and

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~ 2 Corinthians 9:7~*

giving sacrificially. Her gift was the equivalent of \$1.88 today. In her day, this would have been the equivalent of her entire net worth. Truly a sacrificial gift. She responded out of gratitude for God’s provision and God’s love.

Please do not misunderstand the message for today. No one is asked or expected to give their entire net worth. The message is to prayerfully

discern God’s direction for my giving. The message is to respond out of gratitude. In 2 Corinthians 9:7, Paul states, “Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

The above provides guidance for when the church asks for donations. Prayerfully discern God’s direction for when, what, and how much. It is never the same for everyone and may not require a response every time there is an appeal. You and God know your circumstances.

Giving is as much a spiritual discipline as worship, prayer, Bible Study, and Christian Service. As an aside, the only topic Jesus talked about more than money and material

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possessions was the Kingdom of God. When comparing the widow to the wealthy, Jesus is not teaching equal gifts, but equal sacrifice. The response may be a small offering. The response may be a tithe of 10%. The response may be sacrificial well over the tithe.

When the widow gave her net worth, she had faith that God would provide. Never are we to put our life or family at risk with everything we have. That's not the message. But if we believe God calls us to give, and we reply faithfully, we have faith that God will provide.

Over the coming weeks, I will be sharing more about generosity, which entails time, talent, and treasure. I hope you participate as a means of growing in grace and knowledge of our relationship with God!

~ Pastor George



Stewardship '25

4th Quarter Giving:

Your **Third Quarter Giving Statements** are out! As we move into the final months of the year, please remember to complete your **pledge contributions** by December 28th. Your generosity helps sustain the mission and ministries of our church.

If you have any questions about your statement or giving, please **contact the church office**.

Reminder:

The per capita for 2025 is \$46 per member. Your per capita gift plays a crucial role in supporting our shared ministry within the Presbytery and the Presbyterian Church USA. It helps underwrite various initiatives that strengthen our collective mission and impact.

A EASY WAY TO GIVE!

Scan the QR code to contribute to First Presbyterian online. This cashless **Giving Opportunity** is now a convenient way to seamlessly contribute to our ministries. Just scan the code and set up an account to give.



This Thanksgiving!

Dear Friends,

First Presbyterian Church is once again preparing for our annual Thanksgiving Dinner, continuing our tradition of helping friends in need.

This year, we are committed to supporting **Hope House** by providing over 125 meals (up 25% over last year) to ensure a hot meal reaches everyone who needs it. With costs rising this year, we anticipate needing approximately **\$500** to make this possible, and we are focusing on **financial support** and a **smaller volunteer team**.

Our mission remains the same: to offer a full Thanksgiving meal to those in need and to share love and compassion with our community on this special day. This effort is made possible through the generous support of **individuals, businesses, and faith organizations**.

We invite you to consider supporting the 2025 Thanksgiving Dinner—through a **financial contribution**. You can either place in a blue envelope or mail it to the church (mark it “Thanksgiving dinner”)

Thank you for your continued generosity and for helping us make this Thanksgiving a meaningful one for our neighbors.

Sincerely,

Tom | Thanksgiving Dinner Coordinator

GIVE BACK & GIVE THANKS...YOU CAN HELP!



Session Notes!

- Plans are underway to support the upcoming holiday season with opportunities for all congregational members to participate. Watch for more details — **Angel Tree**, and the **holiday services**.
- Thanksgiving Dinner** prepared for Hope House
- Sanctuary Decoration for Christmas** on the 23rd after services
- By motion, passed unanimously, the Session reaffirms its support for the existing, and an expanded Congregational Care Team, led by Mary Wilde and Rev. George Cooper.



GROWING IN GENEROSITY

2 CORINTHIANS 9:7

As we enter November and the Thanksgiving season, we pause to give thanks for all we've received from God's loving hand—and to reflect on how we can respond with gratitude and generosity.

This year's theme, "Growing in Generosity," reminds us that Jesus is the source of life, hope, and joy. At First Presbyterian Church, we are called to follow Him, grow in faith, and serve as He served. Our giving—of time, energy, and financial support—allows our

church to share God's hope and bring new life to our community and world.

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus brought healing, compassion, and transformation. As His followers, we continue that mission—bringing light and renewal to our relationships, families, neighborhoods, and beyond.

During three Sundays in November, our worship services will focus on how we can joyfully and generously give of ourselves to grow God's work among us:

November 9 – John 3:16–21 & 2 Corinthians 8:1–12

Generosity as a Lifestyle

November 16 – Malachi 3:12 & Matthew 6:1–4, 19–24

Evolution of Church Giving

November 23 – Matthew 26:6–13 & 2 Corinthians 9:6–16

Joyful Generosity

*Each of you should give what
you have decided in your
heart to give, not reluctantly
or under compulsion, for God
loves a cheerful giver.
~ 2 Corinthians 9:7~*

We'll celebrate **Commitment Sunday** on **November 23**. During worship, you'll receive an Estimate of Giving Card for 2026. Please prayerfully complete it, seal it in the envelope provided, and place it in the offering plate. If you can't attend that day, call the church office to have one mailed to you.

Your commitment helps us continue to grow in faith, service, and generosity—making a lasting difference in our church, community, and world.

"When we give freely, we reflect the heart of God. My prayer is that together, we will continue to grow in generosity—sharing God's blessings with joy and gratitude."

— Pastor George

Prayer List

We believe in the power of prayer and the peace it brings. If you or someone you know would like to be added to our prayer list, please contact the church office.

- Reid Simpson
- Tom Harrington
- Davis Family
- Capraro Family
- Morris Family
- Glenna Pryor
- Barb Wuest
- Mariana Tata
- Linda Weise
- Judy Westerhoff

Let's join together in faith—supporting one another with love, and heartfelt prayer.

"The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective." — James 5:16

Free Christmas Card Making Class – Join the Fun!

Get into the holiday spirit with a creative and joyful afternoon of **Christmas card making!**

Join us on **Friday, November 22nd, from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM** in the **Fellowship Hall** for a **FREE hands-on class** where you'll make **12 beautiful, handmade Christmas cards** — perfect for sharing God's love and holiday cheer with family and friends.

All materials will be provided — just bring **yourself and a pair of scissors!**

Space is limited, so **reservations are required** to ensure we have plenty of supplies ready for everyone.

Sign up in the church office or call to reserve your spot today!

Come enjoy good company, light refreshments, and the joy of creating something special this Christmas season!



New Congregational Care Team Reorganizing & Reconnecting

Mary Wilde and Pastor George are re-organizing our Congregational Care Team, and we invite you to be part of this meaningful ministry!

Our first meeting will be **Sunday, November 16**, right after worship in the Fellowship Hall. Feel free to bring your coffee and a snack as we gather for planning.

There are many simple but powerful ways to care for others:

- Making phone calls
- Visiting members
- Sending cards
- Organizing, providing or delivering an occasional meal for someone recently home from the hospital.

The team will meet quarterly for just one hour to review needs and coordinate care.

If you'd like to join or learn more, please contact Mary Wilde (315-749-4510) or Pastor George @ Pastor-George1stPres@outlook.com. Together, we can share Christ's love through care and connection.



Craft Connection

Every 3rd Monday of the month November 17th @ 1:30 - 3 pm

Do you enjoy being creative or simply spending time with good company? Then **Craft Connection** is the place for you!

We meet for a relaxing time of crafting, conversation, and connection. Whether you sew/quilt, knit/crochet, scrapbook, paint, or just want to see what others are making, **everyone is welcome!**

Bring your own project or come ready to learn something new. There's always plenty of laughter, inspiration, and maybe even a few snacks to share!

No experience needed — just bring your creativity and a smile.

Come craft, connect, and create with friends each month!

See Betty Cardamone @ abcardamone@verizon.net for all the details.

Calendar of Events

November 6th — Jared Box Pack @ 1 pm

November 11th — Office Closed
Disciple Bible Study

November 15th
Worship Team Mtg. @ 11:15am

November 17th — Craft Connection

November 18th — Disciple Bible Study

November 19th — Session Meeting

November 22nd — Card Making Class

November 23rd — Hanging of the Greens
(after worship)

No Disciple Bible Study —
week of Thanksgiving

November 27th & 28th — Office Closed

November Fun Facts & Blessings!

A Season of Thanks

The word “*thanksgiving*” shows up in the Bible long before the Pilgrims — Psalm 26:7 says, “That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving and tell of all Thy wondrous works.”

Turkey Trouble

At the very first Thanksgiving, there probably wasn’t turkey! Historians say the Pilgrims dined on venison, duck, fish, and corn instead.

A Presidential Proclamation

President Abraham Lincoln made Thanksgiving a national holiday in 1863 — during the Civil War — to remind the nation to give thanks to God.

What’s in a Name?

“November” comes from the Latin *novem*, meaning “nine.” (Yep — it used to be the *ninth* month!)

Sing It Out!

The beloved hymn “*Come, Ye Thankful People, Come*” was written in 1844 as a harvest song. Perfect for humming while counting blessings.

Pumpkin Surprise

Pumpkins aren’t in the Bible — but gourds are! (Check out Jonah 4:6.)

The Countdown Begins

Advent can start as early as November 27 — the beginning of a brand-new church year and the beautiful journey toward Christmas.

Thanksgiving Prayer

Lord, we thank You for the many blessings You have given us. Help us to see Your hand at work in our lives and to share our blessings with others. Amen.



Cards Needed

We are collecting **birthday, thinking of you, and get well cards** to support our church’s year-round outreach! These cards will be used to encourage, uplift, and stay connected with members of our church family throughout the year.

We welcome store-bought or handmade cards, which will be kept on hand and used as needed by our compassionate care teams to bring comfort, joy, and love to those who could use a little extra support.

Drop Off: Basket provided in the Sanctuary

Thank you for helping us share God’s love and strengthen our community!



Last Month's Happenings ...



Cook-In
100 meals &
30 Soups

Trunk or Treat



Last Month's Happenings continued...

Trunk or Treat!





Deadline
December 15th

ANGEL TREE



If you would like to donate the office will shop and wrap a gift for you.

315.732.5111 | questions
fpcutica@gmail.com

Angel Tree 2026: Share the Joy of Christmas with Local Families in Need

This Christmas season, our church will once again participate in the Angel Tree project, a beautiful opportunity to bring joy to children and families in our local community. This year, our focus is on supporting families right here at home, working closely with local agencies to ensure that every gift given directly meets the needs of those in our own neighborhoods.

In the coming weeks, you'll see the Angel Tree going up in our church. Each tag on the tree represents the unique needs and wishes of a child or family, providing a chance to be part of their holiday in a meaningful way. We invite you to take a tag and prayerfully consider what God might have you share with a family in need this Christmas season.

Whether it's a family meal, a cozy sweater, or a thoughtful gift card, every gift is a reminder that they are loved, cared for, and remembered. Please join us as we strive to make this Christmas season brighter for our community, one gift at a time.

First Presbyterian Church presents --

1st Annual

HOLIDAY RAFFLE FUNDRAISER

DRAWING DATE: DECEMBER 21st @ coffee hour

Fundraiser Event

TICKETS:

2 FOR \$5.00

15 FOR \$10.00



First Presbyterian Church | 1 Elm Street, Whitesboro 13492

Holiday Raffle Baskets – Needed!

We're getting ready for our **Holiday Raffle Fundraiser**, and we need your creativity and helping hands!

We're looking for volunteers to donate **created themed baskets** filled with fun, festive, and thoughtful items to raffle off.

Ways to Join In:

- Donate new or themed items for the baskets
- Spread the word and encourage ticket sales!
-

Contact Sue DePasquale @ Sdep53@aol.com to learn more.

Your time and talents will make this fundraiser a wonderful success — and bring a little extra holiday cheer to our church family and community.

*"You have not lived today until you
have done something for someone
who can never repay you."*

- John Bunyan



Not your Average Holiday Concert!

The Mohawk Valley Choral Society
Presents

"The Many Moods of Christmas"

A wide selection of holiday songs and carols
Arranged by

Robert Shaw and Robert Russell Bennet

With a

Symphony Orchestra

Under the direction of

Randy Davis

On Sunday, December 7, 2025

At 3:00 PM

Faro de Luz Seventh Day Adventist Church
(Formerly First Presbyterian Church)

1605 Genesee Street, Utica New York

Admission: \$15.00 in advance

\$18.00 at the door

Seeds of Hope News!

We are excited to share that Hannaford has selected **Seeds of Hope** to benefit from the Fight Hunger Bag Program throughout **November**. The Hannaford Fight Hunger Bag Program makes it easy for shoppers to contribute to their local communities.



Every time a \$2.50 reusable Fight Hunger Bag is purchased at the Hannaford located at **Kellogg Ave, New Hartford** in **November**, \$1 will be donated to **Seeds of Hope**. This is a great way to broaden awareness of our mission and help our cause.

Let's get started! Share the news with friends and family. The more people who purchase a **Fight Hunger Bag in November**, the greater the donation we will receive from Hannaford!



Hanging of the Greens

Sunday, November 23rd after worship

Refreshments will be provided

November Birthdays

In November the following people celebrate their birthdays. If you see them, wish them a happy birthday!

12 Tom Wattles

16 Judy Westerhoff

13 Laurie Tanner

28 Barbara Shuck

14 Lisa LaManque

28 Barbara Wuest

Anniversary

21 John & Alice Putnam

Please excuse all errors, slight omissions, slight mistakes, and oversights.



Christmas Flowers

Order form 2025

Orders will be taken for Memorial Christmas flowers through the church office. You may fill out this order form with monies and place it in the offering plate. You may also return the order form, with your check made payable to "First Presbyterian Church" to:

First Presbyterian Church
1 Elm Street, Whitesboro, NY 13492

Deadline for orders is Sunday, December 7th

6" Poinsettia NUMBER OF PLANTS _____ @ \$11

TOTAL ENCLOSED _____

(Please Print) **GIVEN BY:**

(please circle one) **IN MEMORY** **IN HONOR OF:**

**PLEASE SPECIFY IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE LISTED AS
THE DONOR ON THE LISTING ____ YES ____ NO**



Firstnews



First Presbyterian Church | 1 Elm Street, Whitesboro, NY 13492 | 315.732.5111

"Opening Doors, Minds, and Hearts: Serving Christ and Community."

The Rev. George Cooper | Pastor

E-Mail fpcutica@gmail.com | www.fpcutica.net | Follow us at www.facebook.com/fpcutica

"Give thanks to
the Lord
because he
is good, because
his faithful
love endures
forever."

1 CHRONICLES 16:34

thankful



Looking Ahead...



Join us on
**Christmas
Eve**
24th December

4:30 pm | Children's program, gifts & A special visitor
6:30 pm | Candlelight - Communion

1 Elm Street, Whitesboro, NY
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FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

DETAILS OF THESE SPECIAL SERVICES WILL FOLLOW!