



Empathy, Compassion, Kindness... and Love

As we move into the **Advent and Christmas season**, three words keep coming up for me. Empathy. Compassion. Kindness. And I think they all are important for us to remember this time of year.

Empathy means to do our best to imagine what it must be like or feel like to be in the shoes of another. It means stepping outside of our lived reality and trying to imagine how another person might be going through their daily life. Sometimes that’s easier and sometimes that harder, depending on how alike we are with the other person in question.

Compassion means to literally make the choice to suffer with another. *Com* means ‘with’ and *passion* means suffering. We often hear about Christ’s *passion* during Holy Week. When we choose compassion we are choosing to not only see the suffering of another, but take it on, and help lessen the load.

And **kindness**, well, that should be a given. We never know what someone else is going through and we may not be able to have empathy or compassion, but we can show them kindness. We can make sure that our actions in no way make whatever they are going through worse.

Advent and Christmas are times when as humans we can be at our best and at our worst. We are at our best when we are giving to others, helping others and demonstrating empathy, compassion and kindness – regardless of how the other person treats us. We are at our worst when we simply fail to do any of those things for one reason or another. It may be a very good reason in our minds, but as I’ve said, we never know what anyone else is going through.

This Christmas in particular may be challenging for families who fall on opposite sides of our national political divides. It may be hard to have conversations that don’t end up devolving into hurt feelings or bitterly contentious conflict. But I don’t think it has to be this way. I pray that it can be different. I pray that **while we may not understand one another’s perspective, that we choose kindness.** That perhaps we choose not to discuss topics that are particularly painful and respect one another enough to agree to disagree

in love. Maybe the holidays are not the time to try to convince family or friends of the righteousness of your cause.

A couple of years ago, the Andrews children gave me the banner that hangs on my study door that reads, **“True love was born in a stable.”** I can’t imagine anything more true. Love is the “reason for the season” so to speak so let’s lead with love. Let’s show the world that while our politics may differ, God’s love never fails.

So let’s lead with empathy, compassion and kindness. As we anticipate that birth of love in a stable, let us remember that it is truly by our love that we will be known as Christians. And that our love really is the thing that can make a difference in the world.

Blessings and love,



Join us for Advent/Christmas Worship

December 1
You Are A Blessing

December 15
Do the Good that
is Yours to Do

December 24
Love Knows Your Name

December 8
We Can't Go Alone

December 22
Hope is Worth
the Risk

December 29
Don't Forget to Laugh

WORDS

FOR THE BEGINNING

ADVENT REMINDERS FOR NEW SEASON!

Series begins December 1, 2024 and continues through Epiphany.

Remember! Canned food drive for one of our local partners on each

Communion (1st) Sunday

Please make sure that you bring your food with you to worship. There will be baskets to collect the food in front of the communion table. There are so many in need in our community!

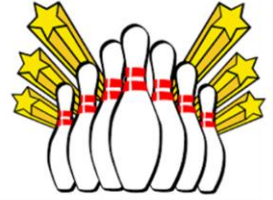
Joyful Noise Club

Bowling Outing

@ Southgate Lanes

December 1st

3:45 pm



2024

Great ADVENTure

O, Little Town of Bethlehem



3:30 pm-5:30 pm

Sunday, December 8, 2024

JCPC Fellowship Hall

Children's

CHRISTMAS PARTY

Saturday, December 14th

11:00 AM-1:00 PM

2024

INTERACTIVE



DECEMBER 15, 2024

10:30 AM



Christmas Open House

at Pastor Jen and Gavin's
(957 Rice Planters Lane, Florence)

on

Sunday

December 15th, 3-5pm
(Drop-in)

All are welcome to come when you can, and stay as long as you like! Want to bring something? Bring a friend!

CANTATA

the light
shines
in the
darkness

Featuring Many JCPC Musicians

Sunday, December 22, 2024



**Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
Tuesday, December 24th at 7pm**

Join us as we bring in the season of Christmas and celebrate the one we call Emmanuel, God with us.

Invite your friends and family to join us.

All are welcome!

You are invited to join with JCPC for a
Service of Lessons and Laughter

Sunday December 29, 2023 at 10:30am.

Join us to hear the lessons and sing the carols and celebrate the joy and playfulness of this season! Readers are needed. If you are planning to attend and want to read, let Pastor Jen know.

All are invited to join in this celebration of the Christmas season.



Jesus taught his followers the importance of prayer, and God longs to change our hearts and our minds through our prayer practice.

If you are not currently on the JCPC prayer email list, please send your email address to janecoker111@gmail.com.

Pastor Jen or Jane Coker send out prayer emails once or twice a week or more frequently when there is an urgent need. Remember, that we pray not so that we can change God's heart, but that we can allow God to change our heart.

Emails come from jcpcprays@gmail.com.



Session Summary

Highlights of the Stated Session Meeting on November 19, 2024

The Session met on Tuesday, November 19, 2024 at 6:00 pm in the Multipurpose room at JCPC. Elders Joe Bittle, Gary Pierce and Betty Anne Smith joined by Zoom. Elders Elect for the Class of 2027 Tom Hoffmeyer and Connie Reel-Shearin were also in attendance. Elder Tom Shearin was approved as Acting Clerk of Session for the meeting.

After opening with prayer, Susan Tedder presented the devotion using the book "Over the Hill - Onto the Mountaintop: Devotions of Hope and Humor" by Louise L. Looney and James N. Watkins. The uplifting devotion was filled with metaphors and bible verses from Proverbs and John throughout and served as a motivation to make the best of our lives.

The eleventh chapter of *Imaginable* was discussed among the Elders. The topic of this chapter was to "Simulate Any Future You Want". The chapter reinforces the evolutionary significance of dreaming to overcome normalcy bias by creating unlikely and at times, bizarre, scenarios. Dreams, though they might not often make any sense, directly influence how we perceive and envision our futures, and are even used in the development of AI programs.

Tom Shearin, Treasurer, reported on current income and expenses and presented the second reading of the 2025 JCPC budget for approval by Session. After lengthy discussion, the 2025 JCPC budget was approved.

The Session approved the appointment of the Endowment Committee members to their respective staggered initial terms starting January 1, 2025.

The Session discussed the need to appoint a committee to develop a plan for the long term use of the vacant land at the back of the church. Myra Horton shared that (with the Session's approval at a prior meeting) she has organized a Playground Committee to develop a plan for a playground area on a portion of the land. Additionally, based on the proposed land usage sketch previously submitted to Session by Margaret Collar, she and the committee are working with a landscaping and playground design professional to develop a proposed plan for the entire vacant area to be presented to Session.

A discussion was begun regarding JCPC's website and social media presence. Further discussion will be held at the December Session meeting.

Plans for Pastor Jen's sabbatical were discussed. There will be a guest preacher on each of the Sundays and the list of guest preachers will be approved by Session. Elders will cover other pastoral care needs.

The meeting was closed with prayer at 7:45 pm.

Submitted by Elder Tom Shearin, Acting Clerk

Serving in December

Date	Elder	Liturgist	Usher/Greeter	Nursery	Counters
Dec 1	Susan Tedder	Tom Hoffmeyer	Beka Andrews Tom Hoffmeyer	Jane Coker Karen Stroemer	Joe Bittle, James Collar, Myra Horton
Communion Prep: Judy & Al Feimster			Communion Servers: Class of 2026		
Dec 8	Thomas Hawkins	Ann Lewis	Jane Thrower	Myra Horton Beth Russell	Margaret Collar, Tom Hawkins, Gary Pierce
Dec 15	Myra Horton	Paula Melbourn	Sheila & Richard Lenz		Ron Rogers, Susan Tedder, Tom Hoffmeyer
Dec 22	Betty Anne Smith	Robin Permenter	Judy & Al Feimster	Karen Pattillo	Kris Andrews, Robin Permenter, Tom Shearin
Dec 24			Debbie Barrett Rita Myers		
Dec 29	Kris Andrews	Karen Pattillo	Emily & Chuck Stonerock	Emily Stonerock Kay Hanson	Al Feimster Tom Hoffmeyer

Treasurer's Report - October 31, 2024

Operating Budget

	Oct-24		2024 Year to Date (YTD)	
	Budgeted	Actual	Budgeted	Actual
Envelope Income	\$ 18,325	\$ 18,621	\$ 183,254	\$ 199,633
Total Income	\$ 18,476	\$ 19,059	\$ 184,754	\$ 205,691
Prior Years Net Surplus	\$ 862	\$ -	\$ 9,621	\$ -
Expenses	\$ 19,338	\$ 17,376	\$ 194,375	\$ 190,113

In October 2024, total revenues exceeded total expenses by \$1,683 with year to date total revenue exceeding year to date expenses by \$15,578.

In October 2024, envelope income was over budget by \$296 and over budget YTD by \$16,379.

Budgeted Prior Years Surplus	\$ 11,345
Total Surplus Used This Month	Oct-24 \$ -
Amount Remaining for Year	\$ 11,345

In order to close out 2024 without using any of the Session approved prior year reserves and PPP funds to offset expenses, in addition to keeping expenses within the 2024 budget level, our average monthly increase in total income for 2024 will need to be approximately 3% over 2023. Compared to October 2023, total income for the month of **October is up 7% and YTD total income is up 8%.**

Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. 1 Peter 4:10
For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Matthew 6:21

MISSION OPPORTUNITIES



The perfect gift.

Through the Christmas Joy Offering, we come together to support past, present and future leaders, embodying God's perfect gift to us, Jesus Christ.

 **CHRISTMAS JOY**
SPECIAL OFFERINGS
LEADERSHIP, PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

DECEMBER 1 – DECEMBER 22

Once again, JCPC will be collecting funds to purchase animals through

Heifer International



These animals are provided to families in the developing world to alleviate poverty, promote self-reliance and ensure that families and communities have access to safe food and reliable income through agriculture.

More information to come!



Once again we will be collecting warm hats, gloves, scarfs, blankets, coats, socks, etc. for

The Parking Lot Ministry

so that we can help our unhoused neighbors stay warm this winter.

The tree will be up throughout the month of December.

To learn more about this important ministry and how you can help, please reach out to anyone on the Evangelism, Outreach and Mission Committee. Distribution will happen in January.

ANGEL TREE 2024

Sign ups will soon be available so that you can be an ANGEL to the child of an incarcerated parent! If you are interested in purchasing or delivering gifts, see Tom Hawkins.



Happy Birthday

David Ardis 12/2

Henry Smith 12/3

Judy Voss 12/4

Richard Chapman 12/13

James Summersett 12/14

Paula Melbourn 12/15

Krista Poulton 12/20

Cassie Holmes 12/22

Gina Stidham 12/29

Thelma Hawkins 12/30

Mary Kathryn McGregor 12/31

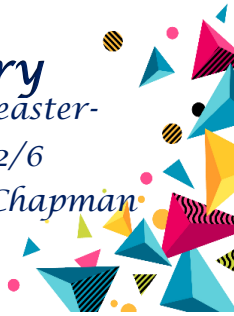
Happy Anniversary

Ken and Steve Feaster-

Eytchison 12/6

Rich and Marilyn Chapman

12/13



NEW ADDRESS FOR:

Anne Witt

% Rob Steadman

205 Howland Avenue

Cary NC 27513

GIFTS RECEIVED

In memory of Dr. Robert W. Miller
Given by Margaret & James Collar,
Johnny, Susan & Alex Nexsen and the
Presbyterian Women of JCPC

In memory of Wylie B. Humphries
given by Kay Hanson

