

# Fincastle Presbyterian Church

F I N A S T L E , V I R G I N I A

## A Message from David

There is a powerful hymn that is very appropriate for the church to sing in this January/February time of year: "In The Bleak Midwinter". The poem/hymn begins:

*"In the bleak mid-winter  
Frosty wind made moan,  
Earth stood hard as iron,  
Water like a stone;  
Snow had fallen, snow on  
snow, Snow on snow,  
In the bleak-mid-winter long  
ago."*

My old professor, Dr. John H. Leith, once wrote that when he first heard the hymn, he did not much care for it, for it seemed too melancholy (especially as a Christmas carol, which it, in fact, had become.) However, upon further reflection, Dr. Leith came to think of the hymn as most definitely a Christmas carol, and one of his favorites to boot! For though the carol

begins with the harsh imagery of "the bleak mid-winter", that imagery reflects accurately the barren and bleak circumstances that can, and often do, come crashing into our lives much like a winter storm can bring the normal flow of life to a stand-still.

But the hymn does not leave us stranded in the bleakness of a frozen landscape. It moves forward.

*"Our God, Heaven cannot hold  
Him, Nor earth sustain;  
Heaven and earth shall flee  
away when He comes to  
reign: In the bleak mid-winter  
A stable-place sufficed The  
Lord God Almighty, Jesus  
Christ."*

Though our world was just as bleak and barren of love and neighborly kindness some two thousand and twenty or so years ago, as it is barren and bleak today, never-the-less Jesus was born on Christmas Day; and through His coming

to our broken and spiritually dark world, the very Light and Life and Word of God came into our world full of grace and truth.

As the New Year begins, we are still facing the barren and bleak circumstances of Covid-19; political and racial disunity; and dangers to our society from within and without. Never-the-less, Jesus Christ is still with us and for us, Jesus Christ the Emmanuel, The "God is with us" man, will see us through "the bleak mid-winter" into the "spring" of the Light and Life of a new life lived in His will and way for us.

May you have the  
Happiest New Year ever!  
David

### Prayer Lists

**Members of FPC:**

Jean Branscom  
Alan Brenner (knee surgery)

Clyde and Nathalie Givens  
Kaki Peaslee  
Evelyn Renshaw (stroke)  
Phyllis Tenser  
Dianne and John Poynor

**Friends and Family of FPC:**

Laura Holt McCann  
Jackie Ferrel

Mary Lee Reese  
Mary Black  
Doug Ross  
Marilyn Koch  
Alexis Porter

Molly Rose  
Gretchen Greiner  
Lisa Curlee  
Marc Evans  
Michael Miracle  
Ronan (4 mo.  
Old)

**Families to remember in our prayers:**

The family of Paul Fitzgerald  
The family of Gwen Griffith



### New Year Resolution

1. Be kind to everyone
2. Cut down on junk food
3. Watch less TV
4. Start exercising
5. Go for a holiday
6. Pray often
7. Be punctual
8. Less daydreaming
9. Learn a new recipe
10. Read more books

### Gentle Goals for a New Year

- Learn something new.
- Tell people you love them.
- Set healthy boundaries.
- Get outside when you can.
- Be truthful.
- Read good books.
- Sing in the shower.
- Allow your feelings to breathe.
- Be delighted by small things.
- Take responsibility.
- Practice seeing goodness.
- Speak kindly to yourself.
- Spend time being lazy.
- Remember your dreams.
- Stay compassionate and hopeful.



# Happenings Around the Church

**The Burton Family rang the Presbyterian Church Bell during the annual Church Bells “service” in Fincastle.** The old year is honored with the churches and courthouse bells ringing one at a time and the playing of taps. The new year is “announced” by the Court House bells ringing the hour and then the digits of the new year, 2-10-2-1, three shots from a shot gun and then all the



### The Burton Family Ringers:

- Supervisor – Kip
- Timer – Miria (granddaughter)
- Ringer – Eric (son)
- Along for the fun - Lyn

### FPC Furnace is being replaced:



Parts of the furnace on the ground.



Bob Omer, overseer for the replacement.



G. J. Hopkins “worker bees”, the guys doing the work.



### Preparations for Sunday services from the Fellowship Hall:

Alan Brenner working on the music for Sunday, Jan.3, 2021



Sandy Gates “running” the Facebook live.



Fincastle Presbyterian Church  
PO Box 144  
108 E. Back Street



Phone: 540-473-2042

Email:  
fincastlepresbyterianchurch@gmail.com

**Mission Statement:** Striving to be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ, Growing in God, Through uplifting and inspiring spiritual experiences, and Serving our community in love.

#### *Church Staff*

Interim Minister: The Rev. Dr. David Dickerson, D. Min  
Treasurer: Becky Downs  
Organist and Choir Director: Evelyn Renshaw  
Bookkeeper/Secretary: Beth Clark

#### *Office Hours*

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday: 9am—  
noon Other times by Appointment

#### *Session Members*

Lynne Bolton	Sandy Gates	Lyn Burton
Alan Brenner	John Griffith	Becky Downs
Cathy Goad	Paul Phillippe	Bo Trumbo

John Kilby, Clerk

#### *Trustees*

Bob Omer, Peggy Davis, Garland Jones

#### *Deadlines*

Weekly Bulletin—by Wednesday of the week  
Monthly Newsletter—by 20th of the month

## *A Prayer for 2021*

**O God,**

We thank you, O God, for your grace that has seen us safely through 2020. You know better than we how difficult the past year was for us. In 2020, our nation became even more deeply divided along political, economic, and racial lines. In 2020, over 300,000 families saw a beloved family member die because of the novel coronavirus.

Now it is 2021. We are only a few days into the New Year. Already, we have seen more of the same, perhaps even worse. So, O God, hear our prayer for the New Year.

First, teach us to pray, not only when troubles confront us, but also when your blessings surround us and would embrace us, if we would only see them.

Second, continue to reach out to us that we might reach out to all others, whether it be across the aisle in Congress, or the aisle in our grocery stores, our schools, our churches, or even our own homes.

Third, fill us with your Holy Spirit that we might, when the need arises, say something, and not nothing; do something, and not nothing; and be there in the moment, and not somewhere else. However, when the need arises, grant us the peace of a holy silence; of a holy rest; and a holy solitude.

Finally, inspire us to live and work, doing your good will in the world, as if it were all up to us. At the same time, inspire us to live and to work in the full faith and knowledge that ultimately it is all up to you, for (You've) "got the whole world in (Your) hands!"; and You will bring all things to their fulfillment in Christ who loves us.

**Amen**