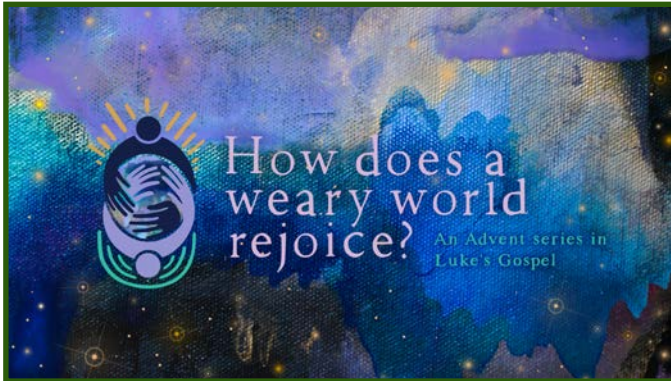




# The New Leaf



## *About Our Advent Theme “How does a weary world rejoice?”*

Joy is often a companion to many other emotions. We can feel joy in addition to feeling many other things at once: grief, anticipation, anxiety, excitement,

disappointment, exhaustion. Perhaps many of us live with the myth that joy is not something we deserve—or that it is wholly out of reach. But our joy is rooted in the truth that we belong to God. Can you tether yourself to that deep truth? You deserve to feel joy—fully. The world needs your joy, even if you are weary. Our joy is better when it is shared. This theme of course alludes to a line in the familiar Christmas hymn, “O Holy Night,” which has an interesting history. The song was originally written by a French poet who was atheist, and the music was supplied by a Jewish composer. The hymn was later translated into English by an American Unitarian minister. In the 1800s, it became a popular hymn for Christian abolitionists due to its justice-focused language in verse 3. Like Mary’s song, the hymn reminds us that justice and joy belong together.

Sometimes our joy is an act of resistance. And so, this Advent, we will hold space for our weariness and our joy. We will seek a “thrill of hope” in our hurting world. We will welcome joy—even and especially if, like the prophet Isaiah, we cry out for comfort (Isaiah 40:1). In this weary world, may we find many ways to rejoice.

-From *A Sanctified Art* LLC materials

Join us for these special services during Advent and Christmas

**Sunday, December 15**  
9:00am & 11:15am Morning Worship with Cantata, “Magnificat”

**Sunday, December 22**  
7:30pm Service of the Longest Night

**Tuesday, December 24**  
4:00pm Family Service, no-rehearsal pageant and children’s choirs  
6:00pm Candlelight Service, with our youth choir  
8:00pm Candlelight Communion, with the adult choir

**Sunday, December 29**  
10:00am Morning Worship



## Note from our Pastor



***“A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices.”*** I have deep memories of a dark sanctuary on Christmas Eve, everyone pressed in together with their velvet dresses looking at the Advent wreath with great expectations. I remember a soloist singing this poetic hymn and, at that line, seeing a tear roll down the face of an adult near me.

I believe children understand the depth of a moment like that. For children, there is a moment when that Christmas Eve candle drives away even the “visions of sugarplums” that were previously dancing in their heads. For a thrilling few moments, we get to hold that light in our hands.

Maybe children don’t know the specific kind of hope that might thrill the grown-ups in the room. And children probably don’t know the full weariness of the adults, some of which they inevitably cause.

But they do know rejoicing in its purest form. And when it comes to joy, they are often our best teachers, reminding us of life’s simple wonders, bringing laughter to our days, showing us the beauty of curiosity, helping us rediscover wonder with each smile and innocent question, inspiring us to see the world anew in their boundless enthusiasm for life, refreshing our spirits daily, leading us to moments we might have missed in their unfiltered view of the world.

The Christmas story makes a shocking claim, that the God of the universe chose to move in with us as a baby. Love itself chose to break through our weariness and fear not with tomes of philosophy but with the soft skin of an infant. The mystery of life itself chose to interrupt our doom scrolling not with the scepter of another Herod but with the thrill of a newborn. O night divine!

Every year, we get to huddle close to this story, to visit in wonder, like the night shepherds or traversing wise people or even yawning herd animals. That’s when the childlike part of us that can get so lost in the weariness of the adult world is found again. That’s when we giggle, sing, dance and play and remember that joy has always been available to us, whether we have a mortgage or a borrowed stable.

Our Advent theme this year is “How Does a Weary World Rejoice?” So join us for childlike rejoicing. May your Thanksgiving and Advent plans not just be about the to-do lists but profound delight with the people of Burke Presbyterian who seek to follow Jesus, who offers joy to the entire world.

*Becca*





# Worship Ministry

## Worship Team and Volunteers

Worship volunteers can be found around every BPC corner on Sunday mornings. Ushers diligently open and secure the building before and after services, and they warmly greet worshippers at the Meeting House entrance. Lay Leaders and Communion Servers arrive early to happily prepare for their responsibilities. Members of the Tech and Audio Teams enthusiastically set up equipment which is monitored during the service.

All this happens seamlessly because Team Leaders are working quietly behind the scenes recruiting and leading volunteers through their tasks. Ushers must be well versed on safety protocol. Lay Leaders must understand the challenges of using a microphone. Communion Servers must navigate the subtleties of sharing the eucharistic elements. The Tech Teams must check and recheck all their equipment. Choirs must rehearse, and visual artists must properly display their creations.

The Worship Team and Worship Volunteers could very well be some of the busiest of our BPC busy bees. Join the hive to further enrich our experience of worship together.

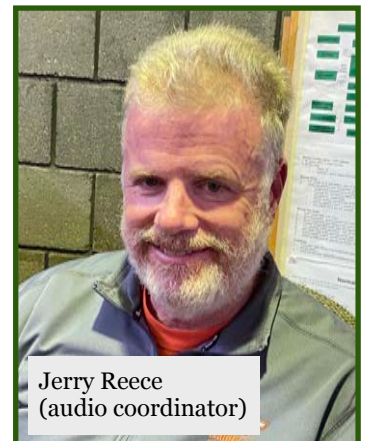
If you have any questions or would like to join the Worship team, please contact Worship Elder Sherrie Brady ([sherrie.brady@gmail.com](mailto:sherrie.brady@gmail.com))



Jim Schoonmaker (video coordinator), Ron Wiersma (lay leader), Ellie DeVaughn (IMPACT), Abbie DeVaughn (IMPACT), Karen Miller (tech), Teresa Weaver (lay leader), Marcie Stennes (usher), Mike Williams (usher coordinator), Sherrie Brady (worship elder).



BJ Sadtler  
(communion coordinator)



Jerry Reece  
(audio coordinator)

# Helping our Neighbors

## Special Mission Projects during Advent

Here at Burke Presbyterian Church, we have many opportunities to help our neighbors, especially during the season of Advent.



### Put together a Bethany Stocking

#### Bring to church on December 8

For many years at Christmastime, BPC members have made stockings filled with essentials for the women who visit the Bethany Center on N Street in downtown DC. Bethany Center helps women facing homelessness and women and children escaping domestic violence. Here's how to put together a stocking:

- Buy thick knee socks (men's socks work very well).
- Stuff the second sock into the toe of the first.
- Fill the rest of the sock with items that would be useful to a woman without a stable home, such as toothpaste, toothbrush, hat, gloves, a scarf, other small toiletries, a notebook, pens, pencils ... use your imagination to make it fun!
- Tie off the end of the stocking with a ribbon and bring it to church on Sunday, December 8.



### Sweaters for the men of Christ House

#### Bring to church by December 8

BPC has a long tradition of supplying sweaters for the men who reside at Christ House (short term) and Kairos House (long term), facilities in downtown DC for the formerly homeless, so that each man receives a sweater at the annual Christ House holiday event. If you would like to buy a sweater, please reach out to Liz Ngongbo (lizjane75@yahoo.com) to get colors requested and sweater sizes of the gift recipients. Bring your sweater to church on Sunday, December 8, or if you'd like to drop off a sweater before then, please leave it in the Mission Center cabinet.



### Christmas Joy Offering

#### December 1-22

This denomination-wide offering distributes gifts equally to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. The Assistance Program provides critical financial support to church workers and their families. Presbyterian-related schools and colleges provide education and leadership development while nurturing racial and ethnic heritage. Contribute online (scan QR code or use link in church emails) or write a check payable to BPC, noting "Christmas Joy Offering" in the memo line.





# Helping Our Neighbors



## Shop for our adopted Homestretch family Bring to church by December 15

BPC began an exciting new partnership with the Homestretch Sacred Homes program in 2017. The mission of

Homestretch is to empower homeless families to secure permanent housing and to attain the skills, knowledge, and hope they need to achieve self-sufficiency.

Through this Sacred Homes program, BPC adopted “C” and her family in 2018. Because of the need for confidentiality, we refer to the mother, who is head of household, by her first initial. She has a son in elementary school and a daughter in college. C is working hard with resources from Homestretch to gain self-sufficiency so she can “graduate” from their program. We have been so inspired because C has earned her US Citizenship AND her GED! These accomplishments were achieved while working at her full-time job. BPC’s quarterly contributions to Homestretch help support C’s housing costs. BPC also contributes a Thanksgiving gift card for the family and provides Christmas presents for each member of the family. You can sign up to buy a gift (scan QR code) from their wishlist. For further information contact Nancy Morrison: njm\_22015@yahoo.com



## Alternative Gifts Throughout the season

Make a donation to a cause the church supports in honor of someone close to you and receive a certificate that can be tucked into a stocking or wrapped and put under the tree. The “order forms” can be found on the Mission Cabinet and in the Gathering Space. You can also visit the Alternative Gifts table on Sundays (Dec. 8, 15 & 22) after worship service in December, or get in touch with Jill Moore (jmoore19@cox.net).



## Donate a toy or teen gift for ECHO’s Holiday Gift Store

### Bring to church by December 1

ECHO collects new toys for children ages 0 to 15 and displays them in a cheerfully decorated, store-like setting, and ECHO clients visit by appointment to choose gifts for their children. You can help by donating a new toy or teen gift, such as a skate board (with helmet), family board games, art supplies, large

stuffed animals, headphones/earbuds, etc. There's a long list of suggestions, as well as a link to ECHO's Amazon Wish List, at <https://www.echo-inc.org/holiday-programs>. Please drop off your larger sized gifts at ECHO (7205 Old Keene Mill Road), between 9:30 and 12:30 no later than December 6. Bring smaller sized items to BPC by Sunday, December 1. Place unwrapped gifts in the Mission Center cabinet.



# Helping Our Neighbors



## Provide a Christmas Meal for an ECHO Family

The Holiday Meal Program provides groceries or gift cards suitable for making a festive meal for Christmas. 300 or more local families are invited to receive this opportunity. To achieve this, ECHO connects willing donors directly with needy families.

There are two options for donating, either shopping and delivering food in person, or buying and mailing a gift card.

The program works like this for donors who wish to deliver their food in person:

- Send an e-mail to [holidayfoodprograms@echo-inc.org](mailto:holidayfoodprograms@echo-inc.org) asking for a family to assist
- Receive contact information about a family: ages of children, cultural background, etc
- Get a list of suggested foods to include, if desired
- Contact the family to arrange delivery date/time
- Shop for appropriate groceries
- Deliver the food at least one week before the holiday

Provide grocery gift cards so families may purchase their preferred holiday foods:

- Contact ECHO by e-mail to [holidayfoodprograms@echo-inc.org](mailto:holidayfoodprograms@echo-inc.org) to get contact information and size of the client family
- Find out the closest food store to the client's address (transportation is sometimes a problem for needy families)
- Purchase food store gift cards in an appropriate amount for the family size (ECHO suggests at least \$65 for a family of four plus \$10 for each additional member, not including infants)
- Mail the gift cards to the family to arrive at least 10 days before the holiday, giving them time to shop and prepare the meal.



# BPC Preschool



*Preschoolers are natural RAKtivists, which stands for Random Acts of Kindness Activist. They turn ordinary days into something special with a simple watercolor picture or offer a classmate a love from the safe space to help ease a tough transition. These acts of kindness connect us to our humanity. Our children are taught that kindness has six components: respect, caring, responsibility, courage, integrity, and inclusiveness.*

If you meet one of our preschool teachers you will realize that their passion is both in their classrooms and in changing the world. The most critical brain development in

human growth happens while these children are in our Burke Presbyterian Church classrooms. As Dr. Pam Shiller says, "What you teach me from birth to three will be what matters most to me. What you teach me three to five is what will help me grow and thrive." Our dream of a kinder world is an area where we can make an impact. We are changing the world's future by teaching the cornerstones of kindness, teaching children to notice kindness, share their kindnesses, and spread love.

We wish our absent classmates well each day, make daily commitments to kind and safe choices, and teach our children to notice when others are kind. If you peek in our Pre-Kindergarten classroom, you will see a Kindness Tree where our students record the kindnesses of others. Education is essential in imparting kindness as a part of a person's self. BPCP ties kindness into our curriculum.

Enrollment for Fall 2025 opens soon. For more information or to schedule a tour, visit our website.



A visit from Pastor Becca



Walk with friends



Corn table play



# Budget & Finance



Financial data as of October 31

		<b>2024 Budget</b>	<b>YTD Actuals</b>	<b>Annual % of Budget</b>
<b><u>Income:</u></b>		<b>\$1,280,000.00</b>	<b>\$1,127,831.17</b>	<b>88%</b>
	<b>Pledges</b>	\$1,100,000.00	\$969,035.49	88%
	<b>Loose Offerings</b>	\$20,000.00	\$11,893.91	59%
	<b>Building Use</b>	\$5,000.00	\$5,622.50	112%
	<b>Interest/Dividends</b>	\$8,000.00	\$19,767.48	247%
	<b>Other</b>	\$0.00	\$30.00	0%
	<b>Per Capita</b>	\$6,000.00	\$3,450.37	58%
	<b>Online Processing Fees</b>	\$4,000.00	\$3,864.72	97%
	<b>2023 Surplus</b>	\$137,000.00	\$114,166.70	83%
<b><u>Expenditures:</u></b>		<b>\$1,280,596.04</b>	<b>\$1,005,268.18</b>	<b>79%</b>
<b><i>Personnel Ministry</i></b>	Personnel/ Salaries	\$503,047.47	\$397,695.74	79%
	Benefits	\$151,747.53	\$106,690.79	70%
<b><i>Worship Ministry</i></b>		\$16,075.00	\$8,469.84	53%
<b><i>Children's Ministry</i></b>	Children's Education	\$5,000.00	\$3,884.72	78%
	General Administration	\$3,908.00	\$3,885.67	99%
<b><i>Spiritual Growth Ministry</i></b>	Adult Education	\$3,201.00	\$1,715.09	54%
	Library	\$26.00	\$0.00	0%
	Youth Education	\$27,032.00	\$22,293.07	82%
<b><i>Congregational Care Ministry</i></b>	Community Life	\$2,676.00	\$2,821.90	105%
	Small Groups	\$350.00	\$0.00	0%
<b><i>Vocations Ministry</i></b>		\$48.00	\$188.45	393%
<b><i>Outreach Ministry (Mission)</i></b>		\$107,594.60	\$97,942.94	91%
<b><i>Communications Ministry</i></b>		\$1,839.00	\$1,424.29	77%
<b><i>Facilities Ministry</i></b>	Utilities	\$48,800.00	\$31,198.18	64%
	Maintenance	\$129,400.00	\$102,780.03	79%
	Office	\$74,893.00	\$62,126.71	83%
	Transfer to Major Maintenance	\$75,000.00	\$62,500.00	83%
<b><i>Stewardship</i></b>	Presbytery Per Capita	\$29,087.44	\$24,233.20	83%
	Insurance	\$29,459.00	\$10,973.00	37%
	Stewardship	\$13,545.00	\$10,297.08	76%
	Mortgage Payments	\$57,054.00	\$53,028.31	93%
<b><i>Session</i></b>		\$451.00	\$711.14	158%
<b><i>Board of Deacons</i></b>		\$212.00	\$358.03	169%
<b>Difference:</b>		<b>(\$596.04)</b>	<b>\$122,562.99</b>	





# Stewardship

*Grounded in Gratitude*



This year, our campaign theme is “Grounded in Gratitude.” When thinking about our church, our stewardship team could imagine the firm grounding of a tree in the earth, roots that have grown deep and wide, and copious branches and leaves of a church that is alive. We could envision a trunk that is strong but also flexible, reaching to heaven and yet firmly planted in this particular community.

It’s not too late to pledge to our 2025 Stewardship Campaign. We are grateful for the 140 pledges for about \$932,586 that we have received thus far.

*“Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”*  
1 Thessalonians 5:18

However, our goal is 200 pledges for \$1.3 million, so if you haven't yet done so, please take a moment to fill out a pledge card (see friendship pads) or our online form (scan QR code). If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact Stewardship Elder Jessie Doll ([jessie.doll@gmail.com](mailto:jessie.doll@gmail.com)) or the church office, or visit our website (scan QR code).



Rainbow



Tree artwork from BPC kids



# Mission & Events




## Celebrate the Season

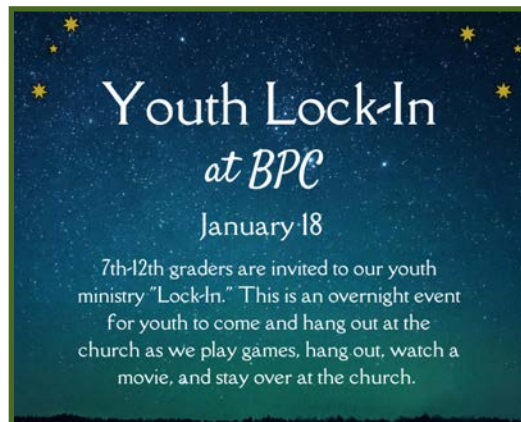
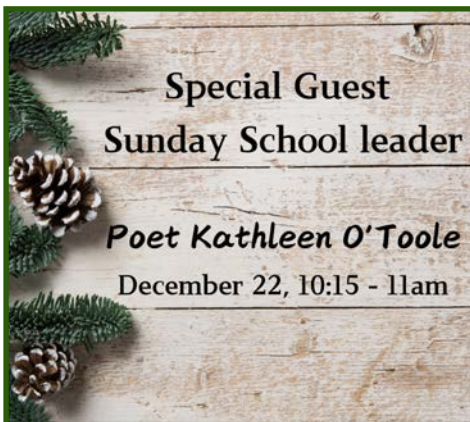
### Pancake Breakfast, the Little Shoppe, and a visit from St. Nick

Please plan to join us during Sunday School on December 8 to celebrate the season of Advent. There will be something for all ages! In case you haven't heard, the Little Shoppe is a place where children can select gifts for their family members; elves will be on hand to assist and wrap the gifts. We accept donations for the items that children "purchase," and those donations are used to support BPC mission



projects. We will need help with setup and "elves" to help children shop. If you are able, please sign up using the QR code.

We need merchandise for the Little Shoppe. If you can donate small items for the Little Shoppe -- such as jewelry, knick knacks, small toys, etc. -- please leave them in the bin next to the Mission Center cabinet. We'd also love to have some of your used Christmas cards (prefer just the fronts) for decorating the gifts that we wrap. Thank you!





# Mission & Events



## Hypothermia

BPC will host Hypothermia again, February 16-23, 2025. We are searching for a Breakfast Team Lead and a Mat Cleaning Team Lead. Volunteer position descriptions are below:

- Breakfast Team Lead will be responsible to help Hypothermia leads to identify groups to prepare a hot breakfast each morning; coordinate with the teams to ensure they have everything they need for the breakfast; ensure teams are trained in the kitchen; and remind teams of their date to serve breakfast.
- Mat Cleaning Team Lead will be responsible to help Hypothermia leads to identify individuals to clean sleeping mats; cleaning sleeping mats each day after guests depart; and returning mats to sleeping area.

If you are interested in either position, please email Marcy Stennes, (mjstennes@verizon.net). Donations and volunteers needed, sign ups will be available soon.

## CROP Walk

The CROP Walk Leadership Team wishes to say a hearty THANK YOU to BPC and its members for once again welcoming hunger fighters from the surrounding community and supporting this critical interfaith event. We greatly appreciate your monetary and non-monetary donations and contributions. And know that because of you, 2025 will be a better year for the thousands of struggling people you helped. You made a REAL difference!! We look forward to you supporting the CROP Walk again in the years to come.

*With much gratitude, CROP Walk Leadership Team*



## Blood Drive

### December 7

The Inova Blood Mobile will be at BPC in the lower parking lot on Saturday, December 7, 7:00-11:00am. Scan QR code to sign up to donate. Or, call (1-866-256-6372) and use Sponsor Code 1049. If you have any questions, please contact Bel Edmonson (blooddrive@burkpreschurch.org).



**Sponsor  
A Bus Seat  
Campaign**

There is still time left to support the IMPACT Sponsor A Bus Seat Campaign! IMPACT youth choir has made a meaningful difference in the lives of so many students over the past 20 years. Please consider sponsoring a seat on the bus for the next choir tour, (full seat for \$200, a half seat for \$100, or a quarter seat for \$50). Thank you to those have donated!





# BPC Snapshots



Tea for Bible & Bagels



Canasta



CROP Walk



Fantastic Fix It Team



Fall Youth Retreat



Rainbow Choirs



# BPC Snapshots



Christ House Meal Prep



Rainbow Dinner



Youth Connections



IMPACT Youth Choir



Communion Sunday



Trunk or Treat



# BPC Snapshots



ECHO Shred Event



CROP Hunger Walk



Rainbow Dinner



Blessing of the Animals



Recreation at Rainbow



Rainbow!



# BPC Snapshots



Ready for dinner!



Special Music



Gathering Circle



Advent Wreath Workshop



Youth Thanksgiving Potluck



Balancing coins on your nose at Rainbow

Regular worship  
schedule

**SUNDAY WORSHIP**

9am in person  
11:15am in person & online

**SUNDAY SCHOOL**

10:15 - 11am

To join us for online  
worship

at 11:15am on Sundays:  
Visit  
[www.BurkePresChurch.org](http://www.BurkePresChurch.org),  
choose "Plan a Visit", then  
select either the Zoom  
button or the YouTube  
button.

# The New Leaf



## BPC Staff

**Senior Pastor and Head of Staff**

Rev. Becca Messman  
([becca@burkepreschurch.org](mailto:becca@burkepreschurch.org))

**Parish Associate**

Rev. Catherine Taylor  
([catherine@burkepreschurch.org](mailto:catherine@burkepreschurch.org))

**Director of Spiritual Growth**

Arlene Decina  
([arlene@burkepreschurch.org](mailto:arlene@burkepreschurch.org))

**Director of Music Ministries**

Julianne Erbrecht  
([julianne@burkepreschurch.org](mailto:julianne@burkepreschurch.org))

**Director of Finance and Business  
Administration**

Holly Walsh  
([holly@burkepreschurch.org](mailto:holly@burkepreschurch.org))

**Interim Youth Director**

Kyle Putnam  
([kyle@burkepreschurch.org](mailto:kyle@burkepreschurch.org))

**Preschool Director**

Anndra Rowland  
[anndra@burkepreschurch.org](mailto:anndra@burkepreschurch.org)

**Office and Communications Manager**

Nicole Sheely  
([nicole@burkepreschurch.org](mailto:nicole@burkepreschurch.org))

**Pianist**

Wei-Han Wu  
([foreignkoffee@gmail.com](mailto:foreignkoffee@gmail.com))

## BPC Leadership

BPC is governed by a 15-member elected Session ("elders") charged with the spiritual leadership of the congregation, policy-setting and long-term planning.

The board of deacons provides pastoral care to congregants in need.

## Contact Us

5690 Oak Leather Drive  
Burke, VA 22015  
704-764-0456  
[office@BurkePresChurch.org](mailto:office@BurkePresChurch.org)  
[www.BurkePresChurch.org](http://www.BurkePresChurch.org)

## Sign Up for Information

The New Leaf, a newsletter of BPC members and friends, is published periodically. For regular updates on the life and ministry of Burke Presbyterian Church, refer to our weekly emails and the "In Community" announcements in Sunday worship bulletins. To sign up for our emails, visit our website, contact the church office, or fill out the form in the friendship pads.

