



# The Bridge

December 2024



## From the Pastor

*Rev. Julie Sterling*

For those of us who gather in Advent expectation, we know that the only perfect gift ever given was the one we received in Jesus Christ. Finding that perfect gift is hard, often laborious work. ..Yet, our congregation knows that our collective gifts through the Christmas Joy Offering celebrate the coming of Jesus Christ, the “perfect gift” from a gracious God. Indeed, there is only one perfect gift...

When we give to the Christmas Joy Offering, we are there with the leaders of our Church – past, present and future.

50% of your gifts assist current and retired church workers and their families with critical financial needs. The other 50% of your gifts make it possible for students to learn and grow in faith at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

The Christmas Joy Offering will be collected as part of our Christmas Eve Morning Service. You are welcome to

donate any time during the month of December.

### OTHER WAYS TO GIVE

- Donate by credit card online at [pcusa.org/christmasjoy](https://pcusa.org/christmasjoy)
- Text CHRISTMASJOY to 91999

Despite the worry and consternation of this busy season, we can never match God’s perfect gift in Jesus, but through the Christmas Joy Offering, we can testify to who we have known God to be. Our perfect gift comes from above. Our gifts reflect our generous God. Our gifts support leaders in our Church and world – past, present and future.

<https://specialofferings.pcusa.org/offering/christmas-joy/>

Text taken from 2024 CJO Pastor Letter and other Special Offerings



We trust in the hope of the Christ Child, the perfect gift, for whom we prepare a way so he can prepare a way for us to know the fullness of God’s love.

 CHRISTMAS JOY  
SPECIAL OFFERINGS  
LEADERSHIP, PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE  
DECEMBER 1 – DECEMBER 22

**Our Mission** – To be a bridge to Christ through faith and service • **Our Vision** – When SPC is faithful in accomplishing its mission, people will know that Christ is at work in their lives and follow Him • **We Value** – Being accepting, caring, outreaching, Spirit-led, and willing to serve

## Prayer Requests

- ✝ Eric Sterling
- ✝ Jeffery Birkey
- ✝ Richard Alan Goforth, Sr.
- ✝ Katie Humphries
- ✝ Pat Jones
- ✝ Bud Little
- ✝ Tommy Morrison
- ✝ Tina Motley
- ✝ Shelby Owen
- ✝ Charlie Powell
- ✝ Dennis Richardson
- ✝ Cindy Robinson
- ✝ Cheryl Scott
- ✝ Mary Ann Sterling
- ✝ Ron Ventura
- ✝ Caroline

## Happy Birthday

- 12/7 Courtney Super
- 12/30 Adelaide Wandell

## Pray for our Military

- ✝ Ashlyn Dawson
- ✝ Laura Dawson
- ✝ Sidney Dawson
- ✝ Nick Meadors
- ✝ Glenn Smith
- ✝ Hayden Spalding
- ✝ Greg Vernon

The *Suffolk Presbyterian Bridge* is a publication of Suffolk Presbyterian Church in Suffolk, VA. The *Bridge* is published 12 times a year under the direction of the Administration/Communication Ministry Team of the SPC Session.

News items should be submitted to the newsletter editor by the 20th of the month in one of the following ways:

- email at [office@suffolkpresbyterian.org](mailto:office@suffolkpresbyterian.org)
- mail to the church address
- Laura Farmer's office mailbox

Editor: *Laura Farmer*, Administrative Assistant

## News Briefs

**Food Pantry Donations:** The greatest needs are canned veggies/fruits/tuna/chicken, cold cereal, peanut butter, and jelly. Financial donations accepted via church website. Donations delivered to Suffolk Christian Fellowship Center.

**Gift Card Ministry:** The deacons are collecting \$25 restaurant gift cards during the offering to help congregation members in times of need. These will be used to assist with meals.

**Suffolk Little Pantry:** The youth are collecting items for their project. Granola bars, individual cracker packets, fruit cups, rice crispy treats, and other non-perishable snack items can be placed in the Narthex collection box.



### Administrative Office Hours

Laura Farmer's regular office hours are Tuesdays from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm, Wednesdays from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm, and Thursdays from 9:30 am to 1:30 pm. If you would like to contact her directly, please email [office@suffolkpresbyterian.org](mailto:office@suffolkpresbyterian.org) or call 757-539-3213.

### Directory Updates

If you have a new address, phone number, or email, please contact **Laura Farmer**, Administrative Assistant, at [office@suffolkpresbyterian.org](mailto:office@suffolkpresbyterian.org) or 757-539-3213. If you are not in the directory, and would like to be added, please email your information. Thank you!

## The Redemption of Scrooge Advent Study 2024

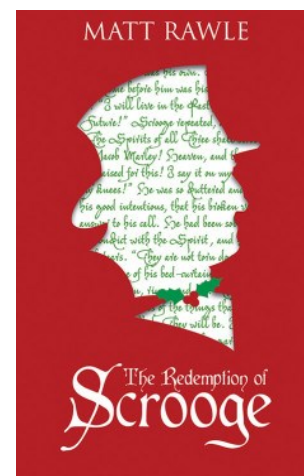
Are you looking for a way to prepare for the hope, peace, joy, and love of Christmas? Join us on Tuesday nights at 7pm starting November 26th this Advent for the Study The redemption of Scrooge by Matt Rawle.

***Is redemption possible for Ebenezer Scrooge? Pastor and author Matt Rawle believes so as he discovers the teachings of Jesus in the words of the Charles Dickens classic A Christmas Carol. Rawle dives deep into the dark, sad, greedy world of Scrooge and discovers a man in dire need of a second chance. Along with Scrooge, we meet the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Future and in the process learn about living with and for others in a world blessed by Jesus. Rediscover and reinvigorate your Christian faith this Advent and Christmas season and look at this familiar classic through the lens of faith.***  
- Press Release

The study includes a book and DVD. During the four week sessions we will discuss the following themes:

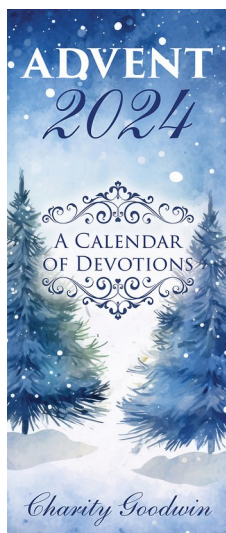
Bah! Humbug!  
The Remembrance of Christmas Past  
The Life of Christmas Present  
The Hope of Christmas Future

Sessions will be hybrid and participants will be able to access the study via Zoom or at the church. Books are available at the church or can be ordered through Cokesbury for \$12.79 or Amazon for \$14.39.



Zoom Link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86489235210?pwd=8TPaWWp7hznPyZGFVDC4uCYE92XOW7.1>



### Advent Devotion For the Congregation

Copies of the Advent 2024 devotions are now available at the church. They are located in a basket near the Baker Funeral Home exit.

## SPC Filled Buckets for Hurricane Recovery Efforts

Suffolk Presbyterian Church responded to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance's plea for cleaning supplies after two hurricanes tore through the southeastern U.S. in September and October.

Our quickly organized "fill a bucket" drive netted four buckets of items such as sponges, scrub brushes and heavy duty trash bags for volunteer workers in PDA's ongoing recovery efforts to assist hurricane victims get their lives back together.

Members gathered after worship on October 25 and filled five-gallon buckets with cleaning supplies that will be used in western North Carolina, hard hit by hurricane Helene.

We also sent a \$150 donation to pay for two more buckets and the designated items that go in them. Those funds were originally expected to cover expensive shipping costs until we found an auxiliary drop off point where we could add our buckets to others on their way to the affected areas.

On their south on another trip, Jack and Susie Stoughton delivered SPC's buckets to Hillyer Memorial Christian Church in downtown Raleigh. David Mallory had a basement room filled with buckets waiting for Church World Service, PDA's partner, to pick them up and deliver them to western North Carolina.

The need for help has been enormous, and many other churches and organizations were also responding to pleas for assistance. SPC and West End Baptist kicked off similar drives as we worshipped together for World Communion Sunday.

PDA and other organizations will be continuing to assist the hurricane victims in the long-term recovery efforts. PDA had initially sent out 5,000 buckets when Hurricane Helene first made landfall and desperately needed help in replenishing dwindling supplies.

Thanks to all who brought bottles of household cleaner, clotheslines and clothespins, air fresheners and bug spray. And thanks to those who donated N95 masks, scouring pads, heavy duty dishwashing gloves and other items.

Thanks also to **Rev. Julie Sterling** for alerting us to PDA's need and for encouraging this mission!



*Filling the Buckets*

## Christmas Cantata

Ballads can tell the meaningful stories of our faith through music. The timeless story of Christmas is alive once more as the choir and instrumentalists present the Christmas cantata, "The Ballad of Bethlehem" on Sunday, December 15, 2024. The music weaves new and rhythmic tunes with the timeless traditional songs about the birth of Jesus Christ. The program will begin at 3:00 pm. R. Dean Kershaw, Organist/Choirmaster of West End Baptist Church, will provide a pre-service concert of seasonal music fifteen minutes prior to the cantata. The service will be followed by a reception.

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### Session Notes - from the Clerk

Greetings everyone. The Session has asked me in my role as Clerk to report on the work of the Session. This is the first of those reports.

At the November Session meeting, the Session heard reports from the pastor on her activities and a financial report from **Jack Stoughton**. It approved the minutes for the October stated meeting and re-elected **Bruce Sharp** as Clerk of the Session for a three year term.

A major item of business was the selection of a financial planner to oversee the investment of the church's assets. The Session requested proposals from three financial planning companies and had one hour Zoom meetings with each to hear the proposals and ask questions. While all the proposals were excellent, the Session finally selected the New Covenant Trust Company, which is a subsidiary the Presbyterian Foundation, as the financial manager for our assets.

The Session voted to add **Elisabeth Writtenberry** to the rolls as an affiliate member. This membership classification is for people, such as students, who are members of another PCUSA congregation, but are temporarily living away from their home church and who wish to temporarily participate in a nearby church. An affiliate member has all the rights of church membership except holding office or voting on church matters.

The Session also accepted with regret and thanks the resignation of Elder **Mary Ann Saunders** as an active member of the Session. Mary Ann has served faithfully for the past seven years through trying times for Suffolk Presbyterian. She and her husband, **Rob**, will remain members of the church and continue their work with the Living Waters mission.

The Session discussed the current organization of the church government and the need to revise the Manual of Administrative Operations governing the church. It was agreed to have a special meeting with the Deacons in January to focus on this matter.

*Bruce Sharp*



## Presbyterian Women

Have you ever considered what it means to live in abundance? How does it affect our life with God? How can the church help those who have little food to eat? Join us on Monday, December 9th at 7pm for our PW Horizon's discussion on chapter 3, "Food Justice". This lesson will discuss the scriptures from Genesis 1:22, 3:19; Exodus 16:13-18, 19-21; Joshua 5:12; Psalms 65:11-14, 78:23-29; 105:40-41; Hosea 4:1b-3; Micah 6:12-15; Matthew 13-8; Mark 4:8; and Luke 8:8. During our lesson we will focus on the following main idea:



The Bible portrays the earth as yielding food in abundance, and today's agriculture scientists say it could provide food for all. We can learn to produce food with justice and peace and feed a starving world.

The evening will include a DVD led description of the chapter by author Patricia K Tull followed by group discussion. All are welcome to join. Extra studies are available but not needed to take part in the discussion.

## Edmarc Families

Where has 2024 gone? It is Holiday time and we are once again supporting EDMARC during this season. As you well know, these families have many challenges and we can show our support to lessen their stress.

The Thanksgiving meals for 2 EDMARC families have been purchased and delivered. Thank you to all who contributed. Once again, you willingly show your support for this mission. Now we move on to Christmas. For the Christmas meal, we will be sponsoring two families. This year the meal plan is an Italian theme. Sign up sheets are available in the area near the Handicap entry to WEBC. Items are needed by Sunday, December 15.

AND you will notice the Angel Tree also near the handicap entry. It is again decorated with small angels listing the wish list items for two small boys – Age 3 & 4. Please assist them to have their wishes fulfilled. Unwrapped Items are needed by Wednesday, December 4. Please mark the items with the child's number listed on the back of the angel. Ie: H-OB-B for Teddy and VD-AL-4B for Zavier.

Many thanks in advance and have a blessed holiday season.

## The new and the old: Chrismon tree decorating 2024



Our Chrismon tree has a new home!  
Come help decorate it in our upstairs parlor area at 6:30 p.m. on Wed., Dec. 4.

The tree itself is new, a bit smaller to better fit its new location, but the handcrafted ornaments are the same. As we adjust to our new worship and gathering space, tradition continues – in a new way.

We'll celebrate the season with the traditional trimming of the tree as youngsters of all ages place ornaments of gold and white on the branches. We'll listen to Christmas music as we adorn the tree and sing a few yuletide favorites, accompanied by Music Director Chris Johnson on the upstairs piano.

We'll munch on mini sandwiches and cookies and be reminded of the significance of the Chrismons – monograms of Christ – and why there are no red or green ornaments. We'll reminisce about the many hands who have fashioned these special ornaments over the years.

Our West End Baptist partners will place their Chrismon tree in the sanctuary for our enjoyment as well. Our tree will be featured during our fifth Sunday service as we gather around it for non-traditional worship upstairs on Dec. 29.

Mark your calendars for this fun-filled evening! Come have your picture taken with family and friends in front of the tree and share some holiday spirit with your church family!

## Christmas Caroling set for Dec. 22

The SPC Carolers will be joined this year by friends from West End Baptist as we sing carols to homebound members from both congregations on Sunday, Dec. 22.

The combined carolers will gather at the church to carpool to various locations. Please be at the church in time to leave by 5:30 p.m.

Vocal training is not required to sing, "We Wish You a Merry Christmas," "Jingle Bells," and a few favorite carols.

Afterward, we'll return to the church fellowship hall for a pizza party. Pizzas will be provided, but carolers are encouraged to bring chips, salads, drinks or desserts. Signup sheets will be provided in both hallways.



**"HERE WE COME A-CAROLING!"**





# December 2024

## Suffolk Presbyterian Church

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p><i>1</i></p> <p>9 AM Choir 9:30 AM Worship 10:45 PM Sun- day School *5 PM Youth Group</p>	<p><i>2</i></p>	<p><i>3</i></p> <p>7 PM Advent Study</p>	<p><i>4</i></p>	<p><i>5</i></p> <p>6 PM Spiritual Fellowship 7 PM Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p><i>6</i></p>	<p><i>7</i></p>
<p><i>8</i></p> <p>9 AM Choir 9:30 AM Worship 10:45 PM Sun- day School</p>	<p><i>9</i></p> <p>7 PM Presby- terian Women</p>	<p><i>10</i></p> <p>7 PM Advent Study</p>	<p><i>11</i></p> <p>7 PM Diaco- nate Meeting</p>	<p><i>12</i></p> <p>6 PM Spiritual Fellowship 7 PM Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p><i>13</i></p>	<p><i>14</i></p>
<p><i>15</i></p> <p>9 AM Choir 9:30 AM Worship 10:45 PM Sun- day School 3 PM Cantata/ Reception</p>	<p><i>16</i></p> <p><i>NewsLetter DEADLINE</i></p>	<p><i>17</i></p> <p>7 PM Advent Study</p>	<p><i>18</i></p> <p>3 PM Session Meeting</p>	<p><i>19</i></p> <p>6 PM Spiritual Fellowship 7 PM Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p><i>20</i></p>	<p><i>21</i></p>
<p><i>22</i></p> <p>9 AM Choir 9:30 AM Worship 10:45 PM Sun- day School 5:30 PM Car- oling/Pizza</p>	<p><i>23</i></p>	<p><i>24</i></p> <p>5 PM Christ- mas Eve Ser- vice</p>	<p><i>25</i></p> <p><b>Christmas Day</b></p>	<p><i>26</i></p> <p>6 PM Spiritual Fellowship 7 PM Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p><i>27</i></p>	<p><i>28</i></p>
<p><i>29</i></p> <p>9 AM Choir 9:30 AM 5th Sunday Worship 10:45 PM Sun- day School</p>	<p><i>30</i></p>	<p><i>31</i></p>			<p><i>*Ecumenical Youth Group will meet on Sunday, De- cember 1st at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 5 pm.</i></p>	



Suffolk Presbyterian Church  
105 Saint James Avenue  
Suffolk, Virginia 23434



**Visit our website!**  
[suffolkpresbyterian.org](http://suffolkpresbyterian.org)

Suffolk  
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**CHOIR PRACTICE**

9:00 AM

**WORSHIP**

9:30 AM

**SUNDAY SCHOOL**

10:45 AM

**Upcoming Events:**

December 1—Ecumenical Youth Group

December 3, 10, & 17—Advent Study

December 9—Presbyterian Women

December 11—Diaconate Meeting

December 15—Cantata & Reception

December 18—Session Meeting

December 22—Caroling & Pizza

December 24—Christmas Eve Service

Thursdays—Spiritual Fellowship & Choir Rehearsal



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