



The Bridge

JANUARY 2024



From the Pastor

Rev. Julie Sterling

The View Looks Good From Here

They say that perception is everything. In the words of Oscar Wilde, “The optimist sees the donut, the pessimist sees the hole.” Beginning a new year together, there is the excitement of newness and anticipation of what is in store for us in 2024. For after we have counted the moments ‘til midnight and sang Auld Lang Syne, the echoes of Advent remain with us. The hope, peace, joy, and love of our past month’s journey linger as we take our first steps in the coming year.

We are blessed to have this time of Epiphany guide us as we begin our calendar year. What could be more fitting than to begin our new journey by celebrating the awareness of God in our lives. In fact, many churches use the Epiphany to help set their parishioners on the right path as they start the new year by giving them “star words”. These words are meant to give each person guidance in the new year, just as the Magi were guided by the star to Jesus. Last year star words were handed out to each of you at the end of worship. My word was “resilient” and I must say, it helped me as I waded through some challenges over the past year. This year we will continue this practice as part of a prayer station during our 5th Sunday service on New Year’s Eve morning.

A new year is an invitation to dream big and to say yes to God. What is in store for

us? Your guess is as good as mine, but I’m thankful that our awesome, every present, ever loving God is leading us. A new year is the perfect time to embrace a new way of envisioning our life with God. More importantly, this shift in perspective allows us to dream together as we face the challenges of our ever changing, always evolving church. Maya Angelou stated, “The horizon leans forward, offering you space to place new steps of change.”

How do we embrace new perspectives in the coming year? In our Advent study this past winter, “The Gift of the Nutcracker”, author Matt Rawle reminds us that our relationships can make the difference in how we perceive ourselves and our life with God. For God built us to live and work in community. In Matthew 18:20 Jesus proclaims, “For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.” When we gather together for worship and fellowship, we have an opportunity to care for one another and share the love and grace that comes from God. We have all experienced times where the love and support of a friend, a family member, or someone from our congregation has affected how we see ourselves or perceive a situation in our lives.

Friends, as we journey this new year together, I ask you to do so with open minds and open hearts, confident in what God has planned

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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



- 1/3 Lennon Super
- 1/4 Doc Crusenberry
- 1/5 Jane Sommers
- 1/7 Gary Williams
- 1/11 Eric Sterling
- 1/24 Lisa Morrison
- 1/29 Nancy White

- † Jeffery Birkey
- † Richard Alan Goforth, Sr.
- † Anton Johnston
- † Kathy Jones
- † Jimmy Hope
- † Charlie Powell
- † Ron Rimasse
- † Sue Rimasse
- † Jeff Snow
- † Zachary

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 in one of the following ways:

- email at office@suffolkpresbyterian.org
- mail to the church address
- Laura Farmer's office mailbox

Editor: Laura Farmer,
Administrative Assistant

PRAY FOR OUR

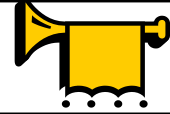
MILITARY

*Thank you for
your service!*

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



News Briefs



Information from Breena:

Below is a link to the list of needs for the ODU English students from Congo and Tanzania. The list should be updated occasionally as the needs are met. If you are trying to downsize and would like to donate items no longer on the list, the English Language Center will send them on to Catholic Charities to be given to other refugee individuals and/or families. Thank you so much for your love, compassion and generosity.

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1RZz9G6o9ungSfVmPb_Z4uTfQGcBRvIrljM6bHu71IeFE/htmlview

Support humanitarian assistance in Israel/Palestine: The needs for the response will be great. God's people are called on to stand in the "GAP" — Give. Act. Pray. Gifts can be made [online](#), by calling (800) 872-3283, by texting PDAIP to 41444, or by check made payable to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with "DR000081-Israel/Palestine" on the memo line. Mail to: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), P.O. Box 643700, Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700.

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.

Administrative Office Hours



Laura Farmer's regular office hours are Wednesdays from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm, Thursdays from 9:30 am to 1:30 pm, and Fridays from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm. If you would like to contact her directly, please email 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 or 539-3213. If you are not in the directory, and would like to be added, please email your information. Thank you!



Presbyterian Women

Have you made any resolutions for the New Year? Why not join PW! This month's meeting is scheduled for January 8th at 7pm in the church library and will focus on Chapter 3, "Mary and Martha Encounter Jesus" from the Horizon's Bible Study Sacred Encounters: The Power and Presence of Jesus Christ in Luke-Acts. The evening's study will include a DVD discussion led by author Olive Mahabir on Luke 10:38-42 and the following main idea:

Jesus calls us to value the role of each person in the community of faith.

The monthly business meeting will follow our study and discussion time. Everyone is invited to attend. Please contact **Rev. Julie** or **Lisa Morrison** with any questions.

Suffolk Little Food Pantry

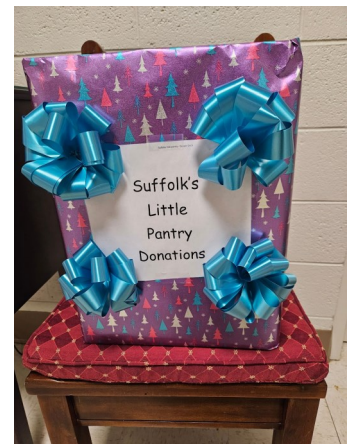
We continue our work with the larger Suffolk Youth Group on the "Suffolk Little Food Pantry" project to serve the downtown community. We will begin with one pantry, located on the St. Paul's Episcopal Church grounds, and we hope to have it up and running by the beginning of the new year. This mission focuses on emergency needs for people in our community and is not designed to take the place of established pantries in Suffolk.

We need help collecting the following items:

- Cans (w/pop-tabs) of fruit, meat, soups
- Applesauce cups
- Granola bars
- Fruit juice boxes (individual with straw)
- Travel size: toothpaste, soap, shampoo, deodorant
- Toothbrush
- Wet Wipes
- Band-Aids
- Quart size Zip-Lock bags

This project is a partnership between the youth at Main Street UMC, St. Paul's Episcopal, and Suffolk Presbyterian Church.

We hope to include others from the community as we work together to tackle food insecurity issues in our community. Any help would be appreciated. Please contact **Rev. Julie** with any questions.



(Continued from page 1)

for us. We have a lot of hard work ahead of us, yet “with God nothing is impossible.” No matter what tomorrow brings, we know that God is with us and He is Good! In closing, I wish to leave you with these words from poet Nick Frederickson. Think of them as a mantra for the coming year:

**“I close my eyes
To old ends.
And open my heart
To new beginnings.”**

What does Epiphany Mean to Presbyterians?

An article from the Presbyterian Mission Agency



EPIPHANY

Epiphany is the celebration of God’s manifestation or self-revelation to the world in Jesus Christ. In particular, we celebrate the revelation of God’s promise and purpose to the nations of the world, as the magi came from the East to worship to the Christ child, and God’s covenant of grace is extended to all who believe the good news of Christ Jesus. The symbolism of light is important: not only because of the star that guided the magi, but as it relates to the bright dawning of God’s self-revelation in Christ.

An excerpt from the *Companion to the Book of Common Worship* (Geneva Press, 2003, 94-95)

The word “epiphany” (from the Greek epiphaneia or theophaneia) means “appearance” or “manifestation” of God, and has roots in the word for sunrise or dawn. In ancient times, an epiphany meant either a visible manifestation of a god or the solemn visit of a ruler venerated as a god.

For Christians, Christmas marks the coming of God to us; Epiphany celebrates the appearance of the Lord in the midst of humanity. The Christmas stories of the birth of Immanuel declare the divine entry; Epiphany extols the revelation of God to the world in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

In our celebrations of Christmas and Epiphany we rejoice in the dawning and the arising of Light in darkness. ... Epiphany not only discloses the Savior to the world but also calls the world to show forth Christ, to be witnesses to God’s true Light. The timeless mystery of the incarnation, God in flesh, leads us forth to show and tell of Christ as God’s gift of grace and salvation for all persons. Some call this ongoing epiphany the work of Christmas.

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/worship/christianyear/epiphany/>

December Fellowship Pictures



Christmas Cantata



Community Youth Group

Pizza Party & Sing Along



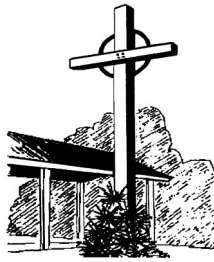
Chrismon Tree Decorating, Wreath, & Sanctuary



January 2024

Suffolk Presbyterian Church

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|---|------------------|--|--|------------------|--|
| | <p><i>1</i></p> <p><i>New Year's Day</i></p> | <p><i>2</i></p> | <p><i>3</i></p> | <p><i>4</i></p> <p>6 PM Spiritual Fellowship 7 PM Choir</p> | <p><i>5</i></p> | <p><i>6</i></p> |
| <p><i>7</i></p> <p><i>Communion Sunday</i> 9:45 AM Sunday School 10 AM Choir 11 AM Worship</p> | <p><i>8</i></p> <p>7 pm Presbyterian Women</p> | <p><i>9</i></p> | <p><i>10</i></p> <p>7 pm Diaconate Meeting</p> | <p><i>11</i></p> <p>6 PM Spiritual Fellowship 7 PM Choir</p> | <p><i>12</i></p> | <p><i>13</i></p> |
| <p><i>14</i></p> <p>9:45 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Choir 11 AM Worship</p> | <p><i>15</i></p> <p><i>Martin Luther King Jr. Day</i></p> | <p><i>16</i></p> | <p><i>17</i></p> <p>3 pm Session Meeting</p> | <p><i>18</i></p> <p>6 PM Spiritual Fellowship 7 PM Choir</p> | <p><i>19</i></p> | <p><i>20</i></p> <p>Newsletter DEADLINE</p> |
| <p><i>21</i></p> <p>9:45 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Choir 11 AM Worship</p> | <p><i>22</i></p> | <p><i>23</i></p> | <p><i>24</i></p> | <p><i>25</i></p> <p>6 PM Spiritual Fellowship 7 PM Choir</p> | <p><i>26</i></p> | <p><i>27</i></p> |
| <p><i>28</i></p> <p>9:45 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Choir 11 AM Worship</p> | <p><i>29</i></p> | <p><i>30</i></p> | <p><i>31</i></p> | | | |



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Suffolk, Virginia 23434



Visit our website!
suffolkpresbyterian.org

Suffolk Presbyterian Church

Reverend Julie Sterling
Pastor

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pastor@suffolkpresbyterian.org

SUNDAY SCHOOL
9:45 AM
CHOIR PRACTICE
10:30 AM
WORSHIP
11 AM

Upcoming Events:

January 8—Presbyterian Women
January 10—Diaconate Meeting
January 17—Session Meeting

Thursdays—Spiritual Fellowship & Choir



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Church*