



*From the Pastor:*

Dear Congregation,

I just received my latest copy of a news magazine that has published its annual year in review issue.

As I passed through the pages, pictures and stories of the year, I was reminded of God's grace over 2015. A lot has happened in the world, in our country, in our state, in our county, in our town, in our church and in each of our lives.

By God's grace, we have been spared of what could be far worse of a year. We give thanks for his grace to restrain evil and bless us with good we do not deserve.

We look forward to 2016. That almost sounds like a space-age to those of us who have lived more life in the 20th century than in the 21st!

God surely has much in store for us. I hope that it is in your plans to stretch yourselves spiritually, maybe to read the Bible through in a year or to engage in the life of the church in some new way.

Over the next few Sundays, we have some special themes and events in worship. This Sunday, we will pick up in Hebrews 4 where we are challenged to make sure we enter God's eternal rest. On January 10, we will install our officers-elect and hear from God's Word regarding how to follow our leaders. We will also be sending Connie Bennett off to Trinidad for her short-term mission service there. Sanctity of Human Life Sunday is January 17 and so our theme will be the 6th Commandment - "Thou Shall Not Kill".

Men, don't forget our first monthly Men's Lunch will be next Monday, January 4, Noon at Southbound Sandwich Works on S. Church Street. I have a handful of copies of our study book available, so be sure to ask for one! And please note, you don't have to be a reader to participate in this monthly gathering. You may show up and enjoy the fellowship and learning opportunity no matter!

See you Sunday!

**Praise to God for a Living Hope**

I Peter 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

Romans 5:5 And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

Isaiah 40:31 but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

*We wish you all a happy and God-honoring New Year!*

## MISSIONS TRIP

In January 2016, Connie Bennett will be sent on her sixth trip for medical missions in Trinidad. Her gifts are well-utilized on the trip. You may participate in sending Connie by your prayers and financial support. The Presbyterian Church in America's (P.C.A.) Mission to the World is hosting the trip and provides all necessary administrative support for the trip. If you wish to contribute financially to the mission, please do so by sending your check to: MTW, PO Box 2589, Suwanee, GA 30024-0982. Note in the memo Account #10865 and all proceeds will support our sister's trip. Her financial goal for support is \$2,100. The Congregation will be commissioning Connie on Sunday, January 10.

## MEN'S LUNCH

Join us on Monday, January 4, at noon at Southbound Sandwich Works on South Church Street. We will begin a study of *Masculine Mandate* by Rick Phillips. See Pastor Crofts if you need a copy of the book.

## THANK YOU!

We want to thank the carolers for braving the cold to come out for a visit and sing familiar Christmas hymns. It was a blessing to us to have them. Thank you!  
-Chuck & Mary Renegar

Thank you so much for the lovely gift basket. We appreciate your kindness to us and pray the Lord will richly bless you all.  
-Jim & June Little

## SYMPATHY

Please pray for the family of Marion Angel who passed away on December 23, 2015.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS AT FIRST ARP

### January

- 1 HAPPY NEW YEAR!
- 2 First Saturday Workday
- 3 Lord's Supper
- 4 Men's Lunch. Noon at Southbound Sandwich works.
- 10 Ordination and Installation of Officers  
Connie Bennett Commissioned
- 17 Sanctity of Human Life Sunday
- 20 Women's Ministry Weekly Bible Study
- 21 Stated Session Meeting/Joint Officer Meeting
- 26 Young at Heart
- 26 First Presbytery Meeting - Gastonia, NC
- 27 Women's Ministry Weekly Bible Study
- 31 Fifth Sunday Hymn Sing and Social

## JANUARY BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

### BIRTHDAYS

|                    |      |
|--------------------|------|
| Steve Walton       | 1/4  |
| Mark Sanderson     | 1/9  |
| Janice Ward        | 1/9  |
| Andrew Newton      | 1/10 |
| Mark Vestal        | 1/12 |
| Alex Constable     | 1/14 |
| Jessica Richardson | 1/15 |
| Anna Spencer       | 1/18 |
| Grady Pack         | 1/19 |
| Julie Snow         | 1/20 |
| Jennifer Spaulding | 1/20 |
| Elizabeth Barber   | 1/23 |
| Ava Grace Ickes    | 1/24 |
| Dottie Latta       | 1/24 |
| Theo Baulding      | 1/25 |
| Bryan Jones        | 1/26 |

### ANNIVERSARIES

|                               |      |
|-------------------------------|------|
| Phillip & Frankie Beaman (16) | 1/9  |
| Bryan & Sarah Ickes (12)      | 1/24 |

## OFFICE HOURS

The office will be closed Thursday and Friday this week.

## 2016 CONTRIBUTION ENVELOPES

Please be sure to pick up your envelope packet from the Fellowship Hall.

### Nursery:

Jan 3: Fran Haynes & Macon Baird  
Jan 10: Nicole Newton & Carol Erb

### Counter:

Jan 3: Bill Haynes  
Jan 10: Jim Knox

### Deacon Duty:

Jan 3: Stephen Robinson  
Jan 10: Stephen Robinson

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