The MacPherson Press January 2024

God calls MacPherson Presbyterian Church to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ, to make disciples, and to be His witness.



Why Do I Need To . . .? PASTOR JIM

As I was contemplating the arrival of 2024, I began to list all the things I must do and all the things I want to do. Each list kept growing and growing. I soon realized there are a number of things I must do in order to live a healthy physical life and a number of things I must do to live a healthy spiritual life as well. The things I realized are applicable to all people.

With regard to a good and healthy physical life, some of the things we need to do are have regular doctor and dentist visits, we need to eat, we need to drink water, we need to exercise, and we need air to breathe. There are many other



things we need in life to maintain good physical health as well. The Christian life is not unlike our physical life. There are numerous things we need to do in order to have good spiritual health as well. Just some of these things are believe in Jesus, communicate with God, learn to love, learn to forgive, and worship in spirit and in truth.

I came to realize many Christians may not be fully aware of the different things they can do to enjoy a better, healthier Christian life. So I thought I would preach on some of these things we need to do in order to enjoy a better, healthier Christian life.

The result of my ruminations is a series of sermons titled, "Why do I need to?" This series will last through the end of February. The topics I prayerfully selected for this series are: believe in Jesus, answer God's call, pray, worship, study God's word, participate in right fellowship, confess and repent, forgive, and share Jesus with others (give your testimony and be a witness). Other than the first two topics—believe in Jesus and answer God's call—there is

no particular order to these topics. I also want to make it clear this is not an exhaustive list. This list is, however, a collection of topics which I believe will help everyone who participates in them be drawn closer to Jesus.

All of these things and more we have all heard about and perhaps participated in. Yet, I hope to encourage everyone who participates in this two-month series to desire to grow more intimate in their relationship with God and devote more of their time to growing in faith. After all, relationships require time to be invested by all parties of the relationship. There should be no questions regarding Jesus' investment in His relationship with you. Remember, Jesus gave His life for you so you could be with Him eternally. What is or has been the sum of your investment into your relationship with Jesus?

I told many of you over the last few years I believe God is pruning not only MacPherson Church but all of the Christian community. Why would God need to prune us and the Christian community as a whole? The reason, in my estimation is clear: We are not producing fruit in the quantities God expects from us. Jesus explains:

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. You are



already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. Just as the Father has loved Me,

I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full" (John 15:1-11).

God doesn't simply desire us to produce fruit for His kingdom: He requires that we produce <u>much</u> fruit. Throughout the 231 years MacPherson Church has served God, there have been periods of low fruit production followed by periods of pruning and subsequent increase in fruit production. We are coming out of the pruning period, and now it is time for us to recognize we are God's laborers in His fields ripe for harvest.

The series of sermons projected for January and February will help us as individuals and as a community of faith to produce greater quantities of spiritual fruit. Moreover, for all who do participate and take heed to God's word, I know we will all become more Christ-like in every aspect of our daily lives. Join me as we sojourn through 2024 doing God's kingdom work.

Until the nets are full, Pastor Tim

The MacPherson Men have a new schedule for 2024, meeting monthly once again! In January they will meet on the 13th. All men and youth are invited to gather for a hearty breakfast in the Fellowship Hall at 7:30 am followed by a brief devotion and opportunities to serve the Lord. Please RSVP to the Church office by Thursday the 11th to let us know you plan to participate. In addition, update your 2024 Saturday calendars for the Men's Breakfast as follows: February 10, March 9, April 13, May 11, June 8, July 13, August 10, September 14, October 12, November 9, and December 14. Be sure to add this info to your important alarms/alerts as well! If you have questions or comments, contact David Hesnard or Steve Thrasher.

Upcoming Sermon Information

Why Do I Need To ...?

As we begin the New Year, I want us to undertake a series of sermons that I believe will help all of us be drawn closer to God's throne of mercy and grace. These sermons will also help us to grow more productive in our daily walk with Jesus. Of course, these suppositions will only come to pass if all of us apply what we learn to our lives each day. The sermons in January will include Why Do I Need to Believe in Jesus and Why Do I Need to Answer God's Call, among others. I do hope you will embark on this sojourn with me throughout 2024 and beyond.

January 7: Why Do I Need to Believe in Jesus?

Acts 4:5-12; Romans 6:20-23

January 14: Why Do I Need to Answer God's Call?

Jeremiah 1:4-10

January 21: Why Do I Need to Pray?

Jonah 2:1-10; Philippians 4:4-7

January 28: Why Do I Need to Study God's Word? Psalm 119:9-11, 105; 2 Timothy 2:14-16; 1 Peter 3:15

February 4: Why Do I Need to Worship?

Psalm 95:1-11; John 4:15-26

February 11: Why Do I Need to Forgive?

Matthew 6:1-15; John 20:19-23

February 14: Ash Wednesday

Why Do I Need to Confess and Repent?

Daniel 9:1-23; Luke 5:29-32

February 18: Why Do I Need to Participate in Right Fellowship?

Acts 2:37-47; 1 John 1:1-10

February 25: Why Do I Need to Share Jesus?

(testimony and witness)

Jonah 4:1-11; Acts 4:13-31

Session News for the New Year

<u>MacPherson Will Welcome the Elder Class of 2026</u> <u>at Ordination/Installation Sunday on January 14</u>

Tricia DeMann Norma Lindon Sharon Mozingo Jada Randall Megan Shoff Steve Thrasher

MacPherson Welcomes New Team Chairs for 2024

Bill Groening, APP
Tanya Anderson, Christian Education
Steve Thrasher, Long Range Planning

Thank You to the Returning Team Chairs for 2024

David Hesnard, CCT Don Mollett, Evangelism & Mission Mary Groening, Worship and Music; Finance

→What Else Is New for 2024?← **YOU!!!**

New Faces Needed for All These Teams!

Watch your bulletin on December 31 and January 7 for the opportunity to step-up and offer your service to the Lord through MacPherson's Session Teams: Admin/Personnel/Property; Christian Education; Congregational Care; Evangelism & Mission; Long Range Planning; Worship & Music.

Attention All Ladies of the Church!

Sunday, January 21, 2024 Women of the Church Luncheon

If you are a woman of the church, high school age and above, please make plans to come enjoy a delicious lunch and a time of fellowship with all the women of MacPherson Church.

This potluck luncheon will immediately follow the 11:00 service on Sunday, January 21, in the Fellowship Hall.

Beverages are provided but we ask you to bring something to share—and use your imagination!

Casserole, Charcuterie Board, or Soup Japchae, Kimchi, or Mondu Spanish Rice, Refried Beans, or Guac & Chips Your Favorite Chicken Salad or Pimento Cheese Dessert, Dessert, Dessert!

Let's Fill the Fellowship Hall with Great Food and All the Ladies of MacPherson Church!



New Sunday School Class!

Finding Jesus in Every Book of the Bible

Have you ever thought Jesus was only in the New Testament—and dreaded wading through the Old Testament to get to the "good stuff"? Join the new "Finding Jesus in Every Book in the Bible" Sunday School class and share a journey of discovery with fellow believers.



We will use *The Bible Code* by O.S. Hawkins and go from Genesis to Revelation as we study Scripture through the light of Christ. In Exodus, He is the Passover Lamb. In Deuteronomy, He is the Bread of Life. In Song of Solomon, He is our Bridegroom. And that's just a start! We will understand His presence in the Old Testament in a new way as we seek Jesus in every book of the Bible—sometimes in words, sometimes in shadow, sometimes in prophecy. As Jesus revealed Himself to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, He can be found "in all the Scriptures" (Luke 24:27). And as we learn to find Jesus in every verse, we realize His constant presence in our lives as well.

Here is a sneak peek at some of the tools & strategies that will help us find Jesus where we do not necessarily expect to see Him: begin with prayer; look for key words or phrases that point us to Jesus' presence; watch for contrasts/differences or comparisons/similarities (words such as *but*, *like*, *as*); look for expressions of time (until, then, when, after); and much more!

This new class begins on January 7 and will meet every Sunday in the Parlor from 10:00 until 10:45 am. There is no need to buy the Hawkins book; you just need your Bible and class handouts that are provided. Join us in an exciting journey of seeking Jesus in unfamiliar places! See David Hesnard for details.

From The Finance Team

Mary Groening, Chair



As we closed out 2023, your Finance Team worked diligently to develop a church budget for 2024. We will be presenting that budget to the Session for approval this month, and to you at the Congregational Meeting in February.

We ended the year having raised 56% of our Capital Campaign goal. We will continue to work to increase our Building Fund as we know that even more new HVAC systems are in our future.

We also know that there will be financial challenges in the new year, just as there were in the last year. As well as challenges, there will also be opportunities for outreach and growth in 2024. As Michael Josephson advises, "Let us approach the New Year with resolve to find the opportunities hidden in each new day."

It is with confidence that we, as a church, guided by God, will meet and overcome the challenges and embrace the opportunities of the New Year.

In closing, we, the Finance Team, would like to thank each of you for your support in 2023 and in anticipation of your continued support in 2024. We know that God has a plan for MacPherson, and it is only through our continued work as a community of believers that we can accomplish His plans for us.

'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity, to give you a future and a hope.'

~ ~ Jeremiah 29:11

From APP

Steve Thrasher, Chair

First, thanks to everyone who came out for the churchwide work day at the Manse on Saturday, December 9! (See pictures next page.) We had a total of 21 people in attendance (over 10 percent of our active membership!), and collectively we made a huge dent in the overdue lawn maintenance. We loaded between 8 and 12 cubic yards of debris from the lawn, which has probably been accumulating for... way too long! This will help us to be good stewards of the property, as well as good neighbors to Forest Creek. There will be an announcement for another cleanup day, to remove the remaining leaves from the yard in 2024.

The search for alternative insurance providers continues, but there are only three nationwide insurance providers who cater to churches, and we are with one of them. I have a call with one of the others just before Christmas, so more to follow on this, as it's an issue which will stick with me as I transition to a different team on the Session.

The annual budget for 2024 is a hot item which will receive my input before you receive this newsletter. As part of the transition of team leaders, Bill Groening and I will work together to complete this and submit to the Finance Team. No sooner had I submitted last month's newsletter article than we had an issue with the HVAC which serves the offices, Parlor, and the halls around that part of the church. We have a "Band Aid" solution in place, but that system must eventually be replaced in 2024. At least we can plan for it, some! Happy New Year!









Worship and Music

Mary Groening, Chair

Another Year! WOW—time does fly! The new year is a time for us to look back over the last year and look forward to the new. Looking back at 2023 we see all we accomplished in the past year. At Thanksgiving, we especially enjoyed the return of the choir under the leadership of Beth Walters as well as music from the Handbell Choir. We hope to hear more from them this next year.

The beginning of the new year also gives us pause as we consider our personal growth during the past year. It is the time when so many of us make resolutions to change in some way, becoming a better person. We make resolutions that we so often do not keep. As the author D.S. Mixell quipped:

"Many years ago, I made a New Year's resolution to never make New Year's resolutions. ...It's been the only resolution I've ever kept!"

Perhaps that rings true for you also. And yet, the first sermon of 2023 was about building good habits as opposed to making resolutions. We learned that habits, while they can be broken in a few weeks, take six weeks to form. Good habits are meant to be permanent, life-altering changes.

The habits we were all encouraged to work on and embrace in 2023 were the habit of prayer and Bible study. We learned that good prayer and study habits are developed through intentionality, repetition, diligence, and practice. As I look back on 2023 I have to ask myself "how did I do?" Perhaps, like me, you want and need to continue to develop good prayer and Bible study habits in 2024, for we know that: "The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much" (James 5:16).

And yes, there is much that the Music & Worship team would like to accomplish in the new year. In addition to all

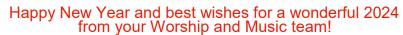
the programs currently in place, we would like to see the music ministry grow. We'd love to have soloists or groups willing to sing like the ladies choir (at right), who performed on



Christmas eve. Perhaps you could work with our little ones to develop a youth choir. We are open to your input, your suggestions, and your involvement. Please consider joining the Worship and Music Team! Help us create a robust, meaningful worship and music ministry at MacPherson. Consider that "What the new year brings to you will depend a great deal on what you bring to the new year" (Vern McLellan).

In closing, I want to thank all those who participated in worship and music this past year:

- The Angelics
- Our pianist, Mary Mac McLean
- Our faithful team member, Martha Treneman
- Our Acolytes
- Our communion bread bakers
- Our flower coordinator, Janice Moore
- Our talented decorator, Vickie Cummings
- Our special service participants
- All those who showed up to decorate the sanctuary and put up the Christmas tree (and take it down)
- Each and every one of you who made 2023 a wonderful blessed year!



There are far better things ahead than any we leave behind.

C. S. Lewis



From Congregational Care

David Hesnard, Chair

The new year has arrived, and I would like to thank the Elders of the class of 2023—Neal Bullard, Awilda Reyes, and Buck Thrailkill—as they leave the Session after six years of dedicated and sacrificial service. I also thank Elders Tanya Anderson and Steve Thrasher for their superb service to the Session as well. Tanya is moving from CCT to lead the Christian Education Team, and Steve is moving from APP to lead the Long Range Planning Team. I would also like to give thanks and a shout-out to the unsung folks who made the Congregational Care Team function so flawlessly over the past year: Betty Jo Dent, Tricia DeMann, Liz Hart, Elizabeth Mollett, Janice Moore, Rob Stewart, Sharon Mozingo, Vicki Cummings, David Carter, and Jada Randall. Thank you all for a job well done.

As we move into 2024, the mission of the Congregational Care Team (CCT) continues to recognize and assist in meeting the spiritual, physical, emotional, and relational needs of the MacPherson Church family and friends that God brings our way. We are dedicated to the ministry of caring for Jesus's people with Christian love, concern, and compassion. We seek to serve the Lord by encouraging each other as we strengthen the bonds of fellowship within our church family. CCT endeavors to lead, sponsor, and support the following activities and actions throughout the year as fitting: Dinners for Eight, Wednesday Fellowship Suppers, Women of the Church, Men of the Church, Faith Freezer Meals, Meal Train Dinners, Homecoming, Mary McArthur Picnic, New Member Recognition, Funeral Receptions, TLC Dinners, Officer Nominating Team, and Community events all in support of Session priorities and guidance. We welcome any volunteers who feel that God is calling them to work on this team. We meet the first Thursday of every month, at 7:00 pm, in the Fellowship Hall.

In Prayer and Service, David

BSA Troop 771 Update



See paper copy for this content



See paper copy for this content

From Christian Ed

Bill Groening, Christian Ed

What comes with the New Year? New Year's resolutions, of course! The Christian Education team would like to suggest that participating in Sunday School would be an excellent choice. Borrowing from Pastor Jim's current Book and Bible



study, *More Jesus, Less Religion*, we have a wonderful theme for 2024. There are new classes starting in the new year, and one of them has just the right fit for you. As we learn more about Jesus, there is another bonus, too! What is that you ask? You will be in fellowship with other members of MacPherson and Jesus will be with you as He promised:

"Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." (Matthew 18:19-20)

The year 2023 presented us with many challenges, but we have much to be thankful for also. As my tenure as the chair of Christian Education comes to an end, there are many people who have guided me along the way. We have done a good job, but I know that it was not done alone. I have many to thank for this success.

- Thanks to our Sunday School teachers.
- Thanks to our parents who bring their children to church.
- Thanks to all of you who support the Youth Group activities.
- A special thanks to Pastor Jim for all that he does as the Pastor, and especially for what he does with the youth of the church.

The Youth Group closed 2023 in style, baking cookies, caroling, the Christmas party, and ending the year with the Youth Group Lock-in.

One of my favorite Bible passages is Ephesians 2:8-10 and I think this is a good place to end.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

This is a common passage that we all have heard. But sometimes we forget that last verse, which tells us

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

God has saved us through grace, but He has a purpose for us to do good works, which He has prepared in advance for us to do!







From Evangelism & Mission

Don Mollett, Chair

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:1-2)

This verse from Hebrews challenges us to do great things in the name of Christ. If He could give so much of Himself for us, then surely we can serve others with this same attitude.

MacPherson Church continues to support local outreach missions, such as the Scouting programs (both Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts), Operation INASMUCH, Habitat for Humanity, the Episcopal Farm Workers Migrant Ministry, and others.

This year saw our return to the West Virginia Cabell/ Lincoln Work Camp focusing on adult and youth Christian fellowship while conducting home repairs for low-income people in the area. We look forward in this coming year to return and renew our friendships and mission work. We welcome and encourage both adult and youth participation, and I pray for all to faithfully consider embarking on this trip. As we move closer to this coming year's trip, more information and details will follow. But you can reserve the dates for the trip on your calendar right now: June 16-22. What do you need to do to ensure you can take part in this trip this year? Now is the time to get started!

Upcoming Events

January 4, 7:00 pm: The first Thursday of every month, the E&M Team meets in Room 228 at 7:00 pm. I encourage all who wish to learn more about the mission work of the church to come and join us.

January 19, 7:00 am: Operation INASMUCH breakfast support. As always, we look forward to any volunteers who wish to help.

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In closing, I want to share five inspiring Bible verses reaffirming that God is calling all of us to His work in missions.

Matthew 28:19-20 - "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Acts 13:47 - "For so the Lord has commanded us: 'I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth."

Mark 16:15 - "He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."

Isaiah 6:8 - "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!"

1 Chronicles 16:24 - "Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples."

I ask that all who read this newsletter prayerfully consider how you can answer Gods Call in Mission Work. In Jesus's name, amen

MacPherson Presbyterian Church January 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Happy New Year! 7:30 am Monday Morning Prayer Meeting (FR) New Year's Holiday OFFICE CLOSED	2 4:00 pm Take Down Christmas Decorations (SVSarious Areas) 6:30 pm Bible 101 (#2.05)	3 4:30 pm McCrafters (FH) 6:00 pm 8Y08 6 Bible Study (FH/ K) 6:30 pm Praisse Band Practice (S) 7:00 pm Freedom to Grow (#205)	Session Team Meetings See Below Store Stor	\$9.00 am—Noon Classical Conversations Tutur Meeting (#205/TN) 7.00 pm 305. Seekers of Sobriety (FH. K)	9
7 Communion 12:35 pm Youth Fellowship (FH/K)	8 7.30 am Monday Morning Prayer Meating (H) 9.00—3.00 pm Dildren's Hope Alliance Staff (#283A) 6.00 pm GS Troop 821 (#728. #283A) 7.00 pm GSA Troop 771 (FH)	9 8.00 am—4:00 pm Classical Conversations Homeschoolers (Various Rooms—See 1878 (#122.#124) 5.30 pm Girl Scouts Troop 886 (#1/ K. 233A, 224) 6.30 pm Bible (IDI (#205)	4:30 pm McCrafters (FH) 6:00 pm BYD8 8 Bible Sudy (FH/ K) 6:30 pm Praise Band Practice (S) 7:00 pm Freedom to Grow (#20S)	### \$4.00—3.00 pm DNA STAFF (#228.0) 10.00 pm Drete 5 (#H) 6.00 pm Presede Cherk with David 8 Pestor Lim (S/You lube) 6.30 pm Prese and Presence (S) 7.00 pm Pset be Board of Review (Writous) 7.00 pm Pset bar's Boak Study (#2.05/Zom))	12 6:00 pm Parlor Reserved Pastor 7:00 pm 308: Seekers of Sobriety (FH. K)	13 730 am MacPherson Men (FH.70)

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January 2024 – Jesus' I Am #4

Verse 1: Jesus Is the Way, Truth, & Life John 14:6

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Verse 2: Jesus and the Father Are One John 14:11

"Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves."

Verse 3 - Jesus Is the True Vine

John 15:1

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser."

Verse 4: We Are Jesus' Branches

John 15:5

"I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."

Verse 5: Jesus Prays for the Believers

John 17:9

"I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours."

Verse 6 – Pray for the Leaders of Habitat for Humanity, Operation Inasmuch & Our City

Psalms 127:1

"Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain."

January Birthdays

See paper copy for this content





See paper copy for this content

MacPherson Presbyterian Church

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Pastor

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Church Secretary René Bahrenfuss