



The Church At The Bridge

Stockbridge Presbyterian Church

4740 N. Henry Blvd., Stockbridge, GA 30281  
www.spcusa.org 770-474-7777

Rev. Betsy Turner, Interim Pastor

DECEMBER 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 7:00 pm Kid's Fellowship 7:30 pm Churchwide Fellowship via Zoom	3 10:00 am Women's Bible Study 7:30 pm Let's Talk via Zoom	4	5
6 10:00 am Adult SS, via Zoom Recorded Worship	7	8	9 7:00 pm Kid's Fellowship 7:30 pm Churchwide Fellowship via Zoom	10 10:00 am Women's Bible Study	11	12
13 10:00 am Adult SS, via Zoom Recorded Worship	14	15	16 7:00 pm Kid's Fellowship 7:30 pm Churchwide Fellowship via Zoom	17 10:00 am Women's Bible Study 7:30 pm Let's Talk via Zoom	18	19
20 10:00 am Adult SS, via Zoom 11:00 am Live Worship with Communion	21 Blue Christmas virtual prayer hours for healing and wholeness	22	23 7:00 pm Kid's Fellowship 7:30 pm Churchwide Fellowship via Zoom Office Closed	24 4:00 pm Christmas Eve Drive-in Service Office Closed	25 Merry Christmas!!	26
27 10:00 am Adult SS Recorded Worship	28	29	30 7:00 pm Kid's Fellowship 7:30 pm Churchwide Fellowship Via Zoom	31 New Year's Eve Office Closed		

SPC SPOTLIGHT

SPC Family,

It seems like every year, there is a particular song, whether sacred or secular, that seems like the perfect fit for that year. A few years ago, I had a particularly hard and sad year and that winter "In the Bleak Midwinter" felt about right (in fact, you'll be hearing more of my reflections on this hymn in my sermon in a few weeks). My two boys have birthdays in late October and early December, so in those years of their birth, I remember focusing on the line "the weary world rejoices" from O Holy Night. When I worked in a rural church, far from the city lights, I remember walking out of church on a very cold, dark, and starry Christmas Eve, humming "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear" with new understanding. And the very first Christmas that I was a mom, I thought a lot about "Winter Wonderland," because of the wonder and joy I saw in my 10-month-old's eyes.

So what about 2020? For my snaggle-toothed 5 year old, this will be a very "All I Want For Christmas Is My Two Front Teeth" kind of year, but what about for the rest of us in this strange year of upheaval, pandemic, election, and a Christmas like no other? As I sat down to write this, I thought of "It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas..." But is it? I've seen some Christmas lights up in my neighborhood, the TV commercials have turned red and green and jingly, and the calendar says December is upon us. Your Discipleship Committee, Ward Gailey, and I have been talking about and planning for this season since mid-September. But at least for me, that festive feeling of anticipation is hard to come by this year.

Well, then, what about "It's the most wonderful time of the year"? We are looking at a holiday season very different than what we are used to, and for a lot of us that feels more challenging than wonderful. The big Christmas dinner, the neighborhood cookie exchange, taking the kids to see Santa, and a lot else will have to be skipped this season. To be clear, missing the usual gatherings and celebrations is absolutely the right thing to do during this continuing pandemic. In fact, one of you wisely named that you are willing to skip all the festivities this Christmas so that it won't be the last Christmas for you or someone else. That's wise and loving. But it's a not all that wonderful. Lots of us are grieving the ways this season will be strange and yes (to use the most popular word of 2020) unprecedented.

So if you're like so many of us who are feeling less than "holly-jolly" this year, not really in the mood to "rock around the Christmas tree," I propose that we create our own mashup of Christmas songs to suit 2020. I say we take a dash of wistful longing - I'm thinking of the lyrics "There's no place like home for the holidays" and "I'll be home for Christmas... if only in my dreams..." Then we can mix in a bit of anticipation, the eagerness for celebration and joy - stuff like "we need a little Christmas, right this very minute..." and an Advent classic like "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus." Maybe a sadder song like "Blue Christmas" or Coventry Carol. And perhaps this is especially the year for those hymns that focus on the incarnation, the miracle of God-made-flesh. One of my favorites, "Once in Royal David's City," contains the line "he was little, weak, and helpless; tears and smiles like us he knew... and he feels for all our sadness and he shares in all our gladness." What a beautiful reminder that Jesus stands with us in the fullness of the human

experience, even and especially in a time of suffering and disorientation and a Christmas that it is anything but usual.

And more good news: we are figuring out ways to connect this season. While we can't worship in the sanctuary, we will be worshipping online (check the worship schedule on page 2 for details) and on Christmas Eve at 4:00pm we will gather in person for a drive-in worship service in our parking lot. We will be sharing details about this event closer to the time, but plan to arrive by 3:45, stay in your car for the short service. There will be an opportunity to light electric candles and to hear the Christmas story along with some of the music that is such a part of the season.

Of course the best news is... well, the Good News. The glad tidings of Jesus' birth! The promise that God has in fact become flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. And that will be true, Christ will be born, even though we have to skip the usual parties and gatherings, even without some of the long-held traditions that we love. This year, once again, we will celebrate - in new ways, but perhaps also with a renewed sense of how much we truly need the hope and redemption and light and peace that were born that long ago night in Bethlehem. Maybe this unusual Advent/Christmas, with a few more silent nights, will help us to focus on that incredible gift.

A Holy Advent and a Merry Christmas to all of you!

Betsy



A Prayer for Christmas 2020  
written by Rev. Kelly Fitzgerald

God-with-us, we have a long list of things we want to see on this Christmas season. Experiences we want to have, feelings we want to feel, friends and family we want to hug, songs we want to sing, and even cookies we want to eat. We hold all that before you today. Some of those things might be realized. Many will not. But still, Christmas will come. You still show up in our world and fill us with awe and wonder. You will once again renew our hearts and minds to fully hope, to express unconditional love, to share contagious joy, and find peace - peace that passes all understanding.

So, we release to you the ghosts of Christmas past and ask for the Spirit to fill us with energy and imagination for the Christmas that is to come. In your holy name, Amen



- Dec 1 Shannon Huggins
- Dec 4 Stephanie Dunn
- Dec 7 Thomas Baxter
- Dec 7 Bert Turner
- Dec 9 Chantal Daniels
- Dec 19 Channah Daniels
- Dec 21 Maxwell Coutin-Baxter
- Dec 22 John Abbott
- Dec 22 Leslie DeSimone
- Dec 22 Claudia Szeto
- Dec 23 Collin Roberts
- Dec 27 Joan Scott
- Dec 31 Joyce Andrews

THE SPC SESSION  
Jim Beisner, Clerk of Session

- Discipleship**  
Aaron Roberts (20)  
Paul Szeto (21)  
Terry Holmes (21)

- Witness**  
Stephanie Phillips Ayoola (20)  
Arlene Lathrop (22)  
Lee Hart (22)

- Resources**  
Gene Ingram (21)  
Kim Seal (20)



- Nov 29** First Sunday of Advent - HOPE  
Recorded Worship  
Isaiah 40:1-11  
Luke 1:46-55  
"Waiting in Hope"
- Dec 6** Second Sunday of Advent - PEACE  
Recorded Worship  
Luke 1:67-89  
Romans 8:19-25  
"In the Bleak Midwinter"
- Dec 13** Third Sunday of Advent - JOY  
Recorded Worship  
Special Nativity Presentation
- Dec 20** Fourth Sunday of Advent - LOVE  
Communion Service on zoom & Facebook Live  
Luke 1-26:37  
"The Weary World"
- Dec 24** Christmas Eve  
4:00 pm Drive-In Service, recorded worship will also be available  
Luke 2: 1-20  
John 1:1-14
- Dec 27** First Sunday in Christmas  
Recorded Worship  
Luke 2:22-40  
"Anna and Simeon"

Recorded worship will be available on the website (spcusa.org), Facebook (Facebook.com/StockbridgePres), or listen by phone at 857-385-7514.

**LET'S TALK** For the month of December, our Let's Talk conversation about race and racism will be meeting on Thursdays - December 3 & 17 at 7:30 pm. Please email Stockbridgeinterim@gmail.com or call the church office if you would like to join this group.

**Coat Closet**



The weather is turning colder, so we are now collecting long sleeve shirts, small blankets, socks, scarves, gloves for the Coat Closet. Items can be dropped by the church office Monday-Thursday, 9 - 1 pm.



Joseph's Pantry needs:

- Canned Peas**
- Canned Potatoes**

We are so grateful for all the donations given to Joseph's Pantry, and at present our selves are stocked. This is due to your tremendous generosity. We continue to make appointment and serve Henry County residents. The two items listed above are the only things we are low on at this time.



**A Word from Ward**

We have been very busy re-inventing our music ministry. Last month we created a virtual audio Lord's Prayer. Last week, you heard a virtual Doxology which has been improved this week via editing. In order to do these things, I had to literally "go to school." How? I used tutorials on YouTube and there are some tech-savvy colleagues around who offer excellent advice.

Last Sunday, Laura and Linda were featured online singing a duet. Many thanks to Laura, Linda, Marie Anne, Monica Andrea, Maxwell and Monica for trekking to my home in Conyers to rehearse and record. I have also been on the road, rehearsing with Sandra and Sophie in their homes.

Upcoming recordings will be coming soon from Arlene and Lexie, Greg, Terry, Sophie, Jeffrey, and Sandra.

Do you have a song you'd like to record? Just let me know.



Join us on Sunday, December 20 at 11:00 am on zoom for a live worship and communion. It will be livestreamed to Facebook and available on our website and call in number afterward. Remember you will be preparing your elements for the communion part of the service.

Check email or contact Betsy or the church office for the Zoom information for this meeting.



Monday, December 21, the longest night of the year, Betsy will be hosting Blue Christmas virtual prayer hours for healing and wholeness from 3-4:00 pm by phone 678-642-9810 and on the Adult Sunday School /Worship zoom (see announcement below for the link). Calls will be answered one at a time (call back if you get a busy or voicemail!) and folks will be let into the Zoom one at a time (wait in the waiting room for your turn) for individual prayer.

**Christmas Eve Service**



Christmas Eve, December 24, at 4:00 pm, we will host a Drive-In Service with candlelight and carols. More details to come, but please plan to attend. A prerecorded worship will also be available.



Come be a part of our Wednesday night fellowship! We get together via zoom each Wednesday night - 7:00 pm for kids, and 7:30 pm for church-wide fellowship!

Zoom information:  
Check email or contact Betsy for the Zoom information for this meeting.



We would love to have you join us! Our Adult Sunday school is meeting via zoom every Sunday morning at 10:00 am.

Zoom information:  
Check email or contact Betsy for the Zoom information for this meeting.

**Session Report**

**Special Meeting - October 11, 2020**

Rev. Turner stated the reason for the meeting was to address issues that affect Stockbridge Presbyterian Church caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

The Session approved the following minutes of previous called meetings: 9/20/2020

The Session approved the SPC 2021 operating budget.

**Committee Reports**

**Resources:** Kim briefly discussed the financial position of the church. Resources will address this issue in greater detail at their meeting.

**Discipleship:** Aaron announced the church received a technology grant from Presbytery for \$1,000.00 along with a \$300.00 grant for Covid-19 mitigation supplies.

**Witness:** Arlene discussed the drive thru event scheduled from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm on 11/1/2020. Church members can drop off items for Joseph's Pantry, school supplies, coat closet along with financial donations.

No new information on preparing the loan forgiveness submission for the Paycheck Protection Program.

Stephanie reported the Elder Nominating Committee has one person that agreed to serve as an Elder. The committee will meet again in early November.

**Gathering for Worship**

The Session approved no activities at church facilities through November 30, 2020 except for drive thru events on 11/1/2020 and 11/29/2020 and activities to record and prepare for Advent. There was one dissenting vote.

Aaron started a discussion on finding ways we can gather rather than keeping the church facilities closed. A lengthy and productive discussion ensued. Stephanie will take these thoughts to the Reimagining Task Force for discussion and action.

**PNC** - Aaron provided an update on the PNC's progress in finding our next full-time pastor. The PNC is meeting every other week.

Betsy updated the Session on the conversation on race discussions, adult Sunday School and Kid's Bible Study.

Betsy led a discussion on proposed activities for Advent. The Reimagining Task Force is reviewing these activities and will bring recommendations to the Session

**Session Business** – The Session decided to have a called meeting via video conference on Sunday 10/25/2020 at 3:00 pm to discuss additional actions as dictated by the situation concerning coronavirus.

The reason for the meeting having been accomplished, Rev. Turner closed the meeting with prayer.

**Special Meeting - October 25, 2020**

Rev. Turner stated the reason for the meeting was to address issues that affect Stockbridge Presbyterian Church caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

The Session approved the following minutes of previous called meetings: 10/11/2020.

**Committee Reports**

**Resources:** Kim briefly discussed the September financial statement. Resources presented a motion to terminate the employment of Gena Ridgeway as Accompanist effective 12/1/2020. The Session approved the motion.

**Discipleship:** Aaron reported the committee is looking at Advent activities to include a drive-up Christmas Eve worship service in a church parking lot.

**Witness:** Stephanie provided an update on the drive thru event scheduled for 11/1/2020 to include logistics and safety protocols. The committee is also exploring using gift cards for this year's Christmas Basket ministry.

Stephanie is looking into being able to restrict certain items from purchase with the gift cards.

No new information on preparing the loan forgiveness submission for the Paycheck Protection Program.

Stephanie reported the Elder Nominating Committee has one person that agreed to serve as an Elder. The committee will meet again in early November.

**Gathering for Worship**

Gene let the Session know that the Reimagining Task Force continues to recommends no activities in church facilities other than the ones previously approved. The task force will revisit this matter at their next meeting paying, attention to whether the number of Covid-19 cases are rising in Georgia and Henry County.

**PNC** - Aaron provided an update on the PNC's progress in finding our next full-time pastor. The PNC is meeting Monday 10/26/2020. The PNC met with Cassandra Morrow and John Callahan from Presbytery concerning progress of the search.

Betsy updated the Session on the conversation on race discussions, adult Sunday School and Kid's Bible Study.

Betsy led a discussion on today's worship service. She enlisted several volunteers to read scripture for the 11/8/2020 recorded worship service. The Session agreed to take down the brackets used for holding the banners in the sanctuary.

Gene provided the Session with an update on the damage to the pavilion and power line from a tree branch. The damage is less extensive than first thought. All repairs have been completed.

The Session approved conducting communion at the 11/22/2020 and 12/20/2020 zoom worship services.

The Session approved applying for a grant from Presbytery to support the Goodness & Groceries ministry.

The Session approved moving the congregational meeting scheduled for 11/1/2020 to 12/20/2020.

**Session Business**

The Session decided to have a called meeting via video conference on Sunday 11/15/2020 at 3:00 pm to discuss additional actions as dictated by the situation concerning coronavirus.

The reason for the meeting having been accomplished, Rev. Turner closed the meeting with prayer.



Same as before, you will pull in on Burke St, be greeted by volunteers and your pastor. You'll drop off items for food pantry, coat closet, and church offerings. For this event, we require everyone to wear a mask correctly (over mouth and nose), and to stay in their car.

Ways to give. Give on-line, below is a link to donate to SPC. You can also mail your checks to the church or drop it by the office Monday-Thursday 9 - 1 pm. Thank you!

