



## TRYON TRUMPET

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# Church dresses for the (sea)Son



A festive crew decorated our church for Christmas on November 24, with several days to spare before the beginning of Advent. Susan Woodcock took the picture of Jane Wilson showing an appropriate ornament, while Richard Kennedy captured the image of Bill McCall. More photos of decking the halls are on Page 13.



# Advent study continues with breakfast



Allan Purtill leads the first study November 30.

What words do you associate with Advent?

Those attending the first Advent study November 30 suggested Awakening, Arrival, Waiting, Hope, Candles, Preparing, Pensive, Longing, Four Weeks and Chrismon.

The session was well attended, with some bringing children and grandchildren. All are welcome! In fact, all families are invited to the second class – which will include breakfast in the Fellowship Hall – Sunday, December 7.

Pastor Allan Purtill led the first meeting. He began with a getting-to-know-each-other exercise “since we’re all going on a journey together.” The journey, which Amy McGrath will co-lead, will continue through Christmas and all the way to Epiphany.

The initial study included a reading and discussion of Isaiah 2:1-5, which offers words of warning and hope. Where is our hope? Of course, it is the coming of Christ.

## Don't miss all these special events at TPC

**December 7** will start with Sunday breakfast and Advent study at 9:20 in the Fellowship Hall, followed by a communion service at 10:30.

**December 13** is the TPC Family Christmas Drop-in from 5:30 to 7 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Please sign up and bring a Christmas ornament to decorate the Christmas tree in the Fellowship Hall and a canned good for our Blessing Box.

**December 14** will have a special “Christmas Choir” focus with guest musicians during the 10:30 worship service. Advent study is at 9:30. We will send off a group of Christmas carolers at 4 that afternoon.

**December 21** will bring our cherished Christmas Pageant during the 10:30 worship service. (There will be a full rehearsal on Saturday, December 20, from 10 a.m. to noon. If you are interested in getting involved, please see Deanna Bancroft or Amy McGrath for more information.) Advent study at 9:30.

**December 24** is our 6 p.m. Christmas Eve communion service.

**December 28** will feature Lessons and Carols. The Advent-Epiphany study continues at 9:30 a.m.

**January 4** is Epiphany Sunday. The final Advent-Epiphany study is at 9:30 a.m.

We will share a joyful and meaningful celebration of the Advent and Christmas seasons.



# True meekness is not weakness

The third Beatitude is “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.” In today’s culture, this makes very little sense. But here, the meaning of “meek” is totally opposite of today’s understanding, such as a meek little person. In our culture, people are encouraged to be strong and forceful. Once again, Jesus turns everything upside down.

According to some scholars, this Beatitude is akin to the first one, but not a repetition. For example, if poor in spirit is the opposite of proud in spirit, then meek is the opposite of aggressive. Jesus is referring to persons who are truly humble in their reverence. They are not aggressive or covetous. They are not concerned with rights, only their duties.



Church of the Primacy of St. Peter, Israel.

Jesus was fully aware of His own people’s pride of race, the Romans’ pride of power, and the Greeks’ pride of knowledge. This third Beatitude must have cut into the culture of the day as it does now! The meek can never show brute force about anything; they can only be conscious of others and hardly ever of themselves. Instead of being in the sunlight, they are content to be in the shadow where God keeps watch of His own. In our world, where anything terrible can happen, it is the meek who may be our only hope.

As I studied the meek, I began to think about who would want to inherit the earth as it is today. I love mountains and valleys, even very small towns. You can have the big cities! So, inheriting the earth was a puzzle to me. However, what is important to notice is the word “inherit.” This meekness has a reward: It inherits the earth. The word inherit comes as a gift or legacy. The meek would never seize it. It is a gift to them, and they are to do with it as they see fit. After all, isn’t that what an inheritance is all about?

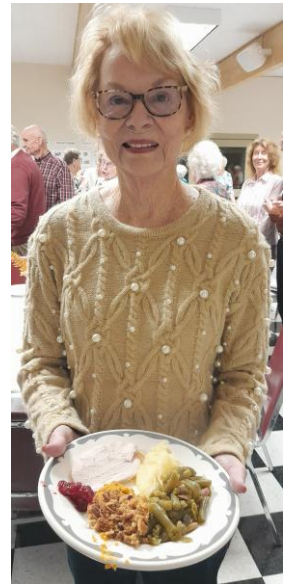
Jesus Himself is meek. His intent was only to do God’s will. He knew full well what was going to happen to Him. In the garden, with reverence, Jesus asked God, “If it is possible to let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.” In going through the humiliation of the cross, Jesus’ meekness screamed to all humanity. From his birth to the Resurrection, we see meekness.

Once more, Jesus turns history upside down, especially as we approach Mary’s song of praise during Advent. We hear God’s “mercy is for those who fear Him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly” (Luke 1:50-52).

How meek and lowly we find an infant in a stable. How meek and lowly we see shepherds abiding in the field keeping watch over their flock by night. An angel appears with a multitude of angels bringing Good News of Great Joy, the Savior needed by all of us!

**By Rev. Mary A. Potter**

# Feast and fellowship



Thanks to the Fellowship Committee and Cook Team for a wonderful Thanksgiving dinner November 20! Please do it again next year!







## ‘Shepherds’ are commissioned, ready to start

“Shepherds” were commissioned during worship November 16 as TPC launched its new Shepherd Ministry. This followed months of preparation by our Congregational Care Committee, led by Bonnie Sakos, and Rev. Lynnette Sills, our Parish Associate.

The congregation has been divided into “flocks,” with each Shepherd responsible for keeping in regular contact with each flock member. The program invites everyone who is part of our church, whether a member or not, to find connection, comfort, compassion, friendship and fellowship with other followers of Christ.

In addition to quarterly, or more frequent, contact by the Shepherd, everyone is welcome to call his or her Shepherd anytime to share pastoral care needs and prayer concerns. Of course, anyone may still get in touch with Pastor Allan Purtill or any member of the ministry staff.

Those participating in the commissioning service pictured above were, from left, Pastor Allan Purtill, Charlie and Susan Speight, Bonnie Sakos, Gail Muir, Gretchen Morris, Cherie Brooks, Joanne Alderman, Jacque and Woody Headden, Caroline Brown, Kim Boswood, Ellen Hendrickson, MaryAnn Sloan, Doris and Tom Clark, Denny Hill, Catherine Lynch, Rev. Lynnette Sills and Amy McGrath.

## Matthew 25 drive continues until December 14

The Matthew 25 drive is extended until December 14. The response has been strong, especially with many coats donated, but the extra time can bring in more needed items. In addition to new and gently used coats (for all ages) for Polk Referral Center, we are accepting canned goods for bagged meals (see list in narthex) to support our Blessing Box and personal hygiene items for adult DSS clients. Just as Jesus taught us in Matthew 25, we hope to help clothe, feed and care for the least among us!

# Congregation welcomes new members

Michael and Laurin Baker reached “a different stage of life” when their third and youngest child left for college. They now have two sons in college and a daughter who’s a recent graduate. They realized that the strong youth program at First Baptist Church in Landrum wasn’t as important to them anymore. So, they began looking around for a new start at another church and a “fresh perspective,” Michael said.

After visiting TPC for a few Sundays, “it felt like the right place,” Laurin said. “Theologically and spiritually, it felt right.”

Both Bakers work at Landrum High School. Laurin teaches English and French. Michael is the athletic trainer and teaches a sports medicine class. They were very active in their earlier church and look forward to getting to know their new church.



Laurin and Michael Baker



Bill McCall

Bill McCall has spent his entire life in Tryon except for four years at Wofford College, three years at UNC Dental School and another three years as chief of a U.S. Army Dental Clinic in Frankfurt, West Germany. Returning home, he practiced dentistry and contributed to the community in many other ways, including as the local Scoutmaster for many years.

He was also an active member of Tryon United Methodist Church. While he’s sad that church closed, he has found a new church home with us.

“I really like the energy and the friendliness,” he said. “I’m not comfortable without a church. It’s what I do on Sunday mornings. And I love to sing.” Bill has sung in a church choir for most of his life, and he is continuing here.

Bill and his wife, Becky, have two grown daughters.

Bill and Michael and Laurin were introduced to our congregation as new members November 23. Welcome, Bill, Michael and Laurin!

## Tryon Trumpet

The Tryon Trumpet is a digital publication of Tryon Presbyterian Church and its Membership Committee, chaired by Rennie Habel. The editor is Doug Clark, [dougclark55@gmail.com](mailto:dougclark55@gmail.com). Your contributions – suggestions, articles, devotionals, photographs – are welcome.

Thanks for help with this edition go to Mary Potter, MaryAnn Sloan, Susan Woodcock, Richard Kennedy, Wes Elam, Amy McGrath, Bill Sullivan, Jon McGrath, Jeff Carter, Ken Shull, Gail Muir, Cindy Allen, Allan Purtill, Kim McPherson and the Presbytery of Western North Carolina.



# Three are elected to serve on the Session

The congregation elected three elders November 9 to serve on the Session's Class of 2028. They are Jeff Carter, Gail Muir and Ken Shull.

This will be Gail's second consecutive three-year term. Class of 2025 Session members Edward Harrelson, Dennis Hill and Bill Sullivan are stepping down at the end of the year.

Jeff, Gail and Ken were proposed by a nominating committee, which attempts to discern God's call to leadership in the church. Nominations may be made from the floor during a congregational meeting, but none was heard.



Jeff and Sherry Carter were married here in 1991.

Jeff has been a Presbyterian since he was baptized at First Presbyterian Church in Florence, Alabama, when he was 10, but this will be his first time serving on a Session once he is ordained as an elder and installed in the office early next year. He was North Alabama Presbytery Youth Moderator and Alabama Synod Youth Moderator in 1967.

He has attended Tryon Presbyterian since moving to Tryon in 1984 and was married to Sherry here by then-Pastor Jim McPherson in 1991.

Jeff worked as Clinical Director at the Rutherford/Polk Mental Health Center from 1984 to 1999 and then was in the private practice of

Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the Pisgah Institute in Asheville from 1999 to 2021. He has served on several community boards, including Tryon Fine Arts Center, Tryon Little Theatre and Thermal Belt Outreach.

Ken joined our church in 2010 after his career in health care brought him to Polk County as CEO at St. Luke's Hospital. He had served on the Session of Pickens Presbyterian Church in Pickens, S.C., Saxe Gotha Presbyterian in Lexington, S.C., and Highlands Presbyterian in Highlands, N.C. He has previously served on the Session here.

After four years in the Air Force, Ken spent 43 years in hospital management, almost all of that time as CEO of hospitals in North and South Carolina. He retired nine years ago. He has been active in the Rotary Club of Tryon and served on the board of the Tryon Country Club. At church, he sings in the choir and recently led the search committee that recommended Jane Wilson as our Director of Music and Organist. He also does a little cooking.



Ken Shull does a little cooking.

(See SESSION on Page 8)

**(From SESSION on Page 7)**

Gail joined our church in 1993. She says: "Since being a member of our church family, my involvement has been varied. I have brought food for our various meals. I am a singer in our choir, which has led me to join the community chorus. I am a member of our Congregational Care committee. I also am in charge of the church grounds and memorial garden for the Property Committee." In addition, Gail chairs the Finance Committee.

"I like to help where there is a need," she adds. "The church is my extended family."

We appreciate Jeff, Ken and Gail for answering the call to serve in church leadership.



Gail Muir is a 'Shepherd' as well as a member of the Session.

## Local man gives our church a lovely creche

We have a beautiful, new-to-us creche in our sanctuary this Christmas season. It is displayed in front of the stained-glass window on the east side of the church.

The nativity scene is a gift from James Sayers, a fairly new resident of Polk County who "picked your church because I was raised Presbyterian, was even an altar boy," he explained in an email.

The creche includes a model of a rough house with hayloft, which James said was made in an area of Bavaria, in Germany, famous for Christmas crafts. He purchased it in the Washington, D.C./Maryland area in the 1980s. The figures came from Italy.

James believes the creche was intended to be placed in a church or embassy. He is "so glad it found a home," he added.



James Sayers is glad this nativity scene has found a home with us.



# Church income, spending show positive trend

Below is a summary of TPC's finances through the end of November. The "Actual" column represents the actual amount in money the church has received (from offering and other income) and spent (expenses) through the end of November. The "Budget" column represents the pro-rated amount of our total budget (both income and expenses) that would be accounted for through the end of the November.

Tryon Presbyterian Church					
YTD Financial Operating Summary					
Through November 30, 2025					
		Actual		Budget	Difference
Income	\$	421,891.67	\$	420,090.00	\$ 1,801.67
Expenses	\$	403,457.17	\$	422,167.00	\$ (18,709.83)
Difference	\$	18,434.50	\$	(2,077.00)	

Through 11 months, TPC's income remains slightly above our budget projections. In other words, through the generous gifts of our members, guests and others, we have received just a little bit more than what we budgeted. Conversely, our expenses are approximately \$18,700 below our budget, meaning we have not spent as much money as we expected to through this point in the year. These savings are due in part to the vacancy in our Director of Music Ministry position earlier this year, reduced office expenses, and more than \$4,000 that will be spent by the Missions Committee in December. We can assume that in 2026, our actual expenses will track our budgeted expenses much closer, assuming no staff changes.

If you have any questions about the finances of the church, please contact Church Treasurer Jon McGrath ([jonathan.c.mcgrath@gmail.com](mailto:jonathan.c.mcgrath@gmail.com)).

Skip Taylor and Denny Hill present tithes and offerings as the congregation sings the Doxology during worship November 30.



# TPC supports wildlife education for local children

Champions for Wildlife is a Polk County nonprofit founded in 2022 by Dale Weiler and Loti Woods to teach children about the animal kingdom primarily through art.

Last month, a group of young Champions was working on a project in our Fellowship Hall while our Missions Committee was also meeting at church. MaryAnn Sloan happened to know about Champions for Wildlife and suggested the church make a donation from its budget for local organizations, according to Chair Bill Sullivan. The proposal made sense to committee members.



Soon after, the committee received this note, and the photo above, from Champions for Wildlife Executive Director Tashi Brewster:

“Thank you for your generous support and donation of \$300 received on 11/24/2025. Because of you, kids are discovering the magic of wildlife through creativity, hands-on learning and art!

“After one of our bird programs, a student came up to our educator, Alexis, with a question that lit up her whole face, asking if she could choose any bird for her art project. Alexis replied, ‘Of course!’ The student’s eyes lit up as she asked, ‘Even a cardinal?’ Alexis smiled and said, ‘Yes! That’s a perfect choice!’

“The student then shared a touching story. She had recently lost her grandfather, and cardinals always reminded her of him. Every time she saw one, it felt like a sign that her grandpa was sending her love. Alexis connected by sharing how cardinals were also a special reminder of her own loved ones who had passed.

“Moved by that bond, the student and her best friend both decided to create cardinals for their fall art projects. If you look closely at their artwork, you’ll see tiny hearts coming from the birds’ beaks. When they finished, they proudly explained that they were ‘best friend cardinals’ sending love to everyone who needed it.

“Your support brings these powerful moments to life, helping kids find healing, hope and connection through art and wildlife. You’re not just giving a donation, you’re shaping the next generation of wildlife champions. And for that, I think you’re pretty amazing.”

We agree, Tashi. Our Missions Committee is amazing. And we’re happy to support wildlife lessons for Polk County kids.

More about Champions for Wildlife [here](#).



# Presbytery news

## Presbyterian Disaster Assistance answers the call

More than 450 Presbyterian Disaster Assistance volunteers have come to Western North Carolina to help with recovery from Hurricane Helene, according to Dr. Anne Waple. And they are just getting started.

Anne is Disaster Recovery Coordinator for the Presbytery of Western North Carolina. She notes that, while some work is complete, other projects are just getting started or are yet to be scheduled.



Disaster Recovery Coordinator Anne Waple

"To just see the joy and help that our volunteer teams get to offer homeowners across the region is extraordinary to see," she says.

Jordan Morris, a volunteer from Columbia, South Carolina, observes: "I didn't know that this existed. I didn't know that we had a relief group that I could join until this trip. And so, knowing that now, and knowing that we are not only a church body that preaches God's Word, but we're out here doing it, that means the world to me."

You can see a very inspiring video about the work [here](#).

And [this video](#) details the experience of Marshall Presbyterian Church.

Learn more about Presbyterian Disaster Assistance [here](#).

## PWNC delegation will visit Microloan Project in January

A delegation from the Presbytery of Western North Carolina will visit the Microloan Project in Guatemala January 20-28.

Please keep the following participants in your prayers: Delilah Bragg, Karen Mills, Suzanne Rhinehart and Mimi Michael from FPC Newton; Ellen Dozier, member of PWNC; Nann King from Long Creek; Lynn Noble from Reems Creek Beech; Kathleen Norman from Brevard Davidson River; Susan Maveety from New Hope Asheville; and Sarah Brown, who spent a year living in Guatemala and is a member of the Microloan Task Force.



Participants in the Microloan Project visit.

Follow the Guatemala Microloan Project Facebook page [here](#) for updates.



# In and around Tryon Presbyterian



Our church put on its fall colors during November.





Clockwise from top left: The children's choir delighted the congregation November 9. Jane Wilson, Cindy Allen, Charlie Fisher, Mark Hereward and Gloria Underwood were among those decorating the church November 24. Sullivan and Davis Meissner enjoy fellowship time, and cookies, after church. Robert Hazelwood contributes his talents to worship.





Clockwise from top left: Cindy Allen recently hiked the 78-mile Foothills Trail between Oconee and Table Rock State Parks in South Carolina. This photo was taken at Hilliard Falls. Rodger Walker was honored during worship November 30 for working as a volunteer since the Covid-19 crisis to develop and implement livestreaming capabilities for our services. Now, he'll get to sit in the sanctuary with his wife, Susan Woodcock. Catherine Hazelwood and Ellie Graber just can't look any sweeter! Joanie Hosick and Hunter Hildebrand load groceries at Outreach for delivery to clients.