

Second Life

A Monthly Newsletter

December 2022

Celebrate Christmas Eve at Your Second Home

Saturday, December 24, 5:00, 5:45, and 7:00 p.m.



So many expectations were turned upside down that first Christmas. But hope prevailed and people received a glimpse of a reality they would only come to understand 30 years later.

Christmas Eve is a memorable time of wonderful traditions for the SPC family. Please make time to join us for an event or for the entire evening.

And please take the time to invite someone, anyone, whom you think might look forward to joining us. Good invitations are what many people need right now.

5 p.m. A Christmas Story Service

Our 5 p.m. service is interactive, with classic carols, stories, baggies of “hymn snacks,” and use of senses! Join us for a re-telling of the Christmas story, energized music with our worship band, and a meaningful look at “a donkey in the living room.” All ages absolutely are welcome as we celebrate Christmas through stories, songs, and snacks.



5:45 p.m. Christmas Eve Meal with Soup and Pribesh Cookies

We'll have a simple meal featuring soup made by our congregants who take part in Feed My Sheep, along with the Soup Kitchen soup makers. We'll also enjoy Helen Pribesh's famous Christmas cookies. Join us for one service or both, or to simply share a Christmas Eve meal with your SPC family. Registration is required for the meal. Just call the church office or sign up during worship on the preceding Sundays.



7 p.m. Candlelight and Communion Worship Service

“Gloria in excelsis deo” describes well our 7 p.m. worship. With communion, with beloved carols, with the choir singing two meaningful Christmas anthems, and with a string quartet adding to the wonder of our worship together, this truly will be an evening of celebration.



Merry Christmas!

Reflections from November and Toward Christmas

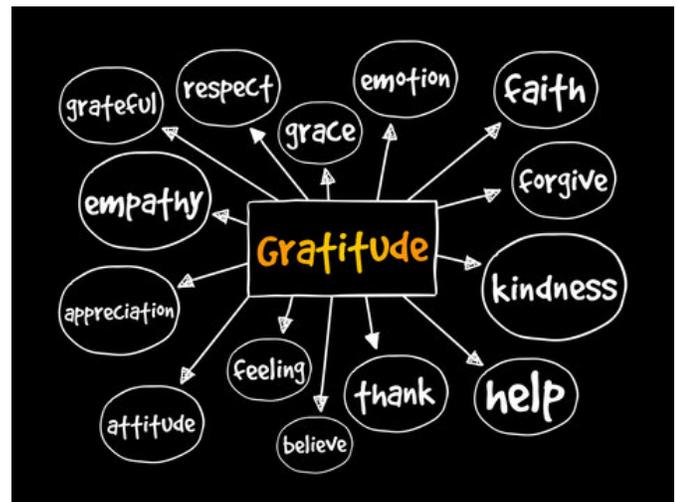
November was a beautiful month of giving at Second Presbyterian.

- On November 6, many of our members gave blood and plasma at the Faithful Neighbors Blood Drive in the fellowship hall.
- On November 8, our church doors were open to neighbors who used our fellowship hall as a neighborhood voting precinct.
- On November 9, 11 of our church family made sandwiches for St. Columba.
- On November 9 and 13, our church choir went to Portsmouth, where they joined with the choir of First Presbyterian. Under the direction of our Director of Music Bob Shoup, they sang a special anthem that Bob had been commissioned to write in honor of Edna Broadhurst's 40th anniversary as Music Director of that congregation.
- On November 17, nearly 20 members of our church family served LAUNCH by loading groceries, sorting food, cutting vegetables, making soup, preparing food, packing groceries, and sharing and distributing groceries, love, and hope.
- On Stewardship Sunday, November 20, we reaffirmed our commitment to our church family and to the ministry we seek to provide. Afterward, we celebrated with a meal with members and friends bringing food for a potluck.
- That same day we celebrated four individuals joining our church family as members. We're so grateful for everything that Janet Bing, Karen and Mark Erickson, and Summer Moore bring to our church family.
- In addition, you brought in turkeys and Thanksgiving food for St. Columba and footballs, basketballs, and soccer balls for LAUNCH. You prepared meals for Catherine and her family. You wrote entries for the Advent devotional. You volunteered to help in worship. You served on the Nominating Committee. You grew in faith by attending Bible studies.

Every year I've been at Second Presbyterian, I've been struck with the beauty of November in the life of this congregation. This year was no different. During a month in which we thank God and reflect on who we are as a church family, we also reach out to support others through sharing our time, talents, and treasure. Each of us has limitations as to how we can reach out, but each of us also has strengths that we must never dismiss.

All too often we focus on our limitations. But front and center at Christmastime are an unwed mother, illiterate shepherds, and foreign travelers. In many respects none of them in their day would have been seen as having much credibility, but the Christmas story reminds us that God calls each of us where we are, to respond in thankfulness to God's gifts to us.

When Mary—an unwed mother—broke out in song, people could have thought she was presumptuous. When the shepherds went to visit the baby, they could have feared that they—maybe justifiably—would have been rebuffed or turned away. When the wise men approached Bethlehem, knowing that the Bible says nothing good about star gazers, they had to know that it was not just their curiosity about stars that had led them to a place where they could have been persecuted.



From the Pastor continued

In each case, the first ones at the manger were open to God's call, and they responded in gratitude.

In a book called *Christmas Inspirations*, Bishop Fulton Sheen writes:

“What interests us is that God called the shepherds while they were still at work doing their duty. An angel appeared to Gideon when he threshed wheat by a winepress. Saul, looking for the lost donkeys of his father, found a kingdom and himself. Elisha was plowing when Elijah passed the mantle of prophecy to him. Amos was with the herdsmen of Tekoa when he saw God's judgment upon Tyre. The best place in all the world to be for higher summons is at a post of duty. . . When the Lord has a great gift or message to give to one of His children, He sends it to the place where the child ought to be found. . . . Sometimes the most humble occupations prepare for the greatest vocations. . . . Civilization is a debtor to lowly cradles, to unknown mothers who are denied places in an inn, and to humble shepherds working in the night.”

During this Christmas season, recognize God's hand on your shoulder, and remember all the reasons you have to offer gratitude.

Have a blessed Christmas season,

Pastor Craig

Advent/Christmas Sermon Series **Out of the Blue:** **Confronting Unexpected Challenges in Life**

Even with all of the planning in the world, the unpredictable, the unforeseen, and the surprising often blindside us. In those situations, each of us finds ourself thinking, “This isn't what I was planning” or “This isn't how life should be.”

That is the Christmas story in short. Almost everyone in the Christmas story seems to be caught off guard, finding their lives turned upside down. How they reacted in their situations shows us how we might react in our own lives.

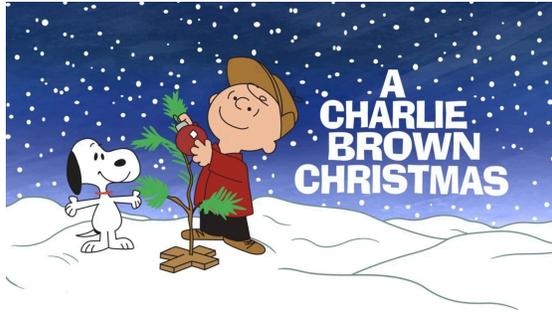


- December 4 ***When You are Powerless: Mary*** (Luke 1:26-38)
- December 11 ***When You are Called: The Shepherds*** (Luke 2:1-20)
- December 18 ***When You are Powerless: Mary*** (Luke 1:26-38)
- December 24 ***When You Need to Trust God: Jesus*** (Phil. 2:5-11)
- December 25 ***When Your Charge is Beyond Your Ability: The Shepherds*** (Luke 2:8-20)
- January 1 ***When Your Hopes Become Nightmare: The Wise Men*** (Matthew 2:1-12)
- January 8 ***When You Need to Share Hard Truths: Simeon*** (Luke 2:21-35)

Advent Intergenerational Discipleship

Christmas Movies, Mary, Joseph, and Unexpected Gifts!

Sundays, November 27 through December 18, 9:45 to 10:30 a.m.



Our worship series for Advent focuses on what happens when we face unexpected challenges in life. That also is the theme of so many Christmas movies. Make sure that you come each Sunday in Advent for a fun-packed, meaningful, unusual, and very special Advent study, as our Sunday School classes come together in the fellowship hall from 9:45 to 10:30. Each week focuses on scripture, a Christmas movie, a Tomie dePaola book, a special activity, and some unexpected gifts.

December 4 Matthew 2:13-23, "Elf," and Jesus in the World

December 11 Luke 1:26-38, "A Christmas Story," and The Gifts of Christmas

December 18 Luke 2:8-20, "A Charlie Brown Christmas," and a Play

Special Sundays in December

December 18, 11 a.m.

Kids, Adults, and Youth. Oh, My!:

An Intergenerational Christmas Story

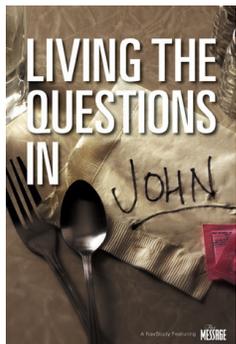
As part of the worship service, kids, youth, and adults will come together to remember and depict a remarkable story. The shepherds will be watching, barn animals braying, angels singing, Mary and Joseph traversing, and a babe will be born in a manger—it's the story of how God came to be with us! Join us as we share the play "God With Us."



December 25, 11 a.m.

Christmas Morning (no Sunday School!)

Wear your pajamas if you wish. Some of us will! Join us for an informal service with low lights, hymn singing, unique presents under the tree, and lots of focus on those mysterious shepherds. Come out for a peaceful Christmas morning.



Lunch and Learn

A Wednesday Time for Fellowship, Discussion, and Study

Wednesdays, noon to 1 p.m. in the fellowship hall (Please bring a sack lunch.)

Note: This will not be held Wednesday, December 28

Take an hour out of your week, bring a bag lunch, and join us every Wednesday at noon for a meal, conversation, and Bible study, as we focus on *Living the Questions in John*. No required reading ahead of time, just meaningful and fun conversation! Please join a variety of SPC friends for a great time together.

Ways to Serve

Volunteers Needed for “Path to Community Peace on Earth”

Saturday, December 17, various times

There are many ways to share the reason for the season through the LAUNCH celebration, “Path to Community Peace on Earth,” set for Saturday, December 17. Mason Memorial Church, at 744 Goff Street in Huntersville, will host the event, which will feature a live Nativity scene, petting zoo, special art project, and more. Look for an email with signup opportunities. Volunteers are need for:

- Early morning food pickup at Operation Blessing
- Morning food sorting and packing
- Morning setup of tents, tables and chairs
- Distribution of groceries, Christmas food boxes, and children's toy
- Community Peace collaborative art project assistance
- Parking direction
- Afternoon breakdown and cleanup
- General assistance as needed

Donations of sports balls are still needed for teen gifts. You can buy your own or donate \$9 per ball toward a bulk purchase. Bring donations to the fellowship hall by Wednesday, December 14.



The Path to Community Peace on Earth event is a collaborative effort of churches that support LAUNCH, Norfolk Police Foundation, Norfolk Department of Neighborhood Assistance, SentaraCares, and Virginia Department of Health—to promote blessings rather than bullets!

Note: Due to the Path to Community Peace on Earth event, the third Thursday food distribution for LAUNCH will not be held in December.

St. Columba Needs Gift Cards, Nonperishable Foods



St. Columba is collecting gift cards to distribute to families so they can purchase gifts for their children this year. Cards are requested in \$25 amounts particularly from Target and Walmart. Please write the value of the gift card on the card before donating it. Bring your gift card to the SPC church office by Sunday, December 4, so they can be given to St. Columba in time for families to shop for their children. You may also give cards to Alice Allen-Grimes, who will take them to St. Columba.

St. Columba has an ongoing need for food in its year-round Food Pantry. The following nonperishable items are especially needed and welcome throughout the year: peanut butter, jelly, macaroni and cheese, pasta, pasta sauce, tuna, rice, canned meat, canned pasta, canned fruits, canned vegetables ramen noodles, oatmeal, and cereal.

Given current grocery prices, there is an even greater need, and St. Columba's Food Pantry, like others in the region, are experiencing numerous requests.



Norfolk's Unsheltered Need Your Help

The City of Norfolk's shelter for people experiencing homelessness is unable to meet the growing demands for shelter this year. Stephanie Van Leeuwen of the Norfolk Street Choir Project and Jordan Brown of [OV] Church are heading up a group to provide additional services. They are soliciting venues to host the unsheltered people for a week or more between December 4 and March 31.

Due to changes in the use of our building, SPC can no longer host overnight guests. If you're interested in volunteering; providing meals, snacks, or bus tickets; or washing blankets once a week, please [click here](#) to sign up, or visit this link:

<http://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0D4FABAE23ABFAC70-winter2>

For Children and Youth

Lights, Camera, Action: SPC Plans Fun and Meaningful Christmas Season

There are so many ways for children and youth to be involved in the life of the church this month.

- Each Sunday from 9:45 to 10:30 a.m., we come together in the fellowship hall for Intergenerational Sunday School, as we have fun with different activities, learn scripture in new ways, and think about Jesus in light of movies like "Elf" (Dec. 4), "A Christmas Story" (Dec. 11), and "A Charlie Brown Christmas" (Dec. 18).
- At 7 p.m. Monday, December 5, join with the church—young and old—as we walk through the Norfolk Botanical Gardens' Garden of Lights. A fun, beautiful evening.
- At 6 p.m. Wednesday, December 14, join us in the fellowship hall for a meal and some fun Christmas games. Then from 6:30 to 7:30 we go caroling. Join people of all ages as we sing and spread Christmas cheer.
- At 9:45 a.m. Sunday, December 18, we'll have fun joining with others in making a play for the 11 a.m. worship service. Afterward, from 12:15-1:30 p.m., we'll have a Christmas party in the youth room upstairs.
- The 5 p.m. Christmas Story Service on Saturday, December 24, is a special kid- and youth-friendly service with snacks, fun music, and a fascinating story.
- And then Christmas morning, December 25, worship at 11 a.m. is pajama-friendly and relaxing. Wear what you wish, bring new Christmas presents, and come with joy!



Please come out to some or all of these events for a fun and meaningful Christmas season! Questions? Contact Katrina Wansink, Director of Children's Ministry, at 757.802.1536 or katwansink@gmail.com.

From the Director of Music

“Hostile Architecture” and the Birth of Christ

Because of my work with individuals affected by homelessness, I have become much more attentive to media stories related to this issue. In a recent San Diego newscast, reporters considered the city’s emerging practice of “hostile architecture” to discourage unhoused persons from resting in public spaces.

Benches have been fitted with metal armrests designed to prevent lying down. Large, jagged stones fill the space beneath bridges to prevent people from resting there. Motion-sensing alarms have been installed to prevent gathering on sidewalks.



New York City has begun to replace flat street grates with custom-designed versions that are wavy in shape, to cause discomfort to anyone lying down on them for warmth. It is interesting that observers have coined the phrase “hostile architecture” to describe this phenomenon, recognizing that the effort and related expenses do not address the safety or well being of those seeking to find shelter. It merely moves them away from areas where their presence is unwelcome.

There are, of course, many hostile aspects to the world we occupy today, regardless of our housing status. It’s easy to identify many threats to our health, our safety, and our peace of mind.

Advent has reminded me that, in this regard, not much has changed since Jesus first wiggled and cooed in a lowly manger. The Christ child who would come as savior began in the most vulnerable of circumstances in a world that, like ours, was full of peril and hostility. He would change the world, but his presence among us did not eliminate division, remove hatred, or banish threats . . . but rather offered hope in the face of such difficulties.

Each time our choir—or any choir with which I work—gathers to sing, it addresses the problems of our world. Problems not of artistic accomplishment, but problems of despair, discouragement and doubt. Choirs do this by modeling the power and beauty of community, collaboration, humility, and unity. They offer hope in the face of difficulties. Melody, rhythm, and harmony have the power to remind listeners (and music makers) of the best possibilities of the life we have been granted.

When we feel adrift and longing for the comfort of our spiritual home, music is one tool that can remove the stones from beneath the bridge and the painful bars from the park bench, allowing us to find a moment to rest or come out of the rain when the world seems to be assailing us.

I remain convinced that the gift of music reveals God’s voice of hope and promise in ways that transcend any spoken words. May it be so for us this Advent and Christmas, and each day of our lives.

Peace,
Bob

continued

From the Director of Music continued



Christmas Eve Features Music Both Beloved and Fresh *Saturday, December 24, 5 p.m. and 7 p.m.*

In addition to beloved carols, our choir will sing with a guest string quartet during the 7 p.m. Candlelight and Communion Service, offering two beautiful and memorable expressions of hope and joy.

“Gloria in excelsis deo” from Antonio Vivaldi’s “Gloria” is full of rhythmic energy and excited anticipation; and “Ecce Novum” by the Norwegian-born composer Ola Gjeilo is a calm, rich, and warmly melodic expression of wonder:

*Behold, a new joy, behold a new wonder!
A virgin, who knew not a man, bears a son. . .*

The 5 p.m. Christmas Story Service, which features our worship band, will include carols that help illustrate and complement the Christmas story.

As we worship together Christmas Eve, may the wonders and wisdom of music both beloved and fresh become avenues of communication for each of us with our God of promise and hope.

Growing Our Choir

We’ve been blessed to enjoy continued growth in our choir, recently welcoming Kathleen Starr and Ken Brock to our singing family—but we’re not done! We’ve made great progress but continue to seek sopranos, tenors and basses to fill out our choir as we move forward. We currently have eight members of the Alto section. . . and hope to match that number across the choir!

If you know of someone who may not have a church home and who might enjoy the fellowship and purposeful work of singing in our choir, please contact our Music Director, Robert Shoup!

NSCP Will Host Homelessness Memorial Ceremony

Wednesday, December 21, 5:30 p.m.

The Norfolk Street Choir Project, an SPC mission partner, will host Norfolk’s observance of the national Homelessness Memorial Day, Wednesday, December 21, at a 5:30 p.m. ceremony downtown.

The event at Freemason Street Baptist Church will include singing by the Norfolk Street Choir, speakers, reciting of names of those who have died in the past year, and the lighting of candles. Interested individuals in our SPC community are encouraged to attend.

**THE NORFOLK
STREET CHOIR
Project**



Garden of Lights: Walk the Garden Aglow

Monday, December 5, 7 p.m.

Last Christmas season we enjoyed meeting at Norfolk Botanical Garden (NBG) for a walk through the Garden of Lights. For those who've never experienced this activity, NBG has created an extraordinary light display specifically designed to be walked through. It's a beautiful display, a wonderful and unique way to experience both God's creation and stunning Christmas lights.

We're going on a Monday evening—hopefully before the weather gets too cold—when tickets are somewhat discounted. We encourage you to [get tickets here](#) or at the NBG link below and then meet us inside Baker Hall Visitor Center at 7 p.m. Monday, December 5. <https://norfolkbotanicalgarden.org/dominion-energy-garden-lights/>

With Gratitude: Thinking about Pledges for 2023 and 2022

We're very grateful to those of you have pledged for 2023. Having a sense—as a congregation—for what expected giving will be is a tremendous help as we plan and hope for the future. If you anticipate pledging for 2023, we are appreciative.

If you haven't done so but would like to, please either pick up a pledge card at church and fill it out, or just email Larry Hull, Clerk of Session, directly at lhull49@cox.net. If you have any questions about your 2022 pledge, also please just reach out to Larry. Thank you for your financial support. It matters.



Advent Devotional 2022: SPC Reads Together

Thank you to those who contributed to our Advent devotional this year. One special aspect of this season is knowing that family and friends of Second are joining in reading and praying the same devotion each day during this season.

If you haven't yet received your devotional, please pick it up at church or email Jo Kolb at jokolb@spcnorfolk.org in the church office, and she'll mail you one. If you have friends or others who might appreciate joining in, please take copies to share.



Come Caroling with SPC

Wednesday, December 14, 6 p.m.

Join us at 6 p.m. for a light meal before we hit the street to share the Christmas message through song. At 6:30 p.m. we'll depart to bring caroling cheer to homes in our community. SPC folks of all ages—and of *all* or *no* musical abilities—are encouraged to participate in this fun time of food and fellowship.



There is definitely a place for you at Second Presbyterian!

SPC December Calendar

Thursday, December 1

The office is open 10:30AM to 1:30PM
BEMA Bible Study: 7:30PM [Zoom]

Friday, December 2

Aaron Hatton's Birthday
Men's Breakfast: 7AM [FH]

Saturday, December 3

Elizabeth Reed's Birthday

Sunday, December 4

The office is open 9:30AM to 12:30PM
Choir Rehearsal: 9AM [Sanctuary]
Intergenerational Sunday School: 9:45AM
Worship: 11AM [Sanctuary/webcast]
Fellowship Hour: Noon [SPC]
Gift Cards for St. Columba Due

Monday, December 5

Isaac Thomas' Birthday
Garden of Lights Walk: 7PM [Norfolk Botanical Garden]

Tuesday, December 6

John Vellines' Birthday
The office is open 10:30AM to 1:30PM
Triple S Circle Meeting: 10AM [FH]
Essentrics Exercise: 1PM [Zoom & FH]

Wednesday, December 7

Erin Todd's Birthday
The office is open 10:30AM to 1:30PM
Men's Bible Study: 6:30AM [FH]
Brown Bag Bible Study: Noon [FH]

Thursday, December 8

Tom Libbey's Birthday
The office is open 10:30AM to 1:30PM
Essentrics Exercise: 1PM [Zoom & FH]
BEMA Bible Study: 7:30PM [Zoom]

Friday, December 9

Men's Breakfast: 7AM [FH]

Saturday, December 10

No activities

Sunday, December 11

The office is open 9:30AM to 12:30PM
Intergenerational Sunday School: 9:45AM
Worship: 11AM [Sanctuary/webcast]
Fellowship Hour: Noon [FH]

Monday, December 12

Taylor Crouch's Birthday
No activities

Tuesday, December 13

The office is open 10:30AM to 1:30PM
Essentrics Exercise: 1PM [Zoom & FH]

Wednesday, December 14

The office is open 10:30AM to 1:30PM
Men's Bible Study: 6:30AM [FH]
Brown Bag Bible Study: Noon [FH]
Caroling and a Meal: 6PM [FH]
Sports Ball Donations Due

Thursday, December 15

The office is open 10:30AM to 1:30PM
Essentrics Exercise: 1PM [Zoom & FH]
BEMA Bible Study: 7:30PM [Zoom]

Friday, December 16

Men's Breakfast: 7AM [FH]

Saturday, December 17

"Path to Community Peace on Earth" in Huntersville: Various times; see Joe Morgan

Sunday, December 18

The office is open 9:30AM to 12:30PM
Choir Rehearsal: 9AM [Sanctuary]
Intergenerational Sunday School: 9:45AM
Worship with Christmas Play "God With Us": 11AM [Sanctuary/webcast]
Fellowship Hour: Noon [FH]
Christmas Party for Children & Youth: 12:15PM [SPC Youth Room]

Monday, December 19

Bill Eley's Birthday
No activities

Tuesday, December 20

The office is open 10:30AM to 1:30PM
Essentrics Exercise: 1PM [Zoom & FH]
Session Meeting: 6PM [SPC]

Wednesday, December 21

The office is open 10:30AM to 1:30PM
Men's Bible Study: 6:30AM [FH]
Brown Bag Bible Study: Noon [FH]
Homelessness Memorial Ceremony: 5:30PM [Freemason Street Baptist Church]
Choir Rehearsal: 7:30PM [SPC]

Thursday, December 22

The office is open 10:30AM to 1:30PM
Essentrics Exercise: 1PM [Zoom & FH]
BEMA Bible Study: 7:30PM [Zoom]

Friday, December 23

Emily Byrd's Birthday
Men's Breakfast: 7AM [FH]

Saturday, December 24

Christmas Story Service: 5PM [Sanctuary/webcast]
Christmas Eve Meal: 5:45PM [FH]
Choir Rehearsal: 6PM [Sanctuary]
Candlelight & Communion Service: 7PM [Sanctuary/webcast]

Sunday, December 25

Nancy Morgan's Birthday
The office is open 9:30AM to 12:30PM
Casual Christmas Worship: 11AM [Sanctuary/webcast]

Monday, December 26

Jude Libbey's Birthday
No activities

Tuesday, December 27

Michael Norman's Birthday
The office is closed.
Essentrics Exercise: 1PM [Zoom & FH]

Wednesday, December 28

Henry Voter's Birthday
The office is closed.
Men's Bible Study: 6:30AM [FH]

Thursday, December 29

The office is closed.
Essentrics Exercise: 1PM [Zoom & FH]
BEMA Bible Study: 7:30PM [Zoom]

Friday, December 30

Men's Breakfast: 7AM [FH]

Saturday, December 31

No activities

FH = SPC Fellowship Hall

About Second Presbyterian Church

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Office hours: Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.; Sundays 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

- Dr. Craig Wansink, Senior Pastor: 757.412.7467, cwansink@vwu.edu
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- Katrina Wansink, Director of Children's Ministry & Nursery: 757.802.1536, katwansink@gmail.com
- Tom Libbey, Facilities Manager; Joe Morgan, Maintenance Specialist; Barbara Watson, Housekeeper