



From the Pastor

A Word from the Pastor — Christmas 2025

(Luke 2:1–20)

There's a hush that falls on this night every year — a silence deeper than words, a wonder that can't quite be explained. We return again to the manger, not to analyze it, but to be still before it. Because somehow, in the most ordinary of places, God came close.

No choirs of power, no dazzling spectacle — just a mother's breath, a child's first cry, and a love so real it could be held. The story of Christ's birth is not about grandeur or perfection. It is about God choosing to enter the dust and vulnerability of human life — to be with us, not above us.

And if God could be born there — in a feeding trough, in poverty, in uncertainty — then God can surely be born here: in our weary hearts, in our unfinished hopes, in the quiet corners of our world that still ache for peace.

Every Christmas reminds us that love doesn't wait for the world to be ready. It comes into the middle of our mess, our fears, and our longing. It comes softly — in a child who bears the name *Emmanuel*, “God with us.”

So, as we gather and lift our candles once more, small lights in a shadowed world, we remember:

The darkness has not overcome it.

The Child has come.

And love — still, always — is being born.

May this Christmas bring you a renewed sense of wonder, and may you find, even in the simplest moments, the nearness of the God who has never stopped coming close.

Grace and peace to you this holy season,

Rev. Jock O'Connell

Mitten Tree Project

The Southminster kids will decorate our Mitten Tree in worship on **Sunday, December 7th**, and they need your help! We are asking you to bring new winter hats, gloves, mittens, and scarves to church that Sunday, which will be distributed to local schools prior to winter break. Last year we were able to assist ten schools in our community with winter gear for students in need.

Chalkley Coat Drive Report

A few weeks ago, the Communities in Schools coordinator of Chalkley Elementary School reached out to Rich Kowalski, a member of our Nurture Committee, to ask if Southminster would be willing to participate in a coat drive for their students. After receiving approval from the Session we responded with an enthusiastic “yes.” We started with three coats; as of the time of this printing we have collected 51. We have been sending them to Chalkley in batches, and with the temperatures dropping many of them have already been given out to the students. If you wish to donate coats to the drive, you may do so through December 5th. Thank you to everyone for supporting this new endeavor.

Progressive Dinner

The Southminster Progressive Dinner will take place on Saturday, December 13th. Dinner guests will progress from host house to host house, beginning with appetizers at 6:00 PM, followed by dinner at 7:15 PM and dessert at 9:00 PM. The cost of the dinner is \$20.00 per person to help our hosts defray the cost of food. RSVP and hosting forms will be available in the Sunday bulletins starting in November. For more information, please contact Brown at 804-347-8895.

Worship & Education

Children’s Christmas Play

On Sunday, December 7th during our 11:00 AM worship, the Southminster kids will present *A Christmas Story*, featuring our very own “Kiki Claus” and her flock of children. Listen to the story of Jesus’ birth and experience again the wonderful gift. All children are invited to participate.

Laura Pearson

Advent Cantata: Sunday, December 14th at 11:00 AM

Our beloved Advent musical service is just around the corner! While the format will be a little different this year, the spirit remains the same. Instead of a Lessons and Carols service, the choir will present an Advent Cantata. This will feel very familiar, as the cantata is a collection of musical pieces and readings, just like Lessons and Carols, but all thematically connected into a single, beautiful work put together by one composer instead of a collection of separately composed works. We look forward to sharing both cherished hymns and inspiring new music with you.

Christmas Eve Service

Southminster will celebrate Christmas Eve on Wednesday, December 24th with a candlelight and communion service at 6:00 PM in the Sanctuary. We hope you will join us as we celebrate the season.

2026 Nominating Committee

The 2025 Church's Nominating Committee is now taking nominations for active members to serve on the 2026 Church's Nominating Committee. This committee will consist of four members of the congregation, giving fair representation of the congregation, as well as one active elder, elected by the Session, who shall normally be the moderator. Any active member may volunteer or submit names of individuals to serve on the Church's Nominating Committee. Please submit your nominee(s) as well as a reason(s) for nominating and place in the offering plate, in Susan Edwards' church mailbox, or mail to the church office no later than Sunday, December 14, 2025.

2025 Contributions

Contributions for 2025 must be received by the church office by December 31, 2025 in order to be included in this year's contribution statements. Thank you to everyone who has so faithfully supported Southminster over the past year!

Facility Alert: Inclement Weather Policy

In case of inclement weather on a Sunday morning, the decision to cancel services will be made by the pastor and the facilities chairperson by 7:30 AM. By 8:00 AM, closing notices will be submitted to local Richmond CBS, NBC, and ABC stations, a notification will be sent to the email list, and a notice will be posted on the church Facebook page. You may also call the church office where the voicemail message will be updated with appropriate information.

Christmas & New Year's Holiday Office Hours

The Southminster office will be operating on limited hours over the Christmas and New Year's holidays. If you experience a pastoral emergency outside of these hours, please reach out directly to the pastor. Regular hours will resume on Monday, January 5th.

Mon. December 22	9:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Mon. December 29	9:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Tues. December 23	9:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Tues. December 30	9:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Wed. December 24	9:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Wed. December 31	Office Closed
Thurs. December 25	Office Closed	Thurs. January 1	Office Closed
Fri. December 26	Office Closed	Fri. January 2	Office Closed

Witness & Outreach**Christmas Joy Offering**

As part of our worship service Christmas Eve, Southminster will collect the 2025 Christmas Joy Offering for the PC(USA). The Christmas Joy Offering has been a cherished Presbyterian tradition since the 1930s. The Offering distributes gifts equally to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. The Assistance Program provides critical financial support to church workers and their families. Presbyterian-related schools and colleges provide education and leadership development while nurturing racial and ethnic heritage. This has been a Presbyterian commitment for nearly 140 years.

Girl Scout Pancake Breakfast

Girl Scout Troop 603 will host a Pancake Breakfast on Sunday, December 7th from 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM in the Fellowship Hall. Everyone is invited to come and enjoy a hot breakfast before worship. The Pancake Breakfast is a fund raiser for the Girl Scouts, with a suggested donation of \$5 per person.

Toddler Sunday School Class

The Toddler Sunday School Class will resume on January 11, 2026 during the Gathering time. We will continue to learn about Bible heroes on the Old and New Testaments. The children are doing great singing *Jesus Loves Me*, and saying our Sunday School prayer. Thank you, parents, for working with them. I look forward to seeing everyone in the new year.

Fun, Fitness, & Fellowship with Chair Yoga

Women and men of all ages are welcome to check out Chair Yoga on Mondays from 12:00 – 1:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall. Our class is led by Pam Dewitt, a certified yoga instructor. She takes us through a moderate whole-body program that emphasizes stretching, deep breathing, and balance. Pam encourages listening to one’s body and doing what one is able. Everyone participates at their own level. The class is free and open to the public (an offering is taken up at each class to help offset the cost of our instructor).

December Schedule

- 1 Class will meet
- 8 *No class*
- 15 Class will meet
- 22 *No class*
- 29 *No class*

January Schedule

- 5 Class will meet
- 12 Class will meet
- 19 Class will meet
- 26 Class will meet

Thanksgiving Basket Report

Thank you to everyone who contributed so generously to our CCHASM Thanksgiving Basket drive in November. Even with a last-minute call for extra baskets (increasing our original pledge from 40 to 46) you went above and beyond, allowing Southminster to assemble 48 complete baskets for our neighbors.

Session Highlights

- Approved October financial report
- Officer training for current elders and elders-elect – Sunday, November 30th
- Approved Rev. Arch Wallace as pulpit supply for Sunday, January 4, 2026
- Approved Sunday, January 18, 2026 for the Ordination & Installation service for elders and elders elect
- Stated session meeting will be held on Sunday, January 18, 2026
- Approved Annual Congregational Meeting for Sunday, February 22, 2026
- Approved Joy Gift offering for Christmas Eve service, December 24, 2025
- Approved Rev. Carson Rhyne Jr. as pulpit supply for Sunday, February 8, 2026
- Approved providing for 6 additional families through our Food Closet / CCHASM

Manchester Concert Series Welcomes The TAM Trio

On Saturday, February 7th the Manchester Concert Series will welcome the TAM Trio, who will present a concert at 4:00 PM in the Sanctuary. Admission is \$10.00 per person, plus a non-perishable food item for the Southminster Food Closet. This event is open to the public. Please invite your family and friends.

Our name, The TAM Trio, comes from the first letters of our last names and reflects our vision of performing Thrilling Artful Melodies. We are an eclectic piano trio of professional musicians based in Richmond, Virginia who enjoy performing everything from Baroque to folk, jazz and modern pop. We are: Kate Tibbetts, cello. Christine Anderson, violin. Sharon Miller, piano.

Directory Updates

Marsha Lane
6807 Arbor Lake Drive
Apt. 101
Chesterfield, VA 23831

We Pray For:

Ramona Clopton, Jean Derrenbacher, Bob Hall, Patsy Hevener, Winki Lampe, Jim & Jane Lewis, Shirley Martin, Donna Medicus, Nancy Peters, Lynda & Charles Reed, Billy Smith, Susan Teller, Art & Ginny Williams, Lora Anderson

For the full list of Joys & Concerns, please see the pastor's weekly email.

Contact pastor@southpreschurch.org if you or a loved one would like to be added to the list.

Southminster Notes

Dixie Kovacs greatly appreciates all of the cards, thoughts, and prayers she has received from her Southminster family over the past several weeks.

Dear Congregation,

I want to take this opportunity to thank you all for making me a hero. "How did we make such a big mistake?" you are probably asking yourself.

Well, the answer is simple. You let me take the coats we are collecting to Chalkley Elementary School. When I showed up with 16 coats the other day and met Ms. Rachel Rapada, the young lady in charge of their coat collection program, she insisted on taking my picture with all those coats in a cart. I kept telling her that I was only in the transportation end of the collecting, and that all of you are responsible for the more than 50 coats we have taken to the school. She said, "OK," and took my picture anyway.

Also, on Nov. 17th when Rick Schaffer and I took the 48 bags of groceries to the county fair grounds for the Thanksgiving collection, we were again thanked for all the food you donated. So, thanks for all the good feelings I am getting, on your behalf. If someone else wants my job, you will have to fight me for it. You all just keep making donations to the various programs we support and I will keep on delivering the goods and letting you all know how good we are doing.

Rich Kowalski

Notes will be published as space permits. Some notes will carry over to next month's newsletter.

December Birthdays

- 1 Haddie Knight
- 3 Curtis Kearns
- 5 Jason Endries, Joyce Grier, Riki Stone
- 7 Brown Pearson, Kathy Liesfeld
- 9 Kate Grier
- 10 Pat Thomas
- 14 Ginny Williams, Marsha Paulson
- 18 Anne Smith, Billy Smith
- 20 Shirley Martin, Jenny Schiller
- 24 Jenny Williams
- 25 Al Stafford
- 26 Merrill Dugger, David Lamberton,
Abby Willis
- 27 Julia Dugger, Norris Hall
- 29 Jeff McDonald
- 31 Kitty Bice, Marie Stuart

December Anniversaries

- 10 Courtney & Lil Price (37)
- 12 Jim & Margaret Hall (61)
- 16 Caroline & Coveh Solaimani (8)
- 18 Jim & Debbie Dugger (37)
- 20 Jim & Betsy Davis (56)
- 21 Bob & Judy Lee (57)
- 22 Tom & Shelley Murray (46)
- 29 Dennis & Riki Stone (51)
- 30 Ron & Susan Witcher (47)

Presbyterian Women

Anna Circle

December 1st at 6:30 PM
Debbie Greenberg's residence

Martha Circle

December 10th at 10:00 AM
Conference Room

Ruth Circle

December 2nd at 2:00 PM
Conference Room

December Schedules

Communion Team

24: Team 3

Elder Servers: Rick Abbott, Laura Pearson,
Judy Lee

Church Closer for December

Jerry Davis

Ushers

- 7 Candace Young, Kathy Liesfeld,
Guy Dixon
- 14 Candace Young, Kathy Liesfeld,
Guy Dixon
- 21 Jerry Davis, Frank Grier, Tracey Williams,
Clay Spillman
- 28 Jerry Davis, Frank Grier, Tracey Williams,
Clay Spillman

Food Closet

- 2 Gene Rhodes, Karen Stafford
- 4 Bonnie Kowalski, Gail DeCosta
- 9 Mary Stahl, Deborah Crain
- 11 Cheriene McCall, Frank Grier
- 16 Carol Todd, Freya Harper
- 18 Shelley Murray, Pat Erwin
- 23 Ann Potts, David Stahl
- 25 *Closed*
- 30 *Closed*

Children's Sunday School

- 7 Children's Christmas Play – No Gathering
- 14 Christmas Cantata – No Gathering
- 21 Winter Lesson 3: Mary Visits Elizabeth
- 28 Winter Lesson 4: Jesus Is Born

January Birthdays

- 1 Connie Goodman
- 5 Danise Warren, Curtis Radt
- 6 Frank Grier, Grier Swenck
- 11 Karen Radt
- 12 Lauren Pinchbeck
- 15 AJ Bookman, Jonathan Derrenbacker
- 16 Hagen Smith
- 17 Bobby Adiele, Bill Morrow Sanders
- 20 Sydney Kirtley
- 22 Ramona Clopton
- 23 Bonnie Cary, Branch Hobson
- 25 Rachel Clay, Freya Harper
- 26 Charles Reed, Rhonda Clopton,
Jonathan Smith
- 27 Betsy Davis
- 28 Mary MacKenzie Swenck
- 29 Patsy Hevener
- 30 Katie Daniel

January Anniversaries

- 2 Guy & Dorothy Dixon (35)
- 14 Bill & Janet Crawford (37)
- 15 Harry & Becky Rowan (60)

*Have we missed your birthday or anniversary?
Let the church office know: 804-276-1749.*

Presbyterian Women

Anna Circle

January 5th at 6:30 PM
Debbie Greenberg's residence

Martha Circle

January 14h at 10:00 AM
Conference Room

Ruth Circle

January 6th at 2:00 PM
Conference Room

January Schedules

Communion Teams

Our next communion will be on February 1st

Church Closer for January

Curtis Radt

Ushers

- 4 Jerry & Cheriene McCall
- 11 Jerry & Cheriene McCall, Kitty Bice,
Freya Harper
- 18 Laura Pearson, Deborah Crain,
Dennis & Riki Stone
- 25 Laura Pearson, Deborah Crain,
Dennis & Riki Stone

Food Closet

Schedule Coming Soon

Children's Sunday School

- 4 Fall Lesson 8: Deborah
- 11 Fall Lesson 9: God Calls Samuel
- 18 Fall Lesson 10: Daniel Is Chosen
- 25 Fall Lesson 11: Solomon Builds the Temple

SOUTHMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

7500 Hull Street Road

N. Chesterfield, VA 23235-5810

Phone: 804-276-1749

www.southpreschurch.org

office@southpreschurch.org

Return Service Requested

December 2025 / January 2026

Christmas Eve

**Join us for worship with communion on
Wednesday, December 24th at 6:00 PM**



Would you like to receive your newsletter electronically?

Send an email to office@southpreschurch.org with *Add Me To Newsletter List* in the subject line.

Southminster Presbyterian Church

December 2025

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 12 PM: Chair Yoga 6 PM: BSA Scouts 6:30 PM: Anna Circle 7:30 PM: IPCN	2 Food Closet 2 PM: Ruth Circle 6 PM: Handbells 7 PM: Sanctuary Choir 7 PM: Girl Scouts 7:30 PM: IPCN	3	4 Food Closet 10 AM: Balladeers	5 2 PM: Cookie Packing (Kitchen) 7:30 PM: IPCN	6 7:30 PM: IPCN
7 Communion 9 AM: Girl Scouts Pancake Breakfast 10 AM: Adult Sun. Sch 10:15 AM: Pastor's Aids 11 AM: Worship 3 PM: IPCN	8 11:30 AM Williams Funeral Service and Reception	9 Food Closet 6 PM: Handbells 7 PM: Sanctuary Choir 7 PM: Girl Scouts 7:30 PM: IPCN	10 10 AM: Martha Circle	11 Food Closet 10 AM: Balladeers	12 7:30 PM: IPCN	13 6 PM: Progressive Dinner 7:30 PM: IPCN	
14 10 AM: Adult Sun. Sch 11 AM: Advent Cantata 3 PM: IPCN	15 12 PM: Chair Yoga 6 PM: BSA Scouts 7:30 PM: IPCN	16 Food Closet 6 PM: Handbells 7 PM: Sanctuary Choir 7 PM: Girl Scouts 7:30 PM: IPCN	17 10 AM: Christmas Eve Services	18 Food Closet 10 AM: Balladeers	19 7:30 PM: IPCN	20 7:30 PM: IPCN	
21 10 AM: Adult Sun. Sch 11 AM: Worship 11 AM: Childrens Sun Sch 1 PM: Session 3 PM: IPCN	22 6 PM: BSA Scouts 7:30 PM: IPCN	23 Food Closet 6 PM: Handbells 7 PM: Sanctuary Choir 7 PM: Girl Scouts 7:30 PM: IPCN	24 Christmas Eve 6 PM: Christmas Eve Services	25 Christmas Day Office Closed	26 Office Closed 7:30 PM: IPCN	27 7:30 PM: IPCN	
28 10 AM: Adult Sun. Sch 11 AM: Worship 11 AM: Childrens Sun Sch 3 PM: IPCN	29 6 PM: BSA Scouts 7:30 PM: IPCN	30 6 PM: Handbells 7 PM: Sanctuary Choir 7 PM: Girl Scouts 7:30 PM: IPCN	31 New Year's Eve Office Closed 12 PM: IPCN New Year's Celebration (FH)				
			Notes				

Southminster Presbyterian Church

January 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
4 10 AM: Adult Sun. Sch 11 AM: Worship 11 AM: Childrens Sun Sch 3 PM: IPCN	5 12 PM: Chair Yoga 6 PM: BSA Scouts 6:30 PM: Anna Circle 7:30 PM: IPCN	6 Food Closet 2 PM: Ruth Circle 6 PM: Handbells 7 PM: Sanctuary Choir 7 PM: Girl Scouts 7:30 PM: IPCN				
11 10 AM: Adult Sun. Sch 10:15 AM: Pastor's Aids 11 AM: Worship 11 AM: Childrens Sun Sch 3 PM: IPCN	12 12 PM: Chair Yoga 6 PM: BSA Scouts 7:30 PM: IPCN	13 Food Closet 6 PM: Handbells 7 PM: Sanctuary Choir 7 PM: Girl Scouts 7:30 PM: IPCN	14 10 AM: Martha Circle			
18 10 AM: Adult Sun. Sch 11 AM: Worship Ord. & Installation of Elders 11 AM: Childrens Sun Sch 1 PM: Session Meeting 3 PM: IPCN	19 ML King Day Office Closed 12 PM: Chair Yoga	20 Food Closet 6 PM: Handbells 7 PM: Sanctuary Choir 7 PM: Girl Scouts 7:30 PM: IPCN	21			
25 10 AM: Adult Sun. Sch 11 AM: Worship 11 AM: Childrens Sun Sch 3 PM: IPCN	26 12 PM: Chair Yoga 6 PM: BSA Scouts 7:30 PM: IPCN	27 Food Closet 6 PM: Handbells 7 PM: Sanctuary Choir 7 PM: Girl Scouts 7:30 PM: IPCN	28			
				1 New Year's Day Office Closed 10 AM: Balladeers	2 Office Closed	3
				8 Food Closet 10 AM: Balladeers	9 7:30 PM: IPCN	10 7:30 PM: IPCN
				15 Food Closet 10 AM: Balladeers	16 7:30 PM: IPCN	17 7:30 PM: IPCN
				22 Food Closet 10 AM: Balladeers	23 7:30 PM: IPCN	24 7:30 PM: IPCN
				29 Food Closet 10 AM: Balladeers	30 7:30 PM: IPCN	31 7:30 PM: IPCN
Notes January 4th: Pulpit Supply, Rev. Arch Wallace						