



## From the Pastor's Desk

One of my favorite Christmas songs is by the band Rend Collective called *Today Is the Saviour's Day* (They are an Irish band, hence the spelling of Savior!) and it includes two lines that say, "Go tell it on the mountains that hope is alive/ go shout it in the valleys that love has arrived." Both reference us back to the title of the song, *Today is the Saviour's Day* and I keep thinking about how our worship services in Advent will live out the lyrics of their song.

Everything we are doing over the next four Sundays is to lead us to Christmas Eve. What we are called to do over the course of this month is "tell it on the mountain and shout it into the valleys that today is the Savior's Day, that God's love has arrived, and hope is alive," all to prepare for Christ's birth on Christmas Eve. What I think about each time I listen to this song is that there's a key element in that call – we must climb the mountain and descend into the valley to proclaim those truths. This is the reality of the Seasons of Advent and Christmas – one leads to the other and requires work along the path.



This song is partly why I chose the Advent and Christmas Preaching Series and titled it *Claiming a New Story: How God Reorients our Lives*. As you'll soon experience, each Sunday in December includes proclamations from Christ, John the Baptist, Mary, Jesus' mother, and many others seeking to help us reorient our lives to claim God's story. These proclamations aren't simple, and it will require hard work and sacrifice to accomplish them.

They may feel like we are climbing a mountain or descending into a valley – both hard things to do – and they are, but they are not in vain. We don't do them just to do them; we do them because they give us a sense of purpose and meaning.

I think that is what is so life-giving about the good news of the gospels – they give us a purpose and meaning. Think about how much God wants to be in our lives that God comes as a child that will be reared by humans and feel human emotions and experience the pain and suffering that are realities of our lives. But God doesn't want to stop there. No, God wishes for us to participate in this gospel – this good news that brings salvation through hope, love, and grace to the world. We are called to prepare to proclaim that *Today is the Saviour's Day!* God wants us – you and me – to announce this good news to the world.

That's an amazing call and the fact that God wishes for us to participate is something that should fill us with joy and possibility.

Friends in Christ, I'm praying for each of you and hope you are praying for yourselves, this church, and our world. As you peruse this month's edition of the newsletter, take some time to see where you might participate in going to the mountain to tell that hope is alive or how you might shout it into the valleys that love has arrived – trust me, there are plenty of opportunities in here!

With Advent hopes and Christmas Blessings,

Rev. Ben

# Advent Preaching Series

God's Advent and Christmas stories reorient our lives around the truth that God wishes to be with us and to save us. The scriptures for Advent and Christmas will reveal how God prepares God's people to reorient their lives to welcome a child that will further reorient our lives. Our call this Advent and Christmas Season is to claim a different story and we've got a preaching series that will offer guidance on how best to claim God's story – but beware, it'll completely change your life!

Dec. 1: Luke 21: 25-36 *This Story Will Change Everything* – Rev. Ben

Dec. 8: Luke 3:1-6 *The Localness of God's Transformative Story* – Rev. Ben

Dec. 15: Luke 3:7-18 *Pointing to the Author of Our Story* (Big Music Sunday) – Rev. Ben

Dec. 22: Luke 1: 39-56 *Why? The Question of Advent* – Children Leading

Dec. 24: Luke 2:1-20 *Expectations Meet Reality* – Rev. Ben

Dec. 29: Luke 2:41-52 *They All Grow Up, Even Jesus* – Rev. Alisa



## Blue Christmas: A Service of Hope and Healing

Wednesday, December 18 at 6:00pm in the Chapel

Advent and Christmas are often seasons of joy and hope, but for many of us these seasons are hard because of death, loss, and sadness. Join us for a worship service that will include scripture, prayers, the lighting of candles, instrumentalists, and music that seeks to proclaim God's presence in the midst of all aspects of life.

*Celebrate Christmas Eve*  
AT SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

**FAMILY SERVICE 3:30 PM**  
**CANDLELIGHT AND COMMUNION SERVICES**  
**5:30 & 7:30 PM**

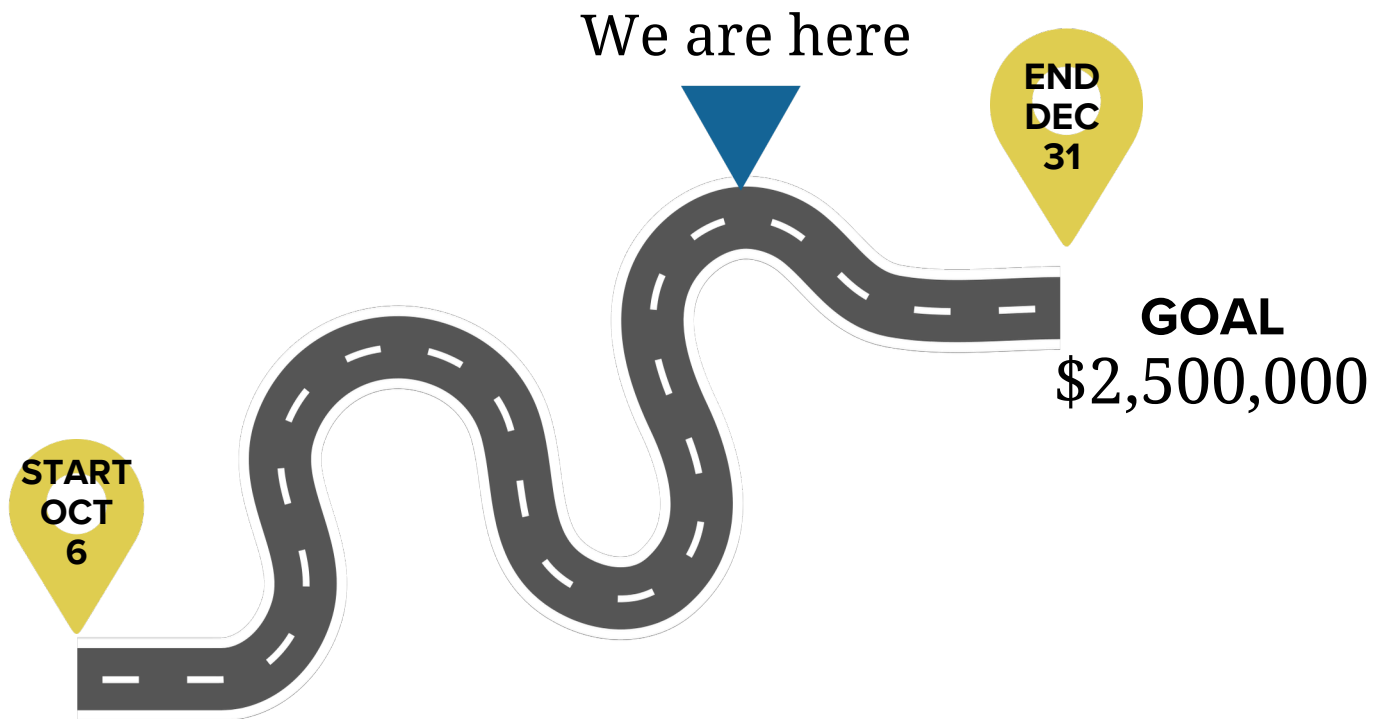
5:30 PM LIVESTREAMED AT  
[WWW.SECONDPRESLR.ORG](http://WWW.SECONDPRESLR.ORG)

600 PLEASANT VALLEY DR.  
LITTLE ROCK, AR 72227

# A Ministry Only Christ Could Build

## STEWARDSHIP APPEAL 2025

**The Road Ahead.** Thanks to the generosity of many of you, we're almost there. Let's keep this pace together to support our ministries. Building takes all of us: you, me, the friend in your pew, and the friend not here in person. Thank you for all the ministry we will make possible together in 2025.



### An example of why our members give:

*I was blessed to know some members of Second Pres already, but it was the warm welcome by those I didn't know, which helped me see God working in my life by leading me to the place where I needed to be nurtured spiritually. Stewardship season was a great opportunity to reflect on all the ways the church helps the community. As a new member, I was blown away by how much is done for others. It's important to have a reliable budget for that assistance and all of the important missions of the church; so, it felt natural to submit a pledge so the good work and the blessings can continue. I pray God continues to show others how Second Pres can be a lighthouse for others. "*

-A New Member



**If you haven't pledged, are you ready  
to fill out your Estimate of Giving?**

Fill out online at  
[www.secondpreslr.org/give/](http://www.secondpreslr.org/give/),  
by scanning the QR Code  
or mail a check to the church office

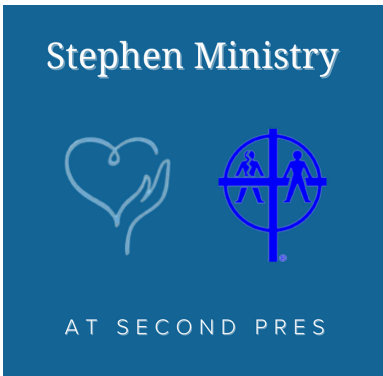
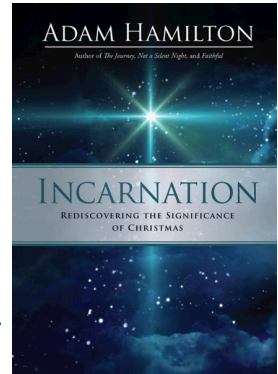


# Connect & Learn

## Second Hall Short Series

December 8, 15, 22 and January 5 at 9:45 a.m.

Second Hall Sunday School Class: *Incarnation: Rediscovering the Significance of Christmas* Learn the meaning behind the many names of Christ and the difference He makes in our lives this Advent season. His parents gave him the name Jesus. But the prophets, shepherds, wise men, and angels addressed him by other names. They called him Lord, Messiah, Savior, Emmanuel, Light of the World, and Word Made Flesh. This four-week series will be based on *Incarnation: Rediscovering the Significance of Christmas*, in which best-selling author Adam Hamilton examines the names of Christ used by the gospel writers, exploring the historical and personal significance of his birth. Session Leaders: December 8, Chris McDaniel; December 15, Jennifer Chilcoat and Dianne Campbell; December 22, Lydia Wingo Kane; and January 5, Steve Dunnagan.



## Stephen Ministry Training Class Begins in January

Stephen Ministry is a lay ministry that provides care and outreach to people who are hurting. Stephen Ministers meet weekly with their care receiver to listen, care, pray and embody God's presence in the person's life.

We are currently recruiting new people to join our training class which will begin in January.

Are you compassionate? A good listener? Supportive? Empathetic? These are all skills that Stephen Ministers use in our caring relationships. However, no one has every gift and that's where training comes in. At the end of training, you will have learned many new relationship skills that will equip you to confidently serve someone who is hurting.

Choose to believe that God can use any of your gifts that you offer to Him. God isn't asking you to be anyone other than who he designed you to be. No matter who you are, watch with humble amazement as God uses your willing, obedient, ordinary life to accomplish extraordinary things in His name.

Sign up today for Stephen Minister training by calling the church office. For more information, talk with Rev. Alisa Secrest [alisasecrest@secondpreslr.org](mailto:alisasecrest@secondpreslr.org).

## Usher and Greeter Sign Up



We all have hands. Hands can wave. Hands can shake other hands. Hands can hand out bulletins...or pass offering plates, making for a hospitable worship experience for all. *All Hands Say Hello!* Use the QR code for the Usher and Greeter Sign Up!

*BE THE HANDS AND FEET OF CHRIST*



- ◆ MONDAY PASTORAL CARE
- ◆ MEAL CARE
- ◆ MEMORIAL RECEPTIONS
- ◆ LOVE IN ACTION
- ◆ CARDS AND PRAYER

READY TO GET INVOLVED?  
CONTACT REV. ALISA SECREST  
AT [ALISASECREST@SECONDPRESLR.ORG](mailto:ALISASECREST@SECONDPRESLR.ORG)

# Connect & Learn Continued

## Did you know... about Second Presbyterian's second building?

Second Presbyterian's second building was located at the southeast corner of 3rd and Gaines streets in downtown Little Rock. The building was designed by Little Rock architects Sanders & Ginocchio and was built between March and December 1925 at a cost of \$250,000. The first service was held in the building on December 20, 1925. The building served as the home of Second Presbyterian until 1969 when the current building was built in Pleasant Valley. Second Presbyterian's second building was demolished in the summer of 1969 and the location is now a parking lot for the Federal Building. If you're looking to learn more about Second Presbyterian Church and its long history in Little Rock, check out the resources in the Heritage Room. Also, keep watching for more fascinating facts about Second Presbyterian's past!



## Presbyterian Women December 2024



Presbyterian Women will hold its annual Christmas program on **Tuesday, December 10** in Second Hall. Join us for fabulous refreshments at 10:00am before the 10:30am special program. Rev. Ben will lead our Bible study. He'll use the scriptures from Luke 1:39-56 and will share a little message about those wonderful verses that are so important to hear each year.

Plenty of seasonal music will be shared by Ouida Keck, Debbie Bass and Carrie Johnson, Melanie Hanna Ezell and Ethan Ezell. The lunch will be hosted by Phoebe Circle. Our service efforts this month will focus on the needs represented on our Outreach Christmas trees. This will be a festive time for all who gather. For more information, contact Emily Hall at [emily1hall@icloud.com](mailto:emily1hall@icloud.com) or Alisa Secrest at [alisasecrest@secondpreslr.org](mailto:alisasecrest@secondpreslr.org).



### 1st and 3rd Bible Study

STUDYING REV. NADIA BOLZ-WEBER'S  
BOOK, *ACCIDENTAL SAINTS*



NEXT MEETINGS ARE DECEMBER 2 AND 16  
9:30-11:00 AM | SECOND HALL



### 1st and 3rd Bible Study

The next meeting will be **Monday, December 16** from 9:30-11am in Second Hall. We are studying Rev. Nadia Bolz-Weber's book, *Accidental Saints*. You can purchase the book by going to Wordsworth in The Heights (they have copies) or buy it on Amazon; we can also purchase a copy for you, if that's easier. Join Rev. Robert Lowry and Rev. Ben on the 1st and 3rd Mondays.

## The Merry Widows

Merry Widows will have two (2) lunches in December. Widows are invited to join for lunch on one of these dates, depending on their schedules. We will meet on **December 7** and **21**, 2024 at 11:30 a.m.

Meeting Place in December: U.S. Pizza Co. in the Heights (corner of Kavanaugh and Taylor) Please contact Anne Crow (501-554-1603) or Catherine Allsbury (501-256-3452) so we know how many to expect.



# Connect & Learn Continued

## Cheeses With Jesus



In December we will meet on only one week: Wednesday, **December 11** at 7:00pm. Our meeting will be at 5224 Hawthorne Road, 72227 – home of J Dyke and Garry Mertins. They have promised to have their Christmas Tree in place for the occasion, so that we can gather around to raise a glass of good cheer. Who is Cheeses With Jesus? We are a dynamic community, bridging the gap between 'young adulthood' and retirement with grace and zeal. We are fellowship of believers who walk with and support one another through celebrations and sorrows. Our doors swing wide to welcome newcomers seeking spiritual enlightenment and treasured long-time members alike. Please contact Catherine Allsbury (revbury@gmail.com) or Justin Villines (villinesjustin@gmail.com) for more information.

## Jingle Jam! Junior Artist Ministry (JAM)

Each year the children (ages K-5th grade) at Second Pres present the Christmas story in worship. JAM is preparing the *Symbols of Christmas* for December 22. This is a much larger presentation and will need all hands-on deck to pull it off well. We are beginning to divide out parts for the December 22 worship services. If your child would like to attend, this is your last chance to get in before Christmas. JAM meets Wednesday nights from 5:15 - 6:30pm to practice music, craft some artwork, and prepare to present in worship. \$25 per child to cover the cost of food. Use the QR code to register or contact Doug Barr at (901) 606-6292. Now is the time to join the Junior Artist Ministry!



### Save-the-Dates for Advent Season with Children & Families Ministry

**Sunday, December 8th:** Family Dinner: Cookie Swap @  
Barrs at 4:30

**Sunday, December 15th:** Birthday Party for Jesus  
Great Hall during the Sunday School hour

**Wednesday, December 18th:** Jingle J.A.M. caroling

**Friday, December 20th:** SPY Kids Christmas Party @ the  
Youth Building

**Sunday, December 22nd:** Adult Christmas Party @  
McCormacks at 4:30



# Christmas Eve Special Offering

Pastors' Discretionary Fund  
December 24, 2024



CHRISTMAS JOY  
SPECIAL OFFERINGS

LEADERSHIP: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE



Christmas Joy Offering  
December 15, 2024



## Second Presbyterian Church Environmental Stewardship Christmas Tips

### Second Presbyterian Church Environmental Stewardship Have an Environmentally Sustainable Christmas!

Every year these are dumped in landfills:  
over 12,500 tons of Christmas decorations  
141,525 tons of food packaging  
30,000 tons of Christmas cards  
This is not counting gift packaging, food waste, unused gifts!

Try these suggestions instead:

#### 1. Christmas Wrapping Paper: Avoid plastic, glitter, foil. Use these:

- \*newspapers, magazines (comics, sports, style sections)
- \*old bags and cardboard boxes, old shoe boxes
- \*reuse fabrics/clothes as wrapping paper and ribbons

#### 2. Christmas Trees.

- \*Live trees are often better than artificial trees: less impact on environment. In tree farms, live trees help balance air, can be recycled as compost, sometimes can be replanted.
- \*Keep artificial trees many years. Get them second hand, or make one from recyclable materials.

#### 3. Christmas decorations

- \*Use old family pictures, children's drawings, paper snowflakes.
- \*Create decorations from newspapers, cardboard, reused fabrics.

#### 4. Gifts

- \*Share what you have.
- \*Make a family scrapbook, write down family stories to share.
- \*Give from the Presbyterian Giving Catalog.  
<https://presbyteriangifts.pcusa.org/>

Enjoy your family creativity!

See also 21 Sustainable Ideas for a Low Carbon Christmas:  
<https://www.sustainablejungle.com/sustainable-christmas/>





# YOUTH MINISTRY

December 2024



## CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS WITH YOUTH

This year we are changing things up! We are hosting an innovative and creative holiday extravaganza for our Youth to celebrate the coming of Christ's birth. Mark your calendars for our Youth Christmas Progressive Dinner on December 15th. Here is the concept: we meet at different Youth Family homes for the three courses of dinner (Apps, Main Course, and Dessert). At each location we will celebrate Christmas in a unique and special way. For Appetizers we will sing Christmas Carols with loud rejoicing. At our main course we will share some of our favorite Christmas Memories by taking part in a silly game of charades. And finally at Dessert we will host our Annual White Elephant Gift Exchange. Please remember to bring a wrapped gift (\$15 or less). With our church bus and different parent drivers we will carpool to our various locations. We ask that everyone arrives at the Youth Building by 5:00PM so we can quickly get on our way! We will arrive back at the Youth Building for pick up by 7:30PM. Listed below are the various homes hosting us for this fun celebration:



Appetizers: The Kane Family (5:15PM)  
Main Course: The McCormack Family (6:00PM)  
Dessert: The Holder Family (6:45PM)

*For addresses: please contact  
Elizabeth via email.  
elizabethcahoon@secondpreslr.org*



# Life Together in November



November was a wonderful month of fellowship and preparation at Second Pres! From meaningful gatherings that brought our community together, to readying our church for the Advent and Christmas season, we cherished every opportunity to connect, celebrate, and prepare for this special time of year.

# Pray & Care

## Peace and Possibilities: Practical Preparation for End of Life



A Guide to Funeral Planning  
Second Presbyterian Church

*I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord.*  
John 11:25

*Peace and Possibilities*, our guide to end of life and funeral planning, has recently been updated and reprinted. Our aim is to provide helpful resources so that you can prepare your loved ones with helpful information they will eventually need. Whatever your age, stage, and health, having your affairs in order is an act of love you can provide your loved ones. You can pick up the new *Peace and Possibilities* booklet at the church front desk. If you wish to meet with a pastor to “pre-plan” your memorial service, contact Rev. Alisa Secrest for consultation and filing your preferences with the church.



Facing grief? Come to the monthly Faith and Grief community support group for encouragement and listening. It is a safe place to sit and listen and a safe place to name your loved one, if you like. We meet the third Tuesday of the month in Second Hall at Noon. The next meeting will be **Tuesday, December 17**. Lunch is available. Please let us know of your plans to attend by registering through the office or at [faithandgrief.org](http://faithandgrief.org).



## Stephen Ministry

*CELEBRATING 32 YEARS OF STEPHEN MINISTRY AT SECOND PRESBYTERIAN!  
commissioned May, 1992*

If you or someone you know is hurting and you would like more information about receiving Stephen Ministry care, please contact any of our Stephen Leaders.

Kay Combs 501-517-5007

Cathy Crass 501-951-5890

Laurie Stueart 501-658-7966

Jana Villemez 501-517-1474

Laura Cook 501-580-0454

Rev. Alisa Secrest 501-227-0000

## Those Serving Our Country

Taylor Douglas, son of Susan & Kevin Douglas – San Diego, CA

Jackson Hudkins, son of Jay Hudkins and Becky Latch, RAF Lakenheath, Suffolk, England

Greer Johnson, daughter of Cory and Stephanie Johnson, granddaughter of Kelly & Judy Johnson - Air Force Academy, CO

Jonathan Johnson, grandson of Helen Scott, nephew of Clarke & Cindy Scott Huisman – stationed in CO

Daniel Jones, Marjorie Watkins' nephew, Sarah Ceja's cousin – stationed in Offut AFB, NE

Kyle Rought, Mary Ibis' cousin – stationed in Fort Hood, TX

Cogan Wade – Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune

# Bulletin Board

**Hospitalized** (\*Discharged) \*Stephen Schueth, \*Tracy Armbruster, Amelia Walters, \*Linda Sue Shollmeir, \*Lynne Minix, \*Nancy Hamlin, \*Les Finch, \*Marilyn Hall, \*Don McDaniel, \*Jeff Gaskalla, \*Dave Gruenewald \*Carol Majors

Our **sympathy** goes to the family of Jane Laudenberg who died on 11/4; Chrissy Voth in the death of her father Lavern Kelley on 11/19; Philip, Rees and John Shell and Barbara Lasley in the death of wife, mother and daughter Leah Shell on 11/21; Janine Tiner and family in the death of her mother Audrey Reeves on 11/24; Jim Penrod and family on the death of his wife Ann Wilkes-Penrod on 11/16; Jim Penrod and family in the death of his wife Ann Wilkes-Penrod on 11/26; Bruce Blackall and Cindy Green and family on the death of wife and mother Jane Blackall on 11/22; Kathy Johnson and family on the death of her husband Jim Johnson on 11/30. Nancy Coleman and daughters Elizabeth, Amanda, Evelyn, Katherine and family in the death of friend and father Richard Coleman on 12/1.

We would appreciate your help in keeping the church office informed when there is a sickness in your family, when someone is in the hospital, or a death has occurred. Please also keep us updated on the sickness or concern so that the information we have on our Care and Concern Line is accurate. Members and friends can call the Care and Concern Line, (501) 227-6117, on weekdays to receive information about prayer concerns in our church family. We will honor all requests for confidentiality, but in order for us to offer pastoral care we need to be aware of your situation. We also want to know about the joys, accomplishments and achievements of members of the church. Please call Alisa Secrest or Tracy May in the church office with information, (501) 227-0000, or e-mail [alisasecrest@secondpreslr.org](mailto:alisasecrest@secondpreslr.org) or [tracymay@secondpreslr.org](mailto:tracymay@secondpreslr.org). Thanks for your help!

## Sunday Online Worship Service

Available beginning at 11:00am at [secondpreslr.org](http://secondpreslr.org)

## Second Pres Staff

### **Pastor**

Rev. Dr. Benjamin E.E. Kane

### **Associate Pastors**

Rev. Alisa Secrest

Rev. Lindy Vogado

Rev. Elizabeth Cahoon

### **Parish Associate**

Dr. Robert Williamson

### **Director of Music and the Arts**

Dr. Bevan Keating

### **Director of Children and Families Ministry**

Doug Barr

### **Assistant Director for**

#### **Children and Families Ministry**

Maggie Kirchner

#### **Interim Assistant Music Director**

Melanie Hanna Ezell

#### **Organist**

Adam Savacool

#### **Business Administrator**

Aileen Moore

#### **Director of Planned Giving**

Malinda Kirchner

#### **Facilities Manager**

Guy Howze

### **Administrative Associates**

Karin Howze

Carrie Johnson

Tracy May

#### **Food Service Manager**

Brenda Majors

#### **Child Care Coordinator**

Karin Howze

#### **Sextons**

Logan Humphrey

Janie Rash



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Care/Concern: (501) 227-6117  
www.secondpreslr.org

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## Giving to Second Pres

Your generosity is a meaningful expression of your faith in God and your commitment to Christ's work in the world. Contributions can be made to the Annual Budget, Memorial Gifts and the Birthday Fund.



### OFFERING PLATE

You may place your offering in the offering plate during Worship



### BY MAIL

Church Office, 600 Pleasant Valley Drive  
Little Rock, AR 72227



### ONLINE

Scan the QR Code or visit [secondpreslr.org/give](http://secondpreslr.org/give)



Second  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

December 4, 2024

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