



## From the Pastor's Desk

A new year signifies change. And this change affects us all differently. It can be a gift, to turn the calendar page and start again. Maybe this is how you are beginning 2025. You've set new goals for your mental, spiritual, physical, and emotional lives; you've committed to something, and you are ready to achieve greatness.

A new year can be a burden. It is a reminder of another year past and the newness that some experience isn't what you experience. You feel the calendar turn and a sense of "more of the same" is upon you. Sure, you want to set new goals, but they already seem daunting or even worthless.

A new year can be scary. What will come next? What will this year hold? These unanswerable questions loom, causing a rumbling cloud of doubt, anxiety, and worry to swell around you. Goals are not something you can do unless you count surviving the day as a goal.

Somewhere within one of these three realities is where we find ourselves, I bet. This community of faith is an amalgamation of each of these and it is best to acknowledge that truth now as we walk into 2025. By acknowledging this we recognize something all of us must recognize – that we need God. If this is a joyful time of the year, we need God; if this is a burdensome time of the year, we certainly need God; if we are scared, Lord oh Lord do we need God.

As we walk into 2025 together as people of faith and members and friends of Second Pres, let us walk forward knowing the one thing that connects is that we all need God. And God loves this. God loves that we need God because it means God can do God's best work in and through us. When we know we need God, we look at the world differently and engage those around us differently. We stop putting ourselves first and making life all about what we need, what we want, what we must do and begin to shift our attention to God. In response, we understand our purpose to be living for and with God.

The great Russian writer, Leo Tolstoy, once wrote, "Everyone wants to change the world, but rarely do people want to change themselves." These words ring true for me as I enter 2025 and look forward to what God is and will do at Second Pres. God is hoping to change us so we might become the disciples God's calling us to be. We'll hear that in our worship, delve into in our education, and practice it in our care and outreach.

I hope you'll take a minute to peruse this edition of the Second Press and see what we'll be doing in January (and February!). Here are some quick highlights – a new vision statement will be unveiled, we'll break bread together at our first Second Sunday Lunch of 2025, hear from community partners about what God's doing in our midst, and practice our faith through weekly worship, Christian Education, and ongoing care and outreach.

Friends, let this new year be a beginning of something new in your relationship with God.

In Christ,  
Rev. Ben



*"Everyone wants to change the world,  
but rarely do people want to change themselves."*

Leo Tolstoy

# Upcoming Preaching Series

## Building on God's Foundation: Casting a New Vision for Second Pres

*Whoever and Wherever You Are, We Welcome You into a Life with Christ at Second Pres.*

This new vision statement adopted by the Session of Second Pres launches us into a new year and chapter. What we've found as we developed this statement was the firm foundation on which we stood as members of Second Pres. Our church has a storied history of proclaiming God's grace and love to all and we feel primed to open our doors wider and welcome more people into Christ's good news of the gospels. Join us in January as Rev. Ben preaches about three prominent parables that Jesus shared as guides for how our new vision can be lived out and practiced at Second Pres and in the larger community.

January 12: *The Building Blocks of a Vision*, Luke 15:1-7

January 19: *Searching for What God is Doing*, Luke 15:8-10

January 26: *The Grace that Makes this Possible*, Luke 15:11-32



## Let's Talk About It: Marriage, Relationships, and God

### February 9-March 2

God believes relationships are essential to being a human and in this four-week preaching series we'll explore this truth. Using biblical principles and ideas about what relationships entail, how covenants are involved in every relationship, and what God is trying to do with marriage, friendship, parenting, and other relationships the pastors (and a guest preacher!) will delve into a Reformed, open-minded exploration of the joys and challenges of all relationships.

February 9: *God the Match-Maker: How Relationships Came into Being*, Genesis 2:18, 21-24 & Matthew 19:4-6

February 16: *Love Enters the Relationship: How Marriage and Relationships Take on Depth*, Song of Solomon 8:6-7 and 1 Corinthians 13

February 23: *How We Love One Another: And What Happens when We Fail*, Ephesians 5:21-28

March 2: Guest Preacher Rev. Dawn Hyde, Pastor of Downtown Church in Columbia, SC

## Covenantal Marriage and Relationships Retreat: Saturday, March 1, 2025 from 9-3pm at Second Pres.

Join Rev. Ben and his dear friend, Rev. Dawn Hyde, for a retreat that'll delve into the good, the bad, and the ugly truths about marriage and relationships. Dawn and Ben have worked together for years and decided to start a conversation about what a healthy, biblical marriage entails. Turns out, there aren't great examples, but scripture offers clues about what a covenantal marriage and healthy relationship should include.

Join Dawn and Ben to explore your marriage and relationships. This retreat is for the newly married, soon-to-be-married, been-married-for-awhile, and we-are-about-to-celebrate-a-BIG-milestone-anniversary married couples. Our hope is to connect couples as Dawn and Ben believe any healthy marriage or relationship must include a support community to guide, nurture, and sustain what God created for all humans – healthy relationships. More details about the retreat will be coming in future newsletter – for now, we hope you'll mark the date on your calendar!



## Our New Associate Director of Music and the Arts: Melanie Hanna Ezell

The Music Ministry of Second Presbyterian Church is excited and indeed blessed to have hired Melanie Hanna Ezell as our new Associate Minister of Music and the Arts. For sixteen years, congregation members have been mesmerized by her wonderful solo voice soaring from our choir loft. Often offering her talents for our All Saints, Christmas and Easter services, Melanie is also heard during weddings, memorial services and concerts throughout central Arkansas. Perhaps unknown to many of our congregation, Melanie is also an accomplished children's music education specialist. With years of experience teaching classroom and individual children music lessons, she is skilled at developing early music education curriculum and producing children-focused church services and community presentations. Indeed we are overjoyed with Melanie joining our Music Ministry team and wish her success and happiness in her new position at Second Presbyterian Church.



Hello! I am so incredibly excited to be the Associate Director of Music and the Arts. My name is Melanie Hanna Ezell and I have been a soprano Section Leader in Second's Adult Choir for the last 16 years. I've also had the pleasure of being the music teacher at our church's preschool for over a decade. It is my hope to create an engaging and supportive environment where children and youth can explore their musical abilities and develop a lifelong love for music and tradition within our wonderful place of worship.

My goal is to make sure each child feels special, inspired, and excited about their musical journey through mid week JAM (Junior Artists Ministry) and Sunday School music. I will always aim to blend the beauty of music and visual arts to enrich the spiritual life of the congregation. I'm ready and eager to embrace the opportunity to grow and contribute further in this new role, bringing my passion and experience to make a positive impact.

**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.

Help us reach our goal by scanning the QR code and filling out your Estimate of Giving for 2025.



We are here



GOAL

\$2,500,000

# Connect & Learn

## Second Hall Short Series January 12-February 2 at 9:45 a.m.

*New Year, New Opportunities for joining in God's work of justice and compassion in our world*

Beginning on January 12, our Second Hall Sunday School class will be hosting community leaders to share with us ways that we might partner in the work of justice and compassion in the upcoming year. We hope you will join us as we explore ways that we can work to be active and engaged citizens as people of faith.

- January 12—Kathy Webb--City Director and Community Advocacy Leader
- January 19—Kathy Webb--City Director and Community Advocacy Leader
- January 26—Greg Adams--Little Rock School District Board Member
- February 2—Rev. Patricia Matthews--Executive Director of the Interfaith Center

**New Year,  
New Opportunities**  
*for joining in God's work of justice and compassion in our world*

**Second Hall Series**  
January 12-February 2  
at 9:45 AM

## Second Sunday Lunch January 19 after 11:00 a.m. Worship

Join us for an all church lunch in the Great Hall after the 11:00AM worship service on Sunday, January 19. Register now by scanning the QR code.

  
DATE CHANGED  
**Second Sunday Lunch**  
January 19  
in the Great Hall

**Register today!**  
Enjoy fellowship and food with Second Pres!



## Stephen Ministry Update January 2025

We are delighted to welcome an incoming class of 6 members who will train as Stephen Ministers. Please keep them in your prayers, as they prepare to serve in this significant ministry of compassion and care. They are Jeannie Ford, Christin Hankins, Joe Holmes, Janie Lowe, Jason Turner and Justin Villines. This team will become a community of trained Christian caregivers, along with previously trained Stephen Ministers in service. Their education includes 50 hours of group training, followed by continuing education and peer supervision. We are blessed by their God-given gifts and their commitment to train and serve. Each member of our incoming class has chosen to believe that God can use any of their gifts offered. God isn't asking them to be anyone other than the persons God designed them to be. They will watch with humble amazement as God uses their willing, obedient, ordinary life to accomplish extraordinary things in Christ's name. Stephen Leaders include Kay Combs, Laura Cook, Cathy Crass, Laurie Stueart, Jana Villemmez and Alisa Secrest. Currently commissioned Stephen Ministers include Jon Davies, Cheryl Denson, Kim Dunnagan, Becky Farrow, Candi Grace, Emily Hall, Diane Holt, Malinda Kirchner, Bob McCarley, Jennifer Rigsby, Tracy Sykes, and Barbara Vaught. If you have questions about Stephen Ministry, feel free to contact Alisa. We appreciate your prayers.

## 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 cornerstone?

When Second Presbyterian moved to Pleasant Valley in 1969, the congregation brought several items from the previous building, including the building's cornerstone. At 3rd and Gaines, the cornerstone was located at the northeast corner of the sanctuary section of the building. Today, the cornerstone is located outside of the Northwest Entry, although it is not known for sure where the stone was located prior to the construction of that part of the building in 1988. (Do you know?) The two dates on the cornerstone, 1882 and 1925, signify the year of the founding of Second Presbyterian and the year that the 3rd and Gaines building was built. 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 January 2025

Presbyterian Women will hold its first meeting of the new year on **Tuesday, January 14** in Second Hall beginning at 10:30am. Rev. Lindy will lead our Bible study. She'll be discussing Lesson 5 from *Let Justice Roll Down: God's Call to Care for Neighbors and All Creation*. Please send your lunch reservations to your circle leader. Martha Circle is hosting lunch. Happy New Year!



## The Merry Widows

Merry Widows will have two (2) lunches in January, on the third and fourth Saturdays: January 18 and January 25, 2025 at 11:30 a.m. We'll meet at the U.S. Pizza on Rodney Parham Road. (9300 Rodney Parham Rd 501-224-6300) Who are the Merry Widows? As the name suggests, we are women (of a variety of ages) who have lost a spouse in death. We share a particular kind of grief and recovery – although the road is different for each of us. We value the unique friendship of girlfriends, know that it is OK to laugh and even to cry with one another. Stiff upper lip and gay demeanor are not required! Come as you are, (please). Please contact Anne Crow (501-554-1603) or Catherine Allsbury (501-256-3452) so we know how many to expect.



## THE Second PRESBYTERIAN Birthday Fund

*Is It Your Birthday Month?*  
Give a gift as well as receive a gift by giving a dollar celebrating each year of your age to our church's endowment fund.

*You may also give in honor or in memory of the birthday of a loved one. Our endowment fund supports all of the ministries of our church.*



Scan here to donate!



## CELEBRATE WONDER



SIGN UP NOW



February 14-15  
\$125 per family



# Connect & Learn Continued

## Cheeses With Jesus



A SECOND PRESBYTERIAN  
FELLOWSHIP GROUP

## Cheeses With Jesus

CWJ will continue to meet twice per month in the new year. Our January dates are: Jan. 8, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. – at 4009 Ridge Road, NLR 72219 (home of Diane Karlson) Jan. 22, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. – place TBA. *Who is Cheeses With Jesus?* We are a dynamic community, bridging the gap between 'young adulthood' and retirement with grace and zeal. We are a 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. CWJ 2025 Winter and Spring meeting dates:

Jan. 8 & Jan. 15      Mar. 12 & Mar. 26      May 14 & May 28  
Feb. 12 & Feb. 26      Apr. 9 & Apr. 23



## Jubilant Ringers

Jubilant Ringer rehearsals resume on January 13 at 11:30 AM! If you're interested in joining this joyful group, contact Dr. Bevan Keating at [bevan@wildwoodpark.org](mailto:bevan@wildwoodpark.org) or Carrie Johnson at [carriejohnson@secondpreslr.org](mailto:carriejohnson@secondpreslr.org) for more information.

## Second Presbyterian Church Environmental Stewardship Make a new year's resolution to recycle !

You can recycle all these items clean, empty and dry. Stamped numerals are triangled. Kudos if you're already recycling!

- Empty glass bottles and jars with lids on. All clear, brown, and green glass is OK.
- Empty plastic bottles and jugs with the caps on (#1s and #2s).
- Clamshell containers (#1s only).
- Reusable #7 plastic beverage bottles.
- Plastic #5 tubs (yogurt, margarine containers).
- Aluminum, steel, and tin cans.
- Paper, stationery, newspapers, magazines, catalogs, junk mail.
- Paperboard or cardboard food/beverage cartons. Remove liners & flatten cartons.

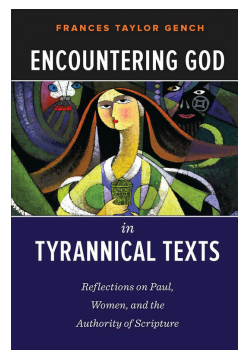
Information is from our Regional Recycling District site: [www.mydoright.com](http://www.mydoright.com) .

Scroll halfway for links to Little Rock, N. Little Rock, Sherwood, Maumelle, and Pulaski County. For pickup days, please check your specific locality's link.



## First and Third Bible Study

The First and Third Monday Morning Bible Study will resume meeting on Feb. 3 at 9:30 am in Second Hall. Rev. Lindy Vogado will be leading a study of the Epistles using the book, *Encountering God in Tyrannical Texts: Reflections on Paul, Women, and the Authority of Scripture* by Frances Taylor Gench. Everyone is welcome!



## Thank you!

Thanks to everyone who contributed to our Outreach donation drives in December! We were able to share numerous supplies with Inmerge Arkansas, El Zocalo Immigration Resource Center, and Youth Home.



# YOUTH MINISTRY

January 2025

## YOUTH SUMMER Trips 2025

REGISTRATION OPENS  
JANUARY 1, 2025

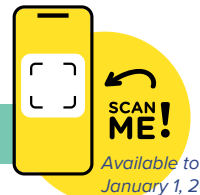


**MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
WEEKEND GETAWAY [JUNE 14-16]  
MISSION WEEK [JULY 7-11]

**HIGH SCHOOL**  
NEW ORLEANS *Camp RHINO*  
MISSION TRIP [JUNE 15-22]  
MONTREAT [JULY 19-26]



For more information, [elizabethcahoon@secondpreslr.org](mailto:elizabethcahoon@secondpreslr.org)



### TAKE A TRIP WITH US! SUMMER 2025

This summer the Youth Ministry is offering four different trips our Youth can register for! Each school unit gets two trips; one fellowship focused, the other mission focused. All registrations will open on January 1, 2025.

Middle School students will enjoy some fun in the sun in Hot Springs, AR as we take part in our Second Annual MS Weekend Getaway. This is a great opportunity for our younger students to go away for a few days and come back energized for summer. This age group will also participate in the Annual Mission Week, which helps to serve our local mission partners.

High School students are going on an urban mission trip this summer to serve the most vulnerable populations in the heart of New Orleans. These students also have an opportunity to go back to Montreat for an amazing week of faith development and fellowship.

### COMING JANUARY!

*Sunday School 9:45-10:45AM*

*Confirmation 9:45-10:45AM*

*Youth Group*

*MS 4:30-6:30PM*

*Dinner 6:00-6:30PM*

*HS 6:00-8:00PM*

# THE JOY OF YOUTH MINISTRY



Romans 15:13 says, “May the God of hope fill you with all **joy** and **peace** as you trust in him, so that you may **overflow with hope** by the power of the Holy Spirit.” If you think that Youth Ministry often looks like silly games and rowdy laughter, you’re not wrong. That is precisely our intention! --JOY!! We want our Youth to be filled with so much joy that its outshines the darkness that lurks in the corners of their minds. So we play silly games and we scream at the top of our lungs while hiking up Look Out Mountain, because in those joyous moments we teach them about God’s love. If we take a moment to imagine the unconditional love that God freely gives

us, then how can we not share that with our young people. It is an absolute joy to be a part of this community of young Christians. We hope that if you are looking for a place for your teen to grow in faith and be surrounded by loving people, you consider sending them to Youth Group on Sunday Evenings.  
MS: 4:30-6:30/Dinner: 6:00-6:30/HS: 6:00-8:00



Youth Progressive Christmas Dinner Party  
December 2024



# Life Together in December



December was a joyful month of fellowship and celebration at Second Pres! Together, we embraced the Advent and Christmas season with festive parties, beautiful music, decorating our church, and inspiring worship. Each gathering brought us closer as a community, as we prepared our hearts and our space for this sacred and special time of year.

## 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, January 21**. 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 – Virginia Beach, Virginia

1st Lt. Jackson Hudkins, son of Jay Hudkins and Becky Latch

2nd Lt. Greer Johnson, daughter of Cory and Stephanie Johnson, granddaughter of Kelly and Judy Johnson - Melrose, MA

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

Capt. Daniel Jones, Marjorie Watkins' nephew, Sarah Bland's cousin – Alexandria, VA

Kyle Rought, Mary Ibis' cousin

Capt. Cogan Wade – Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune

# Bulletin Board

Hospitalized (\*Discharged) \*Dan Lovelady, \*Jane Gillespie, \*Brenda Majors, \*Gina Bridges, \*Gene Berrier, \*Terri Cross, \*Ben Downs

Our sympathy goes to Lydia Wingo Kane, Ben, Margot and Phoebe on the death of Lydia's grandmother Gayalia Story on 12/10. Dudley and Linda Shollmier in the death of sister-in-law Linda Sue Shollmier on 12/10; Linda Kay and David Smith, Matthew and Madison and family in the death of her mother and grandmother Liz Martin on 12/15; Camille Williams and family in the death of her mother Margaret Bundrick on 12/10; David and Linda Kay Smith, Matthew and Madison and family on the death of David's cousin Holly Wilson; the family of Marion Looney on her death 12/22;

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

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

Melanie Hanna Ezell

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

Doug Barr

### **Assistant Director for Children and Families Ministry**

Maggie Kirchner

### **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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Little Rock, AR 72227

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

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Little Rock, Arkansas

## 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

January 8, 2025

Second Press

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