



THE NEW LEAF

Newsletter of Burke Presbyterian Church Members and Friends

Psalm 126 opens with, "When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream." What does it look like to live as those who dream? How can we embody and bring forth God's dreams? How do we dream of a better world when our current one feels harrowing and disorienting?

The prophets, the psalmists, John the Baptist, Mary, Elizabeth, Joseph, Simeon, Anna, the shepherds and the Magi—they were all dreamers. They received, discovered, and responded to God's dreams for the world. In Advent, we step into the mystery and awe of God's dreams and pray they shape our reality.

Our theme for Advent 2023, *Those Who Dream*, is for the dreamers in all of us—those who dream of a deeper connection with God and those who dream of a better world. It is for those who dream of comfort and for those who have given up on their dreams. It's for those whose dreams have been crushed and for those who show us that dreams take time.

Join us this Advent as we dream alongside prophets and angels, Mary and the Magi. Join us as we seek and sow God's dreams for our world.

Graphic design, photography, and other materials for *Those Who Dream* are by A Sanctified Art LLC, a collective of artists in ministry.

THOSE
WHO
DREAM

Join us for these special services during Advent and Christmas

Sunday, December 10

9:00 & 11:15am Morning Worship with Cantata, "Gloria" by John Rutter

Sunday, December 17

7:30pm Service of the Longest Night

Sunday, December 24

10:00am Morning Worship

4:00pm Family Service, no-rehearsal pageant and children's choirs

6:00pm Candlelight Service, with our youth choir

9:00pm Candlelight Communion, with the adult choir

Sunday, December 31

10:00am Morning Worship

REGULAR SUNDAY MORNING SCHEDULE

SUNDAY WORSHIP

9:00am in person

11:15am in person & online

SUNDAY SCHOOL

10:15 - 11:00am

To join us for online worship

at 11:15am on Sundays,

visit our website,

www.BurkePresChurch.org,

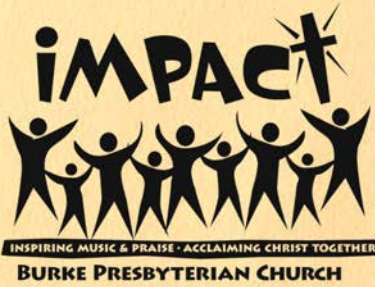
choose "Plan a Visit" (green

button within the big

photo), then select either

the Zoom button or the

YouTube button.



SPONSOR A BUS SEAT CAMPAIGN

Support the choir that has made a meaningful difference in the lives of so many students over the past 18 years. Help us reach our goal to sponsor all 56 bus seats for the 2024 Tour to Toronto!



SUGGESTED DONATION

Full Seat - \$200
Half Seat - \$100
Quarter Seat - \$50

DONATE ONLINE



For details visit www.BurkePresChurch.org. Thank you for your generous support.

BPC Staff

Senior Pastor and Head of Staff

Rev. Becca Messman
(becca@burkepreschurch.org)

Parish Associate

Rev. Catherine Taylor
(catherine@burkepreschurch.org)

Director of Spiritual Growth

Arlene Decina
(arlene@burkepreschurch.org)

Director of Music Ministries

Julianne Erbrecht
(julianne@burkepreschurch.org)

Director of Communications

Elizabeth Reece
(elizabeth@burkepreschurch.org)

Preschool Director

Anndra Rowland
anndra@burkepreschurch.org

Office Manager

Nicole Sheely
(nicole@burkepreschurch.org)

Business Administrator

Holly Walsh
(holly@burkepreschurch.org)

Pianist

Wei-Han Wu
(foreignkoffee@gmail.com)

BPC Leadership

BPC is governed by a 15-member Session ("elders") charged with the spiritual leadership of the congregation, policy-setting and long-term planning.

The board of deacons provides pastoral care to congregants in need.

Contact Us

5690 Oak Leather Drive
Burke, VA 22015
704-764-0456
office@BurkePresChurch.org
www.BurkePresChurch.org

Sign Up for Information

The New Leaf, a newsletter of Burke Presbyterian Church (BPC) members and friends, is published periodically. For regular updates on the life and ministry of BPC, refer to our weekly emails and the "In Community" announcements in Sunday worship bulletins.



A NOTE FROM OUR PASTOR

Friends,

As you are making your lists and checking them twice, I want to offer you a special gift ... especially for the list enthusiasts among us... a Very BPC Christmas List... a few ways for you to celebrate without exhausting your soul.

- Ask yourself, "What is my yes this Advent?" Choose one service opportunity that connects you to those who are struggling. One Bible Study or class that will connect you more deeply to the church community. One gift you can give to ease the suffering of the world. Let your yes be sincere, and you will feel the Holy Spirit there.
- Ask yourself, "What is the no, or refusal, you have been postponing?" What is one thing you can really say no to this year in order to make space for Christ?
- Show up for a youth. In this time of transition when we are missing Pastor Adam Ogg and our new leader has not arrived yet, send a card of encouragement to one of our youth or support them at a game or a concert at school.
- Show up for a senior. There are people in our congregation and in your neighborhood, I imagine, who spend a lot of time alone. Give them a phone call or linger and have a conversation.
- I heard someone say, "It's not Christmas that has been overrun... those days after Christmas are still calm, holy, prayerful times. It's Advent that has been overrun!" Let your Sundays of Advent involve worship, lighting the Advent candles, meals together, and prayerful quiet.
- Invite people to worship with you in Advent and on Christmas Eve. Most people are longing for hope, peace, joy and love in their lives, and most people only find a church home because someone told them about it and welcomed them personally. No website could ever beat a personal welcome.



These require no wrapping, but will wrap you in the peace of Christ. I hope your spirit is renewed as you worship, connect and serve with us this year!

Blessings,

Service of the Longest Night

THOSE
WHO
DREAM

Meeting House
Sunday, December 17
7:30pm

HELPING OUR NEIGHBORS

Special Mission Projects During Advent

Here at Burke Presbyterian Church, we have many opportunities to help our neighbors, especially during the season of Advent.

Put together a Bethany Stocking

Bring to church on December 3

For many years at Christmastime, BPC members have made stockings filled with essentials for the women who visit the Bethany Center on N Street in downtown DC. Bethany Center helps women facing homelessness and women and children escaping domestic violence. Here's how to put together a stocking:

- Buy thick knee socks (men's socks work very well).
- Stuff the second sock into the toe of the first.
- Fill the rest of the sock with items that would be useful to a woman without a stable home, such as toothpaste, toothbrush, hat, gloves, a scarf, other small toiletries, a notebook, pens, pencils ... use your imagination to make it fun!
- Tie off the end of the stocking with a ribbon and bring it to church on December 3.



Drop off a sweater for the men of Christ House

Bring to church on December 3

BPC has a long tradition of supplying sweaters for the men who reside at Christ House (short term) and Kairos House (long term), facilities in downtown DC for the formerly homeless, so that each man receives a sweater at the annual Christ House holiday event. If you would like to buy a sweater, please reach out to Al Bast to get colors requested and sweater sizes of the gift recipients. We will have a contact-less sweater drop off on Sunday, December 3, from 1:00 to 3:00pm in the BPC parking lot. If you'd like to drop off a sweater before then, please leave it in the Mission Center cabinet.

Donate a toy or teen gift for ECHO's Holiday Gift Store

Bring to church by December 3

ECHO collects new toys for children ages 0 to 15 and displays them in a store-like setting, and ECHO clients visit by appointment to choose gifts for their children. You can help by donating a new toy or teen gift, such as a skate board with helmet, family board games, art supplies, remote control toys, teen wallets, teen PJ bottoms, large stuffed animals, headphones/earbuds, etc. There's a long list of ideas, as well as a link to ECHO's Amazon Wish List, at www.echo-inc.org/holiday-programs. Please bring unwrapped gifts to the Mission Center cabinet by Sunday, December 3.



HELPING OUR NEIGHBORS

Special Mission Projects During Advent

Shop for our adopted Homestretch family

Bring to church by December 10

In 2018, BPC began a partnership with Homestretch, an organization that empowers homeless families to secure permanent housing and to attain the skills, knowledge, and hope they need to achieve self-sufficiency. Through the Homestretch Sacred Homes program, BPC is helping to support "C" and her two children. Our support includes helping to bring a wonderful Christmas to C and her family by buying items from their wish list. Scan the QR code (or use the link in church emails) to view the list via SignUpGenius. We will collect the gifts after worship services on December 10, or you may contact Nancy Morrison to arrange for another day/time. Questions? Contact Nancy Morrison.



More about the family BPC sponsors through the Sacred Homes program

Because of the need for confidentiality, we refer to the mother, who is head of household, by "C," her first initial. She has a son in elementary school and a daughter in college. BPC receives quarterly reports about C from Homestretch, and some members of the Mission ministry team have occasional direct contact with the family. C is working hard with resources from Homestretch to gain self-sufficiency so she can "graduate" from their program. We have been so inspired as C works to earn her GED and works toward US citizenship, along with her full-time job. BPC's quarterly contribution to Homestretch helps support C's housing costs. BPC also contributes to a Thanksgiving gift card for the family.

Make a Christmas Joy offering

December 3 - December 24

This denomination-wide offering is a way to honor God's gift of Jesus Christ by providing assistance to current and retired church workers in need and developing our future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. Contribute online (scan QR code or use link in church emails) or write a check payable to BPC, noting "Christmas Joy Offering" in the memo line.



CHRISTMAS JOY
SPECIAL OFFERINGS

LEADERSHIP: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE



Discover an alternative gift

Throughout the season

Make a donation to a cause the church supports in honor of someone close to you and receive a certificate that can be tucked into a stocking or wrapped and put under the tree. See the "order form" on the following page for details, visit the Alternative Gift table on Sundays after worship services in December, or get in touch with Jill Moore.



5690 Oak Leather Drive
 Burke, VA 22015
 703-764-0456
 www.BurkePresChurch.org

2023 Alternative Gifts Order Form

Burke Presbyterian Church has a long tradition of emphasizing the true meaning of Christmas giving - giving from the heart. The BPC Mission Ministry carries on this tradition with an annual offering of Alternative Gifts - gift certificates which benefit both local and international organizations that BPC supports throughout the year. These are thoughtful gifts which assist others in need and never create clutter! The suggested donation amounts are a guide - any amount you choose is just right. **Forms may be returned by email to Jill Moore** and certificates will be sent to you electronically. Payment can be made via the church website at www.BurkePresChurch.org - choose the "Giving" tab, then scroll to the "Alternative Gifts" section. Alternatively, you may mail a check - *payable to BPC with "Alt Gifts" in memo section* - to the church at 5690 Oak Leather Dr., Burke, VA 22015. **Thank you for your generous support!**

Ministry Name	Program Description	Suggested Donation	Qty	\$ Total
Christ House	Provide for the purchase of needed clothing for residents at Christ House in D.C.	\$25		
Hypothermia Prevention	Help unhoused people find respite when BPC provides meals, a warm place to sleep, and other assistance in February 2024 when it hosts the Hypothermia Prevention Program.	\$30		
ECHO	Purchase grocery food cards for Burke/Springfield families in need.	\$20		
Homestretch	Support for BPC's Sacred Homes partnership which helps an individual family propel themselves out of poverty.	\$25		
Refugee Resettlement	Support for BPC's efforts to assist refugees resettling in the local area.	\$25 - \$500		
Affordable Housing	Provide rental assistance and building materials for affordable housing initiatives in the local area.	\$25 - \$500		
Church World Service	Support CWS priority programs including disaster relief, clean water, food, and hygiene.	\$15-\$150		
Malawi - School	Nursery School of the Sazu CCAP Church: \$25 provides fortified porridge for 1 month.	\$25		
Malawi - ARVT	HIV/AIDS Antiretroviral Treatment & Care Program at Embangweni Hospital.	\$25		
Kibwezi - Education	Scholarship and curriculum support for vulnerable and orphaned students enrolled in post-secondary education programs.	\$50-\$250		
Kibwezi - Nendeni Area	Support for preschools in church rural outreach villages (daily meal, clean water, teacher salaries, construction, etc.)	\$10-\$100		
Tumaini Orphan Care	General program support for 35 young people in our care (school fees, uniforms, boarding, food, medicine, etc.)	\$25-\$500		
Tumaini Orphan Care	Purchase milk goats and other farm animals for orphan families so they can help sustain themselves.	\$50		

TOTAL DONATION:

Purchaser's Name: _____ Date: _____

Purchaser's E-mail address: _____ Phone: _____

For AG Team Use:

Received By: _____ Date: _____

Payment Method: Check # _____ Cash \$ _____ Online Engage: _____

HELPING OUR NEIGHBORS

Special Mission Projects During Advent

Provide a Christmas meal for an ECHO family

Contact ECHO no later than Monday, December 11

Through ECHO's holiday meal program, you can deliver groceries or mail a gift card that will help a local family with a Christmas meal. Last month for Thanksgiving, ECHO received requests from 225 families, and many of you stepped forward to sponsor a family. We now have another opportunity, to help families with a festive meal for Christmas. Please see below for details. If you can participate, start by sending an email to holidayfoodprograms@echo-inc.org **no later than Monday, December 11** to express your interest.

The program works like this for donors who wish to deliver their food in person:

- **No later than December 11**, send an e-mail to holidayfoodprograms@echo-inc.org asking for a family to assist.
- Receive contact information about a family: ages of children, cultural background, etc.
- Get a list of suggested foods to include, if desired.
- Contact the family to arrange delivery date/time.
- Shop for appropriate groceries.
- Deliver the food at least one week before the holiday, before December 18.



The program works like this for donors who wish to purchase a gift card:

- **No later than December 11**, send an e-mail to holidayfoodprograms@echo-inc.org to get contact information and size of the client family.
- Find out the closest food store to the client's address (transportation is sometimes a problem for needy families).
- Purchase food store gift cards in an appropriate amount for the family size (ECHO suggests at least \$65 for a family of four plus \$10 for each additional member, not including infants)
- Mail the gift card to the family to arrive at least 10 days before the holiday (December 15, 2023), giving them time to shop and prepare the meal.
- Consider enclosing the gift card in a festive holiday card and use ECHO's return address (7205 Old Keene Mill Rd, Springfield, VA 22150).

Thank you for your generous gifts to ECHO's food pantry! Your faithful, weekly donations of food and hygiene items help keep the shelves stocked during this time of continuing need. Remember to add to your shopping list some of ECHO's "most needed" items, such as protein (canned chicken, Spam, sardines, chili, beef stew) and canned fruit. You can find the complete list on the home page of ECHO's website, www.echo-inc.org.

HELPING OUR NEIGHBORS

More Opportunities for Mission

BPC to host FACETS Hypothermia Prevention Program for a week in February

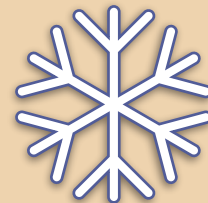
SAVE THE DATES! From February 18-25, 2024, BPC will provide food and shelter for 25-35 unhoused people who are part of the Fairfax County Hypothermia Prevention Program, operated by FACETS. We need your help to make it happen!

We're seeking volunteers to fill the following positions: security/fire watch team lead, greeters, meal preparers/servers, mat cleaners, and setup. Next month, we'll ask for a commitment via Signup Genius. However, we hope to secure a Security/Fire Watch Team Leader by December 1. If you are interested in knowing more, please contact Mara Ashby or Marcy Stennes. Thanks in advance for pitching in to help ensure that our most vulnerable neighbors are able to sleep inside during the winter months.



Seeking a Security/ Fire Watch Team Leader

We need someone to head up the Security/Fire Watch team when we host the Hypothermia program February 18-25. Duties include recruiting team members, coordinating the two nightly security/fire watch shifts, and responding to any security/fire incidents. For more information, please contact Mara Ashby or Marcy Stennes.



Wondering about the coffee/chocolate sales in the Gathering Space?

We sell Equal Exchange coffee, tea, and chocolate. This is not for profit; we sell at cost* to support farmers in South and Central America and other parts of the world. Our pre-Covid numbers were about \$2,000 worth of coffee/chocolate per year. When we got started again, we ordered and sold \$1,500 of materials in 2022. So far in 2023, our orders total \$1,700.

*We sell at rounded numbers (\$3 instead of \$2.87); any extra income goes to our Mission Ministry.

Check out the display in the Gathering Space, especially as the holidays come closer. Chocolate bars are wonderful stocking stuffers! Questions? Please get in touch with Mary Vander Maten.



HELPING OUR NEIGHBORS

More Opportunities for Mission

2024 Kenya Mission Trip

Applications due by December 11, 2023

Interested in traveling to Kibwezi, Kenya, with a group of 18-20 adults, college students, and older youth? We're planning a trip in July 2024, for two to three weeks, with lodging at Kambua Guest House. The goal of the trip is to strengthen our partnership with Bethel Church, to work on projects in/around Kibwezi, and to learn, give, and receive in the context of Christian fellowship.

The cost will be approximately \$2500 per person; \$250 will be due by January 31, 2024, and the remainder will be due by May 1, 2024. If you are interested, please complete the application and submit it to office@BurkePresChurch.org no later than December 11. (You can pick up an application at the Mission Center or contact the church office for a copy.) Questions? Contact David Smith or Pastor Becca.



Inova Blood Mobile returns to BPC

Saturday, December 9, 7:00-11:00am

Please consider donating blood to help replenish our local supplies. The reason to donate is simple: It saves lives! The Inova Blood Mobile will be at BPC in the lower parking lot on Saturday, December 9, 7:00-11:00am.

Sign up to donate online at <https://bit.ly/BPC1209> or call 1-866-BLOODSAVES (1-866-256-6372) and use Sponsor Code 1049. If you have any questions, please contact Bel Edmonson.

BPC Social Witness Group

New members are always welcome

Key areas of focus for the BPC Social Witness group have been affordable housing and housing insecurity, racial justice, criminal justice, climate justice, immigration, and civic engagement. We are guided by the statement that our General Assembly "affirms its conviction that neither the Church as the body of Christ, nor Christians as individuals, can be neutral or indifferent toward evil in the world; affirms its responsibility to speak on social and moral issues for the encouragement and instruction of the Church and its members...corporately to reveal God's grace in places of suffering and need...for only so is the gospel most fully proclaimed..." (1958 Statement – PC(USA), p. 537).

New members are always welcome, and we would like your input about events, organizations, and issues to share with the group. For more information and to be added to our Social Witness email list, contact Nancy Morrison.

PERSONNEL UPDATE

Although he is not a chocolate, the departure of Pastor Adam Ogg is undoubtedly bittersweet. While we are sad to see him go, we are proud of and excited for him as he begins the next chapter of his life in the Pacific Northwest. We had a heartfelt celebration on his last day to send him off with love and community.

Much is happening in the Personnel Committee after Adam's departure. Under Pastor Becca's leadership, the committee has already made important strides in moving toward the future. The search for an Interim Director of Youth Ministries is already underway. The job posting is on the website, our social media pages, Indeed.com, the National Presbytery, and it is being distributed throughout personal networks in the church. If you would like a copy of the job posting to share with potential applicants, feel free to contact the Elder for Personnel, Seth Parsons.

The search committee for this interim position is the Personnel Committee along with a youth representative and a parent representative. We will keep the congregation posted as we continue with the search.

Meanwhile, progress on the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee (APNC) for the permanent position is also underway. Pastor Becca, Elder for Nominations Michael Hrabak, and Dan Herrema are working to begin the process of creating an APNC. An important note is that the National Presbytery is striving to speed up the timeline for the hiring process. Rather than the one to two years that was previously typical, the goal is now six to nine months.

Another Personnel transition is that Elizabeth Reece is stepping back from her Director of Communications position. She is reducing work time to increase time with her family, a transition that will take place at the end of the year. Elizabeth has been an integral member of the office staff and she will be missed in that role, though we look forward to continuing to see her at church!

Happily, Nicole Sheely, our exceptional Office Manager, is going to increase her hours to complete additional work with communications.

On November 12, we celebrated the 20-year anniversary of Director of Music Ministries Julianne Erbrecht. Her creative leadership has helped all of us — children, youth, and adults, whether members of the congregation or members of a choir — connect to God and to each other.

Be on the lookout for additional staff celebrations. We have more anniversaries coming up!



Staff farewell party for Adam Ogg in October



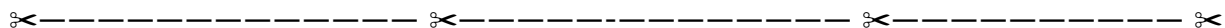
As the Israelites crossed the Jordan on their path of freedom, each tribe chose a stone from the middle of the riverbed to place on the shore of the promised land as a memorial to their journey and the wonders God can work when a people have faith. [Joshua 4:1-24] Samuel took stones and stacked them to remind Israel of how God helped them, naming the stone Ebenezer, or "stone of help." [1 Samuel 7:12]

Please visit [The Path of Freedom](#) display at the end of the Gathering space near the church office. There you will find stones in a "riverbed," and when you make a pledge

to the 2024 stewardship campaign, we invite you to take one of the Ebenezers and add it to the jar, so that we may all be reminded of how God is with us and is helping us on this journey. Our goal is 200 pledges, or 200 stones in the jar.

It's not too late to pledge! If you haven't already, please fill out our online pledge form (find a link to it at www.BurkePresChurch.org/giving) or use the form at the bottom of this page.

If you are interested in detailed information about the 2024 budget, please come to a meeting on Tuesday, December 5 at 7:30pm in person in the BPC Library and on Zoom. Look for the the Zoom link in church emails the week before.



BPC 2024 Stewardship Campaign Pledge Form

I/We _____ make the following pledge:

CHOOSE ONE:

ANNUAL TOTAL

Weekly 52 x _____ = \$ _____

Monthly 12 x _____ = \$ _____

Other _____ x _____ = \$ _____

Place completed forms in the offering plate or mail to

5690 Oak Leather Drive, Burke, VA 22015-2236

ATTN: Stewardship Elder Jessie Doll

Questions? Please contact the church office at 703-764-0456 or office@BurkePresChurch.org.





Celebrate the Season


Multi-Generation Breakfast
Little Shoppe for Children
St. Nick Visit

Sunday, December 3
10:15-11:00am

THE CHANCEL CHOIR
WILL PRESENT
THE MESSAGE
THROUGH MUSIC

"GLORIA"
BY JOHN RUTTER

AT BOTH SERVICES
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10



BPC Christmas Gathering for Seniors and Retired Folks

Thursday, December 14
at 2:00pm

SAVE THE DATE!



Cookies and Carols

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17
10:15-11:00 AM

Bring cookies to share!
No nuts please.