



The PresbyRecord

A community beacon of faith, love and hope.

Volume LV Issue 11

November 2025

A Heart Poured Out: Thanksgiving Through the Story of Hannah

As Thanksgiving approaches, we often reflect on gratitude—sometimes from abundance, sometimes from longing. The Pilgrims’ first Thanksgiving in 1621 was born out of hardship and hope. Their feast was simple, their future uncertain, yet they gave thanks to God for His provision and presence.

This same spirit of thanksgiving pulses through the story of Hannah. Long before her arms held the child she prayed for, her heart was already bowed in worship. In deep anguish, she poured out her soul before the Lord—not with bitterness, but with trust. And when God answered her prayer with the birth of Samuel, Hannah didn’t cling to the gift. She returned to the temple, declaring, “I prayed for this child, and the Lord has granted me what I asked of him. So now I give him to the Lord” (1 Samuel 1:27–28). To understand the depth of Hannah’s thanksgiving, we must walk with her through the story.

The Song of Hannah (A short story inspired by 1 Samuel 1–2)

The sun had barely crested the hills of Ramah when Hannah stirred. The house was quiet, save for the soft breath of her husband, Elkanah, still asleep beside her. She slipped out from under the woven blanket and knelt by the window, her hands clasped tightly in prayer.

Another year. Another journey to Shiloh. Another feast where others would rejoice—and she would smile through the ache. She was loved. Elkanah made sure of that. He gave her a double portion at every sacrifice, whispered words of comfort when her heart broke. But even his tenderness couldn’t fill the empty space in her arms. She longed for a child—not for status, not for rivalry, but because something deep within her cried out to nurture, to cradle, to sing lullabies in the dark.

And then there was Peninnah. Peninnah, with her full arms and sharp tongue. Her children ran laughing through the courtyard, and her words cut like thorns: “Perhaps the Lord has closed your womb for a reason.” Hannah said nothing. But her silence was not surrender—it was a seed of faith, buried deep.

That year, when they arrived at Shiloh, the feast was as joyful as ever. But Hannah could not eat. Her appetite had been replaced by a holy desperation. She slipped away from the table and made her way to the tabernacle. There, before the presence of the Lord, she fell to her knees. Her lips moved, but no sound escaped. Her prayer was raw, unfiltered:

“Lord Almighty, if You will only look on Your servant’s misery and remember me... if You will give me a son, I will give him back to You all the days of his life.”

She didn’t notice the priest watching her. Eli, old and weary, mistook her silent prayer for drunkenness. “How long will you stay drunk?” he scolded. “Put away your wine.” Hannah looked up, tears streaking her cheeks. “I am not drunk, my lord. I am a woman deeply troubled. I was pouring out my soul to the Lord.” Eli’s expression softened. “Go in peace. May the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of Him.” And something shifted. Not in her womb—not yet—but in her spirit. She rose, wiped her face, and returned to the feast. This time, she ate.

Months passed. Then came the flutter. The quickening. The promise, alive within her.

She named him Samuel—“God has heard.” And when the boy was weaned, she did what few mothers could bear: she brought him back to Shiloh. With trembling hands and a steady heart, she placed him in Eli’s care. “For this child I prayed,” she said, “and the Lord has granted me what I asked. So now I give him to the Lord.” And then she sang. Her voice rose like incense, a song of reversal and hope:

“My heart exults in the Lord;
my strength is exalted in my God.
My mouth derides my enemies
because I rejoice in your victory.
There is no Holy One like the Lord,
no one besides you;
there is no Rock like our God.
Talk no more so very proudly;
let not arrogance come from your mouth,
for the Lord is a God of knowledge,
and by him actions are weighed.
The bows of the mighty are broken,
but the feeble gird on strength.
Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread,
but those who were hungry are fat with spoil.
The barren has borne seven,
but she who has many children is forlorn.
The Lord kills and brings to life;
he brings down to Sheol and raises up.
The Lord makes poor and makes rich;
he brings low; he also exalts.
He raises up the poor from the dust;
he lifts the needy from the ash heap
to make them sit with princes
and inherit a seat of honor.
For the pillars of the earth are the Lord’s,
and on them he has set the world.

He will guard the feet of his faithful ones,
but the wicked will perish in darkness,
for not by might does one prevail.
The Lord! His adversaries will be shattered;
the Most High will thunder in heaven.
The Lord will judge the ends of the earth;
he will give strength to his king
and exalt the power of his anointed.”

It was not just a mother’s song. It was a thanksgiving hymn for every barren place, every long wait, every whispered prayer. And the boy? He grew in the presence of the Lord.

Reflection

Hannah’s thanksgiving wasn’t just a response to answered prayer—it was an act of surrender. Her song in 1 Samuel 2 is a powerful declaration of God’s sovereignty, justice, and mercy. She rejoiced not only in what God had done for her, but in who He is.

Like the Pilgrims, Hannah teaches us that gratitude is rooted in faith. It’s not dependent on circumstances, but on the character of God. Whether we’re feasting or waiting, celebrating or grieving, we can give thanks because He is faithful. This Thanksgiving, may we follow Hannah’s example: pouring out our hearts before the Lord, trusting Him with our deepest hopes, and rejoicing in His goodness—no matter the season.

Communion Servers

November 2nd: Valerie Wade - Set Up
Dave Harvey - Server
Jack Rogers - Server
December 7th: Kathleen Jordan - Set Up
Kathy Harrah - Server
Jennifer Burgess - Server
December 24th: Jack Rogers - Set Up
Buck Ivey - Server
Kristi Sutphin - Server

Liturgists

November 2nd Kathryn Maddy
November 9th Dave Harvey
November 16th Kristi Sutphin
November 23rd Holly Greathouse
November 30th Buck Ivey
December 7th Valerie Wade
December 14th Kristi Sutphin
December 21st Kathleen Jordan
December 24th Raven Lanham
December 28th Buck Ivey

In Care Facilities:

Ann McCormick, Apt.106, English Meadows, 5
Bexley Dr, Scott Depot, WV 25560
Sadie Ashworth, 5 Rolling Meadows Dr., Room 118,
Scott Depot, WV 25560
Cel Jones, Meadowbrook Acres Rehab, Room
A-13, 2149 Greenbrier Street, Charleston, WV
25311 Phone 304 344-4268

Prayer Concerns

Prayer Concerns – Congregation Members:

Mike Merguc
Alex Dayfield
Kensie McComas
Mark Curtis
Elliet Malcomb

Prayer Concerns - Family and Friends

Ashley Nestman, Lymphoma (Connie Ivey)
Victoria Reynolds (Wanda Bowman)
Brucie Kessler (recovering from surgery)
Flo Rogers (Jack's wife & Raven's mom) health complications
Ron Collins, multiple and serious health issues (Kathy Leftwich, the husband of a dear friend.)
Jason Haught, complications from spinal surgery (Vickie Haught's son, Jack Rogers' nephew)
Brett and Linda Foster, glioblastoma (Laurie's nephew and his wife)
Kate Lichtenfels, cancer (Kathryn Maddy's niece)
Jason Turley, major health concerns (Laurey's son and Holly's brother)
Matt Waldie, lung cancer (Kathleen Jordan's friend)
Mark Cunningham, stepping up treatment (Abbie Burch's brother)
Mary Jo Swartz, health problems (Kathi Curtis)
Annette Burns, liver issues (Ann McCormick)

Military

Captain Allie Curtis, US. Army (United States)
Hunter Parsons U.S. Navy (Virginia)
Mickey Swartz, Aircrew Flight Equipment
Technician, U.S. Air Force (Eugene, Oregon)
Lieutenant Jack Wiles, U.S. Air Force
PFC Joseph Sutphin, US Army

November Birthdays

1 -- Allycia Stennett, Tony Dayfield
5 – Ina Armstrong, Finn Allevato
9 – Mickey Swartz, Matt Jones
10 – Brian Slappe
11 – Steve Holstein
18 – Trinity Resler
19 – Jeanne Young, Elliot Malcomb
20 – Jacob Haught, JoBeth Mounts,
22 – Julie Wiles, Jasiah Combs (2017), Janelle Combs (2017)
23 – Adrianna Resler
26 – Aaron Peterson
30 – Ron Peterson

November Anniversaries

Kathy and Jeff Maddy - November 7, 1981
Bill and Julie Hartman - November 8, 1975
Laurie Turley and Adolfo Torres - November 11, 2004
Buck and Connie Ivey - November 19, 1977
Mel and Abbie Burch - November 17, 1979

Highlights of October Stated Session Minutes

- Income and Expense Statement and Balance Sheet were accepted as presented.
- Approved Susan Sharp Campbell's request to hold Presbytery's ALP/CP Preparation program for several dates in 2026.
- Approved The West Virginia Horse Network use of the building on Saturday, November 15 for a dinner fundraiser.
- Approved participation in the city of SA Christmas Market on December 6, giving out cookies.
- Approved Parents Night Out event in early December.
- Approved placing a collection box in the fellowship hall for donations to veterans.
- Reviewed Presbytery's Ministry Reflection Report.
- Next Stated Session Meeting is set for Tuesday, November 18, 2025.

Facilities Committee

October 7th

Facility and Worship Meeting

Present: Sara Kell, Jack Rogers, David Harvey, Mike Merguc

- Fellowship Hall stripped and waxed
 - we will put this on an annual basis.
- Jennifer needed a new key for paper towel dispenser.
 - Mike got her one.
- We're getting prices on solar panels.
 - Holly and David are setting up zoom meetings (Nov 4th 6pm).
- A meeting was set up with Bryan Roberts to work on issues with our on line sound.
 - Adjustments have been made.

Little's Story Time Team

by Donna Merguc, Coordinator

The Little's Program continues to be a blessing to all the children, their families, and our awesome HELPERS.

We are having a spooky Halloween Party for all the LITTLES on Friday, October 31st at 10:30am. They will be coming in their costumes and we will also parade around the church around 11:30. Stop by and see us if you can!

A set of twins 2-1/2 years old, Ellie and Evie, joined us two weeks ago. Thank you John and Jackie for inviting them. Four-year old Archer is always so excited to be with us each week. Grandma says he cannot wait to come to Little's. God Bless him.

Thanks Kris Dunlap for all the Holiday plates, napkins and cups. Little's will enjoy them very much. Thanks for thinking about us!

We invited Little's to our Church Fall Festival on October 26.



Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to:
nurture our faith through prayer and Bible study,
support the mission of the church worldwide, work for justice and peace, and build an inclusive, caring
community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and witnesses to the promise
of God's kingdom.

Hat Tricks for Lunch!

Women's monthly lunch gathering is at Hat Tricks on Friday, November 21. We will gather at 11:45
am. This new establishment is located at 714 6th Avenue. Everyone is welcome!

Advent begins Sunday, November 30!

We will gather on Saturday the 29th at 9:30 am to decorate the Chrismon Tree and sanctuary greenery.
Please join this fun activity if you are able.

2025-2026 PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Horizons Bible Study 2025-2026 *Finding Resilience, Joy and Our Identity in Christ*, by the Rev. Dr.
Rhaskell D. Hunter, begins in September. In this Bible study, we will explore resilience in times of
crisis and

finding Christian joy in a chaotic world.

We will also seek to rediscover our identity in Jesus Christ. We have two times you may join a Bible
study, either in person or on zoom. Everyone is welcome to join the discussion whether you read the
lesson or not.

This month we look to Jesus as our role model for resilience. His wilderness experience assures us we
are never alone. Through spiritual practices we find the strength and ability to withstand and recover
from life's difficult challenges. These practices ground our core identity in Jesus Christ.

Daytime Bible study meets Wednesday, November 12 at 12:00 noon in person for table fellowship.
Bring your own brown bag lunch. At 12:35 pm we begin the Bible study and conclude promptly at
1:30 pm.

Evening Zoom Bible study meets on Tuesday, November 11 at 7:00 pm. The zoom will open at 6:45
for early birds to fellowship.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85861031680?pwd=Nw4SR3Clr969qxLdwY9avWaru3wiai.1>

Meeting ID: 858 6103 1680

Passcode: 406332

Christmas Food Baskets

Tick tock, tick tock, tick tock....the clock and calendar are rapidly approaching Christmas and one of our favorite days of the year. Although there is a lot of work and sometimes worry, I love working on our Christmas Food Basket Program!

Of course, the food donations and work to pull it all together require your faithful contributions. We are continuing to collect canned and boxed food items, and the process is progressing successfully through ongoing contributions. The list of items we need is noted in the Announcements flyer you receive every week which includes an update of our progress.

In the meantime, we can start collecting your monetary donations in any amount your heart and budget guide you. We try to hold the cost of each family's basket to \$70 but in the past two years the cost has crept to about \$100. We usually prepare for 48 families with two extra for last-minute situations. You can donate with a check by mail, depositing a check or cash in the offering plate in an envelope or through the online portal. **Please make the check payable to First Presbyterian Church and designate it for the Christmas Food Basket Program**, regardless of how you donate.

We welcome hands on help, too, with the pick-up of the food from Kroger, packing of the "baskets", onsite distribution at the Church and delivery to those who cannot come to the Church for pickup. First Presby is known for our generosity, and our less fortunate neighbors are counting on you! Please contact me by calling or texting 304-421-3780 if you have questions or want to participate in any of those mentioned activities.

Blessings to all!

Thank you to all those who donated hygiene products to Western Regional CASA for distribution to children in foster care . Alison Gerlach the supervisor for Kanawha and Jackson counties was very appreciative last week when I delivered the contents of the donation box in the fellowship hall which included: 10 toothbrushes, 2 bottles of body wash, 2 bottles of shampoo & conditioner, 3 bottles of facial cleanser, 3 sticks of deodorant, 2 packages of dental floss, 40 ponytail ties, 4 bars of soap, 8 packages of feminine hygiene products, 2 tubes of toothpaste, and 6 pair of briefs.

Thanks, Connie



Hygiene Drive for Children in Foster Care

Donate full-size products to your local CASA office!

Shampoo
Body Wash
Deodorant
Feminine Hygiene

westernregionalcasa@teamwv.org

Family Bible Study and Dinner

Classes for all ages!

Dinner 5:45-6:30
Bible Study 6:30-7:30

EVERY WEDNESDAY
AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ST. ALBANS
201 Kanawha Terrace
304-727-2241

EVERYONE IS WELCOME
BEGINS SEPT. 10TH 2025

Learn about God through stories, science, crafts and more!

Blessing Bag Needs

Socks – for men and women

Toilet Paper

Every donation helps bring comfort and care to someone in our community.

Thank you!

Please leave all donations on the stage

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A

Thanksgiving Dinner

NOVEMBER 23
5:00PM

201 Kanawha Terrace
304-727-2241

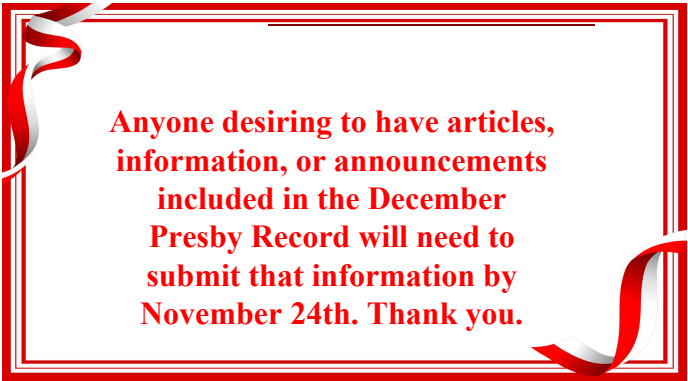
If you would like to bring a dish please let Raven or Kathy H know so we don't double up!

Choral Music Opportunity

St. Albans Festival Choir has begun rehearsals for the SAMA's Community Christmas Celebration on Friday, December 12 at 7:00pm.

Rehearsals are on **Monday** evenings at **6:30** in the sanctuary of **Highlawn Baptist Church** (2304 Jefferson Avenue).

First Presbyterian Church
201 Kanawha Terrace
St. Albans, WV 25177



Trustees

Class of 2025: Buck Ivey
Class of 2026: Holly Greathouse
Class of 2027: Dewitt Bowman

Officers

Class of 2025	Class of 2026	Class of 2027
Dave Harvey (1)	Kathleen Jordan (2)	Jennifer Burgess (1)
Adam Greathouse (1)	Valerie Wade (2)	Kathy Harrah (1)
Buck Ivey (1)	Kristi Sutphin (1)	Jack Rogers (2)

Church Staff

Ministers.....	Every Member of the Congregation
Pastor	
Administrative Assistant.....	Raven Lanham
Custodian	Jennifer Gil & Mike Merguc
Musician.....	N. David Stern
Treasurer	Buck Ivey
Tech Team	Dave&Wendy Harvey, Betty King, Logan Roberts

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