

# The Amen Almanac — January 2015

First Presbyterian Church, 721 Church St., Jefferson City, TN 37760

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Andrew C. Whaley, Pastor

## From the Pastor's Desk...

"Teach us to number our days so we can have a wise heart," writes the author of Psalm 90. This seems an appropriate scripture passage as we transition from one calendar year to another. As we approached 2015, what might we discover about living in wisdom for a new year?

First, the psalm opens with an ascription of praise to God, "from forever in the past to forever in the future, you are God." There is a recognition that our marking of time is superficial, a human construct to help us in our social situation to organize our relationships to others. For God, however, time is not so linear or segmented. As we come into the new year, perhaps we do well to put it in its proper place: our dating system is our creation. The God we serve is beyond all human time.

Second, the psalmist laments human decay and destruction and sites God as the one who causes this pain and suffering as a result of humanity's unfaithfulness and sin. "You return people to dust," writes the author, and "Yes, we are wasting away because of your wrath...you put our sins right in front of you." This notion of God's wrath seems harsh to us as modern readers, but if you look closely at these verses, the wrath of God plays itself out as the natural consequences of our actions against God and others. How many of us can look over the past year and see those things we have done that have hurt others, severed relationships, and hurt our reputations. The "wrath" the psalmist describes may very well be the natural working out of our poor choices.

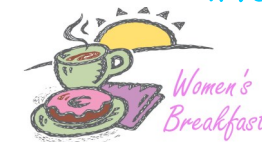
The psalmist is despondent about his condition, that even if he lives seventy or eighty years, it seems like his life is only one of toil, a life of pain and suffering to end only in death. What's the point? Then comes the line that inspires this entire article, "Teach us to number our days, so we can have a wise heart." Perhaps if we see that our days ultimately have an end, that opportunities for reconciliation and peacemaking are fleeting, we would change our hearts and lives to heal the brokenness around us. As we number our days for 2015, where can confession, re-

pentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation take place in our lives?

As the author makes this realization about the days remaining, his words turn from lament to praise. "Fill us every morning with your faithful love, so we can rejoice and celebrate our whole life long." When this prayer fills our hearts, our lives turn away from wrath and suffering and toward healing and newness. At the conclusion we read, "Make the works of our hands last," and the line is repeated again for emphasis. I can think of no better resolution for 2015, than to "make the works of our hands last" to the glory of God. Happy New Year!

Gratefully,  
Andrew

## Announcements



### WOMEN'S PRAYER BREAKFAST

The Women's Prayer Breakfast will be held on January 10<sup>th</sup>, at 9:00 a.m. at the home of Juanita Dykstra (1314 Gaby Hills, Dandridge). We will be studying the third lesson, "Knowing and Being Known". Hope to see you there. If you do not have a study book, we will have them available at that time.

### MEN'S PRAYER BREAKFAST

The next breakfast for the men in our church family is scheduled for Saturday, January 10<sup>th</sup>, at 8:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. We hope to see you here!



**MEN'S  
BREAKFAST**



### YOUTH GROUP—LES MISERABLES

On Sunday, January 18<sup>th</sup>, from 5:00—7:00 p.m., the Youth will be meeting in the Fellowship Hall to discuss, "How are we defined by Mercy?" We will explore this through Matthew 18:21-35 and Les Miserables, along with recreation and dinner provided!

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## SAVE THE DATE! FAMILY/SKI RETREAT FEBRUARY 6-FEBRUARY 8, 2014

Now is the time to mark your calendars and make plans to attend our Family/Ski Retreat weekend at Holston Camp & Retreat Center in Banner Elk, North Carolina. The retreat will begin on Friday evening and go through Sunday worship. Look for sign-up sheets and more information in the Sunday. For more information, call the church office at (865) 475-2761.

**FAMILY NIGHT SUPPER**

Our January Family Night Supper is scheduled for Wednesday, January 21<sup>st</sup>, beginning at 6:30 p.m., in the Fellowship Hall. This month's program will feature the Annual Meeting of the Congregation. We will hear reports on church programs and activities for the year just past, as well as plans for the new year. Bring a dish and join us!



**SMOKY MOUNTAIN HIKING GROUP**  
The Smoky Mountain Hiking Group will be meeting on Saturday, January 24th, at 8:00 a.m. to hike to Old Sugarlands Trail. Once again, we will start with this trail, described as "an undiscovered treasure," and one we've done several times; we'll follow Old Sugarlands to the Two Mile Branch Trail and complete a 6.2 mile loop hike to the Sugarlands Visitors' Center. Along the trail, we'll take the short detour to the Sugarlands Cemetery. Elevation gain 1,000 feet over 2 miles. Don't forget to pack a lunch and join us!



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**NEW ADDRESSES**

Linda Eisenhour  
1317 Secretariat Dr.  
Morristown, TN 37814  
423-353-1181



John and Madison Meadows  
1044 W. Dumplin Valley Rd.  
Dandridge, TN 37725

**THE FAITH JOURNEY**

Faith is better understood as a verb than a noun, as a process than as a possession. It is on-again-off-again rather than once-and-for-all. Faith is not being sure where you're going, but going anyway. A journey without maps.

—Frederick Buechner



**THANK YOU FROM THE STAFF!!**

*Thank You!*  
We would like to express our gratitude to everyone in the congregation for the generous Christmas gift. We are touched by your thoughtfulness and extremely appreciative. Thank you!! We wish you all a Happy and Healthy New Year!!

**2015 WINTER COVENANT LEARNING GROUPS  
JANUARY 4—FEBRUARY 15**



**Rebellion, Revolt and the Reformed Church**

Room: Fellowship Hall  
Facilitator: David Needs  
In the days of Oliver Cromwell and the English Civil War, English Puritans

and Scottish Presbyterians convened in Westminster Abbey to create one of the most lasting expressions of faith ever composed, the Westminster Confession. Join us on this journey as we explore the history of the English Civil War and its impact on the creation of this confession, and examine the major themes that still influence our Church life today.

**Study 2: Acts of Worship—Learning to Pray and Stewardship for Life**

Facilitator: Peggy Hypes  
Room: Parlor



Through the Learning to Pray study we will discover a model for prayer, how Jesus intercedes for us, and how we pray for one another. Within this study we will reflect on our experiences through prayer and how our prayer life can be strengthened. As we move through the study of Stewardship for Life we will explore feasting and fasting, serving neighbors, and serving the least. Through this study we will explore the parable of the Good Samaritan and how we can extend his healing love.

*Coffee Fellowship will be from 9:30—9:45 a.m. each Sunday. The church will provide a light breakfast and coffee before Sunday School begins.*



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 OFFICE CLOSED	2	3
4 Communion Sunday School 9:30-10:30 a.m. Worship Service 10:45-11:45 a.m.	5	6	7 Session 6:30 p.m.	8 Women's Bible Study 6:30 p.m.  Rachel Shockley Phil Williams	9	10 Men's Breakfast 8:00 a.m.  Women's Breakfast 9:00 a.m.  Danny Bates Gail Twine
11 Sunday School 9:30-10:30 a.m. Worship Service 10:45-11:45 a.m.	12	13	14  Doug Moody	15  Ellison Berryhill David & Melissa Needs	16 Sit 'n Knit Group 7 p.m.	17  Abby Reagan
18 Sunday School 9:30-10:30 a.m. Worship Service 10:45-11:45 a.m.  Youth Group 5:00-7:00 p.m.	19	20  NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	21 Family Night Supper/Annual Meeting of the Congregation and Corporation 6:30 p.m.	22	23  Rebecca Whaley	24  Kay Rutherford-Williams
25 Sunday School 9:30-10:30 a.m. Worship Service 10:45-11:45 a.m.	26  Libby Gardner Jennifer Gowan Travis Folsom	27  Margy King	28  All Committee's Night 6:30 p.m.	29  Lucille Tinsley	30  Dianne Reagan Carolyn Berryhill	31