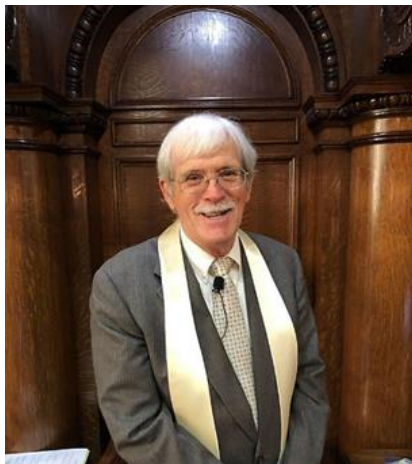


## PRESBYTERIAN LINK

Monthly Newsletter of the Altavista Presbyterian Church

*Equipping the Saints for Ministry, Building up the Body of Christ.  
Eph. 4:12*



### From the Pastor's Desk

January 2025

As we begin the new year 2025 there is a phrase that has come into common use lately: "lean into it." The idea of the phrase is to exert a little more effort and awareness to the issue at hand. The phrase is particularly applicable for us as we contemplate all the possibilities before us in 2025. We know we will be bombarded with a wealth of information online with innumerable options to achieve, obtain things, or work toward improving life. We can often be overwhelmed by the volume of data we receive each day. Indeed, we are tempted to turn away, ignore, give up, or simply lose interest in a desirable good because it is lumped in with a deluge of useless information. Therefore, I invite you to "lean into it." Lean into the new year with your faith and seek the good that it will bring. Jesus advised his disciples, encouraging them to "lean into their faith."

**Luke 17:3-6** *Take heed to yourselves; if your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him; and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, and says, 'I repent,' you must forgive him."* The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" And the Lord said, "If you had faith as a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this sycamine tree, 'Be rooted up, and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.

Jesus is saying "lean into your faith." Sure, it is hard to forgive those who sin against you, but lean into it. Forgiveness is foundational to our identity as Christians. We belong to Him who paid the awful price for the forgiveness of our sin. As Christ's forgiveness of us is unlimited, so also should our forgiveness be toward those who have repented of wrongdoing against us. Even if it is seven times, or seven times seven and beyond. With just a tiny bit of faith we can forgive as we have been forgiven. This is very important as we enter a new year. It has been proven that to carry a grudge or anger toward another person is costly to ourselves and does nothing to mend a relationship. To hold onto anger is detrimental to one's health.

Leaning into our faith can help us unload the burden of unforgiveness, but it can help us in many other ways. With just a little faith we can bring all of our concerns to Christ and we will see positive results. If a health issue arises, take it to the Lord in prayer. If a family member is in distress, pray for their relief. Pray for family, friends, neighbors, fellow church members, church leaders, the leaders of our country, the peace and well-being of the whole world. Pray and then do what you can do to help. If we lean into our faith, 2025 could hold the promise of blessings beyond our imagination.

## Highlights

	<b>November 2024</b>	<b>YTD</b>
<b>Pledges</b>	4,094.00	52,617
<b>Non-Pledges</b>	3,260	39,876
<b>Plate Offering</b>	107	1,234
<b>Total Expenses</b>	18,306.65	132,047

## Updates from your Outreach Committee

We had a great time at our Christmas Koinonia meal Sunday night, December 15. Though the weather and travel plans kept some of you from joining us—and you were missed—we still had fun! We enjoyed good food, Christmas Bingo and games, and sang a few carols. Thanks to June Lee for the accompaniment!

We've received notification from Operation Christmas Child that our shoebox gifts have been delivered to the countries of Chile and Colombia. Please continue to be in prayer that these gifts will be a blessing to the children who receive them and help lead them and their families to Christ.



*Joyeux Noël!*

The holiday spirit was alive and well in APC's 2024 holiday celebrations.

Left: singing favorite carols  
Below: the Christmas cantata





## January 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 APC Office Closed	2	3	4
5 10 AM Worship/ Communion <i>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Christmas</i>  Two Cents-A- Meal Offering	6	7  5pm Outreach Mtg.	8  5:30 PM Adult Bible Study	9	10	11
12 10 AM Worship <i>Baptism of the Lord</i>	13	14  4 PM Administration Mtg	15 12 PM Men's Lunch Hibachi Grill  4 PM Discipleship Mtg  TBD Adult Bible Study	16	17	18
19 10 AM Worship <i>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany</i>  Session Mtg. after Worship	20	21	22 February Newsletter Deadline  TBD Adult Bible Study	23	24	25
26 10 AM Worship <i>3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany</i>	27	28	29  TBD Adult Bible Study	30	31	



obesity-related diseases, and that mental acuity declines in those of us who don't exercise, and when we catch a glimpse of ourselves in a full-length mirror, we resolve to shed pounds. The Y is crowded at the beginning of the year with folks who have made a vow. We huff and puff on the machines in January and February, we taper off in March, and by April we are gone.

Many of the resolutions we make, such as changing a habit, completing a project, or learning something new, have a tendency to fade away. We need a motivation that's larger than our vanity or concerns. If I recall the catechism question, "What is the chief end of man?" and the answer, "to glorify God and enjoy Him forever", we may be able to stay resolved. To glorify God takes cooperation of body and mind, faulty as they may be, so let's keep trudging away.

### What is a good Bible verse for the New Year?

Here are seven Bible verses to take you into 2025, from [compassionuk.org](http://compassionuk.org):

- **Isaiah 40:31** But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.
- **Psalms 90:12** Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.
- **Philippians 3:13-14** Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.
- **Psalms 65:11** You crown the year with your bounty, and your carts overflow with abundance.
- **1 Peter 1:3** Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
- **Zephaniah 3:17** The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing.
- **Habakkuk 1:5** Look at the nations and watch — and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told.