

McAllister Messenger

JANUARY 2026

A Word From Your Pastor: "All Through The Year"

There is a song called "That Christmas Spirit" which was sung by Ray Charles. It begins by talking about the joy that is experienced by being with family during the holiday season:

*"Christmas is that time of year
For being with the ones you love
Sharing so much joy and cheer
What a wonderful feeling
Watching the ones you love
Having so much fun"*

But after these words, the song takes a bittersweet turn. It says the following:

*"Why can't it remain
All through the year
Each day the same
Ah, that's what I wanna hear
It's truly amazing
That spirit of Christmas"*

The song wants to know why we can't keep the good feelings of Christmas going as we go through the year; which means that it has relevance beyond Christmas Day. It speaks a poignant message to us as we begin this new year. That message is a challenge. It's a challenge for us to keep the spirit of Christmas going after our all the presents have been unwrapped, after our trees have been taken down, and after our decorations have been stored away.

What can we do in the new year to keep the spirit of Christmas? First, we can commit ourselves to regular prayer and Scripture reading. These traditional spiritual disciplines are a great way to keep that feeling going. In addition, we can attend worship and Bible study. Getting together with our fellow church members to praise God and study his Word helps us maintain a joyful feeling. Finally, we can give and volunteer our time. Giving of ourselves helps us remain focused on the Christ child, and helps the spirit of Christmas last all year.

It is truly amazing. Jesus Christ has come to us as one of us to save us. Let us give thanks for the special feeling this gives us at Christmas; and in all that we say and do, let us keep that feeling going throughout the year.

McAllister Memorial Presbyterian Church
900 North Alleghany Avenue
Covington, VA 24426

Happy New Year 2026 to:



BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Covington, VA
Permit No. 67
Non-Profit Organization

FEB. 2026
NEWSLETTER
DEADLINE:
Friday,
January 16

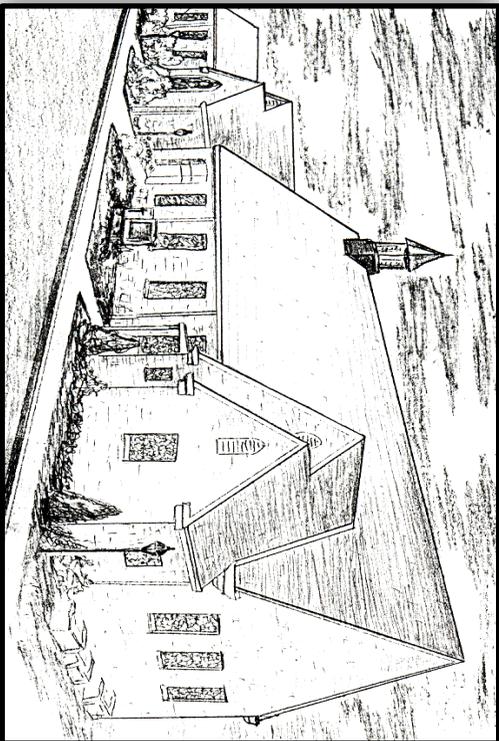
McAllister Memorial
Presbyterian Church
(540) 962-2675



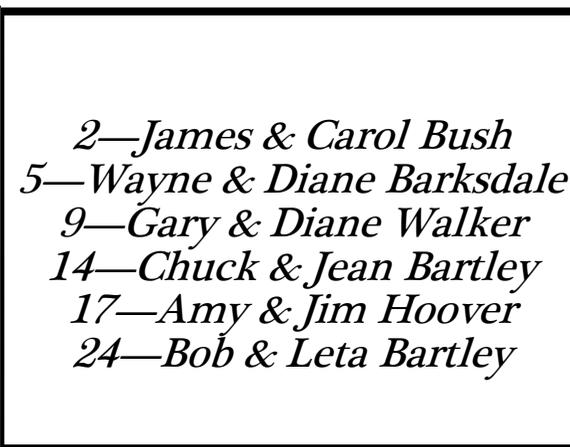
admin@mcallistermempcusa.org
www.mcallistermempcusa.org

online giving link:

Rev. James E. "Jim" Moss
Cell phone: 434-738-8841
revjimmos95@gmail.com



McAllister Church Christmas Eve Service



McAllister Church Worship Service—December 21st



IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

NEXT SESSION MEETING

Sunday, January 18th
Immediately after worship

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN (PW):

Circle 3: 2nd Tuesday of month, 5:30
Circle 4: NO MEETINGS—Jan. or Feb.!!



The church office will be **CLOSED**
Thursday, January 1st
In observance of the
New Year's Day holiday.

TITHING ENVELOPE BOXES ARE ready for pickup. They are located in the Fellowship Hall. Please note that **SOME** (not all) box numbers were reassigned to keep our order to 60 boxes or less to allow for significant cost savings in the future. Those with new numbers please know we made every attempt to keep it similar to your former number as possible. Please feel free to pick the boxes up before or after worship or during office hours.



***The McAllister Messenger is a monthly publication. Deadline for submissions is the second Friday of each month. You can also view this newsletter online at www.mcallisttermempcusa.org. To request a full color copy of this publication BY EMAIL, inform us of a change in contact information, OR object to the use of your photo/your children's photo being used, please call the church office or email us (see back cover). We sincerely regret and apologize for any error, misprint, or omission that may occur in this publication. Contact our office at 540-962-2675 with any revisions. Leave a message if necessary as voicemail is checked regularly.

McAllister Children - Nativity & Christmas Party:

Prayer Concerns

Linda Baldwin	Dallas Bates	Ronald Blevins	Janet Campbell
Rosa Lee Bartley	Phillip & Peggy Layman	Sandra Cook	Luke Crawford
Howard Cobb	Brown University	Ricky Cooke (home)	Donna Fox
Sonia Fornwalt	shooting victims &	Dale Nicely	Marsha Hambrick
Betty Gibson (home)	community	James Ralsten	Pearl Miller
Becky Helmintoller	Bondi Beach, AUS	Gary Tingler	Frenchy Parris
Gerald & Charlotte	shooting victims &	David Vess	Darrell Sampson
Martin (The Springs)	community	Emma Wolfe	Linda Wickham
Philip White	Two U.S. servicemen	Baby Catherine	Jackie Whitehead
Mike Wickline	who lost their lives	"Cate" Marie Amos	Christians in Nigeria
		Brian Center (Covid)	Our Country
			Our World

Shut-In; Military & Missionaries

BRIAN CENTER: David Lynn, Bonnie Patterson, Rosa Lee Bartley
SCOTT HILL: Sarah Mays
CARRINGTON PLACE: B.R. Rupert
TOCKWOTTEN (Rhode Island): Shelby Rock
SHUT-IN: Bob & Leta Bartley, Ricky Cooke, Betty Gibson, Dolly Whitehead
MILITARY: Olivia Bryant, Aiden Downer, Chris Whitehead
MISSIONARIES: Tom & Judy Harvey, Kurt Esslinger & Hyeyoung Lee



Constant Need

Midge Akers, Jerry Ballengee, Dennis Brinkley, Edgar Brinkley, Linda Caldwell, Sandra Capps, Harry & Jean Casey, Leslie Downer, Cindy Durham, Barbara Flint, Renee Gann, Don Hampton, Cory Harrison, Emma Hartless, Danny & Rhoda Hill, Rob Honts, Janet Hubble, Lori Isaacs, Robert A. Jackson, Wendell & Judy Jones, Christine Lopez, Bebe Marshall, Pearl Miller, Bucky & Doris Mottern, Mary Jane Mutispaugh, Denise Pillow, Theresa Purdue, Linda Ratliff, Anita Rice, Mary Rice, James Rice, Angie Sponaugle, Ethan Thompson, Buddy Vass, Greg Vess, Gwen Wolfe, Jerry Wolfe, Linda P. Wolfe, Rider Yeagley, President Joe Biden. Non-believers, our Church, unspoken prayers, local first responders, U.S.A., U.S. troops & gov't, Ukraine & Russia, Middle East.



McAllister Children - Decorating & Caroling 2025...



Deaths

*Marilyn M. Woods
Brian K. Staton
Joyce A. Wills
Clayton D. Wright, Sr.*

*Cam Thepsimuong
"Thompson" -
William Byrd H.S.
student with cancer*

*Paul E. Campbell
James D. Lewis, Jr.
Annabelle J. Bennett
A. "Bruce" Clarkson
Floyd Flanagan
Helen Holloway
R. "Bobby" E. Paxton
Steven L. Vess
W. "Mac" Wilkinson,
Jr.*

*Ione P. Callender
Anita Webb Cary
Pearl F. Conner
Patricia Ann Gibson
Cora Bell Kennedy
Jerry Lee Mayberry
Gloria F. Mynes
Herman L. Smith
Sarah Beckstrom -
(WV Nat'l Guard)*

*Gary A. Bell
Stella Angle Cale
James Fridley, III
Walter P. McCabe
Katherine E. Wolfe*

Gifts

In Memory of Butch Curtin by Larry, Jess and Jay Wade

In Memory of Butch Curtin by Martha O. Wilhelm and family

In Memory of Gerald Gibson, Sr. and Stacey N. Gibson by
Betty Gibson and family

(see poinsettia insert for additional gifts in December)

With Deepest Sympathy & Comfort



The McAllister Church Family extends
prayer and sincerest condolences to:

✝ Anyone having recently
experienced a loss.



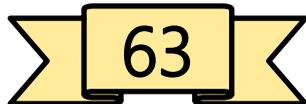
Notes from Pastor Jim

◆ Thank you to everyone who helped out with our Christmas activities: those who drove kids around for the caroling party; those who brought food for the Christmas breakfast; those who helped with the Nativity Play; those who helped with the kids' Christmas party; those who read Scripture for the Christmas Eve service; those who lit the Advent candles; those who helped put up and will help take down the Chrismon tree and Christmas decorations; those who bought poinsettias; and those who contributed in many other ways. It was a beautiful holiday season at McAllister, and you all made it happen!

- ◆ McAllister Church no longer gives out food and presents as part of the Christmas Cheer program. We do, however, still have a Christmas Cheer Giving Fund. This fund makes donations to the local Christmas Mother program. If you would like to make a donation to this fund at any time during the year, please put "Christmas Cheer Giving Fund" on the memo line of your check.
- ◆ On Sunday, January 11, we will install the elders for the class of 2028. Please be in prayer for Gary Rice, Van Walker, Tammy Scruggs-Duncan, Howard Poague, and Paul Riley. We give thanks for the service of the outgoing class of 2025: June Anne Cooke, Marshall Fox, Diane Hicks, and Brigitte Young.
- ◆ The 2026 updated version of the McAllister Church phone tree has been mailed. If you did not receive one and need one, please contact the church office at admin@mcallistermempcusa.org OR 540-962-2675.

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2026 EVERYONE!

AVERAGE DECEMBER 2025 SUNDAY WORSHIP ATTENDANCE:



Pictured Above: The McAllister Church sanctuary looked so wonderfully warm and festive for our December 14th, December 21st and Christmas Eve worship services. Thank you to everyone who purchased a poinsettia in honor or memory of loved ones.

POINSETTIA CARE

Keep your poinsettias inside and watered during winter.

In Spring, repot your poinsettia, if desired, and prune significantly to about 8" stems (no leaves remaining).

Place in bright sunlight or even outside for the summer months. Come September/October, bring inside and place in a sunny window. Your plant should eventually begin to sprout tinges of red before you know it!

APPRECIATION

Dear McAllister Memorial Presbyterian Church,

Thank you for your kind gift to the Alleghany Highlands Christmas Mother Program. Your generosity will bring joy, comfort, and necessities to many families in our community this Christmas!

With Gratitude,

Rachel (Thompson)

2025 Christmas Mother

On behalf of myself and Luke, I want to thank you for the gift card. Also, we appreciate all your kindness and concern. Please continue to pray that he finds work and a place to live.

~ Debbie Rodgers & Luke Crawford

The McAllister Church family is extremely grateful to member, Patty Anderson, for filling our pulpit twice recently while Pastor Moss has been out on vacation. You do such a lovely job and we certainly have enjoyed your messages. Our church is blessed to have you. Thank you.



You are the God who sees me

Genesis 16:13

Jessy Paul



Musical Minute

I'm not sure your opinions on the matter, but I happen to believe that God sometimes places special people with unique characteristics and special skills—not to mention overwhelmingly generous hearts—in our path at certain challenging times in our lives. Probably the most impressive instance of this in my life was in the fall of 1994 when we had been in the Czech Republic for just a few whirlwind months. We were still living in two rooms on the top floor of a little hotel in the center square of our new hometown of Svitavy while our future home was renovated. Househunting had been an adventure and I learned rather quickly to adjust my expectations from suburban Richmond, Va. to recently post-communist former Czechoslovakia. In addition to our living needs, our future home was to house, for 8 to 10 months while the factory was being built, the offices (and early employees) of the Westvaco printing operation that Andy had been sent to Europe to manage. The little hotel or “pension,” as it was called, where we stayed in the interim was newly remodeled, clean, and the owners were lovely to us, but over the months we were there I became a little claustrophobic from the close quarters. I was ready to be back in my own home. As I wandered around town one day learning my way around and exploring little-hole-in-the-wall shops, I came across a set of handheld garden tools. That was it! Even though we couldn't yet live in our home, I could begin tidying up the neglected little garden in back of the house. As winter approached, I carried my little bag of garden implements and began to visit the garden almost every day. It was a process of discovery and as I worked I realized from the perennials that I uncovered that this garden had once been well-loved and tended. It was a good omen. While on a very busy thoroughfare with heavy traffic, maybe we had chosen the right house to become our home.

Our future abode at Pražská 14 was a fairly non-descript, post-war, three-story row house attached to our neighbors on both sides (and to every other house around the whole block, as a matter of fact). Over the weeks as I came and went, the elderly lady directly across the street began to shyly wave at me. Believe me, in the Czech Republic of 1994, communism may have been a thing of the past on paper, but waving at neighbors, especially American ones, was not typical behavior. So though it started slowly and tentatively, by the time we moved into our home in October of that year, we were pretty decent “waving” neighbors with the lady across the street. It was in December that I finally decided to bake some cookies and take them to the few neighbors who had made eye contact with me or said hello, and the neighbors who were directly “connected” to our house and in our line of sight across the street. The next day we received several plates of traditional Czech Christmas cookies in return, but the first plate came from “waving lady.” She introduced herself as Věra Hehlová. When I say her name to myself now, I hear angels singing, but I could have never foreseen at that early stage how important she would become in our life and how her extraordinary warmth would affect our entire family and every single friend who visited us during our time in the Czech Republic.



Because of the age difference, I guess, it felt inappropriate to address her by her first name, so Andy and I referred to her at home as “Paní,” or Mrs. in Czech. It stuck. Mom, brother Nick and sis-in-law Cathy, we all called her Paní. When Andy and I tell stories about her now, they are still “Paní stories” and boy do we have an arsenal of them! After we finally met before Christmas, Paní took the next giant step in our relationship by inviting me over to her house the next Friday afternoon for coffee and chlebičky—traditional opened-faced sandwiches. Our conversations on each other's doorstep during the holidays had been stumbling, since I was, to put it generously, a novice Czech speaker and her second languages were Russian and a little German, but she was well-prepared for our inaugural Friday event.

The first time I walked into her little kitchen off the frigid main hallway in her very similar to ours non-descript, post-war, three-story row house, I was struck by its tidiness, its warmth from the little woodstove against the wall, the attractively set kitchen table, and the pencil and blank notebooks (the same kind the kids I worked with on English conversation at the high school used) by each plate. I was intrigued by the notebooks . . . She, however, was “just” being Paní, as I would learn that day and in the years that followed. She was fearless and determined. She was exceptional and brave. She had a new neighbor and she wanted to visit with her. It seemed if we couldn't talk easily just yet, we'd figure it out as we went. We started out with the basics—weather, food items, clothing, family relations, and then the most basic verbs, “I have,” “I need,” “I want.” We both had Czech-English dictionaries by our side at each visit and every week we recorded our new vocabulary in our notebooks until we filled the first ones, and then we moved on to fresh, blank notebooks. And through it all, we laughed and laughed, and then we laughed some more. We met every Friday afternoon and as the months passed, at in-between times, too. We became fast friends and by the time Andy and I left the Czech Republic to move to Austria she was well and truly “ours,” a member of our family. And we, in turn, had been adopted by Paní. Though she has been gone for more than 20 years, Paní is still a constant in our hearts, often in our thoughts and in our conversations. I've thought about her and those early notebooks in recent months as we approach another new year. (We celebrated so many New Years with her in her happy, warm kitchen.) She was an optimist and a pragmatist with an expansive heart that readily opened to welcome the new and unexpected. I'm not making any New Year's resolutions this year. That's never really been my thing, but, like Paní, I might buy a blank notebook—and try to learn something new. I want to be sure I write it down so I don't forget. Happy 2026!

~Beth