



First Presbyterian of Beaufort gets creative with 10th Annual Nativity Celebration □

As many of us look for new ways to celebrate the season and gather safely with friends and family, First Presbyterian Church of Beaufort's 10th Annual Nativity Celebration "Through the Glass" is hitting all the right notes.

The downtown Beaufort church is opening their historic Sanctuary grounds to the community from December 4 – January 6 for day or evening self-guided tours of 12 beautiful nativity displays in 12 Sanctuary windows.

In past years, First Presbyterian's Nativity Celebration has been a 3-day event welcoming more than 600 people to come inside their education building to view more than 100 nativities from

around the world. It has become a real tradition among locals, and word of mouth has even brought people from across the Lowcountry and beyond. But the church knew this year would need to be different.

“This has been a true team effort by countless women in our church,” said Nativity Event Coordinator Donna Sheetz. “But none of this would be possible without Mary Ragsdale, a creative member of our church, who not only had the idea of window nativities, but helped make it all come to life.”

In addition to the 12 window nativities displayed, church member and artist Betty Holt has created a magnificent hand painted life-sized crèche for the front steps of the Sanctuary. Evening is an especially great time to come experience the Nativity Celebration as the windows, crèche and Sanctuary grounds are lit.

“This year’s event is truly going to be one-of-a-kind and it has helped us realize a real blessing in the midst of so many disappointments,” said Sheetz. “Like so many other churches, our Sanctuary has been closed since March because of the social distancing necessary during the pandemic. But it has created an opportunity to take over the inside of the church for all the necessary behind-the-scenes infrastructure to create these window displays.”

Though there are many ways this season will look different in our community, First Presbyterian Church of Beaufort is certainly offering a sacred hope-filled experience for us all to enjoy.

During the pandemic, First Presbyterian has done many other things to pivot and address both the needs of their community of faith, and reach out into the community to help address important issues like food insecurities. The church has also made the decision that part of their mission during this time is to do everything possible to serve the community by keeping their distance on Sundays – offering socially distanced outdoor worship as well as online services. First Presbyterian is located at 410 Church Street in downtown Beaufort. For more information, please visit FirstPresBeaufort.org.