

He it is  
**who gave  
himself  
for us**  
that he might  
redeem us  
from all  
iniquity...

TITUS 2:14, NRSV



**First Presbyterian Church**  
512 3rd Street SW  
Rochester, Minnesota 55902

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*December*  
2021

# Lessons & CAROLS

## **Celebrate the tradition of Lessons and Carols Sunday, December 19th 8:30 & 11:00 a.m.**

These services are meant to represent a historical look at salvation and God's faithfulness to God's people, reaching back to the creation story with Adam and Eve in Eden and including prophetic voices and Gospel stories of Christ the Redeemer & incarnation of the Word of God.

The esteemed Christmas Eve traditional service of Nine Lessons and Carols with the choir of men and boys at King's College, Cambridge has been mimicked, altered, and re-imagined for more than a century.

Our service of Advent Lessons and Carols will intersperse scripture with congregational hymns and musical offerings by our adult and inter-generational handbell ensembles, the Chancel and Children's choirs, as well as a guest string quintet and flutist, with Music Ministry Intern, Nathan Elisbernd, returning to play the organ and conduct along with Director of Music, John Stender. Music will be presented by George Dyson, G.F. Handel, Carolyn Jennings, Kenneth Jennings, Joel Martinson, Paul Manz, and others.



# Come, Lord Jesus!

Sunday, November 28 .....

..... First Sunday of Advent

8:30 a.m. & 11:00 a.m. Worship

Message: *The Days Are Surely Coming.*

Rev. T.J. Parlette

*"And you also became God's people when you heard the true message, the Good News that brought you salvation. You believed in Christ, and God put his stamp of ownership on you by giving you the Holy Spirit he had promised.*

— *Ephesians 1:13 (GNT)*

Wednesday, December 1 .....

..... Midweek Advent Evening Prayer

6:00 p.m.

..... Advent Bible Study

6:30 p.m. – Sheldon Jackson Lounge

Sunday, December 5 .....

..... Second Sunday of Advent

8:30 a.m. & 11:00 a.m. Worship and Communion

Message: *Laying the Groundwork*

Rev. T.J. Parlette

Wednesday, December 8 .....

..... Midweek Advent Evening Prayer

6:00 p.m.

..... Advent Bible Study

6:30 p.m. – Sheldon Jackson Lounge

Sunday, December 12 .....

..... Third Sunday of Advent

8:30 a.m. & 11:00 a.m. Worship

Message: by Rev. Jay P. Rowland

Wednesday, December 15 .....

..... Midweek Advent Evening Prayer

6:00 p.m.

..... Advent Bible Study

6:30 p.m. – Sheldon Jackson Lounge



..... Sunday, December 19

..... Fourth Sunday of Advent .....

8:30 & 11:00 a.m. *Service of Lessons and Carols*

..... Wednesday, December 22

..... Midweek Advent Evening Prayer .....

..... Friday, December 24

..... Christmas Eve .....

4:00 p.m. – Pageant and Candlelight Service

11:00 p.m. – Candlelight Service

..... Saturday, December 25

..... Nativity of the Lord/Christmas Day .....

No services will be held.

*Pause in the midst of your busy day to celebrate the birth of our Lord and savior...*

*"for unto you was born this day in the city of David a savior, who is Christ our Lord!"*

..... Sunday, December 26

..... First Sunday of Christmas .....

11:00 a.m. Worship

"The Sabbath Poems of Wendell Berry"

Rev. T.J. Parlette

..... Sunday, January 2

..... Second Sunday of Christmas .....

11:00 a.m. Worship

Message: by Rev. Larry Boutelle

..... Tuesday, January 6

..... Epiphany of the Lord .....

*God of endless light, you sent a star—  
rising from darkness,  
guiding seekers and sages,  
overwhelming us with joy.*

*Let the splendor of your dawning light  
grow in us and in all the world  
until the whole creation shines with your glory;  
through Jesus Christ our light.*

*Amen.*

# The Good News

of First Presbyterian Church  
for December 2021

## Signs of HOPE

Advent is the time of year when we look for signs of hope. Hope is something we need right now with so much discord and disagreement dominating the headlines. The church itself needs a shot of hope as we struggle and fret about what the future holds for religious institutions. That's why I was glad to read a recent story in Peter Marty's column in *Christian Century*.

He tells the story of a recent decision by the New York Public Library to stop charging late fees on overdue books and media resources. Then they took an even bolder step and waived all the fines that had accrued in the past.

This sounds like a nice feel good story right before the holiday season, but it is actually a very significant decision. In 2019 alone, the library collected 3.2 million dollars in late fees and some 400,000 New Yorkers were blocked from accessing books because they owed more than \$15 in late fees. The vast majority of those unable to check out a book resided in poor neighborhoods, which meant that those with the least ability to afford fines, many of them children, had no access to basic tools for learning. The NYPL president Tony Marx wrote recently, "This elimination of fines is a step towards a more equitable society. We are proud to make it happen."

Marty comments on the decision as he writes, "It's a gracious institutional move on the part of an enormous library reaching out into a sometimes ungracious world. To suddenly erase fees while entrusting patrons to bring books back sounds an awful lot like the arithmetic of grace."

He makes a good point! Grace is what we hope for, what we yearn for and what we celebrate in this season of Advent. We anticipate the Spirit of God breaking into the world once more. As Jeremiah says, "The days are surely coming..." Keep your eyes open and your hearts tuned to hear a word of hope and grace this Advent season.

Peace,



*Christian Century, November 3, 2021, p3.*

Contact: Parlette. TJ@FPCRochester.org  
Phone: (814) 715-0290

# Music Ministry

John Stender, Director of Music  
Katie Kuisle, Calvin & Cherub Choirs  
Janine Yanisch, First Players Bands



The emptiness of our beautiful sanctuary half-decorated for livestreaming is still echoing in my soul and in my memory one year later. Last December, when it came time to record

music for virtual Christmas worship services, it was not lost on anyone that there would be little festivity to be experienced. My wife, Sarah, and I looked forward to offering big piano/organ duet arrangements of all the expected Christmas hymns. As we recorded, though, we found it difficult to focus on playing artfully. We were overcome with emotion at the time. Late at night, it was just the two of us occupying the sanctuary for a long recording session. We wept openly when we played *Adeste Fidelis* and received no happy congregational return of, "O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant...Come, and behold him."

This December comes with a rich anticipation of post-pandemic hopes for worship and togetherness. It's not the ritualistic schedule and behaviors of fellowship that I am looking forward to. Sure, I'm a sucker for a children's pageant, gads of poinsettias, going to look at Christmas lights, the late Christmas Eve service with candlelight and all the extra music that comes with it. I am most eager to experience and take part in the renewal of the soul of the congregation. In my view, that is all about the singing of liturgical music and hymns which seek to give voice to the Evangel along with a whole range of human emotions and the mysteries of our faith.

Martin Luther said that a believer in Christ should be so stirred by their faith and be of such happy spirit that they might erupt cheerfully into song – even spontaneously, but especially, in worship. Walter Brueggemann says, "We sing to render our lives in all of their rich complexity, in honesty, [before the mystery of] God."

Sacred music, in its proper context is a fitting creation of God that finds "its greatest fulfillment in the proclamation of the Word," to quote Carl Schalk. Another scholar says that "[through the] proclamatory nature of [the sacred music art] the eternal sound of God's grace focused on Jesus Christ is made known and shared with his redeemed people." True congregational music has an integrity and character distinctly its own. Through it we share our faith with God and with one another.

I can hardly wait to engage in the work of liturgy and worship alongside all of you in worship. I encourage you to sing boldly with the voice that God gave only you. How can you know whether and when your bold song of faith might bolster the spirit of someone in a nearby pew? How can you know whether God will seek to work through your voice in the worship of another? How might your own song be elevated by someone else? There is no better togetherness to experience than the unity found in congregational song and its exercises for our faith.

I suspect the music of this month will bring me to tears again this year. However, not out of the hallmark emptiness of last year, but from a place of joy, fitting adoration, and humble praise and thanksgiving for what God has done and promised.

"Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice; now ye hear of endless bliss: Jesus Christ was born for this! He has opened heaven's door, and we are blest forevermore!"





## Christian Education & Youth Group News

Susanna Stone, Coordinator of Youth and Christian Education



During November, the FPC Youth Group focused on giving thanks and explored gratitude towards God, gratitude for other people, and gratitude for God's creation. We had a fall outing to Quarry Hill, where we spent time in nature, exploring God's creation, while on a Fossil Hunt Hike.

The Youth Group is meeting on Saturdays from 1-2 p.m. during the month of December. We will meet **INDOORS** in the Multipurpose Room three times: **December 4, 11, and 18**. There is no Youth Group meeting on December 25 or January 1.

We are hopeful that Youth Group meetings will move back to Wednesday evenings in January, but that will depend on COVID cases in our county. Susanna will communicate plans once they are finalized. The best way to stay up-to-date with Youth Group news is by being part of our email list. Emails are sent out no more than once a week and provide all the Youth Group information.

### Sunday School Update

- \*\*\* In-person Sunday School classes for children from age 3-Grade 12 continue in December.
- \*\*\* Note: there will be no children's/youth Sunday School classes on December 26 or January 2.
- \*\*\* Weekly Sunday School videos are posted on the FPC YouTube site for families who are unable to attend Sunday School in-person. These videos follow the *Celebrate Wonder* curricula being used in the Pre-K through Grade 5 classes.

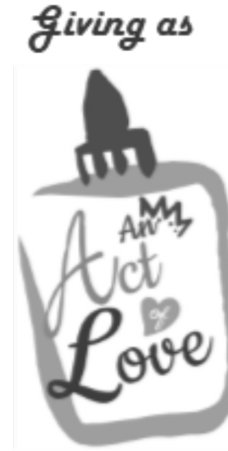
### Christmas Pageant

The Christmas Pageant will be held during the 4 p.m. Christmas Eve service. We have a variety of roles available for ALL AGES, including a few speaking roles as well as MANY non-speaking roles. If anyone (of ANY age) in your family is interested in participating, please let Susanna or John know.



## Giving as an Act of Love!

Mark Keller, Stewardship & Finance



Thank you to those who have already sent in their pledge for 2022. Your support is greatly appreciated! If you have not returned your pledge form yet, please prayerfully consider where you belong in the work of First Presbyterian Church. This year again has been filled with many twists and turns – it is not too late to pledge! Please return your pledge—either by mail or the church office—by the end of December. Thank you for your generosity, and we look forward to 2022 with renewed optimism of good things to come!

## Gifts to spare

The Newsletter Newsletter, September 2011

*Do you want to tithe to the church but think you really can't spare the money? Try this experiment: At the beginning of the month, write a check and deduct the amount from your checkbook.*

*Hold on to the check until the end of the month. By then, you'll likely discover you really can spare that money. Then you can place the check in the offering plate as a cheerful giver.*

—Dorothy Derrigan-DeLuyck

First Presbyterian Church	
Financial Statement / October 2021	
Balance (9/30/2021)	\$26,612.23
Receipts (October 2021)	32,542.98
Disbursements (October 2021)	61,467.70
Balance (10/31/2021)	<u>(\$2,312.49)</u>



## The Rummage Sale: Over \$8,000 for Missions

Many thanks to organizers Judy Kruesel and Sally Brooks and to the many women and men who helped to make the September sale so successful. In October, PW officer, organizers, and circle leaders met to decide how to disburse the receipts which totaled \$8,281. Family and educational support, disaster assistance, food insecurity, hygiene, and access to clean water were all considered.

### WHERE DID THE MONEY GO?

<b>Local</b>	\$1,800
Civic League Day Nurseries	300
Channel One	500
Friendship Place – FPC	200
Jeremiah Program	300
Women’s Shelter	500
<b>National</b>	\$2,400
Community Gardens	400
Presbyterian Disaster Assistance USA	1,500
Su Casa de Esperanza (Mexican Border Ministry)	500
<b>International</b>	\$4,081
Presbyterian Disaster Assistance International	1,500
3 Latrines for Africa	1,050
5 Mzuzu drills (for wells)	575
10 Water filters (for wells)	500
4 families of chickens	100
2 pair goats	356



### News from

### Presbyterian Women

*Sylvia Swede, Coordinator*

### Angels

Angels sang his humble birth  
 Proclaiming peace to all the earth,  
 Angels in the wilderness  
 strengthened Him  
 Against the press of sly temptation  
 And in dark Gethsemane  
 angels shared his agony,  
 Twelve legions waited His command  
 Be He never raised a hand  
 And even angels veiled their eyes  
 Lest mercy take them by surprise.  
 The tomb was bright with angel light,  
 No more the sadness of the night.  
 Welcome then your angels true  
 To strengthen, guide, and comfort you.

*Charlotte A. Swede*



Christmas Blessings!

## December highlights

- ◆ **Poinsettia Fund**—Help celebrate the Advent season with a \$15 donation for the plants that decorate our worship spaces during Advent. The poinsettias will then be delivered by the Deacons to our many C.A.R.E. members. Note “Poinsettias” on the memo line of your check.
- ◆ **Chancel Flowers**—You might also consider donating to the Chancel Flower Fund in honor or memory of loved ones. The flowers can then be taken home or delivered to C.A.R.E. members by the Deacons. Contact Cindy in the office if you are interested in contributing.



## Church Family News

### Anniversaries

Congratulations to these couples who will celebrate their 50th-plus wedding anniversaries in December:

December 1	— Dick and Jan Bennett
December 17	— Bob and Susie McClocklin
December 26	— Jay and Britta Youmans

### Birthdays

Happy Birthday to Carol Smyrk, who will celebrate her 91st birthday on December 4.

### Deaths

We extend our sympathy to Susan Clarida and her family on the death of her husband, James, on November 2.

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### First Presbyterian Church

512 3rd Street SW / Rochester, MN 55902

507-282-1618 / [www.FPCRochester.org](http://www.FPCRochester.org) / [web@FPCRochester.org](mailto:web@FPCRochester.org)

Senior Pastor: Rev. T.J. Parlette

Associate Pastor: Rev. Jay P. Rowland

Director of Music: John E. Stender

Coordinator of Youth and Christian Education: Susanna L. Stone

Sunday worship at 8:30 & 11:00 a.m. in-person;  
 service livestreamed at 11:00 a.m. on YouTube ([channel.fprochester.org](https://channel.fprochester.org))

Education & Fellowship Hour: 9:40 a.m.

A weekly video with Bible Story is available on YouTube.

In-person music education for ages 4-12<sup>th</sup> grade on Sundays and Wednesday evenings.

Office hours: Monday through Thursday, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Member: Presbyterian Church USA