

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

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

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. These services are meant to represent a historical look at salvation and God's

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.

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. 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 Elsbernd, returning to play

Come, Lord Jesus!

Sunday, November 28
8:30 a.m. & 11:00 a.m. Worship Message: <i>The Days Are Surely Coming</i> . 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.
6:30 p.m. – Sheldon Jackson Lounge
Sunday, December 5Second 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.
6:30 p.m. – Sheldon Jackson Lounge
Sunday, December 12Third 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.
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
Christmas Eve Friday, December 24
4:00 p.m. – Pageant and Candlelight Service
11:00 p.m. – Candlelight Service
Nativity of the Lord/Christmas Day
Sunday, December 20 First Sunday of Christmas
11:00 a.m. Worship
"The Sabbath Poems of Wendell Berry" Rev. T.J. Parlette
Second Sunday of Christmas
Tuesday, January 6
Fninhany 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 H⊕PE



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.

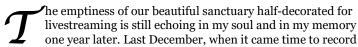
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Christian Century, November 3, 2021, p3.

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



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) (\$2,312.49)

Christmas Joy Offering

Sylvia Swede, Mission Committee



One of the most powerful things that Christians claim is that God saw the great need of the world and offered a perfect gift in response, a gift that brought God and humanity closer together -- God's perfect gift was Jesus Christ. The Christmas Joy Offering is a response in gratitude for that gift of Jesus Christ.

This offering provides:

- grants to help **retired church workers and families** with critical housing needs.
- aid to **church workers** with urgent financial and medical needs.
- scholarships to **students and future leaders** at Presbyterian schools and colleges equipping communities of color and equipping persons of color as leaders in their community.
- support to the the following institutions:

Menaul School — Albuquerque, New Mexico; Presbyterian Pan-American School — Kingsville, Tennessee; and Stillman College — Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

The offering will be received anytime during the Advent and Christmas season. Please indicate "Joy Offering" in the memo line on your check.

Sharing Tree

Ruth Saling, Social Concerns Committee

The Sharing Tree is now on display in the Atrium through December 19th. Each colored gift tag represents a charitable organization in Rochester. The specific gift to buy is on the front of the tag and the name of the organization is on the back of the tag. Also, be sure to note when the gift needs to be dropped off at the church and whether it needs to be wrapped or left unwrapped.



- Childhood Cancer Community This is a local organization that provides meaningful connections for families affected by childhood cancer. Our Youth Group will be wrapping these gifts.
- Red Drop Resources This organization, started by Kristina Wright-Peterson, provides general assistance to blood cancer patients and their families which includes lodging, food and other financial needs.
- ♦ **Alternative Learning Center** These gifts are for infant children whose high school parents are finishing high school credits through the ALC.
- ♦ **Family Promise** This organization provides assistance for homeless families in the way of housing, meals, and daycare. They help families achieve sustainable independence.

Please drop off your gifts in the church library and your gift cards in the church office. It is important that you attach the tag to the gift before dropping it off. We need to know where to deliver the gift.

Any questions? Please contact me at rksaling@msn.com. Thank you for your generosity this Christmas season.

The Coffee Conundrum

Ariel Boswell, Parish Nursing coordinator



Is coffee healthy for you – or not?

Coffee is most known for its component caffeine but it contains many other bioactive chemicals.

The good - for most of us, caffeine increases alertness. Coffee consumption is linked to a lower risk of Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, suicide risk, and stroke! It may lower risk of oral cancer and other cancers. Overall there is some evidence that links coffee consumption to increased life and it shows a reduced risk of Type 2 Diabetes.

The bad - alertness at night means insomnia and trouble sleeping if not appropriately controlled. Caffeine does increase blood pressure and blood sugar for a short time. For pregnant and nursing women, it is often recommended to cut back, and people with diabetes need to keep caffeine's effect on blood sugar in mind. Unfiltered coffee can raise LDL or bad cholesterol. Coffee aggravates reflux and heartburn. High consumption in post-menopausal women is potentially linked to bone loss.

In other words, like most foods, there is evidence to drink it and to not drink coffee! As a former barista I'm a big coffee fan ... but I'm married to someone who got through medical school without coffee! "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Corinthians 10:31 RSV) (References: Mayo, MRP)

God's Child Hygiene Project

Marylynn Aalderks, Mission Committee

A big thank you to Lois Fye, Bev Salomonsen, Jan Hosier, Vicki Wintheiser, and Dorothy Johnson who all helped make hygiene pads and pad holders for school girls in Guatemala! 56 pad holders and 336 pads have been completed and shipped to the *God's Child Project* based in Minneapolis. Another 22 pad holders and 132 pads will be sent in when they are finished. A team member from *God's Child* went to Guatemala in early November and took the pad holders with them. The long term goal of this project is to help girls stay in school and keep up with their classmates. Being able to attend school every day is very important. Having an education can help the girls in this program become self sustaining adults and move out of poverty.

Friends in Jesus,

Thank you for the generous donations to our Back Pack program and the Winter Wear program.

May you be blessed

We will be giving out winter wear on November 10th which is timely for our first snow storm predicted on the 11th.

> Sincerely, Bob & Rosie

> > received from Rosie and Bob Helland, Bdecan Presbyterian Church

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?			
Local	\$1,800		
Civic League Day Nurseries	300		
Channel One	500		
Friendship Place – FPC	200		
Jeremiah Program	300		
Women's Shelter	500		
National	\$2,400		
Community Gardens	400		
Presbyterian Disaster	1,500		
Assistance USA			
Su Casa de Esperanza	500		
(Mexican Border Ministry)			
International	\$4,081		
Presbyterian Disaster	1,500		
Assistance International			
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



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

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 Bob and Susie McClocklin December 17 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.

> First Presbyterian Church 512 3rd Street SW / Rochester, MN 55902 507-282-1618 / www.FPCRochester.org / 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 fpcrochester.org) Education & Fellowship Hour: 9:40 a.m. A weekly video with Bible Story is available on YouTube.

In-person music education for ages 4-12th grade on Sundays and Wednesday evenings. Office hours: Monday through Thursday, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Member: Presbyterian Church USA

Christmas Blessings!