



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

Address Service Requested

December   
2020 

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Rochester, MN  
Permit No. 111

## How we stay in touch in this time of social distancing

We don't know when we will start scheduling meetings and events again. In the meantime, we'll keep you informed through various options, including:

**Sunday bulletins and sermons on our web page.** Go to [www.FPCRochester.org](http://www.FPCRochester.org). In the blue banner, highlight [WORSHIP] and follow >SERMONS or >BULLETINS. Below the option you choose, click on [READ MORE] and then [DOWNLOAD PDF].

**Sunday worship.** We present Sunday worship with T.J., Jay, and John at 10 a.m. on YouTube and Facebook. The pre-recorded service premieres at 10 a.m. each Sunday. If you miss it, you can view it later via access through our web page.

**Prayer requests.** Because we pre-record the Sunday service, prayer requests should be e-mailed to either Rev. Parlette ([Parlette.TJ@fpcrochester.org](mailto:Parlette.TJ@fpcrochester.org)) or Rev. Rowland ([Rowland.Jay@fpcrochester.org](mailto:Rowland.Jay@fpcrochester.org)) by Thursday noon.

**How do I access the services?** The easiest way is through our church's web page:

- 1) Go to [www.FPCRochester.org](http://www.FPCRochester.org). You may need to click on "First Presbyterian Church—located near Mayo Clinic." Wait until the FPC page loads.
- 2) There should be a red banner that appears across the top of the page. There is sometimes a delay before it loads. Click on the red banner to go to the church's YouTube channel. Available service uploads will appear on your screen. Click on the service you would like to watch.



## The Good News of First Presbyterian Church for December 2020

### Why Advent?

Waiting can be hard, and not just for children. But I do love Advent: this four-week time when the Christian church prepares for Christmas.

Maybe I like Advent so much because it involves active waiting, not thumb-twiddling. It is a gift the church offers the world, to be active (which isn't the same as busy) in ways that open our hearts – and the hearts we touch – to the true meaning of Christmas.

Mother Teresa said, "At this Christmas when Christ comes, will he find a warm heart? Mark the season of Advent by loving and serving others with God's own love and concern."

When I take time during Advent to remember in prayer and with gifts of money and time those who have less food than I do, those who are lonely, those without a home; when I pause to share love with a child or an elder, or gratitude for a healthcare worker, pastor or teacher; when I wait for justice to replace oppression but, while I wait, find ways to work for that result ... the Spirit's warmth fills my waiting heart. I am ready to welcome Jesus.

–Heidi Mann

*The Newsletter Newsletter*

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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 10 a.m. on YouTube and Facebook

Education classes: Sunday School One Room Zoom at 9:30 a.m.; also a weekly video with a Bible story is available on YouTube.

Office hours: Mondays & Wednesdays, 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Call the office at 282-1618 for entry into the church.

Member: Presbyterian Church USA



Please note the schedule of services planned for this month. Though we are apart, there is no less opportunity to engage in worship — perhaps there is more!

**Sunday, November 29—First Sunday of Advent**

Premieres at 10:00 a.m. on YouTube and Facebook  
 Message: *Come Down*. Rev. T.J. Parlette

*“Clear out the cluttered heart, lest like the crowded inn, there is no room, no way to part, a path to let Christ in. Then use the opened space for faith, for hope, for prayer, for nurturing a life of grace toward strangers needing care...*

*And with that light comes more, a gift that can't be priced: the joy of learning through your door you welcomed in the Christ.”*

— Thomas Troeger, based on Isaac Watts

This hymn highlights well what we are seeking to do by offering Midweek Advent Prayer services. These are brief services of prayer, devotion, and yes, music, that we hope will be useful to your intangible Christmas preparations. These services will be 30 minutes or less. Please pause to pray with us, watch and wait with us. A blessed Advent to you all!

**Wednesday, December 2—Midweek Advent Evening Prayer**

Premieres at 7:00 p.m. on YouTube and Facebook

**Sunday, December 6—Second Sunday of Advent**

Premieres at 10:00 a.m. on YouTube and Facebook  
 Message: *Before the Comfort*. Rev. Jay Rowland

**Wednesday, December 9—Midweek Advent Evening Prayer**

Premieres at 7:00 p.m. on YouTube and Facebook

**Sunday, December 13—Second Sunday of Advent**

***Service of Lessons and Carols***

Premieres at 10:00 a.m. on YouTube and Facebook

**Wednesday, December 16—Midweek Advent Evening Prayer**

Premieres at 7:00 p.m. on YouTube and Facebook

**Sunday, December 20—Second Sunday of Advent**

Premieres at 10:00 a.m. on YouTube and Facebook  
 Message: *When Angels Come Calling*. Rev. T.J. Parlette

***A Festival of Music — Tidings of Comfort and Joy, An Organ Recital***

Premieres at 4:00 p.m. on YouTube and Facebook  
 Dr. Gregory Peterson (Luther College) and John Stender.

**Wednesday, December 23—Midweek Advent Evening Prayer**

***with Christmas Pageant***

Premieres at 7:00 p.m. on YouTube and Facebook

**Thursday, December 24—Christmas Eve**

Premieres at 4:00 p.m. on YouTube and Facebook

**Friday, 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 27—First Sunday of Christmas**

Premieres at 10:00 a.m. on YouTube and Facebook

**Sunday, January 3—Second Sunday of Christmas**

Premieres at 10:00 a.m. on YouTube and Facebook

**Wednesday, January 6—Epiphany of the Lord**

*Oh, Glorious God, as did the men of old, we too offer our gifts in gratitude, reverence, and thanksgiving, for the birth of your child, whom you called to lead us into fullness. Receive and bless our gifts as a joyful sign of the boundless love and abundant life we are called to share in Christ. Amen.*

*Christ  
 IS Coming!*

## A message from Rev. T.J. Parlette

In the most recent issue of Presbyterians Today (November/December 2020), Donna Frischknecht Jackson wrote an interesting article on finding sacred space beyond our church sanctuaries. I'd like to share some of her article with you:

"Anne Jennings, a member of Brevard-Davidson River Presbyterian Church in Brevard, North Carolina, dressed in a sweater and jeans, lights the candle on a table draped with purple cloth, the liturgical color for the season of Advent. Her Bible is open, ready to read. The table has been purposely positioned in front of two large windows where the trees can be seen blowing in the wind. She quietly sits in a chair." This is her sacred space.

"An upstairs nook was transformed into a new worship space, one that would reflect the seasons of the church achieved by the liturgical colors of the material Jennings draped on the table – green for Ordinary Time, purple for Advent, white for Christmas, etc... The candle on the table, she says, is to signify that Christ is the light of the world. On Sunday mornings, Jennings and her husband enter their sacred space listening to the King's College Choir chanting Psalm 122 – "I was glad when they said unto me: We will go into the house of the Lord."

"In 1922, Carl Jung, the noted Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, purchased a lakeside property and built a stone tower for himself as a place where he could nurture his spiritual life. It was a sacred space where he could reconnect to his dreams and hopes. Seventy years later, Thomas Moore, an American psychotherapist who was influenced by the writings of Jung, became a bestselling author with the publication of "Care for the Soul. In the book, Moore recounts the example of Jung's tower, underscoring the importance of creating a physical space as a "retreat for the soul."

I know very few of you would be interested in constructing a tower for the care of your soul. But it's possible to achieve the same result in a much simpler way. Rev. Chris Miller of Trinity Presbyterian Church in Springfield, Missouri, encourages his congregation to intentionally set aside a space for worship and prayer. He says, "I would offer a simple definition of sacred space – Any space that allows us to more easily connect with God is sacred space."

I like that idea! I have a place like that in my own house, although I wasn't really intentional about it. In the mornings I have my coffee at our kitchen table with a candle and a couple of succulent plants, right in front of our sliding glass door where I can see the birds at the bird feeder and the wind moving through the trees. I read from a devotional book I've been using called The One Year Book of Encouragement, and then one letter a day from C.S. Lewis' Screwtape Letters. It's a peaceful start to the day that I never used to do before COVID came to town.

So this Advent season, I would encourage you to make some sacred space for yourself to read, pray or watch one of our church services on Sunday morning or Wednesday evenings. Any place will do – perhaps a comfortable chair, a view out the window, some cloth or ribbons for color and maybe a candle or two might help.

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

Good News of First Presbyterian Church — 6 — November 2020

Though we can't be together in our lovely sanctuary this holy season, we can still be together spiritually in our own sacred space. When you get yours set up, I'd love to see it – send a picture to Cindy in the office and we'll see if we can get them on the website!

Peace and Blessings to you all!



## A message from Rev. Jay Rowland

*We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be visible in our bodies. ... So we do not lose heart, even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day.*

– Paul, 2 Corinthians 4:1-16

When Paul first penned these words he expressed concern for his congregation. His choice of verbs stunningly describes our acute experience in this year 2020: "afflicted in every way" ... "perplexed" ... "struck down". Paul's prophetic terms meet us in the midst of the enduring and cruel global pandemic, in the wake of the devastating fires and the string of hurricanes which struck down multitudes of people, and in the perplexing interior assault upon democracy. And we cannot overlook the daily reality of people who have endured decades--generations--of blunt force trauma inflicted upon their black bodies by police and by a code of "justice" which devours people with dark or non-white skin which fit into the verb "persecuted."

Last month we pondered a term, resilience, which is getting lots of cultural buzz. Whatever resilience means elsewhere, our life together in these dire times utterly hinges upon it.

Resilience is implicit in the second half of Paul's couplets describing the perils of existence: "afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed but not driven to despair; persecuted but not forsaken; struck down but not destroyed ..."

But resilience is not automatic by way of our faith. We may all trust that God's love shall prevail. But we all know by now that God is not at our beck and call. And so, on any given day, week, month and year, trust in God is the barest of threads to which we cling in the midst of uncertainty, chaos and suffering. Some days we are resilient. Some days we are not. Because we are human. None of us has sufficient individual resilience 24/7/365. Instead, "we hold this treasure in earthen vessels, so that it may be clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us."

Jesus Christ endured the most brutal realities of our earthly life. His resilience takes over when ours lags. The resilience and the endurance of Jesus carries us toward transcendence. The seeds of New Life in Christ are hidden within every affliction, every perplexity, every persecution, every injustice, and yes, every pandemic. Meanwhile, we keep watch. We wait. We anticipate. We wonder. And we pray, "Come Lord Jesus".



Contact: Rowland.Jay@FPCRochester.org  
Phone: (507) 990-1367

## 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 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*

In any other year, the Sharing Tree would be covered with gift cards and displayed in our atrium during the Advent season. Since this is NOT a normal year, we made changes for the Sharing Tree to keep everyone as safe and healthy as possible. To avoid going into stores to shop for gifts, we will instead purchase gift cards for families that are using **Red Drop Resources** and for single moms enrolled at the **Alternative Learning Center (ALC)**.

**Red Drop Resources**, formerly called Medcity Foundation, provides general assistance to blood cancer patients and their families. This includes lodging, food, and other financial needs. This foundation was started by Kristina Wright-Peterson.

The **Alternative Learning Center Daycare** provides daycare for single parents who are finishing high school at the ALC.

If you wish to give to these worthy causes, please send a check to the church and write "Sharing Tree" in the memo line. The money will be used to purchase gift cards from local merchants. The Deacons have already generously given \$500 towards purchasing gift cards for the moms and children at the ALC.

Many families are suffering during this time so if you have the means please think of this as an opportunity to give to a local cause.

Any questions: please email Ruth Saling at [rksaling@msn.com](mailto:rksaling@msn.com). Thank you for your generosity.

## Bdecan Church Update

*Maryllynn Aalderks, team leader of the Bdecan VBS Committee*

We have received updates from Rosie Helland, youth and community programming director at the Bdecan Church along with her husband, Bob; Louie Garcia, elder at the Bdecan Church; and Donna Preston, leader of the Bdecan Ministry Team of the Presbytery of the Northern Plains. They all have expressed their sincere thanks for First Presbyterian Church's generosity.

- ♦ Funds were used to buy winter clothing for the children of the church, who were thrilled to have nice, new winter clothing. Any remaining clothes will go to children in the area who are in need.
- ♦ The tribal food bank in Tokio has closed down due to the coronavirus. A freezer was donated, which allows them to give out more meat.
- ♦ The residential school program in North Dakota is on hold so hygiene bags donated by our PW members were distributed to children served by the food bank.

Rosie and Bob have moved seamlessly into the role created by Joe Obermeyer at Bdecan Church. The position is still overseen by the Bdecan Ministry Team. At the time of this writing, the church has had one member hospitalized with COVID related symptoms. The church is holding virtual worship services. So far, Benson County has reported 547 cases and 10 deaths.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the special collections for winter clothing, the food pantry, and school supplies. **You are appreciated.**

## Know Your Status and Don't Go Viral

*Ariel Boswell, Parish Nursing coordinator*

As the coronavirus pandemic rages on, it is December, AIDS Awareness Month, and time to talk about two other dangerous viruses - HIV and Hepatitis C. HIV or Human Immunodeficiency Virus passed to humans in the early 20th century but started spreading in the US in the early 1980's. Attacking our immune system, it leads to AIDS, Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome, which often presents with rare pneumonias and cancers. The CDC recommends that everyone 13-64 be tested for AIDS. The earlier patients receive treatment, the better their prognosis. 40% of HIV infections are spread by people who don't know they have the virus. Highly effective treatments are now available.

Hepatitis C is another virus recognized around the same time as HIV and also spread through blood products. Half of Americans with Hepatitis C don't know they have it, although it can cause liver failure and cancer. Hepatitis C is more common in Asia. Everyone over 18 should be screened for Hepatitis C. There are now effective treatments to get rid of the virus and protect against complications and cancer. Receiving blood products or an organ transplant before 1992, history of drug use and/or risky relationship behavior increase the risk of having either disease. If you don't already know your status, talk to your doc!



**News from  
Presbyterian Women**  
*Sylvia Swede, Coordinator*

***Into the Light: Finding Hope Through Prayers of Lament***

2020-2021 PW/Horizons Bible Study

Lynn Miller, author

This study explores *lament* in a number of different contexts. In Lessons 1 and 2, two kinds of lament are considered:

1. Individual lament (Examples: Psalms 3, 13, and 31)
2. Communal lament (Examples: Psalms 44, 74, and 80)

If there is any occasion to lament, it is when we feel that God is no longer present with us. Crying out to God is an act of great faith.

In the study, the author points out five parts to Biblical lament:

1. Address to God;
2. Description of the situation leading to lament;
3. Situation of trust in God based on past relationship;
4. Call on God to act; and
5. Assurance that God will hear (some communal laments will not have this element).

Here's a challenge for all our FPC poets ~ Can you write a lament using these elements? We would love to see what you compose.

Where is our HOPE? Read these passages: Romans.8:39; Psalms 34:18; Hebrews13:5; and Luke1:37.

Advent Blessings!

*Loving God,  
you are near to us always.  
When we lament and when we praise, we feel you near.  
May we live our lives in full awareness  
that life is lived in your presence..  
Amen.*

**Ruth Circle** will meet via Zoom on December 19, 2020, to discuss Lesson #4.

<b>First Presbyterian Church</b>	
Financial Statement / October 2020	
Balance (9/30/2020)	\$39,670.62
Receipts (October 2020)	63,306.87
Disbursements (October 2020)	<u>63,273.07</u>
Balance (10/31/2020)	<u>\$39,704.42</u>

Answer: And he will be called Wonderful Counselor,  
Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
Isaiah 9:6, NIV

**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 90th birthday on December 4.

*Deaths*

We extend our sympathy to Fabian and Nadine Luna and Alex and Daniel Luna on the death of Fabian's father on November 2.

We extend our sympathy to the family of Rose Johnson, who passed away on November 6.

We extend our sympathy to Sarah and John Stender, Daniel and Benjamin, on the death of Sarah's grandmother, Betty DePriest, on November 12.

We extend our sympathy to Allen, Marcia, and Amy Dollerschell on the death of their daughter and sister, Lynn Reiter, on November 18.

**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. Please note "Poinsettias" on the memo line of your check.
- ◆ **Chancel Flowers**—Please 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.
- ◆ **Library Books**—All of the Christmas books (and a few new titles) from the church library are now available on a cart in the atrium, and may be checked out and returned any time the church is open.

**Calling All Pledges!**

*Mark Keller, Stewardship & Finance*

Thank you to those who have already sent in their pledge for 2021. 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. We realize this year has been filled with lots of twists and turns, and please know that it is not too late to pledge! We are planning for a modest 1.5% increase to our budget. We hope you have been enjoying the videos shown prior to worship which have showcased areas in our church that are supported through your donations. 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 2021 with renewed optimism of good things to come!

# Puzzle!

Use the code to complete Isaiah's prophecy about Jesus, our Savior.



CODE:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
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6 24 23 13 14 1 15 4 21

12 24 4 23 2 14 21 24 1 ,

22 18 16 17 3 8      16 24 13 ,

14 5 14 1 21 10 2 3 18 23 16

15 10 3 17 14 1 ,      25 1 18 23 12 14

24 15      25 14 10 12 14 .

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