



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

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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. 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) or Rev. Rowland (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. 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.

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 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



The Good News of First Presbyterian Church for January 2021

So I hope you are enjoying the final few days of Christmas! That's right, it's still Christmas until January 6th, when we officially enter the season of Epiphany – the season of light. In Epiphany we talk about the light of God coming into the world in a very unexpected way – a vulnerable baby born in a humble stable among the common folk... A sign for us that God welcomes everyone, even the commoners.

Perhaps you've noticed the Nativity set that is on the communion table during this Advent season. It's a beautiful, white porcelain crèche that someone donated to the church recently, although I have not been able to learn who that gift giver might be. It's a pretty big set, so it doesn't usually get displayed, but I thought it would fit nicely on the communion table during this Covid-altered Advent season.

When I was unpacking the figures and setting them up, I noticed a couple of things I have not seen in most other crèches. First of all, there is not only a "herald" angel floating above the scene, but also a pudgy, little cherub angel blowing a trumpet. In addition, the normal adult shepherd is joined by a shepherd boy carrying a lamb. But the character that really surprised me was one that I first thought was one of the three kings, because he is kneeling and holds an oil lamp. But then it dawned on me that he is wearing a headdress like the shepherd, not very kingly – and there were three other figures that were clearly kings. So I wondered, "Who is this guy – shepherds don't usually bring gifts of oil lamps. Who is this?" Luckily this set came with boxes that identify each character – so I dug out the box and found my answer. The mystery man kneeling with an oil lamp is the Innkeeper! I have never seen an Innkeeper represented in a Nativity set before. I was so intrigued I started quizzing people as they stopped by the church to tape or decorate for our digital services!

As we wind up the Christmas season and prepare to enter Epiphany, the Innkeeper and his gift of an oil lamp is oddly appropriate. The Innkeeper often gets a bad rap in the Christmas story. He's the guy who sends the holy family out into the cold, dark night. In reality, he was just the overworked home owner who didn't have a guest room available, so he put Mary and Joseph up as best as he could. The Innkeeper stands for all of us who have put Jesus up as best we could, but not made him the center of our lives. And the gift of the oil lamp is a good one as we enter Epiphany – the gift of light as we enter the season of light!

So in this season of Epiphany, let us remember to put the light of world at the center of our lives!

Peace and Blessings to you all,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "T.J." with a stylized flourish.

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



Confirmation

The Confirmation Class of 2020 was received by the session into the membership of FPC during a Zoom conference on Tuesday September 29. The class is **Edra Clements, Emerson Domnick, Brie Doppler, Adam Gyura, Sam Hruska, and Katie Keller.**

The objective of Confirmation is to help students begin to understand the practice of faith in a church community. Over the course of the year we talked about different aspects of faith and church, including the Presbyterian denomination--its history, worship traditions, sacraments, organization and form of government. We also discussed important stories, people and events in the Bible. Each student participated in worship as acolyte, and also through completing a handful of *Sermon Notes* worksheets in which they analyzed sermons. They also attended two Session meetings and the Annual Meeting. Our objective is to provide experiences and information to help students *begin* to better understand FPC and church in general.

As always, the “final project” for each student is to compose a faith statement indicating what he or she believes at this moment in their life. Opposite are excerpts of their statements which focus specifically upon what they believe about church.

Please pray for these, our newest church members, as they join this congregation in a very trying and difficult chapter in history. Consider sending them a card or letter welcoming them. I praise God for each of them and for their families wherein their faith was nurtured. FPC is truly blessed by their presence and their interest.

— Rev. Jay Rowland and Dan Wentz

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



Edra Clements: *I believe that the church is a community of believers in Christ. I believe that the church can teach me more about God. I believe that the church will help teach me more about God. I believe that the church does help teach people about God and help show God’s unending love to all people. I want to be an active member of this church because I have found the Love of Christ here and would like to be able to learn more and share it with others.*

Emerson Domnick: *I believe that the church is a safe place. I believe the church can change who you are. I believe the church will pray for you. I believe the church does good. I want to be active and a member of this church because I believe in what the church does and I want to be a part of it.*



Brie Doppler: *I believe that church is a place for forgiveness and communication. I believe church will bring people together. I believe church does strengthen us. I believe that church is a place where friends come together to feel the Holy Spirit.*



Adam Gyura: *I believe that church is a place where people can get together and that church can bring people together. I believe that the church goes through changes. Being an active member of the church will help me continue to form my beliefs about God.*



Sam Hruska: *I believe church is important to attend and listen to the service. I believe church can help me grow closer to God. I believe church will help grow my faith and improve my relationship with God. I believe the church does help me learn more about how to expand my relationship with God. I want to be active and a member of this church because it will make my family proud and help me grow closer to God.*

Katie Keller: *I believe that church is a place that accepts everyone. I believe the church can teach people about Jesus and how much he loves us. I believe the church will help me learn about Jesus, the Bible, God, and the Holy Spirit. I believe the church does help people whenever it can through mission trips, fundraising, and donations. I want to be an active member of this church because I want to be a part of the congregation, and I want to learn all I can about Jesus’s teachings.*



2020

... was a year different from what any of us expected, but we were still able to "gather" (whether in-person or virtually), have faith formation, and celebrate fellowship with one another. If you didn't see the Christmas Pageant as part of the December 23 Advent Midweek Evening Prayer service, head to YouTube to check it out!

Though the church building remains closed through February, we are pleased to provide the following Christian Education and Youth Group programming. See below for all the details!

Live Zoom Sunday School! Every **Sunday morning at 9:30 a.m.** children in Pre-k through 5th grade have been gathering virtually for a "One Room Zoom Sunday School." Each week we meet for about 15 minutes and have a "Show and Tell" activity, reading from the Bible, discussion based on the week's Bible reading, and live fellowship with one another. It's been awesome seeing the kids' faces and marveling at how much they have grown since I have last seen them in person! The Zoom link is sent out via email, so if you are not on the Sunday School email list, please let Susanna know.

Sunday School video option: For families who cannot attend the live Zoom Sunday School, short (<5 minute) videos with each week's Bible lesson and discussion questions are being recorded and uploaded to a private YouTube page. Contact Susanna for the link to the videos.

Sunday School supplies: For families who are interested, we have "Sunday School Supply Kits" available that contain activity sheets and crafts for each week's lesson. Contact Susanna for more details!

Adult Christian Education: Al Depman continues to send out a creative, thought-provoking, enjoyable weekly email with a short Bible Study topic (and many funny comics). There is also a weekly Zoom gathering (alternating topics between Bible study and Current Events). Please contact Susanna or Al if you'd like to be added to the email list or join the Zoom meetings.

Youth Group: The Youth Group (Grades 6-12) has been meeting virtually since mid-November. While we treasured the time we were able to spend together in-person, our virtual meetings have been a BLAST, dominated by weekly devotions, tons of fun and games, and vigorous sessions of *Among Us*. To stay up-to-date on Youth Group planning, join the Youth Group email list. Emails are only sent when activities are planned and to communicate any changes/cancellations (expect less than one per week).

Christian Education & Youth Group News

Susanna Stone, Coordinator of Youth and Christian Education

Healthy Pregnancy Recommendations

The Psalmist wrote "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well." *Psalms 139:14 NIV*

As babies form in the womb, moms have an important job in maintaining a good environment for their development. Here are a few things expecting moms should know—and their families should understand and support to keep mom and baby as healthy as possible:

- 1) Even before conceiving, women should take 400 mcg of folic acid daily to reduce the chances of neural tube defects.
- 2) Pregnant women should avoid alcohol, cigarettes, and illegal drugs, and check all over the counter and prescription drugs before taking. Even common cough medicine, acne and pain relievers are not recommended during pregnancy! The flu vaccine is recommended but some others (such as MMR) are not during pregnancy.
- 3) Expecting moms should avoid overheating from fevers or hot tubs as this can increase risk of neural tube defects.
- 4) A healthy lifestyle, checking for gestational diabetes and treating diabetes appropriately reduce risks from high blood sugar and an extra-large baby.
- 5) Mercury, viruses and bacterial infections can also increase the risk of defects or pregnancy loss so avoid colds; wash hands frequently; avoid raw, undercooked, or large predatory fish; and avoid foods that could contain bacteria.

Pregnancy is hard enough with its pains, discomforts, and lists of do's and don'ts. Don't guilt a mama-to-be if she says "no" to your hot tub party or sashimi tray ... she has very good reasons!

Ariel Boswell, parish nursing program

First Presbyterian Church	
Financial Statement / November 2020	
Balance (10/31/2020)	\$39,704.42
Receipts (November 2020)	67,174.71
Disbursements (November 2020)	<u>53,586.77</u>
Balance (11/30/2020)	<u>\$53,292.36</u>



We have all heard the adage ~ “it takes a village ...”

... while we are not raising children, it does take all of us working together to keep our church running. Here is only a small start to the many **thanks** owed to the generous and caring people that make up our community.

For the FPC Sharing Tree

from Ruth Saling and Social Concerns:

Thank you ... To everyone who sent a monetary donation for the Sharing Tree this Christmas season. I was overwhelmed with your generosity. A special thanks to the Deacons who kickstarted this year’s giving with a \$500 donation to the daycare program at the Alternative Learning Center. We gave Target gift cards to fifteen very grateful moms who are balancing their online high school studies while also caring for an infant.

We were also able to purchase numerous gift cards at our local restaurants, coffee shops and grocery stores to support families who are staying in Rochester while a family member is receiving treatment for a blood cancer. These cards were given to Red Drop Resources.

The committee appreciates your kindness and abundance in giving to help God’s children in need. Many blessings in the New Year.

For Assistance with Advent Decorations

from Bev Lewis and Sally Brooks

As with everything else this year, decorating the church for Advent changed as well. The decorating was limited since activities at church have been curtailed. We asked individual groups to work on separate projects. We lost some of the camaraderie of the event, but we all felt the joy of decorating the church.

We want to thank the following people for their help this year:

- Peg Parsons and Bev Lewis worked to set up the work stations for others.
- Peter and Sally Brooks, Paul Herr and Vera, Beth and Kyle Herr set up the large Atrium tree.
- Laura and Tim Smith hung the wreaths.
- Cindy Kunzman and Jane Hallman decorated two trees in the sanctuary, the Chrismon tree and the children’s tree.
- Bev Lewis worked on the poinsettia cross.

Thank you all!

Covid Response Funds to the Community

from Lucinda Cutrer, Social Concerns:

The Social Concerns Committee met on December 8th specifically to disburse \$6,000.00 of Covid Response funds. The funds were an aggregate of available unused money from the committee’s 2019 budget. In September, the committee had voted to use this combined money specifically for needs arising in the community due to the pandemic. Because it is clear that food and shelter are paramount for thousands in Rochester, the committee disbursed \$2,000.00 to each of these worthy organizations:

- The Landing (which has temporarily been displaced from its new home because of staff shortages due to illness),
- Channel One
- Dorothy Day House

Thank you so much for trusting us to address as many community needs as possible.



Stewardship 2021

from Sarah Edgerton, Stewardship & Finance

Thanks to everyone’s faithful generosity during a difficult, crazy situation, we are in a good financial position ending 2020. For that we say: Thank you!

And now 2021 is knocking on the door. While the delivery systems might be less traditional, we plan to continue supporting local, national and international mission work; our growing youth programs; and offer our signature, wonderful musical offerings. Maintaining our lovely facility and grounds is a priority as we diligently keep it in a clean, sanitized and shoveled condition. All of this will be delivered in 2021 by our talented, experienced and passionate staff. We’re all learning to execute our mission with new technology while keeping the personal touch alive – a delicate balance at times!

Please prayerfully consider where you belong in the life and work of First Presbyterian Church. If you haven’t submitted your pledge, **please do so as soon as possible**. Let us look forward to 2021 with the renewed optimism of good things to come!



News from Presbyterian Women

Sylvia Swede, Coordinator

You are invited ...

... to a book study sponsored by Presbyterian Women in the Synod of Lakes and Prairies and led by members of the PWS Native American Concerns Committee. The book, *Beneath the Same Stars*, is a novel of the 1862 US - Dakota War written by Phyllis Cole-Dai.

Discussions will be held via Zoom and there is no charge to participate, but registration is required. The study begins Monday, January 18, 2021. You may choose a daytime session (1:30 - 2:30 PM) or an evening session (6:30 - 7:30 PM). Groups will meet every two weeks for five sessions. including a session with the author.

To register, contact Marilyn Stone (mmstone52@att.net) with the following information: ~ your name; ~ your phone number, ~ your email address, and ~ your afternoon or evening study preference. Include that you are part of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area.

Enjoy some winter reading!

An Update from Friendship Place

Jane Goodfriend, coordinator

During the COVID 19 pandemic, Friendship Place has continued to reach out to the students and families who live in the nearby Meadow Park neighborhood.

This fall we worked outside with the younger students as long as we had light. We cooked hot dogs and packet meals over a barbeque several times and encouraged the children to play active games. Although we tried to continue to work with homework and tutor the students, we found it difficult to keep them on task outside!

We have continued to be very busy at night tutoring the older students. Everyone has become adept at Zoom, and we go into breakout rooms to be one on one with our students. Wednesday is First Presbyterian's night to tutor, and Jeff Remfert, Eric Eckberg, Ruth Saling and I have been working with the young people. As the kids came close to the end of the term there was a need for tutors who were comfortable proofreading papers in addition to helping with math and science. We would love to have more volunteers Zoom-tutor in coming months. You could tutor Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Although check in time is 7 p.m., the time can be flexible.

It has been very rewarding to see the difference we have made in the lives of many of our students. Two girls are in the Nursing program at UMR, one is in the Dental Hygiene program at RCTC, and another is applying to the Nursing program.

This holiday season we gave gift boxes to the families that "came" regularly. Each box had a gingerbread house to construct, a gift card, mittens, a deck of cards, and books for reading, adult coloring, and activities like word finds and sudoku.

Friendship Place has always been grateful for the financial and congregational support from our church.



- † We extend our sympathy to Jan and Dick Bennett on the death of Jan's brother in October.
- † We extend our sympathy to Peter and Sally Brooks on the deaths of Peter's father on December 9, and Sally's brothers on December 4 and December 20.
- † We extend our sympathy to Michael McDonough on the death of Mike's son on December 8.
- † We extend our sympathy to Bruce and Vikki Wolff on the death of Bruce's brother on December 18.

An Invitation to Join

You are invited to join a small group that practices *compassionate* (nonviolent) *communication*. The group meets monthly by Zoom, at the church, or outdoors at parks, depending on public health mandates and the weather. The group will meet 5-6 hours per month for 12 months: 2 hours with the group, 2 hours to practice with a buddy, and 1-2 hours to read and practice concepts on your own. Group members hold whatever is said during meetings in confidence, and take turns leading group sessions. Members come from a variety of backgrounds and belief systems: Christian, Buddhist, atheist to name a few.

The group is using *The Compassion Book: Lessons from the Compassion Course*, by Thom Bond, and writes, "Through clear, specific ideas, and practical steps, this book provides you with the 'how to' of compassion. By developing foundational skills, and building on them over time, we experience more compassion on a daily basis—and that changes everything....Although the work in this book is readily understandable, putting it into practice can be very challenging."

For more information, or to sign up, contact Carol Shaffer, rev.carol.shaffer@gmail.com or 507-993-4197.



NEW YEAR,

**NEW
BEGINNINGS**

