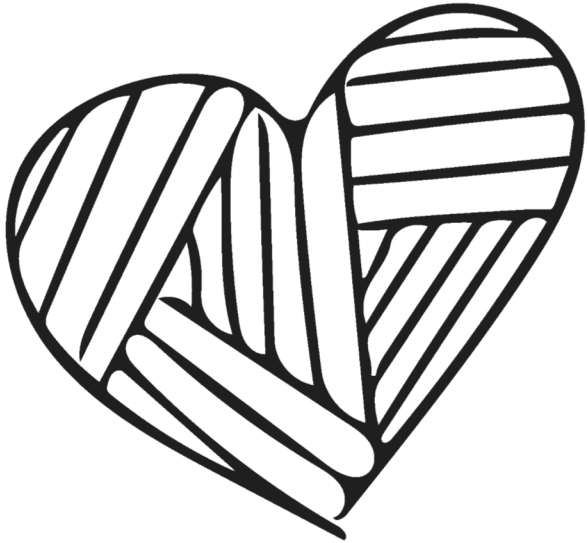


BLANKET THE WORLD WITH

love

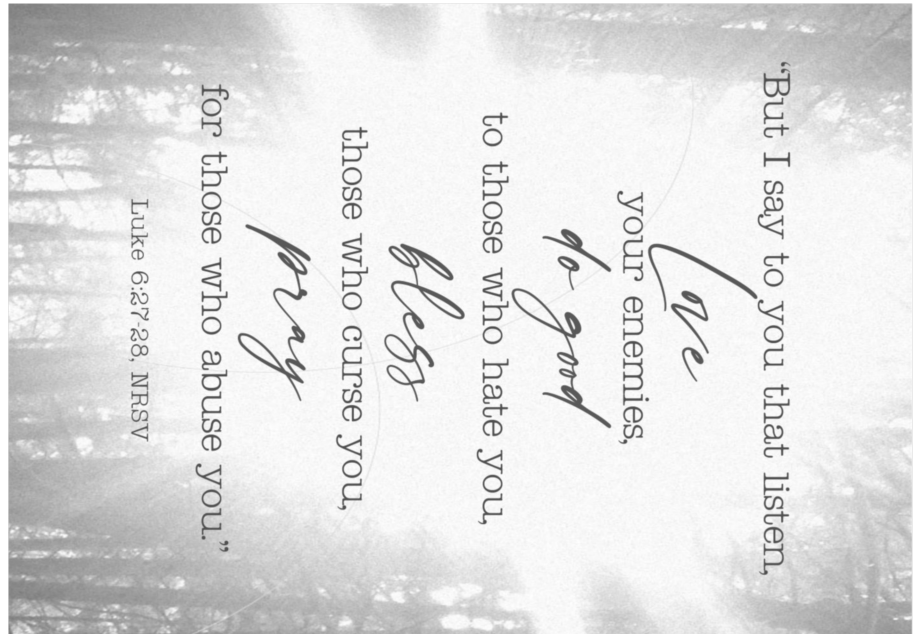


*"And don't forget to do good
and share with those in need."*

— HEBREWS 13:16

— Phyllis Schmid, Mission Committee

First Presbyterian Church has long been a supporter of the Church World Services *Blanket Sunday*. This program supplies blankets, tools, and other needed items for victims of natural disasters. This year, we will recognize this program on Sunday, February 13, but happily accept donations throughout the month of February. Please designate "*Blanket Sunday*" in the memo line on your check.



 FEBRUARY 2022

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

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February 2022						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		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
27	28					

- 1 _____ Deacons Meeting 7:00 p.m.
- 2 _____ Adult Bible Study 6:30 p.m.
- 6 _____ Sunday School 9:30[†] a.m.
- Worship & Communion 11:00 a.m.
- 9 _____ Adult Bible Study 6:30 p.m.
- 13 _____ Sunday School 9:30[†] a.m.
- Worship 11:00 a.m.
- 15 _____ Session Meeting 7:00 p.m.
- 16* _____ Priscilla Circle 9:15 a.m.
- Prayer Shawl Group 1:00 p.m.
- Crafters Group 3:00 p.m.
- Wednesday activities 4:45—8:00 p.m.
- 17* _____ Bell and Choir Rehearsals 6:00-8:30 p.m.
- 19* _____ Ruth Circle 10:00 a.m.
- 20* _____ Worship 8:30 & 11:00 a.m.
- Sunday School & Fellowship Hour 9:40 a.m.
- 21 _____ **The church office will be closed all day.**
- 23* _____ Wednesday activities 4:45—8:00 p.m.
- 24* _____ Bell and Choir Rehearsals 6:00-8:30 p.m.
- 27* _____ Worship 8:30 & 11:00 a.m.
- Sunday School & Fellowship Hour 9:40 a.m.

† Adult Kerygma Class meets at 9:40 a.m. via Zoom.
 Youth & Children’s Sunday school at 10:00 a.m. in One Room Zoom.

* Schedule dependent on outcome during Session meeting on February 15.



The Good News

of First Presbyterian Church for February 2022

PASTOR’S QUILL

Stephen Sondheim died on November 26th of last year, the day after Thanksgiving. I was shocked and saddened by his death. Sondheim has long held a special place in my heart. The first real musical I was a part of as an adult was *Company*, a hit from the seventies. But the work I know best is *Into the Woods*. I played “Jack” of Jack and the Beanstalk fame. It was great fun. The community theater I was involved in was one of the first non-professional groups to get the rights to perform it, and unless you were a theater groupie, not many people knew the show that well. So we were not too surprised that at the end of Act 1, when the house lights went up for the intermission, about 25% of the audience started to leave – they thought the show was over! If you know *Into the Woods*, you know that Act 1 ties up the fairy tales pretty well and seems like the typical happy ending. But of course, the show isn’t over, and things get complicated in Act 2.

I was gratified to see that a preacher and pastor I admire, Martin Copenhaver, wrote a wonderful article for [the periodical] *Christian Century* about Sondheim’s impact on his spiritual life, even though Sondheim was not a Christian and not that spiritual himself. Copenhaver writes: “One aspect of Sondheim’s work that has had a particular impact on my spiritual life is his inescapable, poignant expressions of yearning, a theme that permeates much of his work... the yearning Sondheim evinces is for something that is not yet – for justice, love, and human connection that are elusive. The first and last words in *Into the Woods* as “I wish., and the phrase becomes a kind of leitmotif for the entire show. What each character wishes for is held just out of reach. The song that declares a happy ending, in which all of their wishes are granted comes at the end of the first act. By the end of the play itself, discord and death have again asserted themselves, leaving the characters with their yearning.”

Although Sondheim was not proud of all the lyrics he wrote for *West Side Story* (he felt pressured by Leonard Bernstein to write lyrics a bit more trite than Sondheim liked, ie “I feel pretty, oh so pretty, and witty and bright”), he was proud of his lyrics for Tony’s wonderful song “Something’s Coming.” Writes Copenhaver, “The whole song is an expression of yearning for that which is, as yet, out of reach and out of view: “Could be,/ Who knows?/ There’s something due any day,/ I will know right away,/ Soon as it shows.”

If I could pick a theme song for the year as we move forward in 2022, I think “Something’s Coming” would be a strong contender, for we all yearn for what lies just up ahead, around the corner. I will miss Stephen Sondheim. He may not have been a Christian. He may not have been overtly spiritual. But he certainly wrote something theological in both *Into the Woods* and *West Side Story*.

Peace,

Quotes are from Martin B. Copenhaver, *Christian Century*, December 29, 2021, p11.

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



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



Rise up, O Lord, Rise up

The daily lectionary for February 1 offers Psalm 12 as a morning Psalm. Here's a portion of it:

"I will arise and defend the oppressed, the poor, the needy," (says The Lord). "I will rescue them as they have longed for me to do." The Lord's promise is sure. He speaks no careless word; all he says is purest truth, like silver seven times refined. O Lord, we know that you will forever preserve your own from the reach of evil men, although they prowl on every side and vileness is praised throughout the land. (*The Living Bible*)

Rise up, O Lord. Rise up. Rise up and defend us. We groan aloud and silent. Arise dear Lord. You do not retreat. You are Here. With us. Here beside us. Here among us. Others abdicate. Others deflect. But you stand fast. Through rising waters and falling stars. Rescue us. Again. And again. Arise O Lord. Arise. Rise above pandemic torment. Rise above exhausted fatigue. Rise above anxiety rising to panic. Rise above chaos. You who speak no careless Word, Speak. Soar. Drown out the careless word, O Lord. Rise. Rescue. Speak. Again and again. Moment to moment. Breath to breath. Sunrise to sunset. Speak Love into the night as stars rise above the darkness air. Arise as tears fall. Soar into our dreams. Show yourself our truest, bravest Love above all. Preserve all Love. Preserve the Beauty you've placed Within. Each heart and mind to love Creation, all creatures great and small. Arise again O Lord in morning Son. We long to adore you, purest Light. Awaken us from the trance of trouble. Awaken us to your Beauty, pure Creation. Overwhelm vile masquerading as truth. Rise. Rescue. Speak. As day moves steadily to night. As night steadily returns the Day. Ever Beautiful. Ever Blessed. Ever Love. Your Word. Your World. without end. Amen.

Music Ministry

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



John Stender, Director of Music
stender.john@fpcrochester.org

LAMENT AND LONGING FOR HEALING

My plans for something to write in this month's newsletter were dashed to pieces! I had a few thoughts based on things that have now been postponed. So, another time, let's hope. What I am left with as I write well past the deadline is a feeling of need for further inspiration as I continue to pray for individuals and families affected by the ailments associated with Covid-19 infection and all the members of our healthcare community. The need to support healthcare workers has been widely talked about. I know I need to commit more time to this both physically and spiritually. At least for our own compassionate devotion,

it's worth knowing there are resources close at hand for focusing prayer and encouragement.

In our hymnal, *Glory to God*, there is a whole section with the heading: 'Lament and Longing for Healing' (hymn numbers 775-800). These are filled with many references to personal and corporate healing, a few references to Christ as physician, and so on. A particularly direct option for this subject is hymn number 796. It's a text by the prolific writer of more than 120 hymns, Herman Stuempfle, Jr. (1923-2007).

1 We come to you for healing, Lord, of body, mind and soul, and pray that by your Spirit's touch we may again be whole.

2 As once you walked through ancient streets and reached toward those in pain, we know you come among us still with power to heal again.

3 You touch us through physicians' skills, through nurses' gifts of care, and through the love of faithful friends who lift our lives in prayer.

An excellent text worth studying is Fred Pratt Green's "O Christ, the Healer" at number 793. There are direct references to personal, physical, and spiritual healing. Intellectual healing, however, is also approached. The hymn is set in direct dialogue with Christ and uses rich, yet relatable, metaphors: "Release in us those healing truths unconscious pride resists or shelves...in conflicts that destroy our health we recognize the world's disease; our common life declares our ills. Is there no cure, O Christ, for these?"

We are probably all familiar with phrases from the spiritual Balm in Gilead: "make the wounded whole...heal the sin-sick soul...but then the Holy Spirit revives my soul again." Much like Psalms, spirituals provide plentiful references to waiting in exile, deliverance, hope for heaven. The music of enslaved peoples in America is all about comfort and solidarity in times of trial. These songs were a boon to Dietrich Bonhoeffer's spirit, as described in his writing, while he was imprisoned in Flossenbürg concentration camp.

Other favorites of mine from beyond the Presbyterian hymnal include a text by Edward Hayes Plumptre, "Thine arm, O

Lord, in days of old," which is set to the particularly beautiful, yet largely unfamiliar, early 18th century tune St. Matthew. "And lo! thy touch brought life and health, gave hearing, strength, and sight; and youth renewed and frenzy calmed owned thee, the Lord of light... restore and quicken, soothe and bless, with thine almighty breath: to hands that work and eyes that see, give wisdom's heavenly lore, that whole and sick, and weak and strong, may praise thee evermore."

Another spiritual song that comes to mind is one that was said to be Pope John Paul II's favorite song: "You Have Come Down to the Lakeshore." With a clear Catholic disposition, the Spanish-origin hymn emphasizes the agency of the believer and responds to Christ's invitation to minister and disciple. The third stanza portrays selfless devotion in the name of the One who redefined sacrifice for the whole world. "You need my hands, my exhaustion, working love for the rest of the weary— a love that's willing to go on loving. Sweet Lord, you have looked into my eyes; kindly smiling, you've called out my name..."

Church Photo Directory Update

— Allyson Maurer and Jane Murl, Welcoming and Nurturing Committee

You might be wondering *whatever happened to that church directory?*

After the holidays and a COVID-related hiatus, the team is back together and we are busily putting together the additional “pieces.” We had a small number of people unable to come in during the photography window so we are working with them to collect pictures. We are going through a plethora of shots that depict the vibrant life of our church ... can you say picnic? We are reading through the submission guidelines to make sure we have put all these pieces together as required. It’s daunting!



We do welcome photographs from fellowship and activities that happened around the church during the past 12–24 months. We will also accept photographs from individuals who were unable to sit with the photographers when they were here. Submit these photos to Cindy in the church office at Cindy.Kunzman@fpcrochester.org by February 15. If you have questions, please call the church office.

Church of Jagüey Grande, Mantanzas, Cuba

— Sylvia Swede

We have recently received greetings from Jorge Luis, a new graduate who is currently serving at the Church of Jagüey Grande as a pastoral candidate. Jorge will be ordained in this community once he has satisfactorily completed the ordination examination. Services began once again in October after having been suspended due to measures to contain the pandemic. The congregation is very thankful to be able to meet once again in community. Jorge greets us with joy, calling us their beloved sister church, and prays that the love and peace of Christ be with all of us.



Jorge Luis lights the Advent candle



A scene from the children’s Nativity play at Jagüey Grande

Steve and Alene Burgert’s Final Update from Kenya

After twelve years of service at Kenya’s Tenwek Hospital. Steve and Alene Burgert have recently celebrated Steve’s retirement from his role as Medical Superintendent of the hospital. As they pack and close their apartment, they are blessed with loving visits by friends and colleagues who remind them to thank their many friends who have supported their mission during their tenure in Kenya. They now return to the United States to begin the newest chapter of their lives—a new home community in central California (close to some of Alene’s family). They will continue to serve World Gospel Mission through April of 2022 which will allow them to connect with their partners across the United States.

*As we start our next season of life,
we are searching wholeheartedly for the new paths
that will lead us to a deeper knowledge of
God the Father and His Son Jesus,
whom the Father sent to reconcile all people to Himself.
We pray the same for you in the New Year.*

Steve and Alene



<http://psalm121v8.blogspot.com/2022/01/christmas-greetings-and-final-update.html>





PRESBYTERIAN
WOMEN

– Sylvia Swede, coordinator

PW News

The genealogy of Jesus according to Matthew: Do you know **Bathsheba**? Read 2 Samuel 11-12, 1 Kings 1: 11-31, and 1 Kings 2: 13-25.

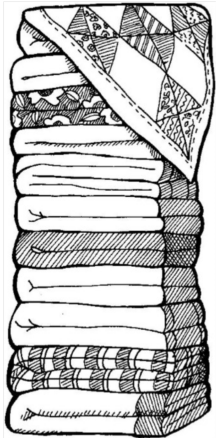
Lord, your constant love reaches the heavens;
Your faithfulness extends to the skies.
Your righteousness is towering like the mountains,
Your justice is like the depths of the sea.
Men and animals are in your care. (and women, too!)

How precious, O God, is your constant love!
We find protection under the shadow of your wings.
We feed on the abundant food you provide;
You let us drink from the river of your goodness.
You are the source of all life,
And because of your light we see the light.

– Psalm 36:3-9 (GNT)

Circles

- ✂ **Esther Circle** will not meet in February.
- ✂ **Priscilla Circle** meets on Wednesday, February 16 @ 9:15 a.m.
- ✂ **Prayer Shawl Group** meets on Wednesday, February 16 @ 1:00 p.m.
- ✂ **Ruth Circle** meets on Saturday, February 19 @ 10:00 a.m. to discuss lessons #5 & #6.



Bdecan Thanks You

– Marylynn Aalderks, Mission Committee

Thank you ... Rosie Helland recently let us know that this fall when they had the blanket distribution, EVERYONE wanted one, and every last blanket was quickly taken. The blankets were VERY much appreciated, as were the winter clothes. The children and their families were so happy to receive them, and they were all distributed. The hygiene kits were sent out to the children heading to residential school. The Food Pantry has also been very busy serving 70-80 families every month. Very recently a new tribal food pantry has opened in Tokio, so that might take some of the pressure off of the Bdecan Food Pantry, but they still benefit from financial support. Thank you all for your kind concern and generosity. You are making a difference in the lives of the people of the Bdecan Church, both children and the elderly.



Forgiveness February

– Ariel Boswell, Parish Nurse

What is one thing that can do wonders for your health AND your relationships?

Ok, you read the title and you're right ... *forgiveness!*

Researchers know that forgiveness can lead to lower levels of stress hormones and that means better blood pressures and better immune response, as well as the psychological effects of less depression, hostility, anxiety, and improved self esteem.

On the other hand, holding grudges and living resentfully is stressful for your mind and body.

In addition to the health benefits, the Bible is very clear. Proverbs 17:9 reminds us "He who forgives an offense seeks love, but he who repeats a matter alienates a friend." In 1 Corinthians 13:5, it says that love "keeps no record of wrongs" (NIV). Paul instructs us to forgive and why: "and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32 RSV). Jesus did not put a limit on forgiveness: "Then Peter came up and said to him, 'Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven.'" (Matthew 18:21-22 RSV)



Jesus wants us to keep forgiving. Not because it is easy but because it is the loving, merciful thing to do and is better for us. When we forgive, we consciously let go of our anger, resentment and vengeance.

Forgiving does not mean forgetting or putting up with abusive treatment. It does not depend on an apology, and it does not guarantee reconciliation. However it does open the door to a more peaceful, joyful way of living.

Have you been holding onto a grudge? The science and the Bible agree - forgive and live!

Resource: Mayo Clinic



Spotlight on Judy Felten



Submitted by Lea B. Jennings

Judy Felten has been a member of First Presbyterian Church for approximately 40 years and brings a life time of belief to our Church. Having grown up on a farm in Aurelia, Iowa, Judy was baptized at Emmanuel Reformed Church of Christ in Buena Vista County. Judy was active in the church, and her aunts were all Sunday School teachers and in charge of the Christmas pageant, guaranteeing a great role for "Niece Judy." Later, Judy and her family moved to Schaller, Iowa, and joined the First Presbyterian Church of Schaller where Judy was confirmed.

Judy became a Registered Nurse and in 1980 sought employment at Mayo Clinic–St. Marys Hospital. She continues full time employment as an RN in the Neurology Critical Care Unit. Judy joined First Presbyterian Church–Rochester around 1982. An active member of the congregation, Judy has served as an elder twice and is completing her third term as a deacon. She has been an active member of the Chancel Guild and represents that group on the Worship and Music Committee. During the summer, Judy provides attention and water for our outdoor potted plants and she maintains the plantings at the northeast corner Welcome sign.

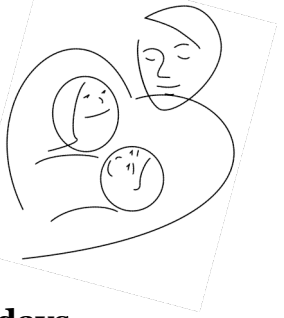
Judy has been an active participant at FPC in the music ministry previously as a choir member and bell ringer. She enjoys volunteering for sitter service and interacting with the kids. Judy was a member of a medical mission trip to Haiti, serving with five other medical staff, and she also volunteered at a Jamaican Orphanage on a medical mission trip with another church. Locally in Rochester, Judy has served meals at Dorothy Day Homeless Shelter and assists at the Neuro Hospitality House.

Judy values our FPC congregation, enjoys chuckling with children during Sitter Service, and welcomes the opportunity to meet other friendly people with similar interests. First Presbyterian Church is blessed to have caring, generous members like Judy.

What We

Believe

Among our Church Family



Celebrating Birthdays

in February ...

- ⁰³ Beverly Eppolite (92)
- ⁰⁵ Janet Purnell (94) and Titus Evans (85)
- ⁰⁶ Corene Bernatz (88)
- ⁰⁷ Mary Potter (92)
- ⁰⁹ Norman Nelson (96)
- ¹⁵ James Claire (80)
- ²⁷ Marilyn Kelly Theismann (81)

We extend our condolences to the family and friends of Beverly Tuohy,
who died in January.

We extend our condolences to the family and friends of Barbara Madsen,
who died on January 20, 2022.



First Presbyterian Church

Financial Statement / December 2021

General Operating Budget

Balance (11/30/2021)	(\$ 11,802.98
Receipts (December 2021)	69,516.58
Disbursements (December 2021)	<u>87,739.90</u>
Balance (12/31/2021)	<u>(\$ 30,026.30)</u>

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