



First Press

Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor
December 2018 Volume 66, Number 11



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Dear Friends,

Advent is a time of waiting. In this time when the world seems to speed up in preparation for traveling, family time and gift-giving, we slow down. We attune our ears to God, and listen again for God's arrival in our midst. We make ourselves alert to what God is doing among us, and the change that God is bringing.

Advent feels so appropriate for First Pres right now. We know that change is coming to our church. How can we be ready to receive it, and alert to join God's ways of healing and hope among us as a congregation? We draw near to one another, supporting those in leadership, reaching out to members hurting or disaffected, and lending strength and appreciation for those who have tirelessly worked to get us this far. We reach out to those with whom we need reconciliation, and seek the Spirit's help in bringing peace and justice. We know that change is coming to our church.

And yet, Advent is also a time when we attune our ears to the divine doxology that change has already come - and not change of our own making, but what God has already done among us. Advent is indeed a time of expectation and waiting - but not of a passive kind. It is a time of anticipating joy unfettered, love unbounded, and endless hope. In that, we draw near to God, to live out the calling God has shown us in Jesus the Christ.

The church slows down time to draw near to the beautiful stories of and around the coming of our Lord. Our theme this year is "Draw Near." In this, we reaffirm that God has drawn near to us by taking on flesh and experiencing what it is to be human. We also plead for God to draw closer to us and to the spaces in the world that are broken and we hear God charge us to draw near to God by leaning into wonder, justice, truth, and one another.

We have an exciting Advent planned here at First Pres. Your staff have been preparing for months, and finally, we get to draw near to these days of waiting, preparing, comforting, and rejoicing. For children and adults of all ages, members and guests, and those seeking to hear the story anew — this is the place to be. "Draw Near" to everything that we have to offer so that your heart will be open and ready to receive the Christ Child.

Faithfully, *Rev. Melissa Anne Rogers and Rev. Jay Sanderford*



Christmas Eve Worship

3:00 p.m. - Christmas Pageant Worship

Candlelight Worship Services

5:00 & 7:00 p.m. - Lessons & Carols

11:00 p.m. - Communion

December 30 Worship

10:00 a.m. - Family Worship



Holiday Building Hours

- The building will be closed Tuesday, December 25 and Tuesday, January 1.
- The building will close at 4:00 p.m., an hour early, Wednesday, December 26 through Monday, December 31.



Worship & Music



Glacier Hills Advent Worship

Monday, December 10 at 10:30 a.m.

Join the staff of First Pres and residents of Glacier Hills in the Hanson Room for this special Advent worship service and refreshments. Preaching will be the Rev. Don Postema. All are welcome!



Longest Night Worship

Wednesday, December 19 at 7:00 p.m., Monteith Hall

We know the darkness — both literal and figurative — that comes around the Winter Solstice. For those grieving, uncertain, facing illness, or feeling melancholy during the holidays, this season is especially hard. This service speaks to the sadness we feel. Invite your heavy-laden friends and neighbors. Light candles, share communion, be comforted by music. Stephen Ministers provide refreshments for a time of fellowship afterwards.

Parking on Christmas Eve

Please be considerate in parking choices as many visitors join us for worship on Christmas Eve. For our able-bodied members, overflow parking is available only at the Forest Street structure (free that day), a short walk down Forest Court. Please do not park at the adjoining sorority houses.



Advent Events

Our Advent theme is "Draw Near."

God has drawn near to us by taking on flesh and experiencing what it is to be human. We plead for God to draw closer to us and to the spaces in the world that are broken. We hear God charge us to draw near to God by leaning into wonder, justice, truth, and one another. Draw near as we travel this Advent journey together.



Advent Email Devotional

Beginning Sunday, December 2, receive daily email devotions written by First Pres members and staff during Advent.

Family to Family

Sign up at Coffee Hour on December 2 and 9 in the Social Hall. "Adopt" a local family in need and purchase gifts and/or food according to their needs. Donations may be made to purchase gift cards for families not directly adopted, or for families in need who have loved ones at Mott Children's Hospital and UM Hospital. Questions? Contact Julie Morrison at jdornmorrison@gmail.com or 668-0420. Sign up online at www.firstpresbyterian.org



Advent Happening Arts & Crafts Event

Saturday, December 1, 10:00 a.m. - Noon, Social Hall

Bring family, friends, and neighbors and join in the fun in the Social Hall! Begin your holiday preparations by making gifts, Christmas cards and ornaments, and decorating cookies. Advent Happening is a multi-generational event with projects for everyone — ages 2 to 102. Childcare is provided for infants through age two if older siblings and parents are busy at the Advent Happening. Make a reservation for childcare by contacting Rebeca Torres-Davenport, Transitional Coordinator of Children's Education and Family Ministry at btorres-davenport@firstpresbyterian.org or 662-4466, ext 342.

Boy Scout Troop 7 Wreath Sale

Boy Scout Troop 7, chartered by First Pres in 1927, will host their annual Christmas wreath sale during Coffee Hour on Sundays, November 25 and December 2. There are two sizes of wreaths, handmade from fresh greens, for sale. A 24" wreath is \$30.00 and a larger 28" wreath for \$40.00. Deck the halls and support Boy Scout Troop 7!

Drawing Near A Blessing to Begin Advent

It is difficult to see it from here,

I know,
but trust me when I say
this blessing is inscribed
on the horizon.

Is written on
that far point
you can hardly see.

Is etched into
a landscape

whose contours you cannot know
from here.

All you know
is that it calls you,
draws you,

pulls you toward
what you have perceived
only in pieces,
in fragments that came to you
in dreaming
or in prayer.

I cannot account for how,
as you draw near,
the blessing embedded in the horizon
begins to blossom
upon the soles of your feet,
shimmers in your two hands.

It is one of the mysteries
of the road,
how the blessing
you have traveled toward,
waited for,
ached for
suddenly appears
as if it had been with you all this time,
as if it simply
needed to know
how far you were willing
to walk
to find the lines
that were traced upon you
before the day you were born.

-Jan Richardson

Be a Part of the Hanging of the Greens!

All are welcome to come and help get our worship spaces ready for Advent. Join us on Saturday, December 1 from 9:00 a.m. to noon in the Sanctuary to put up Christmas trees, hang lights, and decorate with garlands and bows.

Forward in Mission Christmas Bazaar

Sunday, December 2, 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.



Come to the Forward in Mission Bazaar and do your Christmas shopping! Purchase thoughtful gifts – you can't go wrong with handmade jewelry, ornaments, and Fair Trade coffee and chocolate. Support First Pres mission teams by purchasing "shares" of projects or programs. Can't make the bazaar? Support First Pres' mission by purchasing from the online catalog at www.firstpresbyterian.org

Advent Art Installation

All are invited to take part in our Advent Art Installation as we Draw Near to hope and wonder, truth and faith, justice and joy, and one another. Each Sunday in Advent, small pieces of paper will be available in the Social Hall to respond to the themes and questions of Advent. Where do you find wonder? What does your faith tell you is true? What brings you joy? What draws you near to another? As we combine our answers, we will all work together to create a meaningful and interactive art piece that will grow as we travel together through Advent, drawing near to Christmas. Want to help with this project? Contact Rev. Blair Buckley (bbuckley@firstpresbyterian.org), Essie Koenig-Reinke (essie@firstpresbyterian.org), or Rev. Eric Koenig-Reinke (ekoenig-reinke@firstpresbyterian.org).

Sign Up Your Child for the Christmas Eve Pageant Parent's Meeting Sunday, December 2 at 11:00 a.m.

All children, ages 3 and up, are invited to participate in our Family Christmas Eve Pageant and Worship Service held at 3:00 p.m. on December 24. Simply sign up your child by Sunday, December 2 online at <https://firstpresbyterian.wufoo.com/forms/christmas-eve-pageant-registration/> or by filling out the form found in Sunday school classrooms. There will be a parents' meeting on Sunday, December 2, at 11:00 a.m. in the Lewis Room to inform parents of pageant details and the rehearsal schedule.



Age Guidelines - Three year-olds through Kindergarteners are starbearers; first and second graders are shepherds; first through fifth graders are angels; and third through fifth graders are magi. This can vary a little, but this seems to work the best. Middle School and High School age kids are all welcome to take leadership roles.

Pageant Rehearsals - On Saturday, December 15, children will rehearse their parts at the following times – magi at 9:00 a.m., shepherds at 9:30 a.m., starbearers at 10:15 a.m., and angels at 11:00 a.m. On Saturday, December 22 there will be a dress rehearsal in the Sanctuary from 10:00 a.m. - noon. All participants including the choirs will meet and rehearse together.

Questions? Contact Rebeca Torres-Davenport, Transitional Coordinator of Children's Education and Family Ministry at btorres-davenport@firstpresbyterian.org or 662-4466 ext. 342.

Crèches & Cake - PW Sponsors Coffee Hour

What would the holiday season be without beautiful creches? On Sunday, December 9, at the Coffee Hour sponsored by Presbyterian Women, enjoy a lovely display of crèches collected by Jane Warner and donated to PW in 2007 by Mark Warner. Additional crèches from PW women will also be on display. This Coffee Hour honors all the volunteers who have participated in hosting our church memorial service receptions. Interested in finding a new home for your crèche? Contact Virginia Bell, Moderator.



Honor or Remember Loved Ones with a Poinsettia

Submit Names by Monday, December 10 at Noon

Give a poinsettia to beautify worship on December 16 in honor or memory of a loved one. (Note - the poinsettia insert will only be published on December 16). Poinsettias are \$18 and can be ordered until noon on Monday, December 10 at <https://firstpresbyterian.wufoo.com/forms/poinsettias-2018/> or in the Church Office.



NEW! Story Slam & Strolling Soirée

Sunday, December 9, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

Listen to stories and songs of hope, wonder, truth, faith, justice, and joy at First Pres' first story slam, 4:00 - 5:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary followed by a strolling soirée, 5:00 - 6:00 p.m., including hot and cold refreshments, a crèche display, and music by the Chancel Choir and Sanctus Ringers.

Christmas Caroling on "Christmas Eve Eve"

Sunday, December 23 at 2:00 p.m.

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas as we're heading full force on a sleigh ride into a winter wonderland. Our youth think about more than sugar plum fairies — they want others to have a holly jolly Christmas, too! On December 23 in the afternoon, we'll be visiting the residents at Glacier Hills and caroling for them. While this is part of the Monthly Mission put on by the Youth Ministry, we don't want to be rockin' around the Christmas tree alone. Everyone at First Pres is invited for a merry little Christmas event! If you're interested, please contact Essie at essie@firstpresbyterian.org for more details.

Christmas Eve Children's Offerings

During the Christmas Pageant worship service at 3:00 p.m. on December 24, children bring as an offering the gift of new socks or underwear. The socks and underwear can be purchased in any size and should be simply wrapped in plain tissue paper. During the pageant, the children bring their humble gifts forward to the manger. After Christmas they are taken to the House by the Side of the Road and given to those in need.

Childcare on Christmas Eve

Need childcare? On Christmas Eve we provide childcare, by reservation, for children at the 5:00 and 7:00 p.m. services. If you would like childcare for a child in your family, make a reservation by contacting Rebeca Torres-Davenport, Transitional Coordinator of Children's Education and Family Ministry at btorres-davenport@firstpresbyterian.org or 662-4466 ext 342.

Can you help with childcare? Additional childcare providers are needed for these services. If you can offer this wonderful gift to the families of our church, please call Rebeca Torres-Davenport, Transitional Coordinator of Children's Education and Family Ministry at btorres-davenport@firstpresbyterian.org or 662-4466 ext 342.



PC(USA) Christmas Joy Offering

This special offering will be accepted on December 16. Donations will be used to support retired church professionals and other church workers in times of need and will also be used to support the development of future racial ethnic leaders of our church. Make checks out to First Presbyterian Church with "Joy Offering" on the memo line.

Christmas Eve Offering

In keeping with the long tradition of supporting Mission with the Christmas Eve Offering, the Mission Committee has chosen the following recipients:

- **Mar Elias Schools in Ibillin, Israel;** the schools consist of more than 3000 students and faculty of Christian, Muslim, Jewish and Druze heritage, who come together as one community. A part of the Christmas Eve Offering will go to support a recently established after-school learning center, that is open to students and members of the local community. The learning center provides enrichment classes in many subjects, including drama, robotics, and chess. First Pres has long supported this organization.
- **Hand in Hand Center for Jewish-Arab Education in Israel** is a network of six schools in Israel that promotes bilingual, multicultural education for Jewish and Arab children. This organization is a recent commitment of First Pres. A part of this offering will also go to support the newest school located in Haifa, which seeks to expand its bilingual integrated educational model from grade one to all elementary grades.



Business of the Church

Interim Pastor Search Committee Being Formed

As we move forward as a congregation, we will select an Interim Pastor to guide us through a period during which we maintain our excellence and energy in worship, education, congregational life and mission, attend to essential practices of healing and strategic planning and search for and select a new Pastor and Head of Staff for our church. We are seeking nominations for an Interim Pastor Search Committee to identify, recruit and call an Interim Pastor. If you are interested or if you wish to nominate another member of the church, please submit the name of your nominee to the Church Office or complete the online Interim Search Nomination form.

The Interim Pastor Search Committee will consist of five persons nominated by the Congregational Nominating Committee and approved by Session as well as two persons nominated and approved by Session. Please get your nominations in promptly as we hope to move forward to find an Interim Pastor in early in 2019. Thank you.

- *The Session of First Presbyterian Church*

Getting to Know the Administrative Committee

It's always nice to put a name to a face and the Administrative Committee wants you to do just that. The next few editions of First Press will contain short biographies of committee members along with their photos so you can get to know them.



Pam Meilands is a New Jersey native and a graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary. She currently serves as the Associate Pastor at First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak in Royal Oak, Michigan, where she has served with three heads of staff – two installed and one interim – and her primary focus is youth and young adult ministries. When she is not at church, Pam enjoys cooking, watching hockey, and spending time with her dachshund, Karl Barkh.



Rev. Dr. Paul Thwaite (aka Tall Paul) has served as pastor at Orchard Lake Community Church, Presbyterian since December 2009. Originally from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, Paul majored in history at Gordon College and earned theological degrees from Fuller and Pittsburgh Theological Seminaries. He is married to Jan and has two daughters, Katie and Rebecca, and a furry daughter, Anastasia.



Clint Cozier is the pastor at Southminster Presbyterian Church in Taylor. A native of Colorado, the Cozier family relocated to Michigan from Oklahoma in 2004. He married far above his status in life and has been blessed with two children, both of whom should graduate from college this coming May. His current hobbies include caring for the family dog (Alli) and repairing a house that far exceeds his skill set or budget.



Director of Music Ministries Search Update

Shortly after Tom Granum's departure, a committee was convened to search for his replacement. Co-chairs Anne Gere and Julia Pakela along with members Sean Hoskins, Henry Johnson, Eric Kaldjian, Mike Lisull, Marilyn Meeker, Luke Panning, and Tom Brandt, the Worship Committee/Session liaison, have been at work since September. They advertised the position both locally and nationally, and 49 applications were received by the November 1 deadline. By the first week

in December, the committee will conduct online interviews with ten promising candidates, and the plan is to schedule in-person interviews with about three of those candidates in December or early January. In the meantime, Rick Ingram, Paul Haebig, Kellie McInchak, and Simon Suboski are doing a fine job of sustaining the various music programs. The committee requests your prayers as it tries to discern the best possible person to lead the next chapter in the long and rich tradition of excellent and spiritually uplifting music at First Pres.

The Path Ahead: The Bridge Interim

A message from Revs. Melissa Anne Rogers & Jay Sanderford

As we prepare for First Pres to hire a skilled Interim Pastor, we will provide a "bridge" of leadership until God leads new leadership to our church. As requested by the Personnel Committee and endorsed by our Session, we will humbly and prayerfully serve as Session co-Moderators and co-Heads of Staff until those duties can be assumed by an Interim Pastor.

Our focus will be on all of you, and especially on our leaders and staff, to support our congregation's emotional, spiritual, and pastoral needs. We will be personally available to you, as well. With elders and deacons, we will encourage vision and leadership, guide planning, and model healthy communication. Drawing on the resources of the Committee on Ministry of the Presbytery of Detroit, we will assist the Session in the search process for an Interim Pastor and then a new Pastor and Head of Staff. Some roles and committee leadership we will share jointly. We will work together, in consultation with the Worship and Personnel Committees, to plan the preaching and worship schedule. Along with our own gifted preachers on staff, we will invite outside speakers to ensure that our worship is dynamic, inspiring, and challenging. Together we will support the work of the Mission and Vision Strategic Planning Team, Presbyterian Women, and the Personnel Committee.

Rev. Sanderford will continue as coordinator of the Resident Ministry program and will guide the Christian Education Committee with its faith formation programs for members of all ages, and the Mission Committee in international, local and campus outreach ministries. He will, along with Finance Manager Anna Miller, oversee day-to-day financial management and budgeting. With Facilities Manager Adrian Prundeanu, Rev. Sanderford will support the work of the Property Committee.

Rev. Rogers will continue in her primary role to provide leadership to our Pastoral Care program and all areas of Congregational Life, including welcoming new members and building small groups. Her additional responsibilities include providing for our important Worship and Music Ministries, and, alongside Anna Miller, supporting our efforts in Annual Giving, Endowments and Special Gifts. In a healthy interim period, the process of self-study, search, and calling a new pastor occurs in a culture of honesty, healing, dreaming, building, and celebrating as Christ's body here in Ann Arbor.

It is not a fallow time, it is a time when every member lends energy and support to rebuilding in service to discovering God's future for us in all of our ministries and missions. We cannot do this alone. Our staff needs you — members and friends — to do all that you can to move us forward. Help us creatively engage the key issues of our community in this interim period. In an interim, we do important work. We look to rediscover our vision and renew our goals and values. We draw from existing resources, and locate new ones. We look at ourselves honestly so that we can be confident in who we are and who God is preparing us to be. We can be confident as we look for a new pastor.



Children & Families

Celebrating Bible Sunday

Each year our church gives a Bible to all third graders. Bibles are given to our children in recognition of their growth in religious education and in hope that, with guidance of parents, our children will continue to read and study Scripture. A Common English translation of the Bible was presented to each child during the 9:30 a.m. service on Sunday, November 11. Children who received Bibles were Louisa Cowen, Callie Crawford, Finn Dubin, Drew Groves, Ian Hale, Vivian Licata, Oskar Salchow MacArthur, Nathalie Norman, Gwen Richert, Chloe Rink, Alexandra Strauss, Andrew Warner, and William Wood. Following the worship service, we celebrated with cake!





Financial Stewardship

Financial Update

The Session, First Pres' governing body, along with the Finance Committee are committed to providing regular financial updates to you, our members and friends. The following financial information is for the month of September and the 2018 fiscal year which ends December 31, 2018.

For the month of September :

Total income received:	\$139,467
Total expenses:	\$127,831
Surplus:	\$11,636

Year-to-Date through September:

Total income received:	\$1,329,493
(70.3% of our annual budget)	
Total expenses	\$1,317,575
(69.7% of our annual budget)	
Surplus:	\$11,918

Questions? Contact Bill Wood, Chair of the Finance Committee, at wwood594@comcast.net.

Finance Office Hours

The Finance Office holiday hours are as follows to assist you with any First Pres related financial inquiries or transactions:

Monday, December 24 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Tuesday, December 25 Closed

Wednesday, December 26 - Friday, December 28 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Monday, December 31 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Tuesday, January 1 Closed

Wednesday, January 2 Resume 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. office hours



Questions? Contact Anna Miller, Finance Manager, at 662- 4466, ext. 344 or amiller@firstpresbyterian.org.

2019 Offering Envelopes

2019 offering envelopes will be available for pick up outside the Finance Office beginning Thursday, December 20.

Legacy Partners - Betsy and Ben McCallister



“Give thanks to the God of heaven, for His steadfast love endures forever.” *Psalm 135:26*

We have been blessed by fellowship at First Presbyterian Church for 27 years so becoming a Legacy Partner felt like a natural step. Ben and I arrived in Ann Arbor in 1991 and we were quickly introduced to First Pres by my Uncle Dave and Aunt Martha Krehbiel. A family connection may have brought us here but it is this unique church family that has kept us here. Not only did this church provide great ministry for our growing family but it demonstrated Christ's love beyond its beautiful walls better than any church we had been a part of. First Pres's commitment to mission impressed me then and continues to today. Every single day, you can see lives improved by this congregation's many ministries. I wish this to continue forever. In addition, I love our commitment to the future of ministry through the Resident Ministry Program. What a blessing our residents have been to our community and how wonderful to know that it is only the beginning! I wish this to continue forever. On a personal note, First Pres has been a foundation. Over the years it has provided a place to learn as well as teach, serve as well as receive, lead as well as follow, laugh as well as mourn, love, praise and pray, but perhaps most importantly, it has provided a place to step out of a busy life and find a be-in-fellowship-in-Christ-belonging, forgiven and accepted. It has been a life affirming way to start and end a week. We wish this opportunity to be available for everyone in our community, always. We are grateful that the Legacy Program provides a way for us to give thanks and support a healthy future for our church and our many ministries.



Congregational Life

Take Time for Silence in Advent

Advent is a time of waiting, a time to listen for the voice of God. Take a break from the hustle and bustle of the season by attending Christian meditation — Saturdays, December 1 and 15 at 8:30 a.m. in Monteith Hall. Questions? Contact Jeanette Kibler at Jeanette.kibler@gmail.com.





PW Gathering on December 19

Join us from 9:30-10:30 a.m. for Bible study in the Lewis Room. Gayle Stevens leads us in Lesson 4, "God Is with Us When We Seek God" from the *Horizon Study, God's Promise: I Will Be with You Always*. Stay from 10:45-11:00 a.m. for the welcome and business meeting, in Monteith Hall. We will have a very special bagpipe holiday musical interlude

by our own Lynne Gulick plus our last PW(PCUSA) 30th Anniversary Activity. Be ready for some sweet treats. From 11:00 a.m. - Noon, we have a program in Monteith Hall. A representative from the Saline First Presbyterian Church will discuss the Presbyterian Women (USA) Birthday grant request for Care Village Orphanage in South Africa and their involvement in the orphanage. Finally, we have lunch at Noon in the Social Hall (\$7) Make a reservation in the Church Office (662-4466). You are welcome!



Notes from the Parish Nurse

- **CAREGIVERS SUPPORT GROUP** is now meeting the 1st Tuesday of each month from 7:00 - 8:00 p.m. There is one exception ... the group will meet January 8 rather than on January 1.
- **It's FLU SEASON once again.** Have you had your shot? If not, see your primary care provider or stop in at any pharmacy.
- **QUESTIONS?** Contact Parish Nurse and Wellness Coordinator, Sandy Talbott, stalbott@firstpresbyterian.org.

Mature Ministries "Lunch and Learn"

December 13 - A Discussion about Divestment

Sign up in the Church Office for lunch and discussion with Professor Ron Stockton, University of Michigan, on "Presbyterian Divestment." Ron Stockton is a Professor of Political Science at the University of Michigan Center for Middle East and North African Studies. In June 2014, the 221st Presbyterian General Assembly, meeting in Detroit, decided by a vote of 310 to 303 to sell their holdings in three corporations entangled with the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories. They had passed a similar resolution in 2004 but modified it the following year to permit corporate engagement. In 2012, a resolution to divest had failed by two votes. Now it passed by seven. Anyone thinking that this decision centered upon selling stocks is overlooking the broader issues at work. Nothing involving a challenge to Israel is easy, and it is almost never limited to the issues at hand. Dr. Ronald Stockton is a Presbyterian elder and expert who will update us. Where are we now? He will help us understand the history of the decision, the mechanism whereby it was made, the debate that surrounded it, and the peripheral but highly significant issues discussed.



SAVE THE DATE - First Pres Gathering at the Grand Hotel Friday, May 3 - Sunday, May 5, 2019

Watch for more information in January about the gathering of First Pres members and friends at the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island!



UKirk@UMich

Campus Ministry Update

UKirk@UMich continues to support college students through lunches on Sundays, coffee on Mondays and small group discussion on Wednesdays. You may have seen some of our students in the evening helping with the implementation of our new security system. Several of our seniors are busy with job interviews and visits to medical schools, with many already accepting offers. One student will even be joining AmeriCorps to work with at-risk students in Denver, Colorado next year! Please continue to pray for our students as they wrap up their Fall Semester with final projects and exams.





It's Time to Cook the Pancakes!

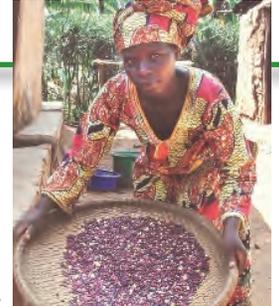
The Pancake Supper will be Tuesday, December 11, 10:00 p.m. - midnight, as UM students wrap up the semester. Students are working hard, and our hospitality goes a long way. We expect to serve over 300 hungry students from 10:00 p.m. to midnight. Volunteers are needed to help with outreach, setup, tear down, cooking, serving, and more. Sign up to help at <https://firstpresbyterian.wufoo.com/forms/pancake-supper/>, or contact Rev. Eric Koenig-Reinke at ekoenig-reinke@firstpresbyterian.org. Don't have time to help? Monetary donations are needed as well. To contribute, make your check out to First Presbyterian Church with Pancake Supper on the memo line.



Faith in Action

Presbyterian Giving Catalog – A Gift of Hope

Are Christmas gifts hard to choose because the people on your list have everything they need? Consider putting together a “basket” of alternative gifts by creating a gift bundle from the Presbyterian Giving Catalog. Help a farmer expand by purchasing a bag of seeds, some tools and beekeeping supplies or help girls better their lives by purchasing school uniforms, teacher training, and supporting women’s empowerment projects. Visit <https://presbyteriangifts.org/gifts/> and browse the catalog. Choose a gift that represents a cause that’s close to your heart or select a gift for someone in an area they would love. When you purchase the gift you unite with thousands of others giving to Presbyterian ministries and bringing hope and growth to communities all around the world. Remember the words of Lord Jesus, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”



Partner with Peace Neighborhood Center this Holiday Season & Beyond

Peace Neighborhood Center’s mission is to provide programs for people affected by social and economic problems by helping people discover options, enhance skills, and make choices that lead to self-sufficiency and positive community involvement. One client says: “I am so in awe of Peace’s ability to help people help themselves. They have helped develop my children into leaders while supporting me to become a better parent. They could not be more genuine or concerned for my well-being.”

Please help with our Holiday Toy & Food Drive, December 20 - 23. Volunteers are needed to sign up for two-hour blocks, four per session. Duties will include sorting toy donations, stocking and restocking the toy room, helping families shop, bagging items, and assisting office staff with paperwork. Sign up on the Peace Neighborhood Center page at www.firstpresbyterian.org or contact Martha Kershaw mdkershaw@sbcglobal.net or Rev. Eric Koenig-Reinke, ekoenig-reinke@firstpresbyterian.org

After School Meals: on the Third Thursday of each month, Kathy Sample coordinates a group of First Pres volunteers who prepare, serve and clean up the meal for the after-school program at PNC. As they work they interact with each child. “It is a joyous time for us, and they like having us there,” said one volunteer. Questions? Contact Kathy Sample at kesample@gmail.com



Rotating Shelter: Sharing Warmth with Our Neighbors

First Pres opens its doors again, January 7 - 21 to provide sleeping space for up to 25 men directed here by the Shelter Association. Last winter more than 100 First Pres volunteers offered friendship and wonderful hospitality. Our guests commented that



First Pres offers hospitality as much as it offers shelter. We are looking for evening (7:00 - 10:00 p.m.) and overnight hosts each night, and morning (around 7:00 a.m.) drivers on the weekends. There are at least three hosts each night, so you will get plenty of sleep. You can also help by donating hot food, snacks, gloves, hats, socks, hand warmers, and new long underwear. We also welcome First Pres groups whose members would like to serve together or host a specific night. Veteran volunteers will be present to help orient others. Watch for sign-up opportunities near the Welcome Center or sign up online at <https://firstpresbyterian.wufoo.com/forms/rotating-shelter-volunteers-2019/> Questions? Contact Jeannette Middleton, msjett@aol.com.



Youth Connection



Christmas Outing to Detroit Zoo Wild Lights!

On Sunday, December 2, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m., we will have a special youth group outing to the Detroit Zoo's Wild Lights! Bring your friends and join us as we wind our way through the zoo, drink hot cocoa and soak up all the Christmastime magic including a brief Polar Express in 4D Experience! Contact Essie Koenig-Reinke (essie@firstpresbyterian.org) to sign up or to arrange carpooling. The Detroit Zoo is located at 8450 W 10 Mile Rd, Royal Oak. **The cost is only \$5 per student!** Join us!

Buy Yummy Baked Goods and Support Youth Ministry

Buy baked goods at the mission bazaar on December 2 made by the youth. The proceeds will go towards things like making summer youth trips affordable to supporting our weekly youth dinners. At least, stop by and say Hi!



November Monthly Mission at St. Andrew's

Our youth woke up early for our mission project the first Sunday of November, serving breakfast at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church's Breakfast Program. What an amazing place! Since 1982, they have served breakfast every day there! We are so grateful for the opportunity to spend the morning with them and get to know our community. Our students spoke eloquently about this. Katie Maugh wrote, "It made me feel good that we were serving food to those who can't afford it. Also, I learned more about how our community gives to others in need, I saw God's grace through all the people." Shannon Hoy wrote, "I saw God through the people I met there. I saw the hope they had and it really kinda showed me that even when you're in the worst situation hope is still huge. It was really inspirational for me." Charlie Eidelman wrote, "It showed me how people of all walks of life can be down on their luck and are also amazing people. I learned compassion is precious, which I found when I talked to people. God's presence was there."



Adult Education – There will be no Adult Ed classes on December 30.

9:30 a.m. Offerings

The Bible at 9:30

December 2 - 23

French Room/Library

"The Bible Speaks: What Does the Bible Say About....?"

So, what do Christians believe? Join the discussion to explore the big ideas of the Christian faith. The group turns to the *Bible* as the source book of our Christian faith. Bring your questions!

First Friends

December 2 - 23

Monteith Hall

Spiritual growth, learning, fellowship, and support for individuals and couples seeking to connect faith and life.

December 2 - Orders to Kill: The Putin Regime and Political Murder

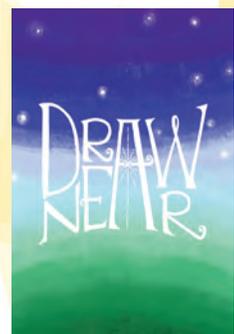
December 9, 16 & 23 - *The Life of Meaning*, Chapter 5 in three weeks: pages 24-40, pages 41-46, and pages 47-52

11:00 a.m. Offerings

Exploring the Faith

December 2 - 23

Monteith Hall



World Cultures "Draw Near" Series for Advent: Join us for this Advent exploration of spiritual, holiday practices from around the world. These practices that grow out of different cultures all, in their own way, help us to "Draw Near" to God and "Draw Near" to one another as we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

December 2 - Las Posadas (Latin America)

Rev. Annette Fraser will lead us on the journey of Las Posadas. Las Posadas is a Christian religious observance celebrated in Latin America. The practice simulates the experience of Joseph and pregnant Mary walking from house to house, and inn to inn and the feeling of being consistently turned away. Annette will teach on the powerful feeling and embodied practice of this celebration.

December 9 - A Lessons on Carols (Western Europe)

Rev. Eric Koenig-Reinke will lead a session where we explore together the power of singing, and the joy of caroling. As singing, and caroling draw us close to our neighbors, we will sing together, and explore the history of carols; giving some specific attention to Silent Night and the Christmas Truce of 1914.

December 16 - Iconography (Eastern Europe/Russia)

Rev. Blair Buckley will lead us as we examine and explore the practice of making icons. The making and drawing of icons has been a large part of the faith for many in Eastern and Orthodox Christianity. Join us as we learn, and experience the spiritual practice where we draw important religious figures.

January 6 - The New Year and Epiphany

In the new year we will be led by Rev. Annette Fraser as we explore traditions surrounding Epiphany, the celebration of the coming of the Magi (or wise men) to visit the newborn baby Jesus.

In January, watch for information on the Adult Ed series “Well Being,” a seven- week series looking at different facets of health: personal, mental, relational, organizational and faith.



Resident Minister Corner

As a teaching and learning congregation we know how blessed we are to have our (almost completely endowed) Residency Program, which brings three recent seminary graduates to First Pres. These newly-minted Pastors who sojourn with us for two years bring their experience and fresh approaches here, deepening their preparedness for their next calls. First Pres sees them develop their pastoral skills and grow in confidence and commitment. Respected pastors in their own right, they also teach and support our whole staff team.

This fall it has been our great joy to welcome back two of our former Resident Ministers to our pulpit. Each one brought words of gratitude for their experience at First Pres and words of confidence and assurance as we enter this bridge period in our congregational life.

The Rev. Mark Brainerd, Associate Pastor of Congregational Care, Preston Hollow Presbyterian Church, Dallas, Texas, said that his time here as a Resident was transformative and he has been privileged to come back here more than once to say “thank you.” “This church set me on a trajectory of meaningful ministry with a strong foundation to know how to care for, to serve and to lead others. I will always be grateful for that first Call.”

The Rev. Jenny McDevitt, Senior Pastor of the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York City, also brought us a message of gratitude and hope, saying “I came here not at all certain I was supposed to be a pastor. There is little doubt in my mind that had I not been here with you during those early years, I would not be a pastor today.” What a privilege it is for First Pres to participate in the formation of these amazing ministers and to feel their support as we make our way forward.

We recently celebrated the Installation of another former Resident Minister. The Rev. Angela Ryo, was installed as Associate Pastor at Kirk in the Hills Presbyterian Church on October 21. Rev. Rogers preached and Rev. Sanderford’s Charge to the Newly Installed included a strong sense of Angela’s personality and gifts for ministry. Many members of our congregation were there to support Angela on this joyful day.

This program which nourishes new pastors serves to build up the body of Christ in many churches in our denomination and we reap the harvest of hope and support from those who have dwelt among us.

Our blessings abound!

A Prayer for Advent: God’s Timing

O God of all seasons and senses,
grant us the sense of your timing
to submit gracefully
and rejoice quietly in the turn of the seasons.

In this season of short days and long nights,
of grey and white and cold,
teach us the lessons of endings;
children growing, friends leaving, loved ones dying,
grieving over,
grudges over,
blaming over,
excuses over.

O God, grant us a sense of your timing.
In this season of short days and long nights,
of grey and white and cold,
teach us the lessons of beginnings;
that such waitings and endings
may be the starting place,
a planting of seeds which bring to birth
what is ready to be born—
something right and just and different,
a new song, a deeper relationship, a fuller love—
in the fullness of your time.

O God, grant us the sense of your timing.

- Ted Loder, *Guerrillas of Grace*