



The Servants' Light

November 30, 2016

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*“Servants of
Jesus Christ—
Ministering
To One Another,
To Our Community,
And To Our World.”*

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Sunday Morning

Schedule

Worship—

9:00 & 10:30 a.m.

Children's Worship—

9:00 & 10:30 a.m.

Coffee Fellowship—

10:00 to 10:30 a.m.

Nursery/Preschool Care—

8:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Two Sundays of Special Christmas Music in our Worship Services

December 11, 9 & 10:30 a.m.

“Sing a Song of Christmas”

Children's Choir

“Sing a Song of Christmas” is a simple musical for children that celebrates the birth of Christ using familiar carols, sights, and sounds of the season to share the message of Jesus' birth.

Join the children of our church in spreading the word,
come see and hear the Good News!

December 18, 9 a.m.

“Advent For All”

Chancel Choir, Glory Ringers & Strings

This original Christmas cantata, composed by our own Jacob Darley, is a full-scale orchestral score for choir, handbells, string quartet, organ and piano. It explores the Advent Season from multiple views with narration and jazz-influenced music.

It is a privilege to debut this original piece.

December 18, 10:30 a.m.

“Our God Is Born”

Worship Band, Glory Ringers

Blending favorite Christmas hymns, new music and scripture, “Our God Is Born” Christmas worship service invites us to recall the journey to Bethlehem and the miracle of Jesus' Birth. The service will include the Worship Band along with additional instrumentalists, and the Glory Ringers Handbells will be joined by piano, keyboard, and percussion.



Sunday, December 4. Advent is a season of preparation for the birth of Christ Jesus. How are you doing so far? Are you preparing your spirit, mind, heart, and will to receive the Christ and follow the Savior? I know we are all preparing for the shopping, cooking, card sending, and Facebook areas of life. I know that, as Black Friday has already passed, but there's Monday, Tuesday, etc. Come and worship with us this Sunday as we seek to live in the presence of the Savior, our Redeemer and Lord. We will celebrate Advent Communion at both the 9:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. worship services.

The Chancel Choir is singing at the 9:00 a.m. worship service. The Worship Band is singing and playing at the 10:30 a.m. worship service.

Sermon. This Sunday I am preaching on "Anticipate The Light and Rejoice," which is the second week of THE LIGHT WILL SHINE: LIVE IN HOPE Series. The sermon scripture passages are Revelation 5:8-14 and Isaiah 2:1-5.

"Invite Your One" Sunday is on Sunday, December 11th! Invite someone to worship with us as we make our preparations for Christmas. People will come if they are invited. Pray about who you wish to invite and then ask in faith.

Sunday, December 18th. This is going to be a wonderful and inspiring Sunday for Worship, Fellowship, and inviting family, friends, neighbors, colleagues, etc. to come and worship with us. Take a look at the first page of the newsletter: at the 9:00 a.m. service there will be the "Advent For All" cantata and at the 10:30 a.m. service there will be the "Our God Is Born" series

November 27, 2016
Worship Attendance — 223

Stewardship Report
2016-2017 Budget: \$ 792,916

Year to Date Receipts \$472,045
Year to Date Expenses \$451,517

2016-2017 Bequest/Gift Income Received — \$38,911

of Christmas hymns, music, and scripture.

Carol Sing With Churches United For Christ. We will meet in the Walmart Parking Lot on Jefferson Street on Saturday, December 10, from 6:00-7:00 p.m. to sing carols, give out hot chocolate and have a joyous presence in Christ. There are practices right here at our church in Hoffman Hall from 6:30-7:30 on Thursdays, December 1 and 8. Come and sing with a great group of people from area churches.

Midweek Study, Worship & Family Night. Zoom meets at the Church on Wednesday Evenings. We are going to finish each night with Worship, from 6:45-7:15 p.m. in the Sanctuary/Worship Center. There is an adult study, The Gospel of Mark, before dinner at 5:10 with Craig Herr leading. There's dinner for everyone at 6:00 p.m. It's a great night for all of our church family. Come join us.

We Are Looking For Volunteers In Our Sound Room Ministry. If you would like to volunteer once a month in the Sound Room for Sunday services, just give me a call or e-mail (craig.herr@firstpresjoiet.org). It's a wonderful way to serve and we have excellent volunteers who could easily provide the training. You could also talk to Cliff Stepina when you see him.

In Christ,

Craig



Known to be in the Hospital: Harry Cobourn at Presence St. Joseph Medical Center

Just Born:

Jack Gregory Kessling (Sept. 10)
First child, Son of Luke and Lindsey Kessling
Grandparents are Gregg and Mary Kessling

Marek Alexander Johnson (Oct. 29)
First child, Son of Tony and Shelley Johnson
Grandparents are Joe and Diane Milosevich

Passing to Life Eternal:

Dolores Spencer (Oct. 26)
Raymond Kolmodin (Nov. 13)



In every time and place, and particularly in this time, we need the Light of the Christ Child to shine into our lives, our communities, and our world. The light of the Savior is His presence, peace, joy and much more. During this Advent season we will explore what it means to live in the Light of Christ Jesus. His light can lift the heaviest sorrows and bring us new and fresh hope. Come worship with us as we seek the Light and Hope that only Jesus can bring.

Help, Hope, Healing! Stephen Ministry

We have trained Stephen Ministers who are eager to walk alongside anyone who needs someone to provide caring listening and supportive conversation. Perhaps you need someone to talk to during a difficult time or a time of change or a time when you are recovering from one of life's challenges. Just give one of our leaders a call: Cyndi Schwartz @ 815-325-9711 or Kris Hayden @ 815-725-3696.



Our on-line devotional blog will be following the Christmas Story as we prepare our hearts for the Christ Child's coming. The on-line devotional blog can be accessed through our website, www.firstpresjoliet.org, or at firstpresjoliet.wordpress.com.

Adult Education Opportunities

"The Light Will Shine" Adult Discussion Group

Our Tuesday Lunch-Time Discussion Group is looking at Advent in a new light... "The Light Will Shine." See beyond the hustle and glitter of commercial Christmas to discover new light in traditional Scripture texts as we journey through Advent to Christmas. So, bring your lunch and join us every Tuesday at 12 noon through December 20 as we dig into the meaning of Advent.

— Dale Ambler

"The Gospel of Mark: Exploring The Life of Jesus Study"

Come on Wednesday evenings from 5:15 to 6:00 p.m. and study the Gospel of Mark with Pastor Craig leading. We are meeting in the Fireside Room. Mark is the shortest Gospel and yet Mark reveals insights and details on Jesus and his ministry that we do not find in the other three Gospels. This is a great way to get ready for Christmas by studying the Life and Ministry of Jesus.

"Bible Perspectives" Sundays, 10:15 to 11:15 a.m. Room 201 with Jim Mullins

We use the Common Lectionary Bible passages each week. The format basically follows a three question format: What do these words mean? What did these words mean to the original hearers? What do these words mean to us today?

Small Groups & Special Events



- *5:30 p.m. Contemporary Candlelight Service
- *7:30 p.m. Family Candlelight Service
- 10:30 p.m. Musicale
- 11:00 p.m. Traditional Candlelight Service
- *Childcare available

SUNDAY, CHRISTMAS DAY
One Worship Service at 10:30 a.m.

The Session met on Thursday, November 10. Information was shared and minutes were reviewed. However, since there wasn't a quorum present no motions were made or approved. No business could be conducted without a quorum. The next Session meeting is on Thursday, December 8, 2016.



December 11 is another "Invite Your One" Sunday. Invite a friend or even a church member you have not seen recently to join us for this special Sunday in Advent when our Children's

Choir presents "Sing a Song of Christmas" at both the 9 and 10:30 a.m. worship services. We all know that personal invitations work best. Invite someone or a whole family, pray for your guest/s, encourage your guest/s and come worship with your church family. Just imagine, if everyone invited just one person to join them.....

PW Circles

Thurs. AM Circle
 2nd Thursday
 (Dec. 8, 9:15 a.m.)
 in the
 Fireside Room

Mary Circle
 2nd Thursday (Dec. 8)
 in the Fireside Room
 Bring a sack lunch at
 12 noon; dessert &
 meeting at
 12:30 p.m.

Meal Fellowship

Men's Breakfast—December 2, 7:30 a.m. at the Old Fashioned Pancake House on Jefferson St., Joliet.

Dinner Out Group—December 20, 6 p.m. at Syl's Restaurant, 829 Moen Ave., Rockdale. Please call Sis Schmidt at 815-725-0544 or Mary Haas at 815-524-4624 by December 19 if you are planning to join us, so a reservation can be made.

Men's Dinner Group—December 16, 6 p.m., at Larry's Diner, 24522 W. Lockport Rd., Plainfield. Please RSVP to Bob Smietanski at 815-838-7616.

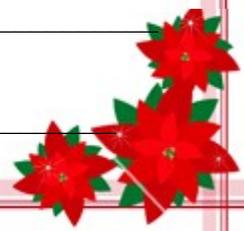
Poinsettia Order Form



Help decorate our sanctuary this Christmas with beautiful poinsettia plants. Fill out this form and place it in the offering plate or mail it to the church office by December 11th. The poinsettias cost \$12 each. Make your check payable to First Presbyterian Church-Poinsettias.

My/Our poinsettias are given: (indicate one)
 To the Glory of God
 To the Glory of God and in memory of loved ones
 To the Glory of God and in loving memory of _____

Your Name _____



Ministering to One Another, to Our Community, and to Our World

Christmas Joy Offering

The Christmas Joy Offering is taken on Christmas Eve. It is distributed as follows: seventy percent of the offering goes to support the Night Deacons' Food Ministries, and 30% goes to support assistance programs of the Board of Pensions and the racially ethnic schools and colleges affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). This special offering is a tradition of over seventy years, supporting the servants of the church, many of whom work at below sustenance wages, and students at our Presbyterian racial ethnic schools. Please prayerfully consider your donation to this special offering.

Night Deacons Free Pancake Breakfast

The Night Deacons are serving breakfast on Saturday, December 3, 8 to 10 a.m. to those in our community who are spiritually or physically hungry. Come on out and help us serve and welcome our guests.



Please return your wrapped Stars of Hope gifts by November 30th. They can be

brought to the church office during office hours, or tonight during Zoom. MorningStar Mission will be picking up the gifts in a day or two. Thank you for your love and kindness to help bring the Spirit of Christmas to MorningStar Mission families this year.

PW Mitten Tree



The Mitten Tree is up and ready for your donations of mittens, hats, and scarves for less fortunate children in our community this winter. This year the PW Mitten Tree will be dedicated to Farragut School needs. Gently used or new gloves and mittens, as well as boots, hats, and scarves would be welcome. Look for the Mitten Tree in the north hallway,

between Hoffman Hall and the Narthex, and fill it up with your donations to help keep children warm this winter. Thank you!

Sounds of Christmas Community Sing



Churches United for Christ is sponsoring a Community Sing. Come on out to the Walmart parking lot (2424 W. Jefferson St., Joliet) on December 10,

6 to 7 p.m. for a huge Christmas

Singalong. The choir rehearsals are December 1 and 8, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. here at First Pres. What a great way to share the joy of the season! There also will be gift drawings, along with pastries and hot beverages.



E-Mail Christmas Greetings to Lucia, Bhoke & Rhobi

If you would like to send Christmas Greetings to our girls at Angel House Orphanage in Tanzania, you may do so through the sponsorship email address, angelhousesponsors@gmail.com. Emails (and pictures) will be printed out for each girl's personal file folder. The girls we sponsor at Angel House are Lucia (Lucy) Joshua, Bhoke Mnanka and Rhobi Mnanka.

Teaching the meaning of Christmas to children—

Children's Ministry Update



1. Tell the Story

Christmas is about Jesus, and while the Elf on the Shelf might be watching, and while you might write letters to Santa, talk about Jesus.

2. Be intentional

There is a day that will come when the magic of Santa will be replaced by the reality of Santa. So take time now to talk to your kids about some of our traditions and their meaning.

3. Get the kids involved

From making cookies, to shopping for a gift, to making cards for family and friends, and so on. The memories we build will last far longer than the best gift under the tree.

What is Christmas all about? This might be a question that you might hear in the coming weeks. And why not? This is the season for it! We decorate our houses, we buy the gifts, we run around taking care of all those Christmas chores, and sometimes, we let people know how much we “LOVE” Christmas (not really). And the message that we send becomes that Christmas is about stuff, about running around and missing the “Oh Silent Night” event.

This year I would like to challenge each parent, grandparent, each family to do Christmas a little differently. It might look like reading the Christmas story before the kids go to bed; it might be something like buying a special gift as a family for someone in need; it could even be spending time with a hot cup of cocoa in your PJ's in front of the fireplace. There are so many things that we can do just a little differently.

And why you might ask? Because it is Christmas! It is about the birth of a Savior! It is about the promise of God that we receive in faith each and every year. Because it is about faith that we share with our families and those around us. It is about that glimpse of hope that seems to spark anew this season.

*“For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given;
And the government will be upon His shoulder.
And His name will be called
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”* Isaiah 9:6

May God's peace and good tidings be yours this season.
Bo M.



Sunday, December 4th—Join us at the church for Youth Group.

We are meeting from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Hamburgers for Dinner; please bring money for the meal.

We meet on Sunday, December 11 and we also meet on Sunday, December 18;
both Sunday evenings from 6-8:00 p.m.

The Youth Bible Study and Learning Times are based upon Mark Hall's
(Lead Singer and Pastor Casting Crowns) Youth Study Book

“Thrive: Digging Deep, Reaching Out.”

Hall writes, “You were meant to do more than just survive.

You were meant to thrive... You were meant to have life
and have it more abundantly.

That's the promise of the eternal God.”

Bible passages and insights from Mark Hall are at the center of the study time
as we finish 2016 with our youth.

WHAT'S COMING UP?

We are going to “Feed My Starving Children” on Saturday,
December 31. Meet at the church at 8:00 a.m. and we
will travel to Feed My Starving Children for the
9-11 a.m. meal packing session. We will eat lunch
together after we pack hundreds of meals for children
and families in need. Transportation will be provided
from the church.

PACK FOOD
FEED KIDS
GIVE HOPE
1.5 MILLION

Join us each week for Youth Group at the Church from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. It's a great time
with your friends.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Craig M. Herr—Senior Pastor

Dale Ambler—Associate Pastor

Bo Mircea—Associate Pastor of Children's Ministry
and Family Ministry

Diane Uden—Administrative Ministry Assistant

Sherry Buffington—Outreach Ministry Assistant &
Newsletter Editor

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Newsletter Deadline—The deadline for reserving space in the December 28 *Servants' Light* is **December 10**. Please e-mail to sherry.buffington@firstpresjoliet.org.

TO:



"Advent for All"
CANTATA

We are excited to premiere an original Christmas cantata, "Advent for All" on December 18 at our 9 a.m. worship service. "Advent For All" is a full-scale orchestral score composed by our own Jacob Darley for choir, handbells, string quartet, organ and piano, featuring our Chancel Choir and Glory Ringers Handbell Choir.

"Advent for All" features a traditional choral and orchestral setting infused with jazz elements. It is a Christmas cantata exploring the Advent Season from multiple views. It is Jacob Darley's first large-scale work and was composed in a home studio over a 3-year period. Influenced by a range of complex musical styles, Darley cites the Baroque era, traditional church hymns, 1950-60's jazz, 1970's progressive rock, and polyrhythmic heavy metal as major sources of inspiration.

Darley seeks to revive traditional forms of worship in a modern church setting, always wanting to keep the listener on their toes...the works listenable, yet unpredictable. "The audience should be occasionally surprised as they experience a song's journey," says Darley, adding, "I hope it moves people at a spiritual level."

Choirmaster Ken Myers says, "This is wonderful jazz-influenced music that should be experienced firsthand in our beautiful sanctuary. It continues the rich musical tradition that we all enjoy here at First Presbyterian Church and it is a privilege to debut this piece."

Invite your friends and relatives and join us for worship on Sunday, December 18, to anticipate the birth of our Lord and Savior through message, Scripture, and music.