



# The Servants' Light

December 27, 2017

*The Servants' Light* (USPS 560-720) is published monthly by  
First Presbyterian Church, Joliet, IL. Periodicals Postage paid at Joliet, IL  
Postmaster: Send address changes to *The Servants' Light*,  
805 Western Ave., Joliet, IL 60435-6998.

*"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.



**Saturday, January 27**  
**4:30 p.m. – Chili Set Up**  
**5:00 p.m. – Chili Tasting Begins**  
**6:00 p.m. – Movies Begin**

Bring a crock pot of your favorite  
chili, or just come for the tasting;  
then stay for the movies...  
new ones or old favorites—  
come and find a surprise!!

**Sunday, December 31st — One Worship Service at 10:30 a.m.**



**Sunday, December 31, 10:30 a.m.**  
**WORSHIP ONLY.** Worship with us on this Sunday after Christmas. We continue to celebrate the Light, Hope, Love, and Peace of the Savior born to give us the life that is truly life. We will have one worship service at 10:30 a.m., sing Christmas Carols, and Ken

Myers will be singing. Come join us to rejoice in the saving presence and love of God and to be together as the family of God.

**Sermon This Sunday:** This Sunday Bo is preaching on “Finding The Light.” Bo writes, John 8:12—“Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.’” What does it look to walk in darkness? What does it mean to find the light? What does it mean to be the light? These are a few of the questions I am asking as I am preparing for Sunday's sermon. I would invite you to answer those questions yourself, spend some time in prayer about what will it take to “Find the Light.” See you on Sunday morning at 10:30 a.m. Blessings, Bo M.

**Volunteers Needed To Take Off Wallpaper.** On Monday, January 15, the Youth and leaders from The Center are going to help us take off all of the wallpaper in Hoffman Hall. The Center's Leaders and Youth wanted to do a project in the church to help us. We (session and staff) decided to go with taking off the wallpaper in Hoffman Hall so we can redecorate the

Hall. We could use your help. We need 50-60 people so we can all take a small section and strip the wallpaper off and have some great fun together on this project. Then we can fill in any gauges and cracks and prime paint Hoffman Hall to get ready for the new look. Once we finish the new look, we will order new chairs. But, first we need to strip the wallpaper in one day. It's a great way to start the new year together.

**When We Struggle.** We all struggle at times with what God wants or understanding our calling, and with the difficulties and the troubles that life brings our way. Starting January 21, we will think about our struggles and how we can find strength in Christ. See the “Growing In Christ” page for this Sermon Series description.

**Putting Away Christmas Decorations.** The decorations at church are beautiful to see and experience in the Advent-Christmas Season. We are still enjoying them and thanks to all who helped set up. The date we have chosen to take them down and put them away is Saturday, January 13. We will meet at 9:00 a.m. and put them all back in their special places. Please come out for a couple of hours to put the decorations away. We'll have a fun time of conversation and catching up with each other.

In Christ,



**December 24, 2017**

Worship Attendance — 366

**Stewardship Report**

2017-2018 Budget: \$ 792,000

<b>Year to Date Receipts</b>	<b>\$553,593</b>
<b>Year to Date Expenses</b>	<b>\$530,422</b>

150th Anniversary Offering — \$21,779  
50% to Hurricane Relief  
50% to Hoffman Hall Redecorating

2017-2018 Bequest/Gift Income Received — \$163,592

Call Tracy Norris if you wish to use electronic giving through your bank. We also have online giving in which you can use your credit card. Just go to our Website [www.firstpresjoliet.org](http://www.firstpresjoliet.org) and click on “Giving.”



**Known to be in the Hospital:** no one

**Just Born:**

Rylie Patrick Blaser (Nov. 29)  
Son of Matt & Bernie Blaser

Charlotte Olivia Jaworski (Dec. 11)  
Daughter of Nick & Anna (Bornhofen) Jaworski

Joyce Miner was inadvertently omitted from the Birthday Calendar. Her Birthday is Dec. 30, so be sure to wish her a Happy Birthday!

# Growing in Christ—

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## New Year Sermon Series!

### "The Struggle is Real – A journey with Jonah"

Jonah is not some distant man who ran from God—he is US. Nineveh is not just a wicked place; it is our most hated enemy, family member, boss, coworker, divorced spouse, abuser, bully, political opponent, etc. Nineveh is the place we want to see our revenge happen in a human idea of justice.

Jan 21 – "What's your Nineveh?"

Theme: Jonah 1: 2; God has a call and desire for his people, and we often run away from it.

Jan 28 – "No?"

Theme: Jonah 1: 3; It's easy to say No to something we do not like.

Feb 4 – "The Struggle is Real"

Theme: Jonah 2:1-2; Struggles That Stress and Stretch Us

Feb 11 – "Go to Nineveh!"

Theme: Jonah 3:1-3a; 4:10-11; Jonah's acceptance and our acceptance

## Daily Devotional Blog

We have a number of blog writers who follow a variety of themes with fresh insights. As we venture forward in this sharing of devotional thoughts and sources of inspiration, you are asked to comment on the blog, pray for those writing, and send in your questions or suggestions for things we can talk about. You can find us at: [firstpresjoliet.wordpress.com](http://firstpresjoliet.wordpress.com)

If you desire a printed devotional, Upper Room Devotionals are available in the Narthex and in the office.

## Adult Education Opportunities

### Adult Discussion Groups

#### Tuesday "Lunch Bunch" Discussion Group

We start the new year looking at The Good News, The Savior, The Ministry and The Teachings. All are welcome to participate, so bring your lunch, your Bible and join us for a Spirit-ed discussion as we grow together in faith and fellowship! As a reminder, we will NOT meet on January 2.

#### First Pres. Men

With the start of the new year, we are going to shift gears a little. We will look at several of the signs of Jesus as told in the Gospel of John. Join us in Room 210 beginning on January 10th at 6:30 p.m. Any man is welcome to attend, so invite a guest and we will look at the miracles of Jesus as we ask ourselves a thought provoking question, "Does God still perform miracles today?"

#### Best Willow Creek Leadership Summit Speakers And Bible Study

Each Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. we are sampling some sections or clips of the best speakers from the Global Leadership Summit at Willow Creek and studying selected passages of scripture which match up with the teaching. We meet in the Fireside Room at 6:30 p.m. We are taking a 2-week break, resuming January 10th.

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

This class follows the Common Lectionary of Scripture passages. The Bible itself, along with history, psychology, and spirituality are woven together to allow participants to gain personal realizations of God's working today. Join Jim Mullins on Sundays 10:15 a.m. in Room 201.

### Celebrating Joys

We have had a very busy December and have much to celebrate and be grateful for.

We celebrated our 150th Anniversary on December 3rd with a special worship service and a delicious dinner at the Victorian Ballroom. It was wonderful to see so many former members and former pastors Dave Fillpot and Kenn Shedenhelm.

The Christmas Concert on December 17th was well attended and was a beautiful concert with Glory Ringers, Chancel Choir and instrumentals. This “Gift to the Community” touched many hearts with the story of the Christ Child’s birth.

Our year of 150 loving acts of service outside the walls of the church has become a wall of over 200 blocks, each one representing a specific loving act! And in December we added 3 more blocks—Stars of Hope gifts for MorningStar Mission families, the PW Mitten Tree with warm clothes for the children at Farragut School, and our new and ongoing Mission to the Homeless.

### Congregational Meeting

There will be a Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 21, to vote to elect new officers for the Class of 2020 and to fill vacancies, and to vote to change the church bylaws to allow Elders to serve consecutive three-year terms. Both of the Deacon Boards are allowed to serve consecutive three-year terms.



### Help with Christmas Decorations

Plan to come on Saturday, January 13, 9 to 11 a.m. to help take down and store the church Christmas decorations. Many hands will “make the job light.”

### Small Groups & Special Events



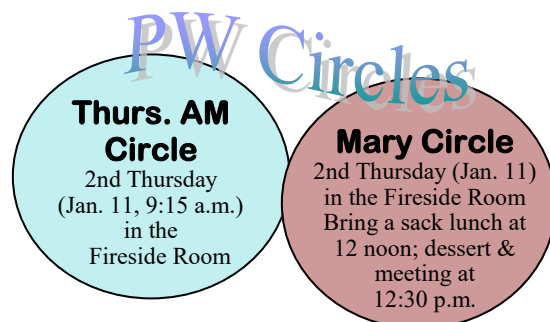
At its regularly scheduled meeting of December 14, 2017, the Session of First Presbyterian Church, Joliet, voted:  
—to hold the Congregational Meeting on January 21, 2018;  
—to work with The Center to strip the wallpaper from the walls in Hoffman Hall on January 15, 2018;  
—to hold another Feed My Starving Children MobilePack Event in the fall of 2018.



**Men’s Breakfast**—January 5, 7:30 a.m. at the Old Fashioned Pancake House on Jefferson St., Joliet.

**Dinner Out Group**—January 16, 6 p.m. at Al’s Steak House, 1990 W. Jefferson, Joliet. Call Jean or Bob Smietanski at 815-838-7616 to make a reservation.

**Men’s Dinner Group**—January 26, 6 p.m. at Larry’s Diner, 24522 W. Lockport Rd., Plainfield. RSVP to Bob Smietanski at 815-838-7616.



# Servants of Jesus Christ —

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

### Mission to the Homeless

God calls us to serve in many ways and the call to care for the least of the kingdom is at the heart of God's desires. Last month we began a new mission opportunity to provide needed items for the homeless in our community. Helping is easy—the first is to simply bring pop-top canned goods such as soups and stews, fruit with peel off lids, warm socks, hats, gloves, scarves, mittens and toiletries to the bins in the Narthex. We will have a bag-packing day on a designated Sunday as the bins fill up and then they will be delivered to distribution points in the area. The second way to help is to offer to drive the bagged items to these distribution points. Please contact Linda Zoellick at 520-400-8396 with questions.

### Night Deacons Food Ministry

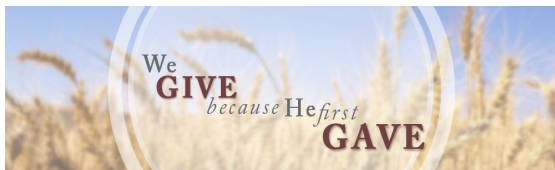
On the first Sunday of each month, the Night Deacons collect monetary donations to fund our various ministries.

Please use the special envelopes marked "Night Deacon Ministries" in the pew racks for your donation. Thank you for your on-going support!

Our next Night Deacons' Free Pancake Breakfast is Saturday, January 6, 8 to 10 a.m. Come on out and help us serve and welcome those in our community who are hungry.

### From the Treasurer's Office:

Annual Statements of your 2017 contributions to First Presbyterian Church will be mailed within the first few weeks of January. To ensure the deductibility of your church contributions, please do not file your 2017 income tax return until you have received this written acknowledgment of your contributions.



It's easy to support the life, mission and ministry of First Presbyterian Church. Here are the guidelines for On-Line Giving and Text Giving. Donations to special offerings such as mission projects and the Christmas Joy Offering (which helps our Night Deacons feed the hungry in our community) can also be made on-line and by text giving.

**On-Line Giving:** Go to our website—[firstpresjoliet.org](http://firstpresjoliet.org)— and click on the "Give" box at the top of the home page. You can plug in your user e-mail address and set up a password. On-Line Giving can be used for an occasional payment when you are out of town or for automatic recurring giving or for special offerings.

**Text Giving:** Text an amount to 815-205-3044. The first time you text a donation, you will be prompted with a one-time registration screen. This will assign your mobile number to First Pres., and allow you to select what account your text donation is withdrawn from. All subsequent donations will simply be texting the amount to First Pres. (which can be saved for easy access in your phone's contact list). You will get a text confirmation that your donation was successful.



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# Children's Ministry News

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## A Happy New Year

Every year I hear people greeting each other with “Happy New Year” and sometimes I wonder what does it mean? I understand it is as much a wish as it is a custom, but what will it take to make it a reality?



I grew up with my mom worrying about everything and anything. I think it was because that's what Romanians do, they worry. Every new year started the same: with a wish and a hope that the best is yet to come, a wish that soon will be squashed by the old ways. So I had to ask myself is this what life is all about? A constant cycle of ups and downs? Or is there more to it?

Matthew 6:34—“Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don't get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes.”

I really like that verse as a life verse for the year, at least for me. There is a part of it that says, when we put our faith in God our life will change. Maybe as adults we have grown a little too cynical along the way, maybe we have lost that child-like faith, or even the ability to see what God is doing. And you know what? At some point that is starting to show in the way we are, the way we see things and respond to life. I have to say that the way we live as adults can and will affect the little ones who are watching us and trying to follow their role models.

My prayer for all of us this is year is simple: Let us be true models to those around us. Let us be people who recognize God in what is going on around us. Let us be Happy because we have a God that cares to walk alongside each and every one of us. And let people see in us that happiness, that peace and joy that we wish for each other each year. Let our good wishes come true and let us live out the greetings and feelings of Christmas and New Year every day of the year.

Be blessed,  
Bo M.

**Things for your calendar:**  
**Midweek Family Night resumes on January 10th.**  
**Vacation Bible School 2018: June 18th -22nd**



What a beautiful semester I've had at First Presbyterian! We are excited to be Wildfire Youth Group! We truly hope to be the hands and feet of Jesus, spreading Truth and the Good News like wildfire. This past year, since I have come to call First Pres. home, we have grown together as a family through weekly meetings, Bible study, Trunk 'n' Treat, Friendsgiving, and our Christmas party. My favorite activity of the year, however, was when we came together as a Youth Group and made packages for those who lost a spouse this year. We know the pain of loss is too deep to be healed by a gift, but we wanted to extend to those who are mourning the truth that they are known, seen, and loved.

In keeping with the attitude of service and being a light to the world, I am excited to announce the plans we have for the Spring Semester! We will be going through a study written by A.W. Tozer called "The Attributes of God." We will be discussing how God is: infinite, immense, good, just, merciful, gracious, omnipresent, immanent, holy, and perfect. I have a strong hope and expectation that we will walk away with a better understanding of who the Great I Am is. I am also excited to tell you that each month will consist of a service project and a live testimony (someone's life story and how Jesus has helped them). 2018 is going to be a year of growth, promise, hope, and love.

I look forward to serving alongside you all!

Many Blessings,  
 Karissa Fleming  
[karissa.fleming@firstpresjoliet.org](mailto:karissa.fleming@firstpresjoliet.org)  
 (815) 727-9259 x207

**WILDFIRE YOUTH GROUP**  
**NEW LIFE FOR OLD BAGS**  
 January 14, 2018; 6:00pm-7:30pm



## UPCOMING EVENTS

Dec 31  
 New Year's Eve  
 No Youth Group

Jan. 7  
 Youth Group, 6-7:30 pm

Jan. 14  
 Service Project  
 New Life for Old Bags

Jan. 15  
 Service Project  
 Remove Hoffman Hall  
 wallpaper,  
 starting at 9 a.m.

Jan. 28  
 Live Testimony

*Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.*  
 Joshua 1:9

## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Craig M. Herr—Senior Pastor  
Dale Ambler—Associate Pastor  
Bo Mircea—Associate Pastor of Children's Ministry  
and Family Ministry  
Karissa Fleming, Dir. of Youth Ministry  
Diane Uden—Administrative Ministry Assistant  
Sherry Buffington—Outreach Ministry Assistant &  
Newsletter Editor

**Newsletter Deadline**—The deadline for reserving space in the January 31 *Servants' Light* is **January 10**. Please e-mail to [sherry.buffington@firstpresjoliet.org](mailto:sherry.buffington@firstpresjoliet.org).

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TO:



150th Anniversary Celebration—  
a Memorable Day!