



The Servants' Light

November 28, 2018

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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.

Holy Hunters—

10:30 a.m.

Coffee Fellowship—

10:00 to 10:30 a.m.

Nursery/Preschool

Care—

8:30 to 11:30 a.m.

"The Christmas Gift" Saturday, December 15, 3:30 p.m.

This year the Music Department will present a new musical format for Christmas. Rather than perform a cantata as in past years, this year we are presenting a Christmas Concert. This "variety show" format will feature Chancel Choir, Glory Ringers, Worship Band, Men's and Women's Choirs, familiar soloists, and special ensembles, accompanied by professional musicians. We will present a variety of music, including a Carol Sing with the audience. We will be sharing some Christmas celebrations from other cultures, as well as our own. This is our gift of music to those in attendance.

Be sure to save Saturday, December 15, from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. and join us to celebrate the birth of the Christ Child and to receive this special Christmas Gift from our many talented church musicians. Invite your special guests (family, neighbors, co-workers and friends) to this free Christmas Concert.

— Ken Myers, Choirmaster

P.S. Why not make an evening of it and go out for dinner afterwards!



Christmas Breakfast

Parish Council will be hosting a Christmas breakfast with the hopes of folks getting better acquainted by getting "us" all together in one place! They have enlisted the help of Chef Allen Brooks who will be preparing Scrambled Eggs, Sausage, French Toast and Fruit. There will also be a gourmet coffee bar and juices.

When: Sunday, December 16

Time: 9:45 - 10:45 A.M.

Location: Hoffman Hall

merry *Christmas*
to all, and to all
a good *breakfast!*



Sunday, December 2. We begin the Advent Season this Sunday. “Advent is not just about Christmas! Rather, it is about the beginning of the Christian year. The focus is on the future of all things as seen through the eyes of those who

follow Jesus. At the same time the Season of Advent takes history seriously and encourages us to remember and reflect upon God’s mighty acts and how they affect us today.” (A Guide to Prayer for All Who Walk with God, by R. Job, N. Shawchuck, J. Mogabgab) In this time we make our preparations for the Savior’s birth. Come and worship and prepare to receive the Savior this Sunday.

We will celebrate the Lord’s Supper at both the 9:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. worship services. We celebrate at 9:00 a.m. with the traditional elements (bread and cups) served to the congregation. At the 10:30 a.m. service we celebrate Communion by Intinction. Chancel Choir is singing at the 9:00 a.m. service. The Worship Band is singing and playing at the 10:30 a.m. service.

Sermon. This Sunday I am preaching on “God With Us: Our Potter” as we begin a new Advent Sermon Series, “God With Us.” The sermon passages are Isaiah 64:8-9 and Matthew 1:18-25. The God who comes to be with us is “Our Potter” and as Potter wants us to allow him to shape, guide, and influence our lives that we might live to the honor and praise of the Savior.

Devotional Book for Advent. Pick up a copy of David Boyd’s “God With Us: Devotions for Advent” in the Narthex/Lobby area



Known to be in the Hospital: No one.

The hospitals will no longer call to tell us who is there, so please let us know if you are admitted.

Thank You: Mary Haas wishes to thank First Pres. Friends for their thoughts, prayers and cards during her recent hospitalization and recuperation at home.

this Sunday. It’s a great resource for preparing to celebrate Jesus’ birth. David Boyd writes, “We so often say to one another ‘God be with you!’ But we frequently fail to contemplate the miracle and meaning behind the message of ‘God with us’ in the person of Jesus Christ. Theologians call this the incarnation. We simply call it Christmas—the day God came down to be with us, embodied in the human flesh of a baby born in Bethlehem.”

Habitat Build Meeting at First Pres.! On Saturday, December 8, from 8:30-9:30 a.m. there will be meeting at First Pres. to learn about Habitat’s Faith Build for the upcoming year of 2019. Habitat is going to build a new house in the 1500 block of North Raynor Ave. We can be involved in building this new home. If you are interested in putting your faith into action in this exciting opportunity, show up on Saturday, December 8 between 8:15 and 8:30 a.m. We will be meeting in Room 210.

Church Officer Nominations. We are seeking nominations for Day Deacons, Night Deacons, and Elders. Please speak with a pastor, e-mail the office or talk to a nominating committee member: Don Barnes or Reed Mott. Suggestions as well as self-recommendations are welcome.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Craig".

November 25, 2018

Worship Attendance — 139

Stewardship Report

2018-2019 Budget: \$799,852

Year to Date Receipts	\$458,068
Year to Date Expenses	\$481,014

2018-2019 Bequest/Gift Income Received — \$4,000
Feed My Starving Children — \$10,200
(Goal—\$23,900, 109,000 meals, feeds
300 children for an entire year)

Please 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 and click on “Giving.”

Growing in Christ—

"God With Us" Advent Sermon Series

"We so often say to one another 'God be with you!' But we frequently fail to contemplate the miracle and meaning behind the message of 'God with us' in the person of Jesus Christ. Theologians call this the incarnation. We simply call it Christmas—the day God came down to be with us, embodied in the human flesh of a baby born in Bethlehem." *God With Us: Devotions for Advent* by David Boyd. This Advent Season we worship, celebrate, and praise the God who is with us, in and through the child born to us in Bethlehem. Each Sunday we consider the wonder of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

- Dec. 2 "Our Potter" (Isa. 64:8-9, Matt. 1:18-25)
- Dec. 9 "Our Shepherd" (Zech. 9:9-16, Jn. 10:1-14)
- Dec. 16 "Our Living Branch"
- Dec. 23 "Our Guide" (9 a.m. only)
- Dec. 23 "Our Savior" (5 p.m. Contemporary Candle light)
- Dec. 24 "Our Savior" (Christmas Eve)
 - 3 p.m. Contemporary Candlelight
 - 7 p.m. Family Candlelight
 - 11 p.m. Traditional Candlelight
- Dec. 30 "God With Us" (10:30 a.m. only)



Sunday, December 23
9:00 a.m. — Traditional Worship

Christmas Candlelight Services

- Sunday, December 23
 - 5:00 p.m. — Contemporary Candlelight Service
 - Monday, December 24, Christmas Eve
 - 3:00 p.m. — Contemporary Candlelight Service
 - 7:00 p.m. — Family Candlelight Service
 - *10:30 p.m. — Musicales (as we gather for worship)
 - *11:00 p.m. — Traditional Candlelight Service
- (*Nursery Care not available)

Sunday, December 30
10:30 a.m. — Contemporary Worship

Adult Education Opportunities

Tuesday "Lunch Bunch" Bible Discussion Group

Our Tuesday Discussion Group gathers at 12:00 noon in Room 210 each Tuesday. We are spending our time until Christmas (Dec. 4, 11 & 18) discussing 1 Corinthians. Paul's letter to the church at Corinth was a bold letter, and it is a bold letter for us as well. The young church faced many challenges to their integrity and faith...just as we do today. With great passion and love, Paul writes about building their faith on the one and only sure foundation... Jesus. Come join us in lively discussions!

— Dale

C4 Men's Bible Discussion Group

We are gathering on Wednesdays (Dec. 5 & 12), 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., in Room 210 using the book of Proverbs to guide us in our discussions.

Why Proverbs? Because I believe we can be difference makers in this world through godly wisdom and Christian character...the very heart of the book of Proverbs. A second reason is that the character of a man is defined certainly in what he claims to believe regarding matters of truth but, more importantly, by the practicing of these truths. Come prepared to talk about what you believe and why you believe it and we will not only learn from the book of Proverbs, but hopefully, from each other.

— Dale

Women's Discussion Group

Lisa Haldorson continues facilitating the Women's Discussion Group on Wednesday evenings (Dec. 5 & 12) from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the Fireside Room using Bob Goff's new book, *Everybody Always: Becoming Love in a World Full of Setbacks and Difficult People*. "Bob Goff takes readers on a journey into the secret of living without fear, constraint, or worry. The path toward the liberated existence we all long for is found in a truth as simple to say as it is hard to do: love people, even the difficult ones, without distinction and without limits." (Amazon) The only requirements to participate in this discussion group are to be a woman and to bring your thoughts and ideas about life with you to share with others.



Stop by the table in the Narthex and talk with one of our smiling Connection Volunteers about what is going on in the life of the church. We need the help of everyone who is a regular part of the life of the church to welcome others who are new here. Building the church begins with relationships and that is the focus of our Connections Ministry. For those who are new here (first, second, even third time), we have a special gift just for you!!

2nd Sunday Potluck

Save the date — December 9 — for our 2nd Sunday Potluck. Plan to join us for a great lunch and spend some quality time with friends. We'll gather right after the 10:30 a.m. worship service. Bring a dish to share, drop it off in the kitchen, and head to worship. We'll have plenty of time to eat and visit together. Questions? Call Jen Gabl, 815-954-1254.



It's Time to Order Poinsettias!

If you would like to order poinsettias in memory of loved ones, just go to our website and click on the poinsettia picture. You can also pay online! Deadline for ordering is December 10.

PW Circles

Thurs. AM Circle

2nd Thursday
(Dec. 13, 9:15 a.m.)
in the
Fireside Room

Mary Circle

2nd Thursday (Dec. 13)
in the Fireside Room
Bring a sack lunch at
12 noon; dessert &
meeting at
12:30 p.m.

Small Groups & Special Events



At its regularly scheduled meeting of November 8, 2018, the Session of First Presbyterian Church, Joliet, voted:

—to authorize Stewardship Council to spend up to \$10,000 or otherwise as much as may be necessary in the discretion of the members of Stewardship Council, to repair the roof above the gym.

Decorating the Church for Advent

Come get in the Holiday spirit and help Worship Council decorate the church for the Advent/Christmas Season. We'll gather on Saturday, December 1st, at 9 a.m. We'll have a lot of fun and enjoy great fellowship! Decorating takes about 2 hours.



If you have prayer requests, please fill out the form in the pew pad and place in the offering plate, in the box on the table in the narthex, or mail to the church office. Our Pat's Prayer Circle prays for those in the congregation, their friends and relatives, and for those in our community and in our world.

Meal Fellowship

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

Dinner Out Group—Dec. 18, 6 p.m. at Fox's Restaurant, 14206 S. Route 30, Plainfield. Call Jean or Bob Smietanski, 815-838-7616, to make a reservation.

Men's Dinner Group—Dec. 28, 6 p.m. at Anthony's Restaurant & Pub, 3151 Voyager Lane, Joliet. RSVP to Bob Smietanski at 815-838-7616.

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



PW 2nd Time Around Christmas Sale

It will be fun to attend the PW 2nd Time Around Christmas Sale on Saturday, December 8, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. It may stir

some memories of Christmas Past or perhaps you might find the perfect item to fill that corner now. As you pull out your Christmas decorations, please consider donating to our sale those Christmas items that you are willing to part with. We are looking for:

ornaments	nativities	lights (that work)
dishes	garland	wreaths
glasses	tree skirts	Christmas sweaters
Santa suits	mugs	outdoor figures

Proceeds benefit PW mission projects. Your donations can be dropped off and placed under the coat racks by the Fireside Room next week, December 3—7, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.



Look for the PW Mitten Tree this Sunday! This tree, in the back entry hall, is dedicated to help keep the children at Farragut School warm in these freezing months. Donations of mittens, hats, boots, and gently used outerwear are appreciated.



Thank you for your love and kindness to help bring the Spirit of Christmas to MorningStar Mission families. The wrapped gifts are due back at church this Sunday, December 2, and will be picked up early next week by the Mission to be distributed to their families.



You can contribute to the church by simply making Amazon.com purchases through the web page, "smile.amazon.com." This is a simple way to contribute .5% of Amazon purchases to the church!



We have an opportunity to help build a Habitat for Humanity House on Raynor Ave. in Joliet. If you are interested in working on the house or learning more about Habitat for Humanity and this project, there is an informational meeting on Saturday, December 8, 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. here at First Pres. in Room 210.

The Christmas Joy Offering will be taken Sunday, December 23 and 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.



News from Angel House

We have received a card from Bhoke Mnanka, thanking us for being her sponsor. Christmas greetings can be sent to Lucy Joshua, Bhoke and Rhobi Mnanka through the sponsorship email address: angelhousesponsors@gmail.com. If you would like to send (small) gifts, a church in Kansas has offered to take them over when they go to Angel House in January. Call the office for the address.

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, December 1, 8 to 10 a.m. Come on out and help us serve and welcome those in our community who are hungry.

Children's Ministry Up-



YEAH!!! IT'S WINTER!

The first snow of the season really makes me happy! I love it! While I might not love the Christmas music playing nonstop everywhere I go, I still enjoy the beginning of the Advent Season. It is something special to me—in part because of the great build up towards Christmas Eve. I enjoy that part of the Bible story; of how God orchestrates a series of events leading up to that blessed night. And at times I feel we just rush through the story of Christmas, that somehow, we get to the magi and the shepherds forgetting about the time that passed in waiting, the time of the promise yet to come.

One of the things I learned over the years is that pretty soon in the season I will get caught in that rush myself, that everything I will focus on and do will be about Christmas Eve, and Christmas day and so on. But I also learned that Advent is about waiting. About enjoying the story as it is written. This Advent season I would encourage you to start your journey to Christmas in the book of Genesis instead of the Gospels. Stop and visit with Elizabeth and

Mary, talk to Joseph and follow the angels. The story of Christ is not just about one night, it is about what was and about what is yet to come.

So, I would like to invite you to join me on a slow-paced walk towards Christmas. I have an Advent Calendar hanging in my office, and I will follow along with the kids who will receive one this Sunday. Use this time to talk about the story of God with the kids, have grandparents talk about their childhood, start a new tradition, make a cup of cocoa and just slow down. Isaiah 9:6 — “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”



Slow down and get to know the wonderful gift of God—Jesus Christ!

Blessing, Bo M.

December 19th – Midweek Family is going caroling! Come out and help us spread the good cheer of this season as we get to visit Willow Falls Retirement Community. Come at 5:30 pm (we will meet at church), have pizza, and then join us at 1681 Willow Circle Dr., Crest Hill, IL 60403 for a time to carol. Hope to see you there!



This month the students did a wonderful job with their Teen Takeover! We at Wildfire are honored that everyone in the FPJ family welcomed us so warmly and enjoyed our service. We were so happy to add an element of play into the service because play is a major part of our group. Every Sunday night begins with a game which not only leads to laughter, but to a sense of team building and friendship! We must never forget, our God is a playful and happy God! Shortly after that, we enjoyed a fellowship night at the Joliet Mall and saw Disney's *The Nutcracker*, which was amazing. One of my favorite things is to spend time outside of the actual church building with these teens. It is important for us all to remember that we are still brothers and sisters in Christ while we are in the world. Christianity is not just a Sunday morning (or night) experience! This is our life and we need each other to get through the mundane, the hard, and the happy! I've said it once and I'll say it again: 1 Thessalonians 5:11 is one of my favorite verses. It reads, "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing." This world is a hard and tempting place. If we are not surrounded by those who keep their eyes on Christ, we will be easily distracted and led astray to paths that cause us so much more pain than we need to go through. I am so happy our teens are learning the value of fellowship at such a young age!

This month I was also blessed to attend The National Youth Worker Convention in St. Louis! I spent Thursday through Sunday learning new ways to engage teenagers in ministry, caring for my adult team (have I ever mentioned how great Bob, Matt, and Laura really are? Because they are the bomb! Next time you see them, give them a high five—they are truly life changers for our teens!), and centering myself in Christ. It was great to hear insight from Youth Workers who have been doing this for 20+ years! I pray their wisdom and my willingness to always be a learner will bless our students in the coming times.

Next month is going to be a blast and I cannot wait to celebrate the Christmas season with our students! On December 2nd we will begin the holiday season with a pajama party! While the lesson on Christ's death will be taught, we will be teaching it in the form of a story time with some hot cocoa and marshmallows. This will be a great chance to show the teens that we can learn about Jesus in many formats aside from lecture style teachings. We are also excited to send care packages to those who have been widowed this year. God is very clear that His people are called to care for the widows and we will continue to do that work with a gift that reminds our beloved members they are not alone in their time of mourning and joy. We will also have a great Christmas party filled with minute-to-win-it games and food!

Wildfire is far from exclusive, so if there are any teens looking for a place to belong with friends who will have their back through thick and thin, send them our way! The December 28th lock in will be a great opportunity for the junior high group especially to get involved with our crew. We have kids who are filled with compassion and questions while our adults are gifted with love, compassion, and energy.

I pray this Christmas season is great for everyone and I look forward to continuing to work with the next generation!

Blessings,
Karissa

Upcoming Dec. Events

Dec. 2:
Who Is Jesus:
His Death
6 to 7:30 p.m.

Dec. 9:
Service Sunday
Widow Care Packages
6 to 7:30 p.m.

Dec. 16:
Who Is Jesus:
His Resurrection
6 to 7:30 p.m.

Dec. 23:
Youth Group
Christmas Party!
6 to 7:30 p.m.

Dec. 28-29:
Jr. High Lock-In!
7p.m. to 7 a.m.

Dec. 30:
No Youth Group
Happy Christmas
Break!

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 Dec. 27 *Servants' Light* is **Dec. 10**. Please e-mail to sherry.buffington@firstpresjoliet.org.

TO:

December Daily Devotional Blog

12/1	Hos 9-10	Prov 20	Matt 1
12/2	<i>Day of Reflection: God as Giver</i>		
12/3	Hos 11-12	Psalms 138	Matt 2
12/4	Hos 13-14	Prov 21	Matt 3
12/5	Joel	Psalms 139	Matt 4
12/6	Amos 1-3	Prov 22	Matt 5
12/7	Amos 4-5	Psalms 140	Matt 6
12/8	Amos 6-7	Prov 23	Matt 7-8
12/9	<i>Day of Reflection: God as King of Kings</i>		
12/10	Amos 8-9	Psalms 141	Matt 9
12/11	Obadiah	Prov 24	Matt 10
12/12	Jonah 1-2	Psalms 142	Matt 11
12/13	Jonah 3-4	Prov 25	Matt 12
12/14	Micah 1-3	Psalms 143	Matt 13
12/15	Micah 4-5	Prov 26	Matt 14

12/16	<i>Day of Reflection: God as Savior</i>		
12/17	Micah 6-7	Psalms 144	Matt 15
12/18	Nahum	Prov 27	Matt 16
12/19	Habakkuk	Psalms 145	Matt 17
12/20	Zephaniah	Prov 28	Matt 18
12/21	Haggai	Psalms 146	Matt 19
12/22	Zech 1-3	Prov 29	Matt 20
12/23	<i>Day of Reflection: God as Emmanuel</i>		
12/24	Zech 4-6	Psalms 147	Matt 21
12/25	Zech 7-8	Prov 30	Matt 22
12/26	Zech 9-10	Psalms 148	Matt 23
12/27	Zech 11-12	Prov 31:1-9	Matt 24
12/28	Zech 13-14	Psalms 149	Matt 25-26
12/29	Mal 1-2	Prov 31:10-31	Matt 27
12/30	<i>Day of Reflection: God as Love</i>		
12/31	Mal 3-4	Psalms 150	Matt 28

Hos = Hosea; Zech = Zechariah; Mal = Malachi;
Prov = Proverbs; Matt = Matthew