



The Servants' Light

December 27, 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.



Saturday, January 26

Parish Council has a great line up of movies to go along with YOUR great chili. If you don't know about Chili & Movie Night, here's the deal: Bring a crock pot of your favorite chili - mild or spicy - and settle in for a fun night of tasting as many different bowls of chili as you'd like followed by your choice of one of five movies. The movies include:



Chili Set Up: 4:30 p.m.
Chili Tasting: 5:00 p.m.
Movies Begin: 6:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 30 — One Worship Service at 10:30 a.m.!
There will be no Coffee Fellowship on December 30.



Sunday, December 30. We continue our celebration of the Savior's birth this Sunday. We rejoice and give thanks to God that Jesus is Immanuel, God with Us, always. Come and give honor, glory, and praise for the wonderful,

wonderful gift of the Savior this Sunday. And please remember that there is only one Worship Service at 10:30 a.m. this Sunday.

The Worship Band is singing and playing and Ken Myers, our Choirmaster, is also singing and playing guitar at the 10:30 a.m. service.

Sermon. This Sunday Pastor Bo is preaching. Isaiah 7:14— "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Emmanuel." Bo writes, "God with Us! Some might say 'Christmas is over, let's move on,' but I have to ask 'Is Christmas really over?' You see, there is a part of Christmas that will always remain with us, a part of Christmas that never changes, and that is God moving and establishing his presence with his people. This Sunday we will look a little deeper at what it means to have God with us, what the Scriptures say about it. I am looking forward to seeing you Sunday in worship. Remember, there is one service at 10:30. Bring your coffee with you. See you Sunday, Bo M."



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.

Just Born:

Dominik Lee Golembiewski (Nov. 24)
Son of Dan and Samantha (Parratore) Golembiewski

Brayden Michael Mau (Dec. 10)
Son of Patrick and Kristen Mau

Passing to Life Eternal:

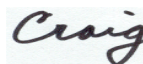
Robert Fraser (Dec. 9)

Habitat Preparing to Build a New Home! Habitat is going to build a new house in the 1500 block of North Raynor Ave. this summer. If you are interested in helping to build this new home, which is not far from our church, please let me or one of our Mission Council Members (Mary Kessling or Mahryha Iwenma) know.

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.

Pastor Dale's News About Retiring. On Sunday, December 16, Pastor Dale shared with us his plans to retire from Pastoral Ministry on June 1, 2019. I understand Dale's desire, as he plans to spend more time with Tari and to free up some time for himself as well, in this next chapter in their lives. I told Dale that I am happy for him and Tari and sad for us. Dale has had a wonderful ministry with us, for us, and for the Lord Jesus Christ at First Pres. The same can be said of Tari and her ministry throughout the life and mission of First Pres. over so many special years. I invite you to pray with me for this time of transition for Dale and Tari and for our congregation.

In Christ,



December 23 & 24, 2018

Sunday Morning Worship Attendance — 147
Christmas Candlelight Services—373

Stewardship Report

2018-2019 Budget: \$799,852

Year to Date Receipts	\$567,942
Year to Date Expenses	\$568,323

Christmas Joy Offering — \$2,461
2018-2019 Bequest/Gift Income Received — \$14,000

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." Tracy is also receiving Pre-Pledges for 2019 and 25% of pre-pledged giving is used for January-March 2019, while 75% is used for April-December of 2019.

January Sermon Series

We begin the New Year looking at our Race of Faith. The Savior is still “God With Us.” And as we turn the pages of our calendars, whether electronic or paper, to the new year that lays before us, we turn our attention to how we shall live in the faith, hope, peace, and joy of the Gospel. We will look at how we follow the Lord Jesus. Are we present to the One who is present to us? Are we listening to his voice? What does he have in mind for us now?

“Run Your Race” Sermon Series

- | | |
|------------|--|
| January 6 | A God Inspired Life
Philippians 2:12-18 |
| January 13 | In Hope
I Corinthians 9:24 |
| January 20 | Overcoming Obstacles
Hebrews 12:1-4, Psalm 27 |
| January 27 | Don't Run Alone |

Here are some Bible search results which you can use to prepare for this new Sermon Series.

1 Corinthians 9:24
[The Need for Self-Discipline] “Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.”

Galatians 2:2
“I went in response to a revelation and, meeting privately with those esteemed as leaders, I presented to them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. I wanted to be sure I was not running and had not been running my race in vain.”

Galatians 5:7
“You were running a good race. Who cut in on you to keep you from obeying the truth?”

Hebrews 12:1
“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us,....”

Adult Education Opportunities



Tuesday “Lunch Bunch” Bible Discussion Group

We will be taking a little break for the holidays and we hope to see you back on Tuesday, January 15, at 12:00 noon in Room 210. Bob and I will be meeting early in January to discuss what we plan to use for our group. So, rest up over the holidays and come back refreshed to see what God may have in store for us as we study his word of life!!

— Dale

C4 Men’s Bible Discussion Group

Like our “Lunch Bunch” discussion group, our men will be taking a few weeks off to enjoy the holidays with our friends and families. We will return on Wednesday, January 16, at 6:30 p.m. to a new year and a new topic of discussion. I have had several recommendations, and I am contemplating the possibilities which is code for “yet to be determined!” Seriously, all men, we have a lot of room for any and all who would like to join us, and please know that as a discussion group we can be enlightened by each other and that means you do not have to have all the answers.

— Dale

Women’s Discussion Group

Lisa Halderson will continue to facilitate the Women’s Discussion Group which starts back up on Wednesday, January 16, at 6:30 p.m. More information on the topic of discussion will be coming soon. All women are invited to participate.



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

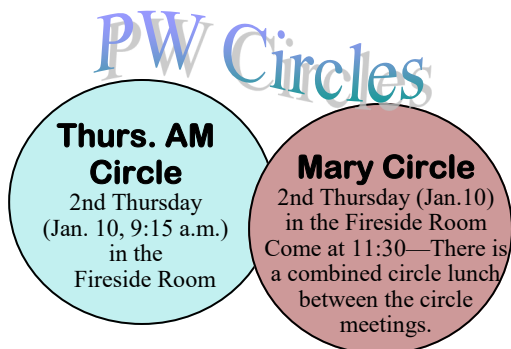
Save the date — January 13 — for our 2nd Sunday Potluck. Plan to join us for a great lunch and spend some quality time with friends. We'll gather right after the 10:30 a.m. worship service. Bring a dish to share, drop it off in the kitchen, and head to worship. We'll have plenty of time to eat and visit together. Questions? Call Jen Gabl, 815-954-1254.



Praise Yoga is taking a holiday break. We will resume Tuesday, January 8, at 7 p.m. and Thursday, January 10, at 8 a.m.

Taking Down Christmas Decorations

Join us on Saturday, January 12, at 9 a.m. to take down and store away our Christmas decorations. Many hands make the job go quickly. Please call the church office if you can help.



Small Groups & Special Events



At its regularly scheduled meeting of December 13, 2018, the Session of First Presbyterian Church, Joliet, voted:

—to hold a Congregational Meeting on January 13, 2019 to elect officers for the class of 2021 and any vacancies that may occur, and to vote on Pastor Dale Ambler's intent to retire on June 1, 2019.

Mark
Your
Calendars—



Vendors Wanted

for our March 30
Craft Fair

Check out our website
for information and
registration form.

Meal Fellowship

Men's Breakfast—Jan. 4, 7:30 a.m. at the Old Fashioned Pancake House on Jefferson St., Joliet.

Dinner Out Group—Jan. 15, 6 p.m. at Al's Steak House, 1900 W. Jefferson, Joliet. Call Jean or Bob Smietanski, 815-838-7616, to make a reservation.

Men's Dinner Group—Jan. 25, 6 p.m. at Thayer Brothers (cash only), 753 Ruby, Joliet. RSVP to Bob Smietanski at 815-838-7616.

Servants of Jesus Christ —

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

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 5, 8 to 10 a.m. Come on out and help us serve and welcome those in our community who are hungry.



Habitat for Humanity®

We have an opportunity to help build a Habitat for Humanity House in the 1500 block of North Raynor Ave. in Joliet in 2019. Watch for more details.

From the Treasurer’s Office:

Annual statements of your 2018 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 2018 income tax return until you have received this written acknowledgment of your contributions.

Mission for the Homeless

Our Mission to the Homeless continues—providing needed items on a monthly basis to the homeless in our community. Helping is easy—simply bring pop-top canned goods such as soups and stews, fruit with peel-off lids, toiletries, etc. and place them in the bins in the Narthex (check out the list of needed items in the Narthex). Especially needed are warm socks. Then once a month we’ll pack up bags after worship and on Monday will deliver them to MorningStar Mission for distribution. The next bag-packing day is December 30. Please call Linda Zoellick at 520-400-8396, if you have questions or to offer your help.

Smile.amazon.com

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!

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—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.



Children's Ministry Update

Matthew 18:2-5

He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. And he said: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me."

Happy New Year

Can you believe 2019 is upon us? Where did 2018 go? When you look at those around you, you might not believe how big the kids have gotten, how their personality has changed in the past year. Wouldn't it be nice if they would just stop growing, so you could enjoy those beautiful childhood years a little longer?

We both know that it is not possible to freeze moments in time. And yet there is something that can last for eternity: Faith, childlike faith. There is something so special about believing in God, and seeing God through the eyes of a child; it goes beyond innocence or childlike trust. Jesus speaks about it as being the essence of faith. And yet, somewhere along the way we seem to lose that childlike faith. When life comes at us fast, with new challenges and problems to solve, we might even forget about that faith.

What if 2019 is a year of faith for you and your dear ones? What if at the end of the year, you are to look back and see how each and every one in your family grew in faith, in their knowledge of Christ? What if you could make that happen?

I believe that it is in your power as a parent, as a person of faith, to nourish and cultivate that faith. And it might start with a simple prayer at the dinner table. Or maybe with a simple question: How did we serve God today? I really wish you a prosperous and healthy new year; and even more, I wish you to have faith like a child, a faith that grows and changes and yet stays strong and opens the doors of heaven!

Be blessed,
Bo M

Midweek Family Night starts back on January 16 with Movie Night! Come to church ready for some good food, dress comfy in your PJ's and bring a blanky. ☺ You do not want to miss this one!



Christmas time has been a grand time at Wildfire Youth Group! We decorated the upstairs teen lounge and Founder's Cafe with delight and joy! We made beautiful and thoughtful care packages for those in our church who have lost loved ones this year as well—embracing the act of caring for people in our church family, even if we don't know them personally. We also learned more about Jesus: the details of his gruesome death, what that means for us, and the miracle of his resurrection!

This actual Christmas we attended the 5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve-Eve service before attending our Christmas party. Sure colors came out when we played the Saran Wrap Ball Game, there was sugar galore as we decorated cookies, and we ended the party with a reading of The Christmas Story as told in Luke 2:1-20.

Who doesn't love a year in review? In 2018 I had the privilege of being with the Youth Group for the whole year. We began doing service projects every month at Youth Group as well as hearing live testimonies. This past year we enjoyed monthly fellowship activities that ranged from the movies, to pool parties, to a great day at 6 Flags. We grew as a family and are developing trust in our small groups. We gained an amazing Advisor: Laura Wakefield. We went to Cincinnati, OH, and spent three days in Joliet serving our local community and the church. We tie-dyed, made a blizzard with glitter, and painted. We laughed, we cried, and loved. Please don't forget our #TeenTakeOver! I was so happy the kids were able to show our church family just who they are and how they like to worship.

2018 was a great year and I already know 2019 will be even better! Here are a few pictures of our "year in review."

Blessings,

Karissa



Upcoming Jan. Events

Jan. 4
Movie Night at
Bob Becker's
"I Can Only
Imagine"
6:30—8:30 p.m.

Jan. 13:
Service Sunday —
The Spanish
Community Center
6 to 7:30 p.m.

Jan. 20:
The "God" Claim,
Part 1
6 to 7:30 p.m.

Jan. 27:
Live Testimony—
Matt Blaser
6 to 7:30 p.m.

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 Jan. 30 *Servants' Light* is **Jan. 10**. Please e-mail to sherry.buffington@firstpresjoliet.org.

TO:

January Daily Devotional Blog

For the first part of this year, we will focus on the parables of Jesus—many of these parables occur in multiple gospels. The blog will run Monday through Friday only.

1/1	The Growing Seed	Mark 4:26-29
1/2	The Two Debtors	Luke 7:41-43
1/3	The Lamp under a Bushel	Matt. 5:14-15
1/4	Parable of the Good Samaritan	Luke 10:25-37
1/7	The Friend at Night	Luke 11:5-8
1/8	The Rich Fool	Luke 12:16-21
1/9	The Wise and the Foolish Builders	Matt. 7:24-27
1/10	New Wine into Old Wineskins	Mark 2:21-22
1/11	Parable of the Strong Man	Luke 11:21-22
1/14	Parable of the Sower	Matt. 13:3-9
1/15	The Tares	Matt. 13:24-30

1/16	The Barren Fig Tree	Luke 13:6-9
1/17	Parable of the Mustard Seed	Mark 4:30-32
1/18	The Leaven	Matt. 13:33
1/21	Parable of the Pearl	Matt. 13:45-46
1/22	Drawing in the Net	Matt. 13:47-50
1/23	The Hidden Treasure	Matt. 13:44
1/24	Counting the Cost	Luke 14:28-33
1/25	The Lost Sheep	Matt. 18:10-14
1/28	The Unforgiving Servant	Matt. 18:23-35
1/29	The Lost Coin	Luke 15:8-9
1/30	Parable of the Prodigal Son	Luke 15:11-32
1/31	The Unjust Steward	Luke 16:1-13