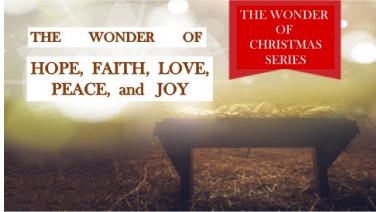




# e-News

November 25, 2020

805 Western Ave., Joliet, IL 60435  
815-727-9259 firstpresjoliet.org



## Advent Sermon Series “The Wonder of Christmas”

During the Advent Season we are going to explore the Wonder of Christmas once more.

It’s still possible to pause and sense the Wonder of the surpassing gift of Jesus Christ, our Savior. In this Advent Season we will seek to experience once again the awe, the wonderment, and the surprising grace of the Lord Jesus. Over four Sundays and Christmas Eve we will think about the Wonder of Hope, Faith, Love, Peace, and Joy.

### Sunday, November 29, “The Wonder of Hope” Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

I work in downtown Joliet, in an office with no windows. So I like to slip outside, feel the sun and get some fresh air once in a while. A few weeks ago, I met a friend by the fountain across the street from the Rialto. And I noticed something odd. I saw various winter coats wrapped around trees. I asked my friend why and she said people leave coats on the trees so that those who are without a coat can take one and be warm. How WONDERFUL this is! It reminded me that hope is ALWAYS present, because hope is grounded in God and his promises. Hope is more than wishes, hope is a sure thing. A sure thing like God working through regular ordinary people to bring warmth to others.

We are entering into Advent, an Advent like none before it. Shopping still needs to be done. Christmas and Thanksgiving, need to be figured out. How do we celebrate safely? It’s a whole new level to the chaos that the Christmas season typically brings. But Advent is a time of waiting. Not just to open presents, but to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Advent reminds us that God does not want to be distant, that he actually entered right into the midst of this busy, messy, loud chaotic world

This Sunday we will be taking a look at parts of Psalm 80. Psalm 80 is actually a corporate prayer of lament. A catastrophe has befallen the community and the people cry out to God. Just as we do today. God has not abandoned us. He brings the good news of mercy, love and HOPE in person through Jesus Christ, born in the most humble of circumstances long ago.

Psalm 80 is a lament, and a beacon of hope. The people cried out to God to be saved. And he saves us. Unexpectedly. Powerfully. Hope comes into our world as a defenseless baby. The psalmist demanded that God’s face shine, and shine it did - in the light of a child born in Bethlehem. The light that darkness has not, and will not, overcome.

## OUR CHURCH FAMILY

No information

## All in-person activities including Live Worship services are postponed.

While Covid-19 cases rise in our community we are hoping everyone can stay home, stay safe, and do their part in protecting our community.

Please continue checking communications from us for further updates on Holiday Services and when we might be able to worship together again.

We will confidently be continuing our Online Worship for the foreseeable future

For timely communication with staff we recommend email ([office@firstpresjoliet.org](mailto:office@firstpresjoliet.org)) since we are largely working remotely. Voicemails will be checked and returned as possible.

We have **1 worship service online** with traditional and contemporary songs in the service. Look for it online, (YouTube ([firstpresjoliet](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC13a9RkK1149UkZ1y100G8)), facebook, our website) or check the email sent each Saturday afternoon.

### November 23, 2020

#### Stewardship Report

<b>2020-2021 Budget</b>	\$734,307
<b>Year to Date Income</b>	\$385,585
<b>Year to Date Expenses</b>	\$372,695
Received for bathroom renovation—	\$11,650

Per Capita: \$38.47

You may text your gift to FPJ at (815)205-3044 or go online to use a credit card  
You can give by mail, by online giving through our website using the “Give” tab, and through electronic giving.  
**Thank you** for your generosity.

THE PASTOR'S CORNER... Craig Herr, Senior Pastor

**On Sunday, November 29,** We begin the Advent Season this weekend as we worship through Online Video Worship on Facebook and YouTube. Once again we make our journey through the darkness to the light of the Savior, through the challenges of our time to the Christ born to us in Bethlehem. Come sense the wonder of Jesus in worship this weekend.

**For the Advent Season** please give through the church to buy food for hungry people in Will County. We are not going to order 120 poinsettia's this year. We are going to decorate the front of the Sanctuary/Worship Center for our Online Video Worship services. We will acquire some poinsettia's to add some color to the Christmas Trees and Characters from our large Manger Creche setting for the front of the church.

**Instead of purchasing poinsettia's** we invite you to **make donations to the church for the Northern IL Food Bank** in memory of loved ones and to the Glory of God. Every **\$1 you give will help provide \$8 worth of groceries** for hungry people.

**We are looking for some more Liturgists.** If you would like to participate in our Online Worship Services by being a liturgist please let the Worship Council (Sue Mueller, Sarah Lundeen, Tandy Penhale) know by calling or e-mailing the office. It is easy to record prayers and scripture readings for our online worship services.

Our **Virtual Children's Worship/Sunday School** called "Celebrate Wonder" is going very well. In fact, some of the children are telling their parents that they want to do their "church stuff" as soon as they start their day! It's designed for Children, Preschool through Fifth Grade. If you have not yet received it call the office to be a part of a great learning experience for our children.

May you experience fresh and new this Advent Season, the Hope, Love, Peace, and Joy of the Lord Jesus. May we all grow in our faith and practice. Have a meaningful and sustaining Thanksgiving.

Craig

### **STEPHEN MINISTRY**

Reminder: If you are experiencing emotional hardship (depression, grieving etc.) you can reach out to our Stephen Ministry to receive help from a trained team. This can be from someone in our FPJ family or not depending on preference. Everything is confidential. These are hard times but you are not alone, please contact Pastor Craig to be put in touch with Stephen Ministry.

### **Sunday, November 22 "How Can We Give Thanks?"**

**Romans 8:28-30, I Thessalonians 5:16-18, Isaiah 11:1-11**

How can we give thanks in this world?  
How can we give thanks to God when we live in a broken, hurting, and fallen world?  
In our society there are tensions, unrest, estrangement and polarization.

The Covid-19 pandemic is filling hospitals across our country and all over the world.

Where is God when we need him, when our friends and loved ones need him, and the world needs him?

Given all of the trouble, tragedy, and turmoil...how can we give thanks?

We just read "In all things, God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

**16** Rejoice always, **17** pray continually,

**18** give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

How can we do this or believe this in such a troubling time?

First, we need to think more deeply of how we understand and see God's Will.

Second, we need to make the effort to see what is good, God at work

G.K. Chesterton once wanted to find one sentence that described what life was all about. In that one sentence he said, The critical thing is whether we take life for granted or whether we take it with gratitude."

All of our virtual Worship Services are available on our YouTube page and website.

### **STARS OF HOPE DROP OFF**

Sunday - Nov 29 10a -12n

Both will be at the back stairwell entrance

If you cannot make these drop off times please contact Kris Hayden to make arrangements

### **Christmas is Coming!**

Did you know you can support First Pres when you buy from Amazon? Just go to

**Smile.amazon.com**

And select First Presbyterian Church of Joliet as your charity and a percent of your money spent will be donated back to the church!

Just continue to shop through

**smile. amazon.com**