



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

**On Sunday, December 6,** On this Second Weekend in the Advent Season we continue to worship through Online Video Worship on Facebook and YouTube. We will celebrate Advent Communion in Worship this Weekend. Make your preparations for communion by acquiring the bread and grape juice for your worship experience. Come in faith to worship this weekend.

**For Pastoral Care** please call the office to leave a message to talk with a pastor or call us on our cell phones. We are available and can access our messages from home.

**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.

Our **Advent Online Devotional** Blog this Season has been changed up to focus on one scripture passage each day. Each passage is about the story of God's saving and redeeming love for us in and through Christ Jesus. I encourage you to access our Church Devotional Blog as you make your way through this Advent Season. Here's the link: <https://firstpresjoliet.wordpress.com>

As we journey through this unusual Advent Season, in a time of pandemic and restrictions, we still seek the Savior's presence, peace, and profound joy. Let's continue to say our prayers and ponder the gift of the Christ Child.

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 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 beginning Advent, an Advent like none before it. Shopping still needs to be done. Christmas needs 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 took 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

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

## **Christmas is Coming!**

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