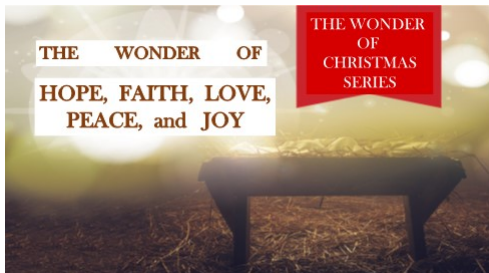




e-News

December 23, 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 exploring the Wonder of Christmas. 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.

Celebrate the Hope, Love, Peace, and Joy of Christ Jesus with us.

Christmas Eve, December 24, "The Wonder of Joy" Luke 2:1-7, Luke 2:8-15

We find Joy in the birth of Jesus in that stable in Bethlehem. Our Joy is centered on who Jesus is to us and all the world. Luke tells us that Jesus is Savior, Messiah, and Lord. We reflect upon these three characteristics of Jesus in our Christmas Eve Worship Service. I hope you will worship with us.

Sunday December 27th "He Promises" John 1:1-14

This Sunday is one of my favorites of the year. We are still in the Christmas season, yet we are also in an in-between space. We are finished with the rush that the holiday season can bring, and we are not yet fully headed into the next year. This is a Sunday for reflection. A time to take a deep breath and focus on God and what He is doing in the world.

After a year such as this, it is tempting to feel overwhelmed; we may find ourselves feeling hesitant about what 2021 may bring. This is one of the reasons we turn to God's Word. In it, we find comfort and reassurance. In it, we find God's promises. This is what we will focus on this Sunday as we read John 1:1-14.

P.S. - remember: The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Prayers to Denise Dunbar on the passing of Jim Chellini on 12/21

Please continue praying for frontline workers as this deadly pandemic continues through the holiday season.

The birthday calendar for January is available on the homepage of our website.

We have **1 worship service online** with traditional and contemporary songs in the service. Look for it online, (YouTube (firstpresjoliet), facebook, our website) or check the email sent each Saturday afternoon.

"The Wise Men"

We are not certain how many wise men there were, however, we do know that they followed the star to worship the Christ Child, bringing gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. As we celebrate this Christmas season, what gifts will we bring? I would suggest that we can give our hearts in obedience to His word and with thankfulness that God sent His Son to save us.

--Dave Steinberg

December 21, 2020

Stewardship Report

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| 2020-2021 Budget | \$734,307 |
| Year to Date Income | \$478,618 |
| Year to Date Expenses | \$447,346 |

ytd Northern II Food Pantry \$3,921.50

| | |
|--|----------|
| 2020-2021 Bequest/Gift Income Received | \$4,200 |
| Bathroom remodel | \$11,850 |
| Christmas Joy | \$1,025 |

Per Capita: \$38.47

You may text your gift to FPJ at (815)205-3044 or go

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

Christmas Eve, Come celebrate the birth of Jesus with us in our Christmas Eve Online Worship service. You will find inspiring Christmas Music of all kinds and a message of Joy. The service is available online on YouTube, FaceBook, and our Website. You should have received the e-mail already!

Sunday, December 27, We continue our celebration of Jesus's birth and life with us, for this Sunday is the First Sunday of Christmas in the church calendar. We continue to worship through Online Video Worship on FaceBook, YouTube, and our Website.

We will be **worshipping Online** for the foreseeable future due to the pandemic, at least into January and perhaps until March. The Session passed a motion to worship Online through March 7. However, at each session meeting in January and February we will reassess the situation. If things greatly improve it's possible that Live Worship on Sunday mornings would start up before March 14. We certainly hope that the pandemic diminishes sooner than expected.

We will receive the **Christmas Joy Offering** the end of this month as is our custom. You will receive the special Christmas Joy Offering in our next congregational mailing. We give 70% of the monies to the Night Deacon's Ministry to help those in need and 30% to the Denomination to help minority college students and retired pastors in need.

You can still access our wonderful and inspiring Christmas music in our **Christmas Music Concert**. Throughout the Christmas Season, the Concert is available on Facebook and YouTube and our Website. The Christmas concert features our Chancel Choir, Soloists, Worship Band and Glory Ringers.

Merry Christmas and may you experience the joy, peace, love, and hope of Christ's birth in this Christmas Season.

May you know Christ's healing and restoring power in this time.

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. Everything is confidential. These are hard times but you are not alone, please contact Pastor Craig to be put in touch with Stephen Ministry.

Last Sunday, December 20, "The Wonder of Peace"

Isaiah 9:6-7, Luke 2:1-14

Mary and Joseph did not find the great family reunion they were waiting for when they arrived in Bethlehem. In fact the words "there is no room" greeted them multiple times. At the end of their journey, the stable welcomed them in the most unexpected way. It became their shelter, their sanctuary and a place that welcomed both the angels and the shepherds. peace comes to us in the same way, in the unexpected, in the simplicity and out of the ordinary. It is God's way to come into our world.

This Christmas remember the peace of the stable, the simplicity of it, and let your heart be filled with Christ's peace.

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

On behalf of the staff at First Pres, we would like to wish everyone a very **Merry Christmas!**

Please celebrate with us by enjoying our Christmas Eve Service (now available) and our wonderful Christmas Concert online!