



e-News

December 30, 2020

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“Seek Life” Sermon Series

We have choices within our reach as we move into 2021. We can move in the direction of what is good and choose to “Seek Life.” We do not know all that will unfold, in this new year. The Covid-19 Pandemic is still very much with us, although vaccines are on the way. Political polarization and estrangement are, unfortunately, still a powerful reality. The economy is demanding and there are hardships for too many. Who knows what the surprising developments of 2021 will be, whether they will be good or bad. And of course, we long for something better than 2020.

Even with all of the challenges we face, there are some things in life over which we have some control, some say. We can choose to “Seek Life” and move toward what is good, right, and true in this new year. We can ask the Lord Jesus Christ to mold and shape us more fully into the people we were created to be and seek to bring life to our corner of the world.

This Sermon Series focuses on the faithful, positive, and hopeful choices we can make to “Seek Life” and choose the good as 2021 takes shape.

Sunday, January 3- “Presence: Seek the Savior”

Matthew 5:14-16 John 8:12, Matthew 28:20,
John 1:1-5, 9-14

This Sunday, we will think about how God reaches out to us and wants us to seek and find the Savior. God comes to us in Christ Jesus to live amongst us that we might know the grace, truth, mercy, and love of God. Worship with this Sunday Online via YouTube, FaceBook, or through our Website.

May you experience God’s strength and joy in Christ Jesus.

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.

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Prayers for Leslie Herr on the loss of her brother Bruce Johnson due to COVID-19

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

On behalf of the staff of First Pres. I would like to wish a Happy New Year to you and your loved ones!

December 30, 2020

Stewardship Report

2020-2021 Budget	\$734,307
Year to Date Income	\$486,626
Year to Date Expenses	\$473,583

ytd Northern II Food Pantry \$4,346.50

2020-2021 Bequest/Gift Income Received	\$4,200
Bathroom remodel	\$11,850
Christmas Joy	\$1,890

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.

THE PASTOR'S CORNER... Bo Mircea, Pastor

Christmas is more than a day a year! It is so much more than a Christmas Eve service, or a dinner, or the gifts under the tree. While all those things makes Christmas a special celebration, they are only a reminder to us of God's love. In this season we all are called to rekindle our devotion to God, and let the light of the Bethlehem Star shine through us, not for a season but for a lifetime. I hope that this year's Christmas, brought you closer to the stable, and while the celebrations might had been lacking some of the traditions and routines, that you were able to find Christ's hope and his peace along the way.

This Christmas First Pres has accepted the challenge to support Northern Illinois Food bank in a big way. So far \$4,346.50 had been collected for this great ministry that helps so many people in our community. Thank you so much for you response to supporting this great ministry.

While we all miss being in church on Christmas Eve and on Sunday mornings, we continue to be a strong virtual community. Between the Facebook and YouTube virtual worship we gather more than 500 views every week. I would like to encourage you to continue to share and participate in the services. Especially at this time when we cannot meet in person, it is important to all of us to stay connected and even find ways to participate in worship.

As 2020 comes to a close, let your faith and hope shine brighter than ever in the year to come.

Happy New Year,
Pastor Bo M.

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.

Sunday December 27th "He Promises"

John 1:1-14

After a year such as 2020, it's easy to ask ourselves questions such as:

Where is God?

How does he work in the world?

How do we know he is working in the world?

We find the answers to our questions in Scripture passages like John 1:1-14. This is a great passage to reflect upon as we enter a new year and face the continued uncertainty around us.

We read in the Bible that God is present and active in the world he created through the people he created. He worked first through Adam and Eve as they tended the garden; he worked through Sarah and Abraham to give birth to the Jewish nation. God chose to work through Moses to set his people in Egypt free from slavery - and he worked through King David to establish Israel.

We may be so familiar with these stories that we lose track of the miracle of them! And then, speaking of stunning, magnificent, wonderful miracles -- God chose to work through a young woman named Mary, who gave birth to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. God came and LIVED HERE AMONG US.

This is what tells us God is actively engaged in the world through human beings. Jesus grew up and when he began his public ministry the first thing he did was gather a group of disciples to help carry out his mission. Could God have carried out his mission without the help of people? I would say of course - and yet that is not what he did. He invited us into his work and ministry.

The reality is that God very likely works through people far more often than we realize. God has been with us in 2020, and he will be with us in 2021. He has promised that, and we can trust his promises.

One last thing - if you are looking for a memory verse for the new year, I suggest John 1:14. "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."

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