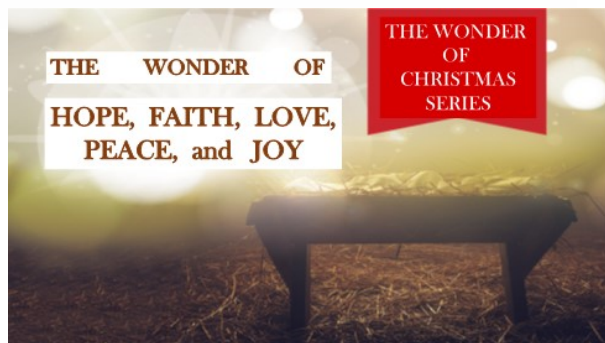




e-News

December 9, 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 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. Celebrate the Hope, Love, Peace, and Joy of Christ Jesus with us.

Sunday, December 13, "The Wonder of Love"

Hebrews 12:1-4, Philippians 2:5-11, John 1:14

We can't help but consider the Wonder of God's Love demonstrated in Christ Jesus when we journey through the Advent Season toward Christmas. How is it that God would actually come amongst us, take up residence on Earth, and love us even unto death? And then rise again and reign for us? What amazing love and mercy we are given in Jesus. Come join us in worship this weekend to ponder once more the extraordinary love of Jesus for us. As we receive Christ's love we will also think about accepting our assignment to go and love others in Jesus' name.

Once we accept our acceptance by God in Jesus we are given an assignment to so live in love for others. Have you accepted your assignment? Let's think together about our assignment and acceptance this weekend.

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

Michael Haldorson's birthday was 12/5 and he would appreciate Christmas notes as well.

Notes on plain white paper only, cards not permitted.

Michael Haldorson 48519424
Pekin Federal Correctional Institution
PO Box 5000
Pekin, IL 61555

Raymond Haldorson
(active in the US Military)

Raymond Haldorson
CMR411
Box 3078

Thank you to Bob and Jana Rudisill for coordinating our Christmas decorating. Your talent and help is always appreciated!

-Worship Council

December 9, 2020

Stewardship Report

2020-2021 Budget	\$734,307
Year to Date Income	\$406,854
Year to Date Expenses	\$397,475

For Northern IL Food Bank \$1,370
2020-2021 Bequest/Gift Income Received \$4,200
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.

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

On Sunday, December 13, Worship with us on this third Weekend in the Advent Season. We continue to worship through Online Video Worship on Facebook and YouTube. You can also access our worship services through our website. Come and experience the Love of God in Christ Jesus as we worship together this weekend.

The Night Deacons have added \$1,000 to our giving to the Northern IL Food Bank. This Advent Season we are giving to buy food for hungry people in Will County. We are not ordering a 120 poinsettia's this year. We have decorated the front of the Sanctuary/Worship Center for our Online Video Worship services and acquired some poinsettia's to 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.

You can find inspiring Christmas music in our **Christmas Music Concert.** Starting the evening of December 10th throughout the Christmas Season we will have the Concert available on Facebook and YouTube and our Website. The Christmas concert features our Chancel Choir, Soloists, Worship Band and Glory Ringers.

Come join us at church for our **Drive-thru Santa** on Sunday, December 20. Santa will be in the back, parking lot from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. There will be special gift packages for all who drive through! Bring your letters to Santa with you. It will be fun to see each other, wearing our masks and waving and saying hello.

Please send a note to encourage Michael Haldorson and or Ray Haldorson this Christmas Season. Michael is in prison and Ray is serving in the Armed Forces. The details are in the "Church Family" section of the E-News. If you know others who are deployed somewhere by our Armed Forces please let us know.

May the presence of the Christ bring you strength, comfort and peace.

Craig

"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

Sunday, December 6 "The Wonder of Faith" Luke 1:26-38, 45-55

Over this Advent Season I invite you to Wonder once more, to enter into the Wonder of Hope, Faith, Love, Peace, and Joy come to us in the Savior, Christ Jesus.

Can you remember the last time you gazed at life with Wonder? the Wonder of feeling better after an illness or surgery, the Wonder of a night time sky or reflecting upon a fresh Sunrise, or what about the Wonder of the first new fallen snow, or seeing the first lights of the Christmas Season, or holding a newborn baby?

Come, this season and experience the Wonder of the reality of hope, Faith and God's love, peace and joy. I experience the Wonder of Faith in Mary's response to God.

In Luke's Gospel, Chapter 1, we step back before that first Christmas morning. We step all the way back to when Mary first heard the news of Jesus birth, first learned that she would have a child. When the Angel appeared Mary, certainly knew far less about Jesus and all that his birth would mean, than on that day when he was born, that first Christmas morn.

Here's her first glimpse into the plans of God. Imagine what she must have felt, and thought. Never forget that we are looking back at a decisive moment in time.

Remember, that Jesus was Mary's son as well as God's...which a lot of people tend to forget at times.

Jesus was Mary's son too.

Notice, mark it down, that it took a yes from Mary before God could send forth his Son, Jesus. Mary can hardly, at first, believe what she's hearing from the Angel.

You are going to have a baby. No way, I don't have a husband.

It's not a done deal just because the Angel Gabriel shows up.

And all of a sudden, what happens...Mary says ok, yes, Mary gives an unqualified yes.

Here am I, the servant of the Lord, let it be with me according to your word.

Yes, I will serve; I will accept my assignment.

And of course she cannot know all that her yes will mean.

Yet, I wonder at such faith.

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