

January 26, 2022

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New Photos from Angel House!
Many thanks to Krista Desiderio



Krista Desiderio with Bhoke who we sponsored previously for many years and Rebecca who we have just begun supporting through sponsorship



Group photo of Krista with many of the youths and young adults for whom Angel House is dedicated to supporting .

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Prayers for the Haldorson family as Lee is working through recovery. If you know of someone who would be willing to help in the mornings or evenings please reach out to Pat.

Prayers and sympathies to family and friends of Don Bossen who passed away on the morning of the 26th.

Prayers for Barb Rogers as she is helping her sister navigate through health issues.

Prayers of healing and recovery for Doris Alderson .

Continue to pray for our church as we continue to be affected by COVID. We pray for the safety and health of everyone in the congregation.

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Stewardship Report

2021-2022 Budget	\$746,307
Year to Date Income	\$522,372
Year to Date Expenses	\$470,316

Income includes \$58,143 of Employee Retention Credit
Per Capita: \$40.00

If you made contributions to First Pres in 2021, please wait to file your taxes until you receive your statement. Statements have been mailed.

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.

A NOTE FROM PASTOR JEN

Greetings Dear Friends and Family of Faith!

It's happening! The COVID positivity rate is going down! Last week it was at 17 and yesterday it was 16.5. Today, as I am writing this message to you, it is a . Amen!

Before we know it, the positivity rate will be 15 – the number chosen by your wonderful session to re-open the doors of our beautiful church and have in-person worship. We will be back together again! And again, I say Amen! Being in this liminal season has been and continues to be difficult. We know what life used to be like and we want to get back to the easiness we remember. On top of that we are wondering if life ever be the same. We aren't quite sure what "normal" will look like in the future once this pandemic has played itself out. Right now, at this moment, we all still find ourselves suspended in a kind of limbo.

Limbo is such an interesting word. Did you know that limbo doesn't just mean

an in between time of suspension of life as we know it? It is also a dance! And, strangely, if you consider it - both meanings of that word, or at least our experience of it, are somewhat similar.

Limbo, the dance, was created on the island of Trinidad to be danced at wakes. Limbo represents that sad/happy time when you have to navigate a new way of life – a time without the presence of a loved one. But you are also happy for those who have passed because they are now with the Lord in paradise. That is why, after the funeral service and time of shared mourning, the wake is held where they celebrate their loved one's ultimate blessing. The music is light hearted and upbeat, reflecting that celebration.

The crowd gathers on each side of the "dance way" to watch and cheer on each dancer as they move forward trying to pass under a low bar without falling or dislodging the bar. The dancer must approach the obstacle (the lowered bar) change positions, adapt to

new conditions to "survive" the passage. Once the dancer makes it through they celebrate with their fellow dancers!

The limbo of Covid and limbo the dance are so similar. We have approached this obstacle (the virus) and have often had to change our positions (masks, distancing, thinking) deciding to forego parties, even changing our minds to take the vaccine in order to make it past this "bar" and come out on the other end. Brothers and Sisters, during this time of "limbo" we have learned new skills and ways of thinking. We have not only survived we will have thrived!

Soon, as the experts suggest, we will have passed this "bar" and made it through. And then, fellow dancers of the faith, we will praise God together and celebrate! Alleluia! And once again I say Amen!!!

Pastor Jen

A NOTE FROM PASTOR BO

I love WINTER!

Everything about the snappy cold air, the clean snow, even sliding on ice as you go to your car. There is something that feels so fresh and it that makes my heart happy. We all have one of those things that keep us going. These last couple of weeks, I spent time on the phone or visiting with some of our folks that are going through a challenging time health wise. Each time I am reminded that God is good, that even in those times when we are at our lowest, God finds a way to comfort us to lift our spirits. It is our willingness to see God present through what we are going through that makes that whole difference.

Even with the church being closed for in person worship, I continue to see or hear about God moving among us. Krista Desiderio returned from her trip to Angel House in Tanzania, and you can see the smiles on the kids faces. I am looking forward to sitting down with her and hearing the stories about Angel House.

The COVID positivity rate for our county is indeed going down, and we will soon reopen for in-person worship. Please watch for communications from the church office via email or on Facebook.

I know many of our councils are trying to figure out the best way to approach the reopening, and how ministry will look like this year, and I want to encourage you to be in prayer for them. Ministry as a whole is about being faithful to who we are as a church, to our call to serve not just the people that are here every Sunday, but also those that are looking for a place to belong. If you are serving the church as a member of session and/or council please check in with your fellow members and look at the calendar ahead and think about how we can best engage our congregation at this time.

And while we still have snow on the ground, go for a walk, listen to the sounds of winter, and take in the beauty of this season that God has blessed us with this year.

Blessings,
Pastor Bo