



e-News

December 13th, 2023
 805 Western Ave., Joliet, IL 60435
 815-727-9259 firstpresjoliet.org

No Room, No Vacancy

There was no room in the inn (Luke 2, Verse 7). We all know this story. The innkeeper told Mary and Joseph that he had no room, no vacancy. All he had was a lowly stable in the back of the property. There our Savior, the Savior of the world, was born in a manger.

Where will you put Jesus in your life this Christmas season? Will He be front and center, or with all the other activities of the season, will you say “No room, no vacancy”? Perhaps you will find some room in the back reaches of your life. Take a moment to examine where you want our Savior this Christmas season.

Will it be front and center or will it be in the background to be dusted off once or twice a year or when you need help? Let us always make sure Jesus is first in our lives.

Remember that no matter what our situation is, God always has room for us.

-Dave Steinberg

Youth Group Christmas Party

December 17th 6-8pm

Mark your calendar!

WHY30 Christmas Party

December 15th @7pm in the Fireside Room

- * The main dish will be provided but please bring a (peanut-free) food item to share.
- * There will be a White Elephant gift exchange (\$20 limit).

Don't forget to wear your festive attire!

Children's Church Corner

Faith Word: JOY: A feeling of gratitude or happiness.

Lesson for Sun. 12/17: 'Jesus Brings Joy' - Luke 2:1-7

Bible Verse: "With all my heart I glorify the Lord! In the depths of who I am I rejoice in God my savior. -Luke 1:46-47

Lesson for Wed. 12/13: 'God Delights in His People' -Zephaniah 3:16-17; Luke 15:8-10; Psalm 18:19; Psalm 37:23; Psalm 149:3-5

Church Family

Continued prayers of healing for Mary Caisley's sister Linda.

Sympathies and prayers to the family and friends of Mary "Molly" Wachtl who passed on November 23 in Arizona.

As we go into this holiday season let us remember those who experience anxiety and loneliness during this season and pray that Christ's peace will find room in their hearts.

SUNDAY SERVANTS 12/17/23

USHERS: unknown

COFFEE: unknown

LITURGIST: Pat Haldorson and Lisa Haldorson-Diaz

ADVENT CANDLE: Pat Haldorson and Lisa Haldorson-Diaz

ACOLYTE: Joseph Adler

SOUND: Keith LeVasseur

VIDEO: Todd Hayden

POINSETTIAS

Cut off date extended—order now!

Each poinsettia is \$15. Place your poinsettia order today on our website or with the form in your bulletin. **ALL ORDERS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY THE END OF SUNDAY 12/17.**

December 13th, 2023

Stewardship Report

2023-2024 Budget	\$772,600
Year to Date Income	\$412,426
Year to Date Expenses	\$392,291
Per Capita	\$42.00

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.

The PNC Process

Planning	Mission Study	Data Evaluation	Resume Evaluations	Interviews	Pastor Visits	Pastor Selection	Pastor Acceptance
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The PNC has been working diligently for months on the Mission Study Report to develop a clear understanding of who First Pres is today and who we are called to be. The study talks about our church both past and present. Compiling this information has been a huge undertaking, and is vital in helping us find the person best suited as our next called pastor. The PNC is working on some edits to the report and will post the revised version on our website when it is completed.

A Letter from Transitional Head Pastor, Roy Backus

Grace and peace be with you. Grace and peace.

This is a special week for the Backus family, because my father married Dorothy Olive Thorssen, a beautiful Swedish lady. Although my father's family was spread all over the place, Mom's family stayed close in northwestern Wisconsin. I remember our family's semiannual trips to Solon Springs and the warm familial visits with grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. There was comfort and joy every time we visited. That warm hospitality rubbed off on my children, and especially on my oldest daughter. In high school she was an exchange student to Sweden. Later she continued to learn Swedish, and took extra time to study our Swedish roots. A few years ago she connected with the Santa Lucia society in Chicago, and she and my youngest grandchild participate in the Santa Lucia celebration every year. (Santa Lucia Day is a Swedish festival that is celebrated on December 13th every year. It is a day to honor St. Lucy, an Italian martyr known for her compassion and generous nature. The festival is held to bring light and hope during the winter solstice.) In Chicago the evening's events start in Andersonville. It includes crowing of the maiden to lead the procession from the Swedish American Museum to Ebenezer Lutheran Church. The church setting is perfect to gain the Advent Season Spirit, and the music, dance, loving environment and celebration of faith and family is just right. My daughter has truly brought me in closer contact with our heritage. So, although I'll miss First Presbyterian's Wednesday night celebration of cookies and carols, I will be celebrating with you and my family at the same time.

Grace and peace, and may you bring light to others,
Pastor Roy

A Letter from Director of Children and Youth Ministries, Lindsay Gordon

Hello everyone!

Just like it always does, it already feels like December is going by so quickly. As we've spent some time pondering hope and peace these last two Sundays of Advent, I've been reflecting on the meaning of *shalom* - signifying peace as wholeness and completion. As we reflect on the shalom of the season, I'd like to fast forward one week and talk about joy.

Our word for the month in our children's classroom is "joy," and this past Sunday, we were discussing Joseph's joy following his encounter with the angel in his dream. The people of Israel had waited generations for the Messiah - and now, before Mary and Joseph's eyes, they had the first glimpse of this promise coming to fruition. Rescue and restoration was coming - *shalom* was on its way. I can't think of a better reason to rejoice! This peace beyond our understanding still whispers to our hearts; may the wonder that comes with it never be lost on us.

This Sunday, our students will gather for our Christmas party, and our last student gathering of 2023! Beginning January 7th, we'll have youth group every week. I can't wait!

See you at Midweek!

Blessings,
Lindsay Gordon

A Letter from Associate Pastor, Bo Mircea

This Sunday I am preaching on the beloved Christmas text Luke 2:8-20 - Angels and Shepherds. This story is amazing to me, as it captures the human response of the shepherds, trembling with fear as they hear God's plan, but also the beauty of God working in their hearts, and turning that fear into joy. As I think of that story, I feel like it is representative of so much of the human experience, the tremble we feel as we get called to serve or step out in faith, and the calm and joy we experience once we step out and do the work of faith. That is the prayer I have for us as a church today, that God's peace and comfort will reside in our hearts, and the joy of serving the Lord will inspire not just us, but the people we run into every day. Lord, make this season a season of joy and peace for all. Amen.

Happening at 806 Western:

- **Christmas Breakfast this Sunday** - Night Deacons are inviting you to come and enjoy a beloved tradition in our church. From 8:30-9:40 this Sunday morning please come and fellowship, enjoy French toast, ham, fruit, and eggs and let your heart be captured by the hospitality that is at the heart of this church.

- **Kids Choir is playing BELLS this Sunday** - And they sound great! Come support the young worshipers and their love and dedication to serving the Lord.

- **Christmas Eve** is almost upon us, with three candlelit services. Each service is built a little different, from the Family Service (10am), to the Jazz Casual Service (7pm), to the Traditional Service (11pm). But all of them will lack the shine and joy if you are not here. So we pray that you will find time to join us on Christmas Eve for one of the three services and the Musicales by our own FPJ musicians: 10 am/ 7 pm/ 10:30 Christmas Musicales / 11:00 pm.

Blessings,
Pastor Bo

PS. One more thing: This Sunday the Sanctuary will be beautifully overflowing with poinsettias :)

Christmas Breakfast

December 17th 8:30-9:40am

Our Night Deacons will be continuing the tradition of a free special Christmas Breakfast on Dec 17th. Feed your body with ham, French toast, eggs, and fruit before feeding your soul in worship.

Dinner Out Group

December 21st 5pm

Angeli's in Naperville. RSVP to Carol Kline (815) 630-7099

MIDWEEK:

Special Christmas Midweek tonight!

5:00-5:30 - Kid's Music and Bible Classes (*split by age*)

5:35-6:05 - Kid's classes swap

6:15-6:45 - Fellowship Dinner for all

6:45-7:15 - **Christmas cookies, hot cocoa, and carols!**

7:30 - Chancel Choir Practice