



e-News

December 18th, 2024

805 Western Ave., Joliet, IL 60435

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firstpresjoliet.org

A letter from Lead Pastor Bo Mircea

Isaiah 9:6

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders, and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

On the Fourth Sunday of Advent, people of faith are called to gather around the Prince of Peace. For people of faith, gathering around the manger comes not just with a sense of wonder, but also with a call to be peace makers. As a pastor, I pray for peace every single day. Peace in my heart, peace in the church I love and service, peace in the hearts of those that experience fear and anxiety, and for those that are lonely and their hearts are shaken by despair, I pray for peace in the community around us, in the hearts of the people that are in positions of authority. I pray for peace and comfort when tragedy finds its home in our neighborhoods. I know that peace is not easy to come by, and yet I strive for it every day. I hope that these thoughts will encourage you to find your own peace. From that estranged relative, neighbor, or coworker, to being gracious to yourself, may you find your way to the quiet manger and hear the words: God is with us.

Praying for you this season, May the God of peace find you at peace.
Blessings,
Pastor Bo

Christmas happenings at 805 Western:

- **SUNDAY 8:30 am - Christmas Breakfast**, you know what goes well with good people? Good food, fellowship, and a great Sunday morning worship. I think we have the food, fellowship, and worship part covered so what we need is the good people- that's you :)
- **TUESDAY 4 pm - Family centered Candlelit Service** - Carols and the Christmas Story will remind us of those old Christmas times, while the younger worshipers will get to experience maybe their first Christmas service. Talk about creating some memories.
- **TUESDAY 10:30 pm** - Our talented musicians have been working on sharing their hearts and passion with you all. Some days you want to go to church twice. And this is that day.
- **TUESDAY 11:00 pm** - There is nothing like a Traditional Service in this Church, as I have heard for so many years. That is my prayer for all of us, that we can bring all of our family and friends to experience a glimpse of what this church in worship looks like.

Hey everyone, I've got some exciting news to share! I'm taking some time off after Christmas to visit my parents. I can't wait to see them! In fact, I'm flying out on Christmas day, and I'm even expecting to meet Santa on my way over. While I'm in Romania, the front office will be there to help with any pastoral care needs, hospital visits, or anything else you might need. Pastor Mark and Pastor Craig have both agreed to take care of the flock while I'm away. If you need anything at all, don't hesitate to reach out to Jen and Scout. They're amazing and will be more than happy to help. I hope to see you all this Christmas weekend! Merry Christmas, Bo

Church Family

Prayers of health and healing for:

Jean Smietanski, Klint DeGeus, Mary Jane Johnson, and John Savage.

Prayers for baby Anna, granddaughter of Sarah and Craig Randolph, as she is back in the hospital.

Prayers for healing after surgery for Judy Garrison, Judy Bartels, and Henry Province.

Are You a Shepard Also?

In Luke, Chapter 2, the angels announced the birth of our Savior to the shepherds. Upon hearing this news, they immediately left their flocks and went in search of the baby Jesus. When they found Him, wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger, they fell to their knees and worshipped Him. After leaving the stable, they shared the news with all of the wondrous things that they had seen and heard.

What will we do this Christmas season? Will we be like those Shepherds? During our time at work, at Christmas parties, and gatherings with family and friends, will we continue to spread the news of our Savior, the Christ Child? Will we remember that He has given us peace, joy, comfort, and salvation in our lives?

May the Lord bless us this Christmas season and in the upcoming year.

- Dave Steinberg

Children's Church Corner

Faith Focus: Christmas Storytellers—We prepare for Jesus together.

Lesson for Sun. 12/22: Jesus and His Family—*Luke 2:1-7*

Bible Verse: "A child is born to us." *Isaiah 9:6*

Faith Idea: Faith in Community—how do you practice faith in your community?

THANK YOU to everyone who has donated their time to our Soar High program each Wednesday and on Sundays when the kids share the songs they've been learning. Thank you to our Soar High families and everyone who makes this ministry possible.

SOAR HIGH AND MIDWEEK

Both Wednesday night programs are on break for the holidays. But don't worry, they will return Wednesday January 8th. We wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! See you in January!

We'd appreciate your help taking down our Christmas decorations!

Worship council sincerely thanks all the volunteers who assisted us with Advent decorating on Saturday, November 30th—you did a WONDERFUL job! Now we must think about taking these decorations down after the Christmas holidays. **We'll be meeting on Saturday, January 4th at 9am to complete this task.** There is a FREE pancake breakfast that day as well, so you can come early (starting at 8:30) and have breakfast beforehand! Please consider helping—putting away these decorations doesn't take very long, so we should finish well before noon with YOUR help! If you can assist, please sign up on our website.— With sincere gratitude, First Pres Worship Council

GIVING AND TAX SAVINGS

Those with Traditional or Rollover Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) must begin taking mandatory withdrawals at age 73. You're required to pay US and IL income taxes on these Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs). If you add the Qualified Charitable Distribution step, **YOU PAY NO U.S. or IL INCOME TAX WHILE THE CHARITABLE GIFT QUALIFIES AS AN RMD.** In effect, you can donate SOME OF WHAT YOU'D OTHERWISE PAY IN TAXES to the church or another public charity! Savings typically range from 30 to 40% of the gift amount. If you're not familiar with QCDs, contact Ken Graham at kengraham8@msn.com Please put your name and QCD in the subject line.

CHRISTMAS BREAKFAST **December 22nd at 8:30am**

Come over early to enjoy a delicious breakfast cooked by Lisa Haldorson-Diaz and the Night Deacons before the 10am worship service.

December 18th, 2024 **Stewardship Report**

2024-2025 Budget	\$747,600
Year to Date Income	\$409,105
Year to Date Expenses	\$398,234
Per Capita	\$43.00

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.

SAVE THE DATE— COMING UP

12/22 Christmas Fellowship Breakfast
12/24 Family Worship Service at 4pm
Christmas Musicale at 10:30pm
Traditional Worship Service at 11pm
1/4 Christmas Un-decorating at 9am
1/12 Congregational Meeting

HELPING HANDS UPDATE:

This marks the 19th year of the Helping Hands ministry here at First Pres. Since our inception in October 2005, we have delivered over 4800 meals, including over 200 this year. We would like to thank those of you in the congregation who have made referrals, have prepared and delivered these meals, and have taken the time to visit with the recipients. We are currently utilizing Golden Corral for our meal preparation. If you know of anyone you would like to refer to receive a meal or if you would like to help with the delivery of these meals, please contact the church office or Dave Steinberg at 331-212-0627. Again thank you. God bless all of you.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

January 12th

Session will be holding a Congregational Meeting to elect new elders and deacons.

SUNDAY SERVANTS 12/22/24

USHERS: Reed Mott, Mark Dykema, Scherrie Sanchez,
Mark Fumagalli, Ed Schultz

COFFEE: Jasmine Keir

LITURGIST: Maria and Jim Pongrace

ACOLYTE: Rylie Blaser

SOUND: Rich Pool

VIDEO: Matt Blaser

Childcare Volunteers

Thank you to those who responded and will help our Children's Ministry Team in the future. We are still looking for some folks who are willing to help in the nursery if needed on a Sunday if there's an abundance of kids. If you are interested please contact the church office.

CHRISTMAS EVE AT FPJ

4pm—Family Worship Service
(nursery care will be available for kids under age 3)

10:30pm—Christmas Musicale

11pm—Traditional Worship Service