

December

Here and Now!

December 2023 Volume 70, Issue 12

PASTOR LEANNE’S MESSAGE:

A Year of Music

“I hear the real, though far-off tune that hails the new creation.”

How Can I Keep from Singing?

The Book of Revelation, often used manipulatively to scare people, was actually written to give comfort and confidence to those who were suffering a world crisis. As a feature of this comfort, the tragedies of the book are interrupted by frequent interludes of songs – specifically, the songs of heaven which declare the definitive and unstoppable victory of God over all the world.

I have thought about this a lot this last year, as our 150th anniversary unfolded in song – the amazing concert prepared for us by Debi and the churches of Mandan and St George, the beautiful string quartet, our choir’s regular gift in song - our talented musicians, St. Andrews Day Bag-piper, the Jamestown choir, the amazing and always up-lifting Westminster Chimes. Even as I write this, I am happily anticipating Christmas worship, on December 10th, with the Chancel Choir and the Westminster Chimes. A service which is my standard happy starting signal to Christmas, when “Joyous Music” is on the bulletin. In an uncertain world, music is a gift from God, sent at interludes, to offer us comfort and peace!

Typically, Advent starts with songs in minor keys... the purpose of which is to help the celebrant to experience the longing for redemption that one sees in “O Come, Oh Come Emmanuel.” I love those hymns, but I admit, there is so much good theology in Christmas carols like “O Holy Night” (truly he taught us to love one another; his law is love and his gospel is peace” and “Joy to the World” (He comes to make his blessings known far as the curse is found) – that I am not against sneaking a few of them into the Advent season... the Christmas holiday is simply not long enough to reacquaint oneself with all their beauty. Christmas hymns celebrate the joy and hope of all things good – the happiness promised in Christ Jesus. With their coming, the longing of advent is fulfilled as “Christ the Lord is Born Today!”

That is why, as the Advent season comes, I want to encourage you to sing – sing every Christmas tune you know, and even if you forget a line, or verse here and there, belt it out! Let the songs of childhood celebrations stir in your hearts, let them stir up memories and feelings, let their words preach to you the old, old story of an on-going deep rich love.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE	
PASTOR’S MESSAGE	1-2
PARISH NURSE NOTES	2-3
RESOURCE COMMITTEE	4
ADVENT BIBLE STUDY HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE	5
BREAKFAST WITH SANTA	6
RED & GREEN POTLUCK THE BANQUET	7
“BRAG BOX”	8
SESSION HIGHLIGHTS	9
BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES	10
CALENDAR	11
UPCOMING EVENTS FAMILY NEWS	12



Go Christmas caroling if you can, come to worship, sing, and hear singing, listen to carols on the radio. Laugh at yourself when you miss a note – fake it when you don't know the second verse. Purposely immerse yourselves in the songs of the season... and let them help you enter into a spirit of true celebration and worship.

Because, even the angels sang with the coming of Christ, promising a day of peace for the people of the world. Sing, then. Sing with the angels even if you don't sound like an angel. Let your heart be glad, for Christ has come and will come again with salvation in his wings.

Merry Christmas, Y'all!

Leanne



FROM OUR PARISH NURSE - WANONA

Holiday Greetings everyone! This year has gone by fast. This will be my last article for the monthly newsletter as my last day of serving you as your Parish Nurse will be December 31st. In all my years as a registered nurse this position has been the most meaningful, and rewarding experience. Please know that you will be forever in my thoughts and prayers.

My new adventure will be “retirement”. I just cannot imagine not working; I have always had a job even at the age of nine. My first paid job was babysitting and from there I joined my sisters working as nurse's assistant (now called CNA) until high school graduation. While in College, I cleaned the dorm bathrooms, and worked as a nursing assistant at a Bismarck long term care facility. Eventually, I progressed to a resident assistant in the dorm. After graduating from college, I ventured out to Idaho, Georgia, Colorado, South Dakota, and back to North Dakota. I tried all kind of nursing jobs including medical, surgical, oncology, intensive care, cardiovascular, operating room, Public Health Nursing, Home Health Nurse, Head Start Nurse Coordinator, Delta Dental Ronald McDonald Care Mobile, occupational nursing, employee health, infection control, long term care, and of course Parish Nursing!

I want to thank the congregation for welcoming me into your homes and sharing your life journey's. Your support and kindness has been overwhelming. I will always remember your open arms in letting me be your Parish Nurse and friend. God Bless you all! Also, a big thank you to my boss and co-workers, Pastor Leanne, Shawn, Vanessa, Maureen (Mo) and Carol. It has been such a pleasure working with you all. Thank you for your support and help in ways you will never know. You are a blessing from God! Now it's time for me to take care of my family and myself. They say “retirement” is busier than working. I guess I will find out. Please welcome your new Parish Nurse, with open arms as you did for me. I hope their ministry will be a blessing for all of you. Here is a prayer for your new parish nurse...

Dear God,

Send your Holy Spirit into my heart today and hear my prayer for health and healing. Use their hands as if they were Yours to touch and help heal others. Use their ears as if they were Yours to listen to those who are in pain, lonely, or indecision. Use their heart as if it was Yours to love and accept those that are different from us, lonely, and afraid. Use their arms as if they were Yours to embrace those who need reassurance and security. Use their soft voice as if it was Yours to pray and provide comfort. Use their gentle spirit as if it was Yours to bring your Holy presence into those who need you close. Give your strength and ability to work through the Holy Spirit and give of yourself to others in need. Amen.

I LEAVE YOU SOME HUMOR!

One day shortly after the birth of their new baby, the mother had to go out to do some errands. So, the proud papa stayed home to watch his wonderful new son. Soon after the mother left, the baby started to cry. The father did everything he could think of to do but the baby wouldn't stop crying. Finally, the dad got so worried he decided to take the baby to the doctor.

After the doctor listened to the father all that he had done to get the baby to stop crying, the doctor began to examine the baby's ears, chest and then down to the diaper area. When he undid the diaper, he found that the diaper is indeed full.

"Here's the problem", the Dr. said, "He needs a change."

The father was very perplexed, **"But the diaper package says it is good for up to 10 lbs.!"**

A boy came late to Sunday School, knowing he was usually very prompt, his teacher asked, "Johnny, is there anything wrong?" "No, ma'am, not really," he said, "I was going to go fishing, but my daddy told me that I needed to get on up and go to church."

The teacher was very impressed and asked Johnny if his father had explained to him why it was more important to go to church than to go fishing. "Yes ma'am, he did," Johnny said.

"My daddy said he didn't have enough bait for both of us."

Every Sunday a little old lady placed \$1,000 in the collection plate. It went on for weeks until the pastor, overcome with curiosity, approached her. "My dear, I could not help but notice that you put \$1,000 a week in the collection plate", he said. "Why yes", she said, every week my son sends me money and what I do not need I give to the church". "That is wonderful but how much does he send you?" the pastor asked. "He sends me \$2,000 a week", she replied proudly. "Your son is very successful", the pastor said. "What does he do for a living?". She answered, "He is a veterinarian". The pastor said, "That is a very honorable profession. Where does he practice?"

She replied, "he has one cat house in Kansas City and another in New Orleans".

Parish Nurse Recognition at worship Sunday, December 10

WANONA - WE WILL MISS YOU... FPC Staff

Who Says Men Don't Remember...

A couple were Christmas shopping. The shopping center was packed and as the wife walked around she was surprised to discover that her husband was nowhere to be seen. She was quite upset because they had a lot to do and hence, she became so worried that she called him on her cell phone to ask where he was. In a quiet voice he said, "Do you remember the jewelers we went in to about five years ago, where you fell in love with that diamond necklace that we couldn't afford, and I told you that I would get it for you one day?" the wife got choked up and said, "Yes, I do remember that shop."

He replied, "Well, I'm in the pub next door!"



CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING WILL BE HELD SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17

Why is the Christmas carol “What Child Is This” so meaningful to us? When we sing that carol, we sing of a flesh-and-blood human, born under the most vulnerable of conditions. We sing of Emmanuel, “God with us.” We are reminded of infants born in our own life stories.

The words “so bring him incense, gold and myrrh” remind us not only of the gifts the Magi offered to the baby Jesus -the perfect gift - but also how we can support those whom God loves with our own gifts. With the words “the babe, the Son of Mary,” we sing of all those who are vulnerable and in need, which includes those who receive support from the Christmas Joy Offering. It supports retired ministers and church workers and their families through the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions as they face medical and emergency costs. The Offering also supports students in Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color, as they pursue their education and prepare to bring their gifts in service to the church and world.

Your gifts to this worthwhile program will be most appreciated.

Thank you for your consideration.

Resource Management Committee

John Richter



9TH ANNUAL BISMARCK COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS CONCERT

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8TH AT 6:30PM

HOSTED BY THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS, 1500 COUNTRY WEST RD

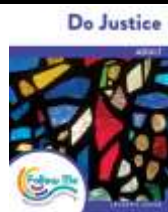
OUR OWN WESTMINSTER CHIMES ENSEMBLE WILL BE PLAYING!



“Do Justice” - Fall Adult Bible Study

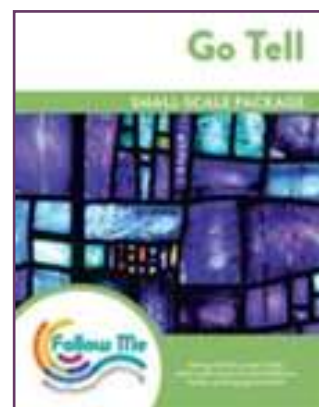
10:00am Saturday, December 2

1:30pm Saturday, December 9



ADULT ADVENT BIBLE STUDY - **“GO TELL”**

Ever since angels lit the Bethlehem sky and sent amazed shepherds to meet the baby, people whose lives have been touched by Jesus have been telling others the story. Go Tell demonstrates to us a practice of sharing a gift in love. The stories for this unit are grounded in the prophecy and events surrounding the birth of Jesus, and so are ideal for Advent, yet this story isn't one that should just live in the month of December. God's people can, and should, share this good news every chance we get. “Go Tell” is, simply put, evangelism. Jesus teaches and preaches and gives the imperative to do the same. Join Elder Rusty Bender & friends for meaningful conversation!



Thursdays - December 7, 14, 21, and 28 at 7:30 pm in the Parlor

THE HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE

During Advent, our congregation has an opportunity to participate in the **“Tree of Love Ministry”**. This ministry supports and connects our congregation to the families of children in the First Presbyterian Child Care Center.

For virtual members, a list will be emailed out once it is finalized.

Please bring or send items to the church; the church's address is 214 E Thayer Ave. Bismarck, ND 58501.

Please wrap your gift, and put the gift tag with its contents on the gift.

Place your donation under the tree.

All gifts should be delivered by **Wednesday, December 13.**

We will wrap any unwrapped gifts.

For many families, requests for laundry soap and other household items reflect how limited their financial resources are. Please understand that for many of these families, our donations of these items will allow them to use their limited resources for other necessities like food and rent. Our families are grateful for your donations!





Breakfast

With

Santa

Saturday, December 9th

9:30 am - 11:30 am

First Presbyterian Church ~ Ramstad Hall

214 E Thayer Ave * Bismarck, ND

Please use West entrance labeled Child Care Center

Join Santa and our Boy Scout Troop 6 for a pancake breakfast!

There will be a puppet show and craft tables for all to enjoy.

Santa will be attending so be sure to bring the whole family for some holiday fun before you head out to do your Christmas shopping.

Free will offerings accepted.

The Hospitality Committee invites all - including members, guests, and friends of the Church to come downstairs to Ramstad Hall following our Youth Christmas Pageant on December 17th. Please bring food to share, possibly “red or green”... There will be a sign up sheet in the Narthex. We welcome your presence!



Our church family had two opportunities to assist at "The Banquet". First, on November 2nd. Jerry Lindblom, Don Bigwood, Clyde Johnson, Otto Reile and John Richter prepared a delicious roast beef dinner. A total of 190 meals were served at a cost of \$4.73 per meal. Many church volunteers and our Boy Scout Troop were available to serve and clean up.

Second, 523 meals (40 turkeys) were served on Thanksgiving Day. A huge thank you to all who volunteered and Rusty Bender for providing beautiful piano music throughout the day.

Whether you provided a monetary donation, trimmed fat from roast beef, smiled, washed endless dishes or served a helping of mashed potatoes, thank you! You made a huge difference in feeding senior citizens, single parents and their children, hurting and broken people, and those seeking fellowship.

Our church should be very proud of the service we provide to our community.



Thankful

Brag Box:

CONGRATULATIONS

Laci Rauser

&

Erik Hein

FPC Childcare Center employees



Both kids have been accepted to BSC for fall of 2024.
Erik plans to go into law enforcement and Laci social work.



Proud Great-Aunt Kathy Wachter with great nephews Broden & Treyson

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

November 28, 2023

CLERK'S REPORT

The death of Luella Bowman was noted.

Session approved a membership request from Rose and Thomas Trenbeath. They are joining FPC by affirmation of faith. Total membership is 311.

A request for baptism for Iris and Koa Falcon was granted by Session. Baptism will be January 21. Both children have been participating in PAC.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Income YTD Actual	\$432,623	Budget	\$418,912
Expense YTD Actual	\$451,792	Budget	\$509,890
NET Income	-\$19,169	Budget	-\$90,978
Unrestricted General Fund	\$215,356		

MODERATOR'S REPORT

Pastor Leanne thanked those Elders who will finish their terms at the end of December.

She reminded chairs to have a continuity file that can be passed to incoming chairs.

Wanona Goetz will be honored on December 10.

Session approved a request for baptism of Iris and Koa Falcon. Both participate in PAC. Baptisms will be January 21.

The annual congregational meeting will be January 21. Committee chairs should have your yearly report in the office by December 29.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Administrative and Personnel

Interviews of candidates for the Parish Nurse position are beginning. Maintenance position remains unfilled.

Session approved the 2024 pastor compensation package: total effective salary--\$85,806.44; benefits--\$43,028.70; total compensation \$128,835.14. Pastor receives 4 weeks of paid vacation. Staff including pastor will have a 4% increase in pay.

Hospitality

Most of the gift tags on the Tree of Love have been taken. Gifts will be given to 3 Child Care Center families.

Church members helped serve Thanksgiving dinner at the Dream center.

Proclamation-Christian Education

The committee will help with the "Santa" event. Audrey Simmons may become an intern beginning in January.

Proclamation-Worship and Music

Session approved the following 2024 communion dates: first Sunday of every month; Maundy Thursday, Easter Sunday and Christmas Eve

Property and Equipment

Pastor Leanne noticed a problem with the roof over her office window. The committee will investigate this.

Resource Management

The following 2024 budget was approved by Session: Total income--\$517,500; Total expense--\$578,468;

NET income -\$60,968. Due to a large general fund, the deficit yearly budget can be covered.

So far pledges for 2024 are close to \$300,000.

Board of Deacons

Poinsettia plants will be delivered to members who have lost a family member and to those on the visitation list.

Child Care Center Board

Breakfast with Santa is December 9. Staff evaluations have been completed.

Session approved the following 2024 CCC Budget: Total income--\$433,883; total expense --\$450,136

NET income -\$16,253 (deficit).

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Session approved Chris Henriksen to continue as Elder, Class of 2025.

Alice Nix, Clerk of Session





First Presbyterian Church

214 East Thayer Ave.

Bismarck, ND 58501

Phone: 701-223-6091

firstpresbyterian@fpcbismarck.com

www.fpcbismarck.com

Sunday Worship: 10:00 am

Office Hours: 8:00 am - 4:30 pm



Pastor

Rev. Dr. Leanne Simmons

Finance Assistant

Carol Thompson

Administrative Assistant

Maureen Chrest

Parish Nurse

Wanona Goetz

Christian Ed. Youth Director

Mark Jensen

Organists

Arvy Smith & Gail Snustad

Chancel Choir Director

Debi Rogers

Westminster Chimes Director

Lael Hoerauf

Audio/Visual Specialist

Josh Stokka

Membership Services

Judy Lentz

Child Care Center Director

Shawn Stettner

Child Care Center Asst. Director

Vanessa Hein

Nursery

Mary Jones

Christian Ed. Intern

Ruth Jensen



ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

SUNDAYS - 1:30 PM

VIA - ZOOM

NOT - 12/17 OR 12/24



**Please let us know if we've made
a mistake, omission or if you
would prefer not to have your
special day published.**

~ Thank you ~

BIRTHDAYS

DECEMBER

Linda Tonolli	1st
Hailee Bitz	4th
Laken Gratz	8th
Bert Asselin, Jr.	8th
David Shockman	9th
Audre Goll	9th
Linda Stensrud	11th
Danette Pengilly	11th
JoAnn Hodny	12th
Richard Belisle	15th
Janice Mayer	16th
Chris Hellman	17th
Laura Adair	18th
David Bachmeier	18th
Bob Kinnischtzke	20th
Kade Massey	20th
Jae Reile	21st
Ella Gutzke	22nd
Patricia Keller	27th
Doug Sturlaugson	28th
Shiny Mahlum	30th
Kaye Halvorson	31st
Carolyn Barks	31st
Lori Lee	31st

ANNIVERSARIES

DECEMBER

Paul & Kristi Ronningen	18th
Jim & Nanc Skaret	21st
William & JoAnn Hodny	30th



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 10:00am Fall Adult Bible Study in Parlor "Do Justice"
3 10am Worship "1st Sunday of Advent" communion 	4 1:30pm Prayer Shawl Ministry 6:00pm Suzuki Christmas Recital 6:30pm Scouts	5 11am Bal. & Strength Class 5:45pm Prop.& Equipment 6:30pm Lay Pastors	6 Noon "Munch & Mingle" 5:45pm PAC/Teens 6:30pm Bells 7:30pm Choir	7 11am Bal. & Strength Class 5:30pm Yoga 7:30pm Advent Bible Study in Parlor	8  6:30pm 9th Annual Community Christmas Concert	9 9:30-11:30am "Breakfast with Santa"  1:30PM Fall Adult Bible Study in Parlor
10 10am Worship "JOYOUS MUSIC SUNDAY"	11 5:30pm Worship & Music 6:30pm Scouts	12 11am Bal. & Strength Class NOON "BLUE CHRISTMAS" SERVICE in Chapel 5:30pm CCC Board	13 5:45pm PAC/Teens-last night of 2023 NO Bells 7:30pm Choir	14 11am Bal. & Strength Class 5:30pm Yoga 6:00pm Hospitality 7:30pm Advent Bible Study in Parlor	15	16 1:00pm Children's Christmas Program - dress rehearsal
17 10am Worship NO Sunday School CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM BP CLINIC Red & Green Potluck! Christmas Joy Offering	18 Noon -Resource Management NO Prayer Shawl Ministry NO Admin.& Personnel 6:30pm Scouts	19 11am Bal. & Strength Class 7:00pm Christian Ed	20 NO PAC/Teens NO Bells 7:30pm Choir	21 NO Bal. & Strength Class NO Yoga NO Deacons 7:30pm Advent Bible Study in Parlor	22	23
24 NO 10am Worship NO Sunday School Christmas Eve- 4:30pm 9:00pm 31 10am Worship NO Sun. School	25 OFFICES CLOSED 	26 OFFICES CLOSED No Presby Friends No Session	27 NO PAC/Teens NO Bells NO Choir	28 NO Bal. & Strength Class NO Yoga 7:30pm Advent Bible Study in Parlor	29 OFFICES CLOSING at Noon	30

-Upcoming Events-

Sunday, 12/3 - **“1st Sunday of Advent”** - communion
Monday, 12/4 - **6:00pm “Suzuki Christmas Recital”**
Friday, 12/8 - **6:30pm** 9th Annual Bismarck Community Concert
Saturday, 12/9 - **9:30-11:30am “Breakfast with Santa”**
Sunday, 12/10 - **“Joyous Music Sunday”**
Chancel Choir & Westminster Chimes
Tuesday, 12/12 - **Noon “Blue Christmas Service”**
Church Chapel
Sunday, 12/17 - **“Children’s Christmas Program”**
followed by **“Red & Green Potluck!**
Blood Pressure Clinic
Wednesday, 12/20 - **NO PAC/Teens - NO Bells - NO Choir**
Sunday, 12/24 - **NO 10am service**
4:30pm (early)
9:00pm (late - communion)
OFFICES CLOSED Dec. 25 and Dec. 26,
Dec. 29 (at Noon),
January 1, 2024

