HERE AND NOW!

December 2016 Volume 63, Issue 12



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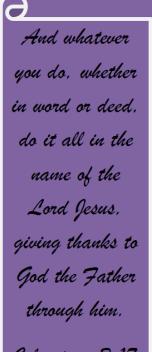
TREE OF LOVE

The Outreach Committee has again, set up the Tree of Love with much gratitude for your past loving actions.

The Tree of Love will be in the Narthex from November 20th through December 11th. Each paper ornament on the tree contains a gift request. Please take one or more ornaments from the tree, purchase the item and



return the ornament and gift item to the church by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 14th. Please wrap your gift (or use a gift bag) and tape the ornament to the gift. If your ornament request is a gift certificate, please place the gift card with the ornament taped to it in the box at the base of the tree. Your generous gift donations are for families with limited financial resources who attend the FPC Child Care Center, and recently arrived refuge families. The Outreach Committee thanks you in advance for caring!



Train a child in
the way he
should go, and
when he is old he
will not turn
from it.

Proverbs 22:6

And whoever
welcomes a little
child like this in
my name
welcomes me.

Matthew 18:5





Join the Child Care Board in saying "thank you" to all of the childcare staff
who give so much of themselves to our littlest members!

We will be collecting cash and gift card donations for staff meeting dinners
– any amount (or pizza place!) welcome ~our goal is \$200.00!

~Donations accepted at the front office – make checks to FPC and specify

"staff meeting funds"~

"...the free Gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23)

CHRISTMAS GIFTS!

Hooray for Christmas Gifts!

Isn't <u>that</u> really our deep-down answer to the question: "What is Christmas all about?"? C'mon grownups, too...when we are honest, at our deepest level? Or, is it?

Oh, I know...we serious and sincere Christians, at some time during the holiday season each shake our heads in dismay, distressed by what we see going on around us, thinking or saying something like: "Jesus Christ is the true reason for the season!" "We should put Christ back into Christ-mas!" "It all has become too commercial!" I know I do—say and think those things.

However, if we pause to think deeply—reflectively and prayerfully...we discover that Christmas *really IS* about Gifts. I don't mean the "gifts" we hectically shop for, wrap, and hope are "just the perfect presents" for the persons they are intended for.

But isn't the birth of Jesus the Messiah truly God's Gift to you and me, and to all of humanity? Isn't Faith the Gift that Jesus' coming makes possible for each one of us? Isn't the Grace God gives us—that welcomes us, that we do not at all deserve on our own—truly a Gift? Isn't the Abundant Life we live here and now made possible by the Gift of the Spirit of Christ alive within us? Isn't Salvation and Eternal Life made possible by the birth of Christ truly a Gift more precious than anything we can imagine?

Actually, Christmas IS all about the Gift and Gifts God makes possible to you and to me, and the whole world and all of creation...through the coming of Christ!

As we journey through this Advent season...preparing for, anticipating, and awaiting the coming of Christ this year—into our lives and into our world, in exactly the ways God knows we each need most—lets us each, and all, be a part of this "spiritual gift exchange." *Receiving* the Gift of Christ into our lives and spirits—and also *Giving* the Gift of Christ to others in our lives and our world, that we each uniquely have to offer.

"Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received." (1 Peter 4:10)

How exciting it is to share the blessing of this amazing season with you!

May you have a Glorious, and Joyful, and truly Gift-ed Celebration of Jesus this Christmas!

David Reiter

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Time to put the 2016 Pony Express out to pasture

Congregation helps to build a stronger church

The First Presbyterian Stewardship Committee would like to thank members who have turned in an estimated of giving for 2017. Our Stewardship drive is almost complete. If you have not already done so, we ask you to please send in your estimate of giving form whether or not you are going to pledge.

We are 10 pledges and about \$10,000 behind last year, but we can still catch up. At last report, church members have sent in 157 pledges for a total of \$314,948. That compares to last year's total of 167 pledges totaling \$324,215.

If you have questions or concerns, Pastor David would be happy to speak with you. You can call him at the church office—223-6091.

Thanks again for helping First Presbyterian build a stronger church.





WINTER WEATHER ANNOUNCEMENT

With the recent storm that hit Bismarck/Mandan, the church office was closed Tuesday, 11/29 and Wednesday, 11/30. **Any time Bismarck Public Schools close, First Presbyterian Church and Child Care Center closes as well**. So any scheduled meetings or events will be cancelled automatically if the church closes due to weather. If you have any questions, please call the church office. Thank you for your understanding!



RED & GREEN POTLUCK

Following the Youth Christmas Program on December 11th.

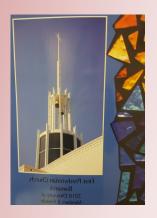
The Membership Committee invites any and all church members to come together after the Youth Christmas Pageant on December 11th to enjoy each other and share food together. Families and guests are welcome! Please plan to bring a main dish, salad, vegetable dish, fruit or dessert to share.

Please invite friends and family to attend, and please sign up on the Volunteer board in the Narthex so we know how many places to set.



NEW PHOTO DIRECTORIES ARE HERE

Pick up your copy of our new directories. The Membership committee has been distributing them following Sunday worship to those who participated in the portrait sessions. We are now inviting all members and regular visitors to pick one up Sunday, December 4th, also following worship. The directories will than be available at the church office.



A THANKSGIVING TO BE PROUD OF

We are so grateful. We did it! Our First Presbyterian Church successively hosted the Community Thanksgiving

Dinner. The eight member committee began our work about seven weeks before the special event. Sue Sorlie and Gladys Cairns served on the team which included Sister Kathleen representing Ministry on the Margins, representatives of Heaven Helpers Soup Café, New Song Church and Trinity Lutheran Church. Duane Ehrens led us as chief

> chef with Karen Ehrens providing the leadership of all our work. Over 90 volunteers worked in all areas to produce this Thanksgiving Day experience serving 245 guests. Included in the volunteer crew were Ella and Tedd Gutzke, Vic Sonneman,

Donna and John Richter, Dick Weber and Lynn Dodge all representing our church family. Charee Linton was our rock during the course of producing this community dinner. She was such a wonderful support to us being always one step ahead, keeping us on track.

Volunteers peeled 160 pounds of potatoes, roasted 13 turkeys, served sweet potatoes, stuffing, pie and all the rest of the trimmings. The atmosphere throughout Ramstad Hall was inhabited by the Spirit of Love. The team is so appreciative of First Presbyterian Church for sharing our beautiful building for this event. We are grateful for all the support from Pastor David, the Outreach Committee, Session and church family members. Thank you! Hopefully we'll do this again in 2017.

















CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

This past November, our youth attended a Multi-Church Lock-In, welcoming churches from all over Bismarck, Mandan and Wilton. Our youth have been begging for a Lock-In since August, and this is the first that has been offered locally for the school year. As youth group numbers around the country continually seem to fade, leaders from a few churches got together to promote a big overnight event. But, as these numbers continue to dwindle, one by one, churches were not able to attend. "Youth aren't signing up. We can't get adults to chaperone. It won't work for us this time" In the end, our First Presbyterian Church joined with Trinity Lutheran Church and Lord of Life Lutheran Church for an awesome night of fun.

We ended up with almost 30 youth total, ranging in age from 6th to 11th grade. We enjoyed games together and almost three hours of "Thunder Alley" bowling and arcade. Our youth formed bowling groups of six and had a lot of fun together! Most of the youth still had lots of energy once we returned to the church, even after spending a half hour at Prayer Stations. Our youth quietly went from room to room taking time to pray with a Finger Labyrinth, over a flag for our country, putting gems on a map for certain areas of the world, and in one room, just quietly to themselves. Our youth interacted in a quiet way, sharing time in prayer, with teens they had just met.

As it happens in most overnights with youth, most of the youth ended up asleep, but there's always that small group who want to tough it out and stay up all night. Out of our group of thirty, 12-13 kids stayed up until 8 am, continually asking for games to play, and taking over the church throughout the night. Game after game was played, and often times they would come up with their own ideas for fun, coming together to try something new. As the night wore on, and I got to know these kids giggle by crazier giggle, I started to realize I had no idea who was in what grade, or what church they were a part of. As I started to ask questions, I found a good third of our group didn't even come from our three churches, but were invited by a friend. We were reaching more churches than we had realized!

As the night turned to morning, and more and more fun was being had, I noticed how I was the only one asking questions. None of these kids seemed to care what school anyone was from, what church they came with, or much else either way. The kids interacted, and enjoyed each other's company immensely throughout the night! Even as the controversial topic of our new President-Elect came up, the youth were light hearted and respectful of each other's comments and personalities.

As I look to our Advent Season, I can't help but compare this feeling to what may have happened around the manger on the night of Jesus' birth. I highly doubt that there were many questions as the Shepherds, Wise Men and Angel arrived. No one asked "who are you and where did you come from? What do you believe? (Who did you vote for?). They came together to celebrate this magical birth and what was to come from this gift from God. As we celebrate Christmas, under different circumstances each and every year, I hope we can find a way to treat our neighbor the way this historical event carried, and in the way a group of teens would do together on a Friday night.



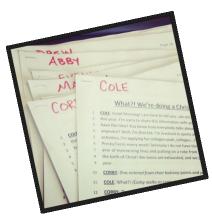
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Events:

Christmas Pageant and Movie Afternoon! Sunday, December 11th

All PAC and PresbyTeens youth taking part in the Christmas Pageant are to be at Church by 8 am on Sunday, December 11th. The Pageant will be during 10 am Worship, with a "Red and Green" Potluck hosted by the Membership Committee following Worship





Movie Afternoon!

All ages are invited to join us in the Movie Room after the Potluck to enjoy the Christmas Movie "Elf"! We will be together until 2 pm, hopefully a perfect time for parents to enjoy some quiet time or some quick Christmas shopping.



PAC and PresbyTeens Schedule: Wednesdays at 5:45-7:30 pm

December 7: Pageant Rehearsal December 14: Christmas Fun!

December 21 & 28: No PAC or PresbyTeens

Session Highlights

November 2016

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS November 22nd, 2016

CLERK'S REPORT

The death of Lynn Strombeck on November 7th, 2016 was reported with total membership now at 517. Communications from Teen Challenge and Youth Works were read. Session approved the baptism request by Jennifer And David Gronos for December 4th, 2016 for their son Bryar Christian Gronos.

ELDER TRAINING

Session members continued discussion of the book by Joan Gray, "Spiritual Leadership for Church Officers". Chapter 7 entitled "The Church: Christ's Body in Our World" described three principles to deal with difficult situations.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Total Income YTD Actual	\$372,975	Budget	\$385,038
Total Expense YTD Actual	\$377,205	Budget	\$389,534
NET Income YTD Actual	-\$34,219	Budget	-\$4,496
Unrestricted General Fund	\$179,428	<u> </u>	
Memorials	\$555.00		

CHILD CARE CENTER BOARD

Damita Engel, chair, presented the 2017 Child Care Center Budget. It included fee increases for supplies and for infant/toddlers. Total income estimate is \$594,578 and total expense estimate is \$592,020. Session approved the budget. Session also approved an internal and external fundraiser beginning in January 2017 for the new outdoor classroom equipment and gravel/grass/fence. The total to be raised over 2 years is \$40,000.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS (from minutes and meeting)

Administrative and Personnel—No organist has responded to the ad for that position so Theresa Heupel will be hired to play the piano. All staff performance reviews have been completed. Elders are being assigned to committees.

Worship and Music—Fred Larson explained that the organ curtain repairs were around \$1,600.

Outreach—The Tree of Love has requests from Child Care Center families as well as Lutheran Social Services refugee families. Everything is set for the Thanksgiving Dinner in Ramstad Hall. The committee donated \$1,000 to the Heaven's Helpers Soup Café.

Stewardship—Fifteen giving units have not returned a pledge. The goal of \$333,000 has not yet been met. The total for the Peacemaking Offering was \$1,250. Session will decide in December the recipient of the Christmas Eve Offering.

Property and Equipment—Issues with the elevator occur when it is "overused". The Procurement Policy is being drafted. A new leaf blower was purchased.

Membership—The committee continued discussion of its role in the mission of the church. The Red/Green Potluck will be December 11th following the children's/youth program.

Session Highlights (cont.)

November 2016

Christian Education—The committee finished the discussion of assessment questions. Rev. Johnny Rhodes will be moving to Canada after December so that will change the configuration of Confirmation. There was a multi-church lock in for grades 6-12 involving FPC and a couple Lutheran Churches. After bowling, there were activities at Lord of Life Lutheran Church.

Nominating—One more member at large is needed for the 2017 Committee.

Business and Finance—Session approved the proposed 2017 budget with \$444,000 total income and \$500,713 total expense. Money from Endowments and General Fund will cover the difference.

REPORTS OF RELATED GROUPS (from minutes)

Board of Deacons—At the December 15th meeting, deacons will be packing trays with cookies and fruit to be delivered go elderly members on the visitation list. No church has inquired about the glass communion cups. All the communion serving pieces were polished.

Fine Arts Festival—The wrap up meeting was held October 20th. With the retirement of Ann Lynch and Priscilla Wilson, new chairs are needed for the High Tea. Phyllis Lindblom and Donna Richter have also retired from this committee.

PASTOR'S REPORT

Rev. Reiter stated that the staff position descriptions for the church manual were completed. Adult Education discussions will begin again January 8th, 2017.

Session approved the following dates: January 8th for ordination/instillation of officers; January 21st, 9-Noon for a Session retreat; January 29th for the annual congregational meeting.

A committee of Jay Cofell, Karen Ehrens, Bill Jensen, Carole Watrel and Alice Nix, with Session approval, will draft a letter to the congregation to share information from the discussions which Session held over the past few months.

Time away: Nov. 23-26; Dec. 26-Jan 2 and some days in December depending on weather/schedule.

OTHER

Session approved the request from Youth Works to use Ramstad Hall on December 15th. The \$125 building use fee will be paid by Outreach Committee budget.

Alice Nix, Clerk of Session



ADMINISTRATIVE & PERSONNEL

The Administrative and Personnel Committee has been busy working on personnel matters this past month and continuing into December. New job descriptions have been drafted for all church staff and performance reviews have been completed for all staff members. Some new policies and procedures have been drafted for inclusion in a new Deacon and Elders Manual to be given to all Deacons and Elders in January as new church officers take office. The work on the new manual has been ongoing for much of 2016 and has involved a lot of time from the committee and Pastor David, Gladys Cairns and Vickie Haas.

A new contract for the remainder of November and December for Pastor David was drafted and has been approved by Session and signed by David and myself. Session has also approved a contract for David for 2017 and that will be signed very soon by both of us after approval of the budget and last weeks Session meeting. We are so pleased that he will continue with us in 2017. Please take the time to thank him when you see him next.

Dick WeberChair 2016

PRAYER CHAIN

A prayer chain provides the power and strength of collective prayer for those in need. If you would like to join the prayer chain, or have a prayer need, please contact:

Nanc Skaret at

skaret@bis.midco.net

Or 258-4703

You may also call the church office at 223-6091





LIBRARY UPDATE

What books have inspired you?

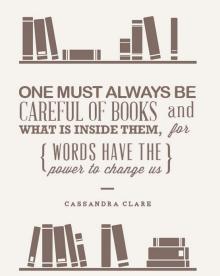
We are so excited for our Church Library to be back on the Main Floor, and have done a lot of work to donate our most used books, and old copies. As we look forward to 2017, we hope to bring in new titles and books that inspire, and we're asking for your help! Starting in January, we hope to

accept books that have been important in *your* life.

Please think of a book from your childhood, young adult experience, family life or recent finds that have brought you joy and inspired you and your faith! We hope to fill our bookcases with important books to share with others within the congregation. Starting in January, we will have a Book Donation Drop-where you can fill out a label describing why you loved the book, and your name if you wish to include it.

Take some time in this busy month of December to consider what books you may wish to get rid of from home, or keep an eye out for any special book you wish to donate to our Church Library for 2017! We are hoping to bring in Children and Adult Books, as well as Gently Used or New Items. We look forward to seeing what inspired reads people are wishing to share with one another!

"One must always be careful of books and what is inside them, for words have the power to change us." –Cassandra Clare





December Facts

The 12th month of the year is an outstanding one!

December is the last month in the Gregorian calendar. Its name is based on the Latin term for ten. In the Roman calendar, December was the tenth month until the addition of January and February at the beginning of the year. In the Northern Hemisphere December has the shortest daylight hours and marks the beginning of winter. December provides the longest days in Southern Hemisphere, as it is the beginning of summer. December is a month home to many religious holidays.

Below are some fun facts about December:

- 1. The birthstone of December is turquoise.
- 2. Zodiac signs for December are Sagittarius (November 22 December 21) and Capricorn (December 22 January 19).
- 3. The birth flower of December is the Narcissus.
- 4. World's AIDS Day is celebrated on December 1st.
- 5. December 3 International Day of the Disabled Person
- 6. Universal Human Rights Month
- 7. National Read a New Book Month
- 8. In December, Nobel Prizes are awarded.
- 9. On December 4, 1791, The Observer newspaper (the first Sunday newspaper) was first published in Britain.
- 10. Christmas Day is celebrated on December 25th.
- 11. On December 7, 1941, The United States Naval Base at Pearl Harbor was attacked by Japanese planes.
- 12. On December 20, 1803, the Louisiana Purchase was completed.
- 13. Kwanzaa is celebrated on December 26 January 1 every year.
- 14. National Stress Free Family Holiday Month
- 15. December 27th is National Chocolate Day
- 16. On December 29, 1862, the bowling bowl was invented.
- 17. Poinsettia Day is on December 12th.
- 18. On December 3, 1967, the first heart transplant was completed.
- 19. On December 17, 1903, the Wright Brothers made their first flight.
- 20. On December 14, 1791, the Bill of Rights was passed.



How Loving Yourself Can Change the World

Did you know you have the power to change the world every single day? All you need to do is love yourself, and that positivity will radiate. You have a unique gift to give, and once you see the value in your smile and self-esteem, the world around you changes. Self-esteem is an overall reflection of one's worth. Unfortunately, low self-esteem prevents people from gaining healthy friendships, living a positive life and contributing to the community. Maxwell Maltz, an American cosmetic surgeon, said, "Low selfesteem is like driving through life with your hand-break on." Stop pumping the brakes on life and become more altruistic simply by loving yourself. Here are 3 side effects you'll enjoy:

- **Become kinder**—When you learn to accept everything about yourself, flaws and all, you develop a more positive attitude which permeates through your everyday actions. You smile more, and you're more likely to do more small deeds. You really can change someone else's day for the better with just a smile and a kind word.
- **Relationships improve**—With a positive and unconditional self-love, relationships naturally become more supporting and loving. Not only does your optimism spread to those closest to you, but you become more accepting of your family members' and friends' flaws.
- **More involved** Unconditional self-esteem is infectious, and you're likely to spread it to your family and friends, but also to those you help in the community. You'll be more likely to volunteer and make an impact in the community while bettering the lives of others just with self-esteem.



LAY READERS

Donna Richter Dec. 4th Dec. 11th Dale Hoerauf Dec. 18th Ann Gallup Dec. 24th 5:30 p.m. Damita Engel Dec. 24th 11:00 p.m. Kim/Daniel

If you are unable to serve on the date scheduled, please find a replacement and then contact the office with the changes.

223-6091

COMMUNION SERVERS Sunday, December 4th

Jay Cofell	Bob Kinnischtzke		
Kathy Wachter	Karen Ehrens		
Kim Wassim	Ella Gutzke		
Jody Bachmeier	Lynne Bigwood		
Priscilla Wilson	Kent Ellis		

Communion is available to be served at home, hospital, or nursing home to anyone who is unable to worship with the congregation. Please call church office to schedule time.

223-6091

<u>LIGHTERS</u>						
11/27/16	10:00 am	Charbonneau Family				
12/4/16	10:00 am	Engel Family				
12/11/16	10:00 am	Gratz Family				
12/18/16	10:00 am	Henriksen Family				

12/24/15

2016 ADVENT CANDLE

5:30 pm

Still In need

of

Volunteers



This Month's Anniversaries & Birthdays

BIRTHDAYS DECEMBER

Linda Tonolli 1st Stan Halling 4th Hailee Bitz 4th Laken Gratz 8th Bert Asselin, Jr. 8yh David shockman 9th Audre Goll 9th Linda Stensrud 11th **Danette Pengilly** 11th Arne Arneson 12th JoAnn Hodny 12th Richard Belisle 15th Janice Mayer 16th Chris Hellman 17th Laura Adair 18th **David Bachmeier** 18th Arley Gallup 19th Caitlin Van Voorhis 20th **Bob Kinnischtzke** 20th **Kade Massey** 20th **Iae Reile** 21St Ella Gutzke 22nd Bob Tonolli 22nd Patricia Keller 27th 28th Doug Sturlaugson Shiny Mahlum 30th Kaye Halvorson 31St **Caroline Barks**

ANNIVERSARIES

John & Kim Dixon 5th

Paul & Kristi Ronningen 18th

Jim & Nanc Skaret 21st

William & JoAnn Hodny *30th*

All birthdays and anniversaries are taken from the church's membership database. If we made a mistake, or missed you or a loved one, we apologize and ask that you please let us know so we can update our system. If you do not want your birthday listed in a bulletin or newsletter, please let us know that as well. Thank you!



31**s**t



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 12:00pm Stewardship Comm. 6:00pm Membership Comm.	2	8:30am Lay Preachers 10:30am Women's Step Study
4 10:00am Worship ~ Baptism of Bryar Christian Gronos 10:30am Sunday School	7:00pm Boy Scouts 7:00pm Christian Education Committee	6 1:30pm FAF Meeting 5:00pm Suzuki Music 5:30pm Property & Equipment Committee	7 5:30pm PAC/ PresbyTeens Pageant Rehearsal 6:30pm Westminster Chimes 7:30pm Choir	8 6:30pm Officer Training (Parlor)	9	10 10:30am Women's Step Study
7:30am Pageant Arrival Time 10:00am Christmas Pageant ~ Worship 11:00am Red & Green Potluck (Ramstad)	12 5:00pm Admin. & Personnel Comm. 5:30pm Worship & Music Comm. 7:00pm Boy Scouts	13 5:00pm Suzuki Music 5:30pm CCC Board Meeting	14 12:00pm Munch & Mingle (Rankota) 5:30pm PAC/ PresbyTeens 6:30pm Westminster Chimes 7:30pm Choir	15 6:00pm Outreach Committee (Conf. Rm) 7:00pm Deacons (Parlor)	16	17 10:30am Women's Step Study
18 10:00am Worship 10:30am Sunday School	19 7:00pm Boy Scouts	20 12:00pm Business & Finance Committee 7:00pm Bridge	21 6:00pm Session 6:30pm Westminster Chimes 7:30pm Choir *No PAC/ PresbyTeens	22	23 Office Closed	24 5:30pm Christmas Eve Worship Service 11:00pm Candle Light Worship Service
25 10:00am Worship *No Sunday School* MERRY CHRISTMAS!	26 Office Closed	27	28 6:30pm Westminster Chimes 7:30pm Choir *No PAC/ PresbyTeens	29	30 Office Closed at 12:00 pm	31 New Years Eve!



FAMILY NEWS

** We recognize the pain felt with the loss of a loved one and send our condolences and prayers to the friends and families of those listed:

Lynn Strombeck Kathleen McDonald

"And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." ~ John 16:22





** On December 4th, 2016 we will be celebrating the Baptism of :

Bryar Christian Gronos, born to David & Jennifer Gronos on 8/23/16.

Sunday Worship Schedule

Worship: 10:00 a.m.

Church Office Hours

Monday—Friday

8:00 AM-5:00 PM

(Closed over Noon Hour on Friday)

Church Staff

Pastor Rev. Dr. David Reiter

Administrative Assistant Charee Linton

Finance Vickie Haas

Organist Jan Candee

Choir Director Debi Rogers

Bell Choir Director Lael Hoerauf

Custodian Les Hornbacher

Child Care Director Shawn Stettner

Asst. Child Care Director Vanessa Hein

Membership Services Judy Lentz

Membership Services Shelli Peterson

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