



Here and Now
December
Newsletter!

December 2024

Volume 71, Issue 12

INSIDE THIS ISSUE	
PASTOR'S MESSAGE	1-2
UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES GROCERY BAG MATS	2
BRAG BOX CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING	3
PARISH NURSE NOTES MVCHP HOMELESS COALITION MUNCH & MINGLE	4
CCC NEWS BREAKFAST WITH SANTA!	5
HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE: TREE OF LOVE THE BANQUET THANKSGIVING DINNER	6-7
CHRISTIAN ED ~ YOUTH!	8
BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES	9
CALENDAR	10
SESSION HIGHLIGHTS	11
ST. ANDREW'S DAY CELEBRATION!	12

PASTOR LEANNE'S MESSAGE:

They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." 2 Peter 3:4

Advent is a season meant to give voice to our deepest longings. The sober tunes of Advent like, "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" are deliberate liturgies of stressful waiting in which the people of God sing out their most painful need for the intervention of God. Advent is designed to open us up, to tell the truth of our spirits – to be exposed before God as people who must have things that only God can supply.

This is how all of the nativity narratives open – with longing and desperation that has gone on too long. Israel awaits a Messiah while generation die under Roman rule. Prophecies of God' deliverance unfulfilled, hang over every word. A young maiden believes she will never see a just world because the government is too corrupt. An old man believes he will die childless because God has not answered a lifetime of prayers. And taxes... heavy, agonized taxes that fund the very government that crushes their spirits. Advent always begins with the questions: "where is God? Why haven't my prayers been answered? Why are the bad guys winning?"

And then, Christ arrives. Quietly, in ignominy, and in poverty, and the heavens ring out with the long-for answer: "he is here! God has answered! The good guys are finally going to win!" And everyone whose hope was dying is suddenly vivified – and a young maiden sings of the fulfillment of prophecy, the overthrow of a corrupt government and an unjust wicked world. The Kingdom has arrived because the King is here.

Except, it doesn't. Not completely. What arrives in Christ is the beginning of the answer to prayer, the start of the Kingdom; hope touches down with the feet of Christ, and everywhere he goes, he demonstrates what the Kingdom is like, as he feeds the poor, heals the sick, eats with outsiders and forgives sin. What he brings is partial fulfillment, and even more promises. His death is a huge disappointment. His resurrection a shocking twist of belief. And then, he is gone. Leaving the church to carry on his mission of advancing the Kingdom of God.



PASTOR'S MESSAGE CONTINUED:

This season, as every season, I am always struck by how much of our belief system can only thrive if our hearts are doggedly hopeful and our perspectives are fueled by patience. Lions do not lie down with lambs, guns have not been beaten into plowshares... and here we are in Advent, with aching hearts that are still dreaming the dreams that Mary and Joseph's generation dreamed. The Apostle Peter saw this coming. He knew we would be asking, "where is the promise? – when will peace on earth *actually* come?" And he replies, "but do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead God is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

In other words, even in the day of our deepest longing, God is at work, and the difficult periods of waiting are somehow connected to God's mercy, not God's indifference. The prayers which we lift up in daily desire and need are ever present before the throne of God – God is at work. God will come through. This is the call of Advent – dare to believe again. Refuse to get jaded. Don't give up and despair, don't worry that you are on your own. Advent: the "coming/arrival" of God is here to remind you, once again: "God is not dead, nor doth he sleep. The wrong shall fail, the right prevail, with peace on earth goodwill to men (and women!).

Leanne

UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES:

Dec. 7 -	9:30-11:30am Breakfast with Santa!
Dec. 8 -	Children's Christmas Program Followed by Red & Green Potluck
Dec. 10 -	Blue Christmas Service in Chapel
Dec. 15 -	Joyous Music Sunday
Dec. 22 -	Westminster Chimes Sunday
Dec. 24 -	4:30pm Christmas Eve (early service) 9:00pm (late service) - communion
Dec. 24 & 25	FPC & CCC OFFICES CLOSED Merry Christmas!
Dec. 31 -	OFFICES CLOSE AT NOON
January 1-	FPC & CCC OFFICES CLOSED Happy New Year!
January 26 -	Annual Meeting

Collecting plastic grocery bags for a good cause!

Our Hospitality Committee is collecting used plastic grocery bags for a project to make mats to give to homeless people. The bags must NOT have any holes. The committee is working with a woman who creates the mats, like the one pictured here, by hand-weaving the plastic bags. It takes about 500 bags to make one mat. The committee decided to test whether the congregation would support this effort, hoping this could be a long-term outreach (and environmentally friendly) project for our congregation. The mats will be given to groups who work with the homeless in our area!



Brag Box:
Congratulations - **Izabella "Bella" Baltzell**
Daughter of Brian & Alley
Great-grand daughter of Judy Lentz
Cast member: the Greatest Showman
A dance production by: Bismarck Danceworx Studio



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. **Christmas Joy Offering will be December 8th.**

Your gifts to this worthwhile program will be most appreciated. Thank you for your consideration.

John Richter, Resource Management Committee 3



We are there. ✨ CHRISTMAS JOY
SPECIAL OFFERINGS

PARISH NURSE NEWS - Merry Christmas to all of you!

I hope you will be able to spend time with family and friends this holiday season.

I have been enjoying the senior nursing students from University of Mary shadowing me. I hope those of you we visited enjoyed them as well. So far, I have received positive feedback from the students. It is rewarding to show them a form of community nursing that requires critical thinking, patient advocacy and nursing skills that expand beyond hospital nursing. They have really enjoyed the Strength and Balance class as well!

Our Strength and Balance class has been having an increase in participation and I would encourage you to come and try a class! It is a wonderful group of people and there are no requirements. You do what you can, and we have fun! There will be NO CLASS on December 24th, 26th 31st and January 2nd, but will be back to our normal Tuesday and Thursday routine at 11:00am starting January 7th.

I will not be having a blood pressure clinic in December, however, please reach out if you would like your blood pressure taken. I can meet for a home visit or an office visit.

NO Exercise Class on December 24, 26 or 31. NO class on January 2, 2025.

See you on Tuesday, January 7, 2025!

Sincerely, Carmen



NO BLOOD PRESSURE CLINIC IN DECEMBER

IF YOU NEED YOUR PRESSURE CHECKED

FEEL FREE TO CALL AND SCHEDULE A TIME WITH CARMEN!

The Missouri Valley Coalition for Homeless People, Inc., is a regional nonprofit dedicated to helping ensure that housing and other basic human needs are within everyone's reach in an affordable and dignified manner. The Coalition is comprised of over 40 nonprofits, government agencies, churches, businesses and citizens, all of which have an interest in the issues of homelessness and/or the less fortunate.

The Missouri Valley Coalition for Homeless People (MVCHP) hosted a variety of events during **Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week in November**, to build awareness and understanding of the impact of hunger and homelessness in our region. These activities joined national and state-level efforts to educate, increase awareness, and promote action to end hunger and homelessness.

First Presbyterian is a member of MVCHP and supported Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week in a variety of ways. Members volunteered at collection sites, assisted in organizing clothing giveaways, and promoted activities during the week. Using Hospitality Committee funds, feminine hygiene products were purchased, re-packaged and delivered to four agencies in Bismarck that assist women in need. The receiving agencies were Ministry on the Margins, Emergency Food Pantry, Abused Adult Resource Center, and Youthworks.



Munch & Mingle! December 4th

Please come for Munch & Mingle the 1st Wednesday of the month
12:00pm at Broadway Grill Tavern



CCC NEWS:

Our very talented Child Care Center staff member Eileen created the Thanksgiving bulletin board which you can check out in the southwest entry area of the church near the Child Care Center office area. The staff members and CCC Board give thanks for the children, parents and family members who entrust their children's care to the FPC Childcare Center. May each and every one of you have a very Merry and Joyous Christmas!

Please plan to attend the third annual "**Breakfast with Santa**" which will be held on Saturday morning, December 7th from 9:30 -11:30 a.m. in Ramstad Hall.

-pancakes served by the Boy Scout Troop 6 -puppet show and crafts for ALL ages along with a visit from Santa!

-FREE will donations are encouraged to benefit the Boy Scout Troop!

Use the "West" entrance labeled Childcare Center.



The Child Care Center has part-time and full-time positions available along with great employment flexibility for high school and college students. For more information, contact **Shawn or Vanessa at 258-7490**, or learn more about the center using this **QR code!**



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 welcomed to support Boy Scout Troop 6

“Tree of Love” is ready for our childcare families in need...

Each year our church childcare staff choose families who could use a little help making this Christmas merry. The Hospitality Committee creates ornaments for the items the families request so they can have some gifts under the tree. Church members are asked to take an ornament or two so they can buy the requested gifts. Members are asked to wrap each gift, attach the ornament and put it under the tree. Gifts should be under the tree by **Sunday, December 15th**. Thank you in advance for your generosity.



Tree of Love:

Family #1 –2 parent household with 13-month old –son

Wish list for baby boy:

shirts, pants, pajama onesies, 12-18 month
Hard cover sound books
Haircut gift card to Golden Comb in Mandan
Leap frog learning book
Diapers - Parents Choice brand– size 5
Unscented wipes - Parents Choice brand
Crayola color wonder mess free markers
Toddler size table and chair set
Large toddler size towels

Wish list for mom:

Healthy recipe book
Joico defying damage shampoo & conditioner from Evolve Salon

Wish list for dad:

Under Armour shin high socks, size: men’s 13
Nike or Under Armour sweatpants, size: 2X
Nike or Under Armour shorts, size: 2X

Wish list for family:

Walmart gift card
Sam’s Club gift card

Family #2 - 2 parent household with 11 yrs. & 6 yrs. old daughters. (This is a staff member whose household has experienced a very difficult year)

Wish list for 11-year old daughter:

Nickel -free earrings
Barnes & Noble gift card, she loves to read
Art alcohol markers from Walmart- \$29.86
Drawing/sketching pad & pencils
Wireless earbuds with charging case (can be found at Walmart- \$24.88)
Harry Potter book cover collage (Walmart- \$27)
Leggings, Sweatpants, Long sleeve shirts (kids size XL 14/16)
Sweatshirts (size adult XS)

Wish list for mom:

Winter hat & gloves
Starbucks gift card
Grand Theater gift certificate for movies

Wish list for dad:

Play Station gift card
Men’s house slippers, size 7
Yu-gi-oh Legendary Dragon deck of trading cards (Target- \$29)
Philips Norelco series 5000 electric razor (Target- \$29.99)

Wish list for 6-year old daughter

Chapstick
Colored pencils & markers
Just Play Barbie Fashionista (Walmart- \$24.97)
Disney Munchlings-Stitch (Walmart- \$14.97)
Disney Stitch plush (Walmart- \$10)
Barbie dolls (Walmart- \$15)
Barnes & Noble gift card
Pajamas kid size M 7/8
Long sleeve & short sleeve shirts– kid size M 7/8

Wish list for family:

Gain moonlight breeze laundry pods
Gain original dryer sheets
Downy April Fresh fabric softner
Finish dishwasher pods
Hand soap
Batteries– AA and AAA
Vacuum
Grocery gift card
Tidy Cat 24/7 cat litter
Temptations dry cat food– chicken flavor

Family #3 –2 parent household with 8yr & 5yr old daughters and 1-1/2 yr old son

Wish list for 8-year old daughter:

Hover- 1 kick scooter
Gen-ME kids al-in-one airbrush designer kit from Target
Kinetic sand kit
Pink binoculars

Wish list for 5-year old daughter:

Hover– 1 kick scooter
Mini Karaoke Machine
Kinetic sand kit
6 Disney princess cash register



Wish list for 1-1/2 year old son:

- 3 wheel blue scooter
- Toy vacuum
- Interactive Toy tablet
- Little Tykes tough workshop



Wish list for dad:

- Men's fuzzy robe, size 2XL, grey or black (Amazon)

Wish list for family:

- 32 inch outdoor swing set, 440lb. saucer swing set with heavy duty metal A-frame and adjustable ropes, round swing sets for backyard (2 seat)

Wish list for mom: (Amazon or Walmart)

- Clarks women's Breeze fur ankle boot, size 9.5 black
- Luvamia women's casual long sleeve lapel button slim work office blazer jacket, size XXL- hot pink
- Women's business casual blazer open front long sleeve work office blazer jacket with shoulder pads Fall 2024, size XXL- red

A big thank you to the crew from First Presbyterian churches in Bismarck and Mandan who prepared, served and cleaned up afterwards for "The Banquet" on November 7th. Over 250 people were fed a delicious roast beef dinner. In addition, your generous monetary donations are much appreciated!



Our church was the sponsor for "The Banquet" on Thanksgiving Day. It took many helping hands including our Boy Scout Troop 6 - to serve 530 meals! A huge thank you for all volunteers and to those who made a financial donation. Your kindness is appreciated!



CHRISTIAN ED:

In October, the PAC and Teens had a Halloween carnival. Thank you everyone that donated candy! For Thanksgiving, we had a feast together. Next, they are getting ready to perform a Christmas pageant! The Pageant will be on December 8th. Other events coming up are Breakfast with Santa, Red and Green Potluck, and "Open Your Heart". So much to do this Christmas season!

-Youth Ministry Director, Mark Jensen



hello

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BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

DECEMBER 2024 - BIRTHDAYS

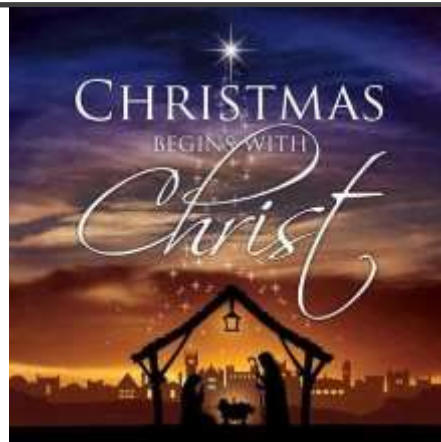
December 1	Linda Tonolli
December 4	Hailee Bitz
December 8	Laken Gratz
December 8	Bert Asselin, Jr.
December 9	David Shockman
December 9	Audre Goll
December 11	Linda Stensrud
December 11	Danette Pengilly
December 12	JoAnn Hodny
December 15	Richard Belisle
December 16	Janice Mayer
December 17	Chris Hellman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



ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL
SUNDAYS - 1:30 PM
VIA - ZOOM

DECEMBER 2024 - ANNIVERSARIES

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



**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 ~

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

Carmen Bryhn

Maintenance

Brandon Schildberger

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



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 10am Worship 1st Sunday of Advent 	2 1:30pm Prayer Shawl Ministry 6:00pm Suzuki Christmas Recital 6:30pm Scouts	3 11AM Bal. & Strength Class 5:45pm Prop.& Equipment 7:00pm Lay Pastors	4 Noon "Munch & Mingle" 5:45pm PAC/Teens 6:30pm Bells 7:30pm Choir	5 11AM Bal. & Strength Class NO Yoga	6	7 9:30-11:30am "Breakfast with Santa" 
8 10am Worship Children's Christmas Program Communion Followed by the Red & Green Potluck Christmas Joy Offering	9 NO W & Music 6:30pm Scouts 7:00pm Christian Ed	10 11AM Bal. & Strength Class Noon- Blue Christmas in Chapel 5:30pm CCC Board	11 5:45pm PAC/Teens NO Bells 6:30pm Choir	12 11AM Bal. & Strength Class 2:00pm Yoga 6:00pm Hospitality	13	14
15 10am Worship Joyous Music Sunday	16 Noon -Resource Management 1:30pm Prayer Shawl Ministry 4:30pm Admin.& Personnel 6:30pm Scouts	17 11AM Bal. & Strength Class	18 5:45pm PAC/Teens Last Night of 2024 6:30pm Bells 7:30pm Choir	19 11AM Bal. & Strength Class 2:00pm Yoga NO Deacons	20 6:00pm Christmas Caroling!	21
22 10am Worship Westminster Chimes Sunday	23 6:30pm Scouts	24 OFFICES CLOSED NO Bal. & Strength Class NO Presby Friends NO Session	25 OFFICES CLOSED Merry Christmas! 	26 NO Bal. & Strength Class NO Yoga	27	28
29 10am Worship 1st Sunday of Christmas	30 6:30pm Scouts	31 NO Bal. & Strength Class OFFICES CLOSE AT 12:00 NOON				

Annual Meeting - Sunday, January 26, 2025

**SESSION HIGHLIGHTS
NOVEMBER 26, 2024**

FINANCIAL REPORT

Total Income YTD Actual	\$417,956	Budget \$414,050
Total Expense YTD Actual	\$438,200	Budget \$488,153
NET Income	-\$20,244	Budget -\$74,103

MODERATOR'S REPORT

Pastor Leanne thanked all the participants in and planners of St. Andrew's celebration. A \$2,000 grant was received from Presbytery to help purchase video equipment. A reminder to all committee chairs that annual reports are due January 6.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Administrative and Personnel—Session approved the pastor's salary totaling \$131,217.52 which includes a 4% increase.

Hospitality—The Tree of Love gifts go to 3 families and should be brought by December 15. Red/green potluck is after service on December 8.

Proclamation-Christian Education—T-shirts will be ordered after December 1. The cost is \$20.00.

Proclamation-Worship and Music—Session approved communion dates for 2025: first Sunday of each month except April, which will have a communion service on April 17 and April 20. December will have an additional communion service at 9:00pm Christmas Eve.

Property and Equipment—The problem of the too bright balcony lights has been solved. Snow removal service will be the same as last year.

Resource Management—The special Christmas Eve offerings will go to the Child Care Center. So far, \$254,896 has been received in pledges and it is hoped that will increase to \$305,000. Session approved the 2025 budget: total income--\$533,500; total expense--\$618,615; net income--\$85,115.

Board of Deacons—50 poinsettias will be delivered.

Child Care Center Board—Breakfast with Santa is December 7.

Nominating—Session approved the following officers for 2025:

Treasurer—Ella Gutzke, Assistant Treasurer—John Bjornson;

Trust Officers—Keith Magnusson and Jodi Bjornson;

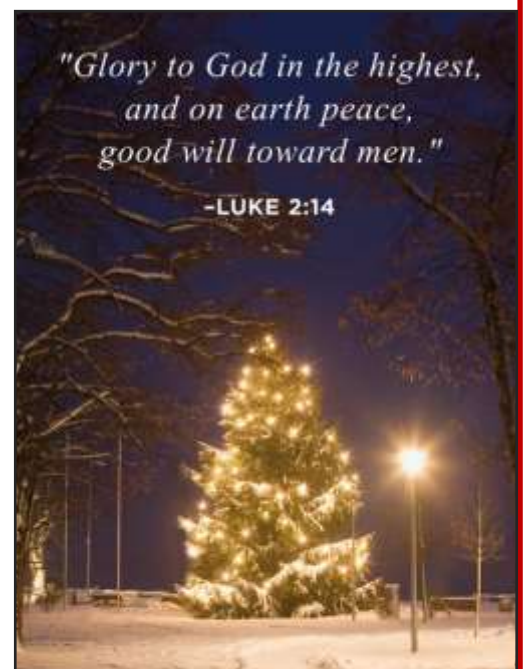
Clerk of Session—Alice Nix

Anniversary—The 150th booklet will be available at the annual meeting, January 26.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Elder Rick Lee and Deacon Allen Hoberg will be installed on a future Sunday.

Alice Nix, Clerk of Session



Sunday, November 24 - St. Andrew's Day

this year we celebrated with FPC of Mandan, and Glencoe Sloan!

Thank you to all who participated and came, despite the icy roads/sidewalks!



Lisa McEvers - bagpiper



Pastor Deanna Reikow & Pastor Leanne Simmons



Lay Ministers: Suzy, Stephan, Ray and Jim