DECEMBER
2019

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HOWARD LAKE

LAMPLIGHTER NEWSLETTER

From the Pastor's Desk:

Advent Greetings!

Thanksgiving is now in the rearview mirror, and onward we race toward Christmas. With Thanksgiving being late this year, it really does feel as though Christmas is coming at us at break-neck speed. The world tells us of all that we have to do and accomplish in these days of waiting. There are cards to send, programs to attend, parties and gatherings, cooking and baking, presents to purchase and wrapping to do. And that's on top of all of the things that we normally do!

And I can imagine God looking down on us and wondering how we have chosen to spend our time in this frenzy of activity, instead of preparing our hearts for the Joy that comes from the reason that we celebrate at this time, the birth of his Son. And not only in remembering that day long ago, but also preparing our hearts for Christ's coming again.

Where is Jesus in our celebrations?

Now don't get me wrong, I love to do all of these Christmas things! On these shortest days of the year, it helps to have the extra things to look forward to and not just bemoan the hours of darkness. And Christmas lights are one of my very favorite things!

While I decorate the Christmas tree, I usually play Christmas music in the background. And when I'm finished, I love to turn off all the overhead lights and sit in the midst of the boxes of tree decorations and admire the lights of the tree. Our tree has many special decorations that we have collected over the years. Silly decorations from when the kids were in elementary school and ornaments that we purchased as we traveled to different places. But for me, it's mostly the lights.

It makes me think of the true light that overcomes all darkness. The prophecy of Isaiah 9:2 says: The people who walked in Darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them light has shined.

We are blessed beyond all blessing in that we know, love and follow the Prince of Peace. We are blessed that as we look at the secular lights of the Christmas season, we can be reminded of the light of Christ. Too many in our world do not know and follow the light of Christ. They've lost contact with the church, their idea of Christmas carols is "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree" instead of "Oh Come All Ye Faithful."

But what are we as Christians supposed to do? First and foremost, we should always live a life that pleases God. And in our living, we should be a reflection of the love that we receive from God. I'm not big on being all in your face and beating others up if their beliefs are different or non-existent. But I am a firm believer in always showing kindness, compassion and caring to everyone. And when we do this, we are reflecting all of these things that Christ has so generously given to each of us.

There is a quote that is credited to St. Francis of Assisi. It says: ***"Preach the word at all times, if necessary, use words."*** Those are the words that I hold close to my heart. Those are the words that can bring Peace on Earth. It's our living and our doing that brings the light of Christmas to the world.

And if by chance you have the opportunity to invite someone to join you for worship during the Advent and Christmas season, then I pray that you will find the courage to do so. It's not easy, but it may be exactly what the person needs, and we know that our world needs a whole lot more Jesus!

Peace and Christmas Blessings!

Pastor Carol

Session Minutes, 11/20/19

Pastors Report:
Committee on Ministry approved the appointment of Carol Chmielewski to be our Commissioned Ruling Elder from September 1, 2019 to August 31, 2020. She will be formally commissioned in 2020. CRE Chmielewski has given the confirmation students a Christmas project. She has given each student $20.00 to buy gifts for teenagers for Love INC's teenage store.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Budget & Finance

Balance Sept, 2019	11920.01
Oct. 2019 deposits	12576.46
	24496.47
Oct. 2019 expenses	-6193.65
Balance October 31, 2019	18302.82

Finance committee suggests that we pay the balance of the insurance premium and balance of Per Capita for the rest of the year. Bookkeeper will pay these balances before the end of the year. The Proposed Budget for 2020 was accepted.

Building & Grounds
New refrigerator is in place, and this was paid for through the general fund. Cabinet above refrigerator has been repaired. Volunteers are on board for snow removal. The boiler is leaking again, and the stool in ladies room is running again. Carpet needs cleaning again.

Christian Education
Christmas program will be Sunday, December 15th. CRE Carol and Christie Tussing are working on this program.
On December 18th we will go caroling with pizza following. CRE Carol feels our confirmation class should be a two-year program. She has verbally committed to stay for two years.

Mission and Outreach
Change Sunday collected $156.45. We will participate in the Christmas Joy Offering coming up in December. Food drive collection is going on, and the barrel is in narthex. Hat and mitten tree will be put up in the Fellowship hall for donations to go to Wright County Community Action Council.

Personnel and Administration
Having been approved, the Child Protection Policy needs to be implemented.

Pastoral Care
Reta Blanchette continues to reach out to members with calls and cards. Communion will be served to shut-in's after Thanksgiving.

Worship
Church decorating for Advent will be done on Sunday, Dec. 1 and Dec. 8 after morning worship. Christmas Eve service will be at 4:30 pm on Dec. 24th with communion. CRE Carol will be off on December 29th.

Other Business
There was a review of the membership list. CRE Carol was asked to write letters to the following to see if they are interested in remaining active members of First Presbyterian Church: Tamara Freed, Emilee Gustafson, Gwyneth Larson, and Nic, Julie, Tyler and Jessica Workman. We were advised that Susan Colley could be removed by her Aunt Reta Blanchette. All of these persons will still be on our friends list.

Karen Neisen requested to use the building for a family Christmas party on Saturday, December 28. There will not be a charge for her to use the building.

Annual Meeting will be held on January 18, 2020. Committee chairpersons need to get reports into Secretary as soon as possible.

Nominating Committee needs to meet. The session appointed Michele Berg and Jim Thorne to serve as the two Elder representatives. Elder Cindi Berg will check to see who the At-Large members are.

The next meeting will be held Thursday, January 16, 2020 at 6:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Cynthia R. Berg
Clerk of Session

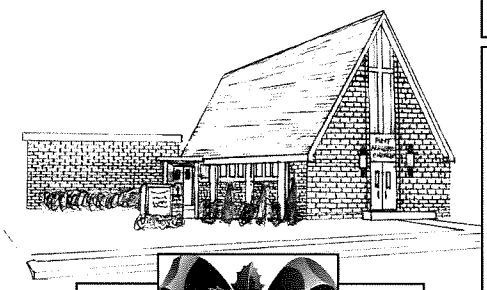
December, 2019

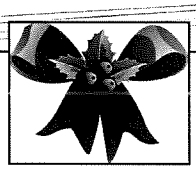
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURS	FRI	SAT
1 *1st Sunday of Advent* 9:30 am Worship & Communion Music: Gretchen Karg 10:30 am Fellowship & Decorating for Christmas 4-7:00 pm Visitation for Everrett Smith at Swanson Peterson Funeral Home	2 11:00 am Funeral for Everrett Smith	3 7:30 pm AA Meeting	4 5:30-7:00 pm Midweek Dinner & Youth Program	5	6 6:00 pm Wedding Rehearsal	7 4:00 pm Catheryn Barth & Trevor Mages Wedding
8 *2nd Sunday of Advent* 9:30 am Worship Music: Gretchen Karg 10:30 am Fellowship & Decorating tree	9 2:00 pm Mary Robinson's Birthday Celebration at Good Sam. 5:00 pm Committee Meeting Night	10 7:30 pm AA Meeting	11 5:30-7:00 pm Midweek Dinner & Youth Program	12 6:00 pm PW Christmas Celebration	13	14
15 *3rd Sunday of Advent* 9:30 am Worship & Children's Program Music: Gretchen Karg 10:30 am Fellowship & Jesus' Birthday Party (Workgroup 2)	16	17 7:30 pm AA Meeting	18 5:30 pm Christmas Caroling & pizza dinner	19 6:30 pm Stamp Club	20	21 *First Day of Winter*
22 *4th Sunday of Advent* 9:30 am Worship Music: Gretchen Karg 10:30 am Fellowship	23	24 *Christmas Eve* 4:30 pm Worship with Communion 7:30 pm AA Meeting	25 *Christmas Day* Office Closed No Midweek Program	26	27 Lamplighter deadline	28
29 *1st Sunday after Christmas* 9:30 am Worship Pulpit Supply: Music: Gretchen Karg 10:30 am Fellowship	30 Bloodmobile at St. John's Church in Howard Lake	31 *New Year's Eve* 7:30 pm AA Meeting				

Church Life

December Birthdays

Mary Robinson	12/9
Trevor Berg	12/12
Hunter Decker	12/13
Joshua Helmbrecht	12/17
Chuck Miller	12/20
Ashlee Weiers	12/20
Romana Koeppe	12/21
Dan Robinson	12/22
Liz Helmbrecht	12/25
Clayton Decker	12/26
James Robinson	12/28





Christmas Eve, 12/24

Candlelight Service

4:30 pm

December Anniversaries

Lee & Gini Gutknecht	12/7
Trevor & Amanda Berg	12/30

Join us as we go Christmas Caroling on Wednesday, Dec. 18th! Bring your beautiful voice at 5:30 pm! We will be singing glorious Christmas songs to shut-ins and others in the neighborhoods!

Prayers Needed

Urgent, immediate needs for prayer can be placed on the FPCHL Prayer Chain by calling Reta Blanchette at 320-286-2941.

"Bless us Lord, this Christmas, with quietness of mind; teach us to be patient and always to be kind."

~ Helen Steiner Rice

Date	Liturgist	Greeters	Usher	Counter
December 1	Colton Robinson	Loren & Judy Brovold	Glen Mumford	Karen Mumford & Cindi Berg
December 8	Gretchen Karg	Carol & Charleen Schuette	Curt Forst	Joanne Dressel & Judy Forst
December 15	Calista Decker	Rose Barberg & Gretchen Karg	Reta Blanchette	Joanne Dressel & Rose Barberg
December 22	Zach Gunderson	Tim & Michele Berg	Tim & Michele Berg	Karen Mumford & Cindi Berg
December 24	Cindi Berg	Bob & Cindi Berg	Bob Berg	Joanne Dressel & Judy Forst
December 29	Carmen Grangroth	Curt & Judy Forst	Cindi Berg	Elaine Smith & Rose Barberg
January 5	Shane Koeppe	Adam & Andrea Koeppe	Shane Koeppe	Karen Mumford & Cindi Berg
January 12	Zach Gunderson	Glen & Karen Mumford	Glen Mumford	Joanne Dressel & Rose Barberg
January 19	Madie Tussing	Elaine Smith	Reta Blanchette	Elaine Smith & Cindi Berg
January 26	Emma Weege	Trevor & Amanda Berg	Trevor & Amanda Berg	Karen Mumford & Rose Berg

Congregational Care

Please Pray for...

Healing: Alice Swanson, Susan Colley, Delores Lahr, Sonja Johnson, and Rose Barberg's daughter Cheryl Paicius

At Home: Eugene Lorentz

Care Center: Everrett Smith & Mary Robinson

Missionaries: Heidi Epple, Hank & Maureen Hornstein

Please call Reta Blanchette at 320-286-2941 if you have a prayer request to add to the Prayer Chain.

If you desire a visit from a pastor, please call the church office at 320-543-2806.

Budget & Finance — Financial Report

	Nov 1-3	Nov 4-10	Nov 11-17	Nov 18-30	Totals
Offerings/Pledges/TFs	$1,699.00	$871.65	$2,287.00	$590.00	$5,447.65
Expenses	$0.00	$2,237.33	$1,940.64	$1,703.13	$5,881.10

	Nov 1-3	Nov 4-10	Nov 11-17	Nov 18-30
Bi-Monthly Budget	-$1,450.00	-$1,450.00	-$1,450.00	-$1,450.00
Offerings / Pledges	$1,699.00	$871.65	$2,287.00	$590.00
Total	$249.00	-$578.35	$837.00	-$860.00

Presbyterian Women

Presbyterian Women's Christmas Party will be held Thursday, December 12th at 6:00 pm. All women are invited to attend. This event is a Potluck so bring your favorite dish to share.

Interested in joining the Presbyterian Women's Group? Contact the Church Office for additional information.

Mission

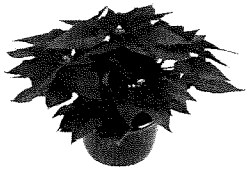
FOOD BARREL NECESSITIES — December needs are personal hygiene products.

HAT, SOCK & MITTEN TREE — When the tree goes up in the sanctuary on December 8th, so too will the Hat, Sock and Mitten Tree in the Fellowship Hall. Please bring anything warm and soft that will help someone keep themselves warm during a long winter. Adult and children's accessories accepted and we will donate them to Wright County Community Action.

Christian Education

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM — The Children will be presenting their Christmas Program, "Just a Little Christmas" during our regular worship service on Sunday, December 15th. In addition to the program, we will be singing lots of favorite Christmas carols. Following the service, we will have a Birthday Party for Jesus during our fellowship time. Please join us for the fun of the Christmas season as the children and youth share Christmas Joy.

CHRISTMAS CAROLING — The children and youth who meet for their classes on Wednesday night are planning on going caroling on Wednesday, December 18th. They'll be visiting our local care facilities and senior apartments. If you'd be interested in joining us that evening, we'd love to have you! Especially since your pastor isn't much of a singer! So, come and join in the singing and the pizza too! Just let us know that you'll be joining us so we order enough pizza.



Poinsettia's

Please order your Poinsettia's early and bring them to the church between December 20th—December 23rd. Make sure that you let us know if they are given in memory or in honor of someone and by whom. The flowers will be on display for Christmas Eve worship. You can take your flowers home following the service.

Wishing you a very blessed and Merry Christmas!
Karen

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- Annual Reports are due to the Church Administrator, Karen, by Monday, January 6th, 2020.
- The Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 19th following worship.

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"We Are Here To Help You in Your Walk With God."

Office

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Webpage:	www.firstpreshl.org

Like us on Facebook

Pastor:	**Carol Chmielewski**
Cell Phone:	952-207-6684
Home Phone:	320-327-2324
E-Mail:	chmielm2jc@embarqmail.com
Office Administrator:	**Karen Neisen**
Monday	9:00 am – 1:00 pm
Wednesday	9:00 am – 1:00 pm
Friday	9:00 am – 1:00 pm

Lamplighter Mailing List
If you or someone you know would like to be added to the Lamplighter mailing list, please contact the church office.

December Events

12/1	*1st Sunday of Advent*; Worship, Communion, Fellowship & Decorating for Christmas
12/2	Funeral for Everrett Smith
12/4	Midweek Dinner & Youth Program
12/7	Barth & Mages Wedding
12/8	*2nd Sunday of Advent*; Worship, Fellowship & Decorating the Tree
12/9	Mary Robinson's Birthday Celebration at Good Samaritan; Committee Meeting Night
12/11	Midweek Dinner & Youth Program
12/12	Presbyterian Women's Christmas Program
12/15	*3rd Sunday of Advent*; Worship, Children's Program, Fellowship & Jesus' Birthday Party
12/18	Midweek Christmas Celebration
12/19	Stamp Club
12/22	*4th Sunday of Advent*; Worship & Fellowship
12/24	*Christmas Eve Worship Service*; Worship & Communion
12/27	Lamplighter deadline
12/29	*1st Sunday after Christmas*; Worship & Fellowship
12/30	Bloodmobile at St. John's Church