

Good News Newsletter

First Presbyterian Church of Decatur

December 2015

Pastor's Pen:

This year's Advent Bible Study is really best described as an Advent Hymn Study. Over the course of 4 weeks, we are taking an in depth look at four different, popular Advent hymns: *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus; Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence; O Come, O Come Emmanuel; In the Bleak Midwinter* (slightly more Christmas-y than the rest). In the study, we read about author, the Scriptural basis of the hymn, and pick apart the meaning in each stanza. It's a great change of pace to sit with each hymn for about an hour rather than a quick sing through before returning the hymnal to the pew back.

The hymns of Advent get somewhat short changed. We only sing them during the four Sundays of Advent; even less for churches with Christmas plays or Cantatas. We don't get as many choices for hymns during these Sundays given that there are twice as many Christmas hymns in our hymnal as there are Advent hymns. Finally, these hymns are often overlooked because all around us, Christmas songs have already been playing for weeks. The news of "Silent Nights", "First Nowells" in the "Little Town of Bethlehem" have arrived prematurely, well before the celebrated birth of the Christ-child.

The Advent hymns that we sing each Sunday, and the hymns sung to the tune of beloved carols, are sung for a specific purpose. We sing them as part of worship lifting up the holy place and holy time in which we reside. We are in Advent; we are waiting; we are preparing; we are anticipating that wonderful night we will gather and celebrate Christ's miraculous birth. This is a holy time and these hymns help us to live into them.

The hymns we sing give voice to our hope that "The King of kings is drawing near: The Savior of the world is here." They give us peace knowing that Christ is "Born thy people to deliver; born a child and yet a king; born to reign in us forever". They remind us that "Love the guest is on the way." They bring the joyful command to "Rejoice, Rejoice, Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel!"

This Advent season, take time before Sunday services or even take a hymnal home with you, and pray using these hymns. Even the ones that are really hard to sing are beautiful in their verse and poetry. Read them. Pray them. Use them to prepare for the coming of Christ.

In hope, peace, joy, and love,

Rev. Will

Worship Volunteers for the Month of December

	*Dec. 6	Dec. 13	Dec. 20	Dec 27
GREETERS/ USHERS	Keith & Loretta Roxanne	Brian, Missy & Family	David & Nancy Amy Druskovich	Tom & Brenda & Family
LITURGIST	Leonda	David Vliek	Chuck Cabbage	Jack Hovenkamp
ACOLYTE	Communion	Davis	Abby	Aaron West
NURSERY	Judy & Charlene	Matt & Lisa	Lori Jerue...& Laurie Southworth	Shannon & Lauren Leighton

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE.....USHERS.....Eleanor & Norris Smith.....and Jan Roeder
*COMMUNION SERVERS: David Vliek, Karen Makay, Lynda Newton, & Brian Klimczak

DEACON OF THE MONTH Marcia Krueger

Schedule for the Month of December

(Please put these dates on your home Calendar)

10 a.m. Service Every Sunday

6th Sunday	Don't miss the Bell Choir at 10 a.m. service
8th Tuesday	6:30 p.m. Presbyterian Women Christmas Potluck
12th Saturday	Dinner at First Reformed
13th Sunday	Don't miss the POP-UP choir at 10 a.m. service
Sunday	5:30 p.m. First Presbyterian Church of Kalamazoo
	Vespers Service of Lessons and Carols
20th Sunday	Children's Christmas Play 10 a.m. Service
	4 p.m. Caroling
24th Thursday	8 p.m. Christmas Eve Service
25th Friday	CHRISTMAS
27th Sunday	White Oaks Service 2:30 p.m.

December Birthdays and Anniversaries

3rd Gordy Krum	21st Tina Leary
16th Randy Gale	30th Jack & Elaine Hovenkamp
20th David & Nancy Vliek Anniversary	31st Cole Southworth & Chelsea Kocsis Birthdays

Happy Birthday and Anniversary to all !!!!

Time Change for Christmas Eve Service

Please note this time change.....Our members offered input in two different Sundays about what time they would like the Christmas Eve Service. The session reviewed the totals and voted to change the service to **8 P.M.** on Thursday, December 24th, 2015.

3rd Annual Community Dinner

I know it is a busy time of the year for all of us, however, we are part of the Ministerial Association, and there is a dinner planned at First Reformed. We are one of the churches that have been asked to help with desserts so, if you can, please have a dessert over to First Reformed **Saturday, December 12th, by 4 p.m.** If you can attend that would be nice, it is a turkey dinner with all the trimmings for the whole community.

Presbyterian Women Christmas Potluck

Please remember to bring a dish to pass, your own beautiful table service and a \$5.00 wrapped gift for our gift exchange. **Hostesses:** Helyn, Phyllis, Jan and Amy. We will have a VERY short meeting.....**6:30 p.m.** Tuesday, December 8th.

A  from Linda

It is almost beyond my imagination that I have been with you for almost a year. It is true as the saying goes "the older I get the faster time goes". I would like to wish everyone Christmas Blessings and say thank you for all the kind words I have received, the goodies that show up on the organ bench on Sunday, and the forgiveness for when I play and it is not even my turn! It is still hard to put a name with a face, but know I appreciate each one of you.

Bible Study

We will finish up our Advent Study on Monday, December 21st. There will be no Bible Study on December 28th or January 5th. We will pick back up on January 12th.

Susan Schoblaski

Sadly Susan passed away November 24th, just short of her 100th birthday. Susan was the mother of Pat Cabbage and lived with them a number of years. While living with them she attended church regularly. She always sat in the back pew with Connie Johnson and myself. We always said "I forgive you" to each other when passing the peace. She will be missed. Memorial donations may be directed to the First Presbyterian Church Endowment Fund. jmr

Thank-You's

Thank You,

We deeply appreciate your recent and generous support to keep our annual SafetyPup Program successful again this year.

Each day we hear of preventable accidents and drug issues that occur with our youngsters. The need to reach children with accurate and vital facts and information is important, if we are to keep them safe.

We cannot always be with our children. We must trust their intelligence and good judgement in preventing an incident. As your Chief, I feel it is my duty to teach children to be alert to the dangers in their environment. The Safety Program gives children the knowledge to become safety aware, and to know what to do if they suddenly find themselves confronted with violence or any other dangerous situation.

We find the CSA materials to be excellent teaching aids in helping children understand the dangers of our world today. Our department will teach children how to stay safe and drug free. Thanks again, from the Decatur Police Department, myself and all the individual lives we touch with the help of your caring hand.

Sincerely,

David A. McLeese

Chief of Police

Decatur Police Department

Dear FPC Congregation,

On behalf of the Board, staff, and victims whom we serve, I want to thank you for your donation of \$116.25 given to our agency. Your thoughtful donation helps us to carry on services that are critical to some of the most vulnerable members of our community – those victimized by the cruel crime of domestic violence. Support from our community is important to us as we respond to those who have life-changing emergencies and on-going needs. Thank you for aiding in our efforts. We sincerely appreciate the support of your congregation.

Sincerely,

Melanie Hooker Executive Director, Van Buren County Domestic Violence Coalition, INC

Dear First Presbyterian Church Members,

The Decatur Public Schools would like to thank you for the donation of \$1,000 from your endowment fund investments to supplement the Science Olympiad and Alternative Education Programs. These programs will help students with the projects and activities throughout the year.

Thank you again for your donation that supports the Decatur students! We appreciate your help.

Sincerely,

Dr. Patrick Creagan

Superintendent



Chatting with people I came up with the idea that it would be nice to serve coffee/tea in mugs instead of those pesky Styrofoam cups. I'm sure some of you have some mugs that you would like to be rid of, or just don't need SO would you please bring them to church and we will start using them. Please no big, funky ones, just the standard mug size. Any writing, pictures on them are welcome. jmr



Please note that Virginia Vliek's Telephone Number is now 423-8600...

Session Highlights for the Month of November

Mission Committee

- A motion was moved to donate the 25% local use of the Peacemaking Offering to the Van Buren County Domestic Violence Coalition in the amount of \$116.25.

Endowment Committee

- The Investment Income check of \$1,000.00 will be awarded to Decatur Public Schools at the next School Board Meeting, November 16th.

The next Session Meeting will occur at the church on December 1, 7:00 p.m. A motion was moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was supported and approved. The meeting was adjourned with prayer at 8:27 p.m.

Signed _____

Mark R. Johnson
Clerk of Session