

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
OF HIGHLAND



THE LARGER VIEW

December
2023

Volume 16 Issue 12

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Dear All,

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Advent is upon us, and I am so very excited about it! It's time for some of our favorite hymns, some of our dearest scripture stories, and some of our most meaningful missions. It's time for our Christmas Cantata, our caroling, our candle lighting! So, let's hold up the candles of hope, peace, joy, love, and Christ for the world to see and be inspired. This year we are going to pay particular attention to peace! With such horrific violence happening in Palestine, Israel, Ukraine, and Sudan as well as saber rattling in so many other places, I am sure that peace is a deep desire we all share. With gun violence and acts of hate plaguing this country, I am sure that peace is in the forefront of many of our minds. With all of the anxiety and grief of the past few years still fresh in our memories, I am sure that peace is needed in all of our souls and spirits.

Heather Casiano and I have been hard at work planning liturgical and missional elements based on the theme "Circles of Peace." The Advent wreath is our guiding image. It is a circle that holds within it the lights of our faith, the lights of the promise of the Messiah. We invite you to imagine concentric circles (wreaths!) representing expanding realms of peace—inner peace, interpersonal peace, world peace, and peace with God. Very soon you will notice new and creative components of worship, peacemaking mission opportunities, and spiritual practices. I urge and encourage you to have open hearts and open minds, for

First Presbyterian Church
of Highland
8727 Delaware Street
Highland, IN 46322



*The Mission of First Presbyterian Church of Highland
is to be
the HEART, HANDS, and FEET of Jesus Christ*

as Jesus says, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.” So, children of God, let’s commit ourselves to making peace! In preparation, let us start being intentional with prayers of peace in all of those wreathy realms mentioned above. Also, let us get this little earworm stuck in our heads:

I’ve got peace like a river, I’ve got peace like a river, I’ve got peace like a river in my soul!

I’ve got peace like a river, I’ve got peace like a river, I’ve got peace like a river in my soul!

As we prepare ourselves for the coming of Mary’s child, the coming of our King, the coming of our Christ, may we remember that as children of God we are called to prepare the world for him to come back and to usher in the Kingdom of peace.

I leave you with the following words from *Isaiah 9*. I pray that you will read them and be inspired!

*For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders,
and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, **Prince of Peace**.
Great will be his authority,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.*

In Christ and with Love,

Rev. Tyler





TRUSTEES

- The bricks above Doors B and I have been repaired where the old awnings had been removed.
- The outside garden area on the south side of the old sanctuary has been built up away from the building, the old sidewalk removed, and new rock has been installed.
- The furnace for the fellowship hall has been installed!
- A programmable switch for the light above door B has been added to provide better lighting.
- Rev. Tyler and the Session thanked President Jeffery Savage and the Trustees for their work.

DEACONS

- Prayers and concerns were offered for members of our congregation and community.
- Prayer shawl ministry meets on the 4th Tuesday of each month.
- Deacons continue to check the Blessing Box daily for perishable and outdated items and stock it.
- Gladys' Table meals of lasagna, bean salad, garlic bread and cookie bars were prepared and delivered on October 21st and November 18th to members of our church who are homebound. The meal was prepared by Munster High School students with Krissy LaFlech and delivered by the deacons.
- October 28th Sackurday (sack lunches for the community) was cancelled due to unavailability of workers. The next Sackurday was on November 25th. Elder Lois Fozkos shopped and was assisted by the deacons. Forty-two lunches were served to the community.
- December 3rd Fellowship/Coffee hour: Deacons will provide sweets, fruit and cheese and crackers, and all will serve and clean up.
- December 17th Deacons will extend a welcome to our Hammond First Presbyterian Church neighbors who will be attending the Cantata.

SESSION

- The Session voted to approve an amendment change to the Endowment Guidelines to allow an elected congregational member to serve two terms of 3 years each (instead of just one term) on the Endowment Committee, making this more consistent with the other boards. We also voted to allow any Trustee to be on the committee, rather than just the President or Secretary of the Trustees. This will be voted on at the congregational meeting on December 10th.
- The Session voted to amend the Bylaws of the Presbyterian Church of Highland to allow more flexibility in the number of Trustees elected each year. Instead of the current number of 6 being elected with 2 per year, we voted to use the wording "at least 4" being elected with 1 or 2 per year. This will also be brought up for a congregational vote at our December 10th congregational meeting.



- Session voted to hold our annual Congregational meeting on January 14, 2024.
- Our fundraisers were discussed. The T-shirts and Sweatshirts will again be offered for sale at the beginning of next year, with a modified design and in heather gray, instead of white. The craft fair has already raised over \$700 and will hold a holiday craft sale on December 3 after worship.
- Beginning in 2024, ministries/committees/ boards will be assigned to host fellowship hour after worship on a rotating basis.
- The Nominating Committee has a slate of officers and committee members ready for the upcoming congregational meeting on December 10th. Thank you to all those who answered the call to service.
- Clerk Jean Smith attended the Presbytery Clerk Review meeting and reported that our 2022 minutes were reviewed and approved. She also reported on other information regarding old Session minutes. Session decided to send 7 books of old minutes to the Presbyterian Historical Society which will store those minutes in a climate-controlled environment. We will be able to access those minutes should information from them be needed.
- Rev. Orem reported on the Advent theme this year, which will be “Circles of Peace”. Our worship and activities will focus on this theme.
- Session meetings will tentatively change to the third Tuesday (instead of Monday) evenings at 6:30 pm beginning in 2024. This will allow for hybrid meetings.
- The last Presbytery Assembly meeting of 2024 was on Tuesday, November 28th. This is the last meeting where Rev. Tyler was the moderator. Elder Bonnie Perryman commended Pastor Tyler for his excellent leadership as moderator this past year. He will be moderating the coordinating council next year.



Treasurer’s Report

For the Month of
October 31, 2023

	Month of October	Monthly Budget	Year to Date
Operating Revenue	\$8,742.05	\$10,038.59	\$105,715.45
Operating Expenses	15,139.72	14,862.86	138,395.45
Excess (Deficit)	(\$6,397.67)		(\$32,680.00)



A gift was given to the Endowment Fund by Rodney & Peggy Fozkos,
In Honor of Rev. Tyler on Pastor Appreciation Day and in thanks for 5 blessed years at FPCH



Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.'—Matthew 25:37-40

This month's *Matthew 25* spotlight is shining upon all of FPCH in anticipation of our commitment to be peacemakers during Advent and beyond! You will have opportunities to bring peace and joy to people experiencing poverty, loneliness, and inner turmoil. You will have opportunities to advocate for an end to gun violence and war. You will have opportunities to pray for peace. These actions of peacemaking contribute to all of our *Matthew 25* foci: dismantling structural racism, eradicating systemic poverty, and building congregational vitality. Thank you in advance, children of God!



“CIRCLES OF PEACE” THIS ADVENT

The Faith Development team is providing a variety of ways for everyone to experience and get involved in the worship and life of our congregation this Advent season, through our theme of “Circles of Peace”. There will be creative ways of weaving our prayers and hopes together; we’ll learn a few words in different languages in worship; we’ll offer several ways to take the message of peace out into our world through simple mission projects; everyone can participate in the annual Cookies & Caroling event (see below for details); and there will be a unique Christmas pageant that all can participate in (without any rehearsals). For those who worship online or those who are homebound, we will have ways for you to participate, and all activities are appropriate for all ages to participate. We would love to have your children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews, etc. be an active part of the Circles of Peace this Advent!



Circles of Peace:
**Advent at First
 Presbyterian Church
 of Highland**

8727 Delaware St., Highland 219-838-6850 www.fpchighland.org

Sunday worship: 10:30 am

Dec. 17: Choir Christmas Cantata, 10:30 am

Dec. 24: Worship with Christmas Pageant, 10:30 am

Dec. 24: Christmas Eve candlelight service, 7 pm

All services are in person and live-streamed on Facebook and YouTube



ADVENT DEVOTIONS

If you enjoy a daily devotional to help you walk through the days of Advent, look no further! Advent begins on Dec. 3rd and continues through Dec. 24th. The Faith Development team has compiled a list of several free online Advent devotionals. You can bookmark the one(s) you like on your device and read from it daily, or print a copy out. Choose whichever options make your Advent experience meaningful.

- There are 24 chapters in the gospel according to Luke. Start on Dec. 1st and read one chapter a day to get you through Christmas Eve. The author of Luke's gospel gives us a pretty thorough view of Jesus' life and ministry from birth to death-resurrection-ascension.
- Pittsburgh Theological Seminary offers a free Advent devotional each year, which can be found online at https://www.pts.edu/devotional_1. You can download a PDF of the devotion, or visit the webpage each day. There are also audio recordings for each day's Scripture reading and devotion that you can listen to.
- Presbyterians for Earth Care, a national eco-justice network that cares for God's creation by encouraging Presbyterians to make creation care a central concern of the church organization, offers both a print and web version of their Advent Devotional: <https://presbyearthcare.org/devotional-and-worship-aids/>
- UKirk Collegiate Ministries, part of the PCUSA Office of Christian Formation, offers "Words of Waiting", their free online Advent devotional beginning Dec. 3 here: <https://ukirkadvent.org/>
- Another Starry Black Night: A Womanist Advent Devotional is offered by the Unbound website here: <https://justiceunbound.org/another-starry-black-night/> Unbound is a ministry of the PCUSA, exploring the intersections of faith and justice.
- Kate Bowler, a Christian author, speaker, and professor at Duke Divinity School, shares her free Advent devotional here: https://katebowler.com/seasonal_devotional/blessthisadvent/ Enter your name and email address on the page, and the devotional will be emailed to you.
- Luther Seminary has a free Advent devotional on their website to download in regular or large print: <https://www.luthersem.edu/godpause/advent-devotional/>
- Another option for an Advent devotional is to read the writings of Pastor Tyler, who will once again be sharing his daily thoughts and reflections during Advent, as he has done in past years. He generally posts these writings online on Facebook. If you aren't on Facebook, we are going to compile his Advent writings and email them out weekly. We will also have a limited number of printed copies of the weekly email at the church.



COOKIES AND CAROLING DEC. 10

This annual tradition of the Youth Connections group will take place on Sunday, Dec. 10, after worship. Everyone is invited to join the youth this year! If you like to bake and/or decorate Christmas cookies, or have kids/grandkids that like to do so, we will start baking about 12:30 pm in the church kitchen. If you like to sing Christmas carols, you can meet us at the church at 3 pm. We'll hand out maps of our caroling route, make sure everyone has a ride, and head out to sing and deliver cookies with Christmas joy. We should finish up by 5 pm.

For all youth: we will start with lunch at the church after worship, then dive into baking and decorating until 3 pm, when we'll head out to go caroling. Your friends are welcome to come with you! Bring jackets/coats/winter gear appropriate for caroling outside for whatever the weather will be that day. Please let Heather know ahead of time if you are planning on coming so we have enough food for lunch.

If you have any questions about this event, please contact Heather Casiano.



YOUTH CONNECTIONS

We're trying to plan a New Year's Eve Lock-In at our church for all youth. There will be fireworks across the street at Main Square Park, lots of food, games, movies, and other activities (and very little sleeping). **PLEASE RSVP TO HEATHER CASIANO IF YOU WOULD BE INTERESTED AND ABLE TO ATTEND NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 15.** We need to have a minimum of 5 youth (including friends) to make it work, as well as 1 or 2 additional adult chaperones.



ADULT CONNECTIONS

These classes are open to all youth and adults of all ages. Friends are always encouraged to join in as well – you do not have to be a member of this congregation to participate.

- “The Bible in Today’s World” class meets in person on Sunday mornings from 9-10 am, in the upstairs meeting room. They are making their way through the book, “The Difficult Words of Jesus” by Amy-Jill Levine. In class they discuss the Scriptures and essential issues each chapter is based on, and watch short videos by the author to better understand some of Jesus’ most confusing teachings. **There will be no class on Dec. 24 or 31, and class will resume on Jan. 7, 2024.** Contact John Toren or Heather Casiano with any questions.
- The Wednesday evening “BYOB” (Bring Your Own Bible) discussion group meets on Wednesday evenings from 7-8 pm online on Zoom. In December they will be taking a deeper look at the Advent Scriptures from each worship service, and seeing where any connections might be to our theme of “Circles of Peace.” **There will be no BYOB on Dec. 27 or Jan. 3, and will resume on Jan. 10, 2024.** The link to join the Zoom meetings is emailed out weekly. If you are not on that email list and would like to be, contact Kristen in the church office or Heather Casiano.



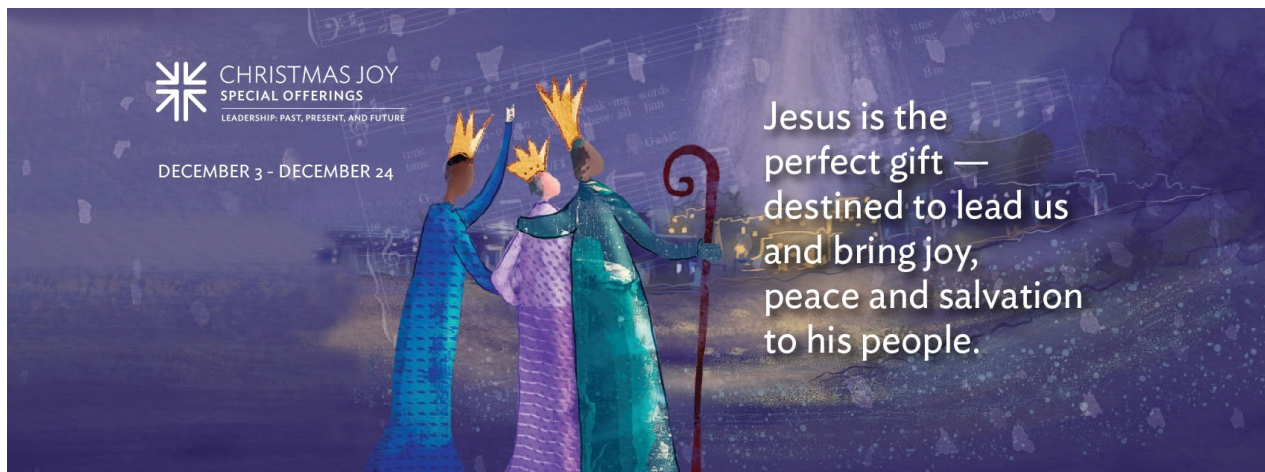
a big
**thank
YOU**



The Ministry of Mission would like to Thank Everyone for their support of Mission’s annual fall bake sale. We greatly appreciated all of our talented bakers sharing their time and talent and for the support of the congregation in purchasing the goodies. Blessings to all!

Session would like to thank everyone for the support of the “Spirit Wear” Fundraiser for the General Fund. There was a great response to this fundraiser, and the t-shirts and sweatshirts are amazing. There are plans to have additional “Spirit Wear” available after the New Year. Session will keep you apprised of further details when available.





THE PERFECT GIFT

When Jesus was born among us, he came as a helpless baby destined to bring joy, peace and salvation to his people. This child, God’s Word made flesh — fully human and fully God — became one of us. One with us. One among us. In all of our vulnerabilities, struggles and triumphs, Jesus became one of us — leading us, knowing us, connecting us to himself and to each other, and offering us his gift of eternal life.

The perfect gift.

Through the Christmas Joy Offering, we reflect God’s perfect gift to us, with generous support of church leaders among us — past, present and future — who have pointed us to God.

We honor and celebrate leaders like retired pastors, church workers and their families who have faithfully guided and led us but who now find themselves in critical financial need. We honor and celebrate emerging leaders like students in schools and colleges equipping communities of color, who develop leadership skills as they pursue their education and prepare to bring their gifts in service to the world God loves so much.

Jesus’ example as a child born to be among us and lead us to eternal life provides a pattern for us to follow as we celebrate those who have led us in the past and will lead us into the future. Through the Christmas Joy Offering, we come together to support past, present and future leaders, embodying God’s perfect gift to us, Jesus Christ.



Text CHRISTMASJOY to 91999
to give to the Christmas Joy Offering
or visit pcusa.org/christmasjoy for more information.

WORSHIP & MUSIC



December Candle Lighters:

- 12/3: Gerry & Nancy Veltman
- 12/10: Carol Callaway & Georgette Sknerski
- 12/17: Rodney & Peggy Fozkos
- 12/24: Gale & Peter Churitch
- 12/24: Christmas Eve Service
The Casiano Family



December Liturgists:

- 12/3: Carol Callaway
- 12/10: Robbie Casiano
- 12/17: Renee Williams
- 12/24: Karen Lounsbury
- 12/24: Christmas Eve Service
Heather Casiano
- 12/31: Tracy Oprea



December LiveStreaming

- 12/3: Tristan Casiano
- 12/10: Tracy Oprea
- 12/17:: Jamie Ham
- 12/24: Robbie Casniano
- 12/24: Christmas Eve Service
Jamie Ham
- 12/31: Jean Smith



Christmas Cantata will be on Sunday, December 17th, during Worship.



There will be morning 10:30 AM and a candlelight service at 7:00 PM on Sunday, December 24th.



It's time to order your Christmas Poinsettias! We will be offering red poinsettias for \$10.00.

This is a good way to honor or remember loved ones. Donations may also be made in LIEU of flowers. Your order and money are due in the church office by Monday, December 11th.

POINSETTIA ORDER FORM
(Please Print CLEARLY)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone #: _____

	Number	Price	Total
Red	_____	\$10.00	\$ _____

Donation in LIEU of flowers \$ _____

TOTAL: \$ _____

In honor of: _____

In memory of: _____

Deadline: Monday, December 11, 2023

First Presbyterian Church of Highland
8727 Delaware Street
Highland, Indiana 46322

A poem submitted by Lois Fozkos

Our Christmas Prayer
by Ann Trott Talmage

**For the happiness of Christmas with its time of friendly giving,
For the star that led the Wise Men to a joyous way of living,
For the little Baby Jesus lifting tiny hands to bless us,
For the tender smile of Mary which today may still caress us,
For wondering beasts that, quiet, stood in gentle silence listening
While shepherds followed from afar the star all gold and glistening,
For angels singing with delight upon that holiest, holy night,
May we be kind and gentle, too, in all the things we strive to do.
Unto each heart that here today impatient waits for Christmas
morn,
Make known the meaning of the words that “unto us a Child is
born.”
Dear Jesus, hear our Christmas prayer, and bless thy children
everywhere.**

Amen.

*A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL OF YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS
YEAR'S STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN! YOUR GENEROSITY OF SPIRIT
AND SPIRIT OF GENEROSITY ARE INSPIRING!*



The 2024 Pledge Envelopes will be available for pick up in the Narthex starting, Sunday, December 10th. Please help us keep costs down in the office by picking up and delivering envelopes for members that are unable to do so.



Fellowship Hosts

Our Ministry of Hospitality is seeking hosts for fellowship! There is a sign up board downstairs. Hosting can be as simple as bringing store-bought snacks or as fun as making something if you have the skills!



The Prayer Shawl Ministry will not be meeting in the month of December. Their next meeting will be on January 23rd.



HELP STOCK OUR PANTRY!

Please pick up a beautifully decorated grocery bag in the narthex to help the church's food pantry. We'd love to have you take a bag home, place some non-perishable food items in the bag, and bring it back to the church to help keep our pantry stocked!



Blessing Box

Please continue to place items in the Blessing Box and take items if you are a person in need! Items most commonly donated: canned goods with pull tabs, socks, toilet paper, non-perishable foods, small snacks, toiletries, baby wipes and diapers.

Please do not donate homemade or perishable items.



CHECK OUT THE GARDEN MEMORIAL PATH!

Our faithful trustees recently made sure that our beautiful garden memorial path would continue on in good shape, having the walkway leveled, the foundations improved, and the bricks re-laid. Take a peaceful walk along the path when you have a chance! Thank you, trustees!



Thank you to the Prayer Shawl Ministry for the beautiful shawl.

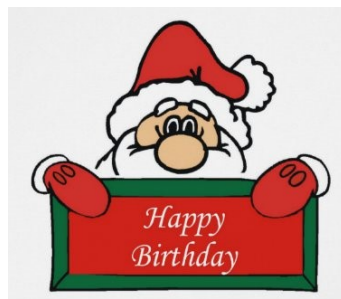
With Love & Prayers,

Jan Oprea



FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

If you don't already follow First Presbyterian Church of Highland on Facebook and Instagram, please start doing so and sharing our posts with your friends!



- 6 Evvy Kikkert
- 8 Kristen Wilson
- 9 Ben Porter
- 11 John Toren
- 12 Serena Agbor
- 18 Hilary Kikkert
- 21 Renee Williams
- 28 Caroline Studer
- 29 Suzanne Gruoner
- 30 Rodney Fozkos



Prayers & CONCERNS



Pray For...

Anthony
 George Nelson
 Brady Vanes
 George Griner
 Guy Hendricks
 Bill and Anettia Holmes
 Daniel Litwicki
 David Markley
 David Kingen
 Diana and Ray Mendoza
 Janet Orem
 Jeanne Nestor
 Cindy Waltz and Sister
 Andrew Bobalik
 Gale Snyder
 Yvonne Suroviak
 Wendy
 Georgette Sknerski
 Jakob Holden
 Denise Matthys
 Steve & Melinda
 Gary Studer
 Jan Oprea
 Janet Vargo
 Ric Jaeggi
 Florance Cody
 Josephine Kim
 Carol Figley
 Kathy & Chuck Pumnea
 Robin C.
 Nick
 Laura Buono Domsic
 Annie & Mike Windstrup
 Kevin Windstrup
 Ruth Dekker
 Rick Parker

Barbara Morton
 Caroline Studer
 Cary and Jennifer Pearson
 Carol Finley
 Holly Letnich
 Lily Renfro
 Marla and Jerry Renfro
 Jaden Mendez
 Frank Falzone
 Doug and Sue Matthews
 Robert Urich
 Richard Simmons
 Janet Terpstra
 Glen Nahler
 Tammy
 Tom
 Jana Tolley
 Larry & Bonnie Perryman
 Virginia Marshall
 Delta Rose
 Lena
 Mark
 Paulina Martinez
 Sharon LaFlech
 Winnie Owen
 Charity Lynn
 Chestine
 Shannon
 David Hamblin
 Judy
 Breeanne
 Charlotte Abernethy
 Joe Petersen
 Susan Agbor
 Mom Bechtler
 A Close friend

- We pray for victims and survivors of gun violence.
- We pray for peace and peacemakers!
- We pray for those undergoing treatment for cancer, the mentally ill and their families, those recuperating, those undergoing treatments and those waiting for transplants.
- We pray for first responders and front-line medical workers
- We pray for the health and safety of our service men and women as we pray for an end to the wars that put them at risk
- We pray for the unemployed, the under employed and the homeless.
- We pray for all children in the world.
- We pray for the work of the Holy Spirit within the life of FPCH and within each of us, that we may indeed be and make disciples each new day.
- We pray for our home-bound loved ones.

In order to keep the prayer list current, we need your input. If there are people you would like to have added or if there is someone who can be taken off the list, please call the Church Office (219-838-6850).