

FALL 2020

AN UPDATE FROM PASTOR DUSTIN RAY:

Friends and Covenant Partners of FPC Branson,

On Wednesday, October 14, we welcomed Ezra Henderson Ray into our family! He and Debbie are doing so well, and Judah and Abigail are mesmerized by their new baby brother. They can't wait for him to get big and play with them!

Our family is doing so well right now for lots of reasons, one such reason is that our church family is so loving and supportive. Meals, diapers, gifts, gift cards, and prayers—you have been so, so good to us. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you. We can't wait for each of you to meet Ezra.

I'd like to share with you why we named our son Ezra Henderson Ray. Ezra is Hebrew for "God helps". Henderson, a family name, means "ruler of the home". In the Bible, Ezra was a man who loved God, loved His people, and loved His Word. Ezra was graciously persistent and steadfast in his teaching of God's word to God's people. Ezra knew that God's law was good for His people, and Ezra led God's people in repenting of their sins and trusting in the God who loved them and saved them from their enemies. We pray that our Ezra will know God, love God, will know and love God's Word, and will love helping others come to know God and His word through his love and leadership. God will help this little boy rule his home when he becomes a husband and father, but he won't rule selfishly--rather, he'll lead and rule like Jesus did--by laying down his life for his family. We're blessed by Ezra, and we know that he'll be a blessing to you as well. Only by God's grace, Jesus' sacrifice, and the Holy Spirit's power will our Ezra become this great and humble leader, but God is indeed gracious to us. Amen and Amen!

I'd also like to update you on what we've been doing in reaching out to young families in and outside our church family. We took a short break while Debbie and Ezra were settling into our home, but before that and since, we've continued to meet with young parents and families. We're making new connections, growing existing connections, and asking God how He is leading us as we enter the winter months. I'd like to ask you to pray with us on this. We want to be bold in faith and wise in our strategy. In exercising wisdom, we want to be cautious as we enter flu and sickness season. We don't want to spread or encounter any sickness, but we can't stop the work of the ministry. This tension is the same tension that we encounter in our Sunday worship: we want to find the right balance of friendly and safe.

Here's the encouraging thing about this tension—God knows best, and He delights in leading us as we seek Him for His guidance. So please join us in praying for God's blessing, protection, and wisdom as we seek to spread His Kingdom, without spreading Covid (I hope that was sort of funny)!

Bless each of you! I hope to meet each one of you as soon as you feel it is safe.

Pastor Dustin



THE GREAT ADVENTure

ADVENT KITS FOR FAMILIES WILL BE DELIVERED DURING THE WEEK OF NOVEMBER 22ND. IF YOU NEED TO BE ADDED TO OUR LIST OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN 6TH GRADE AND UNDER, PLEASE LET THE CHURCH KNOW.

417-334-3468 or fpcbranson@gmail.com

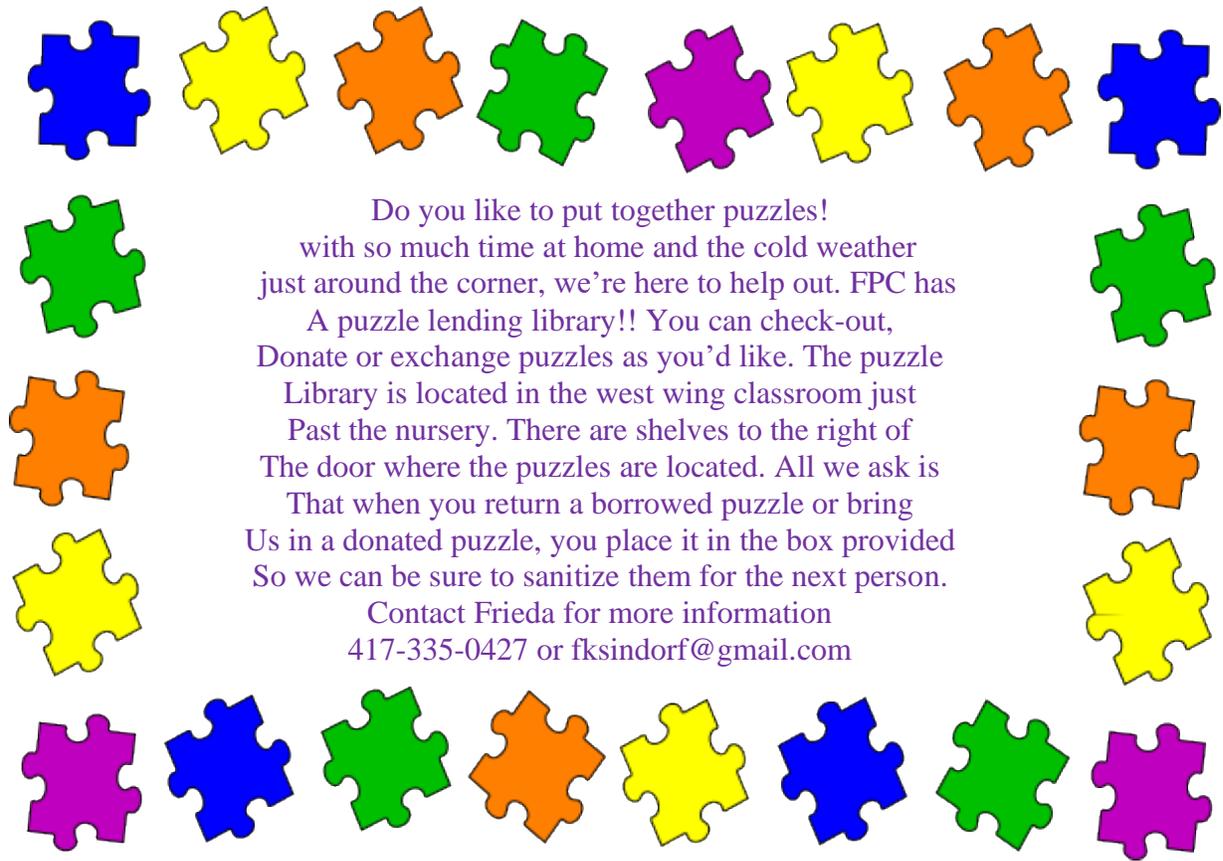
THANKSGIVING MEALS

The fellowship team is preparing and delivering Thanksgiving Day meals for members and extended families of our church who would like to have one prepared for them. Please let Frieda or the Church office know if you would like one or know someone in our church who may want a meal delivered by November 22nd.

Frieda 417-335-0427

Church office 417-334-3468





Do you like to put together puzzles!
with so much time at home and the cold weather
just around the corner, we're here to help out. FPC has
A puzzle lending library!! You can check-out,
Donate or exchange puzzles as you'd like. The puzzle
Library is located in the west wing classroom just
Past the nursery. There are shelves to the right of
The door where the puzzles are located. All we ask is
That when you return a borrowed puzzle or bring
Us in a donated puzzle, you place it in the box provided
So we can be sure to sanitize them for the next person.
Contact Frieda for more information
417-335-0427 or fksindorf@gmail.com

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL HAS RETURNED TO IN-PERSON GATHERINGS.

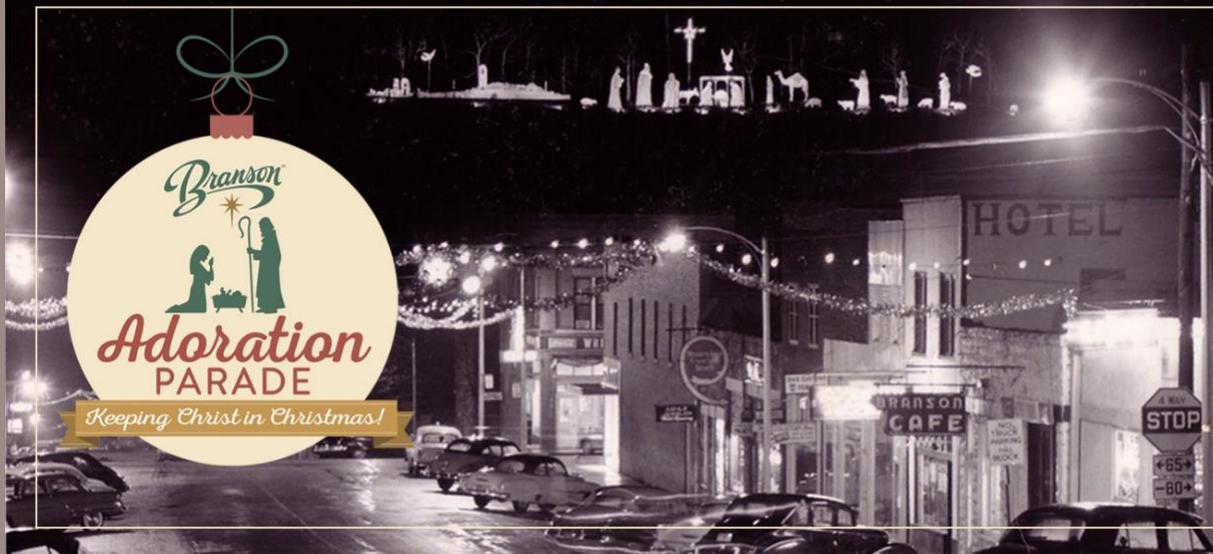
Since a social distancing (and/or face covering) ordinance is in place by the City of Branson; face coverings will be required for all class participants. The Seekers class still met via ZOOM last Sunday, Nov. 1 because leadership was traveling. Class leadership/membership may make appropriate concessions regarding in-person versus continuing virtual class gatherings.



COVID-19 GUIDELINES REMAIN IN EFFECT FOR ALL WORSHIP ATTENDEES

Face coverings will be worn when entering or leaving the building and while speaking or singing during worship. Face coverings may be removed during the sermon and if you choose to sing-in-your-heart rather than sing out loud. Households are expected to follow social distancing guidelines, as well. Please save greetings and friendly chit-chat until after worship in the parking lot. Masks and social distancing is still recommended during this time.

FPC Youth is beginning to gather some in the Youth Building, as well as, two BSA troops and PEO.



BRANSON'S ADORATION PARADE

The 72nd annual Adoration Parade and Lighting Ceremony will take place on December 6, 2020. The time-honored event will begin at 5:30 p.m. with the lighting of the Adoration Nativity Scene atop Mount Branson.

Each year the Branson community gathers for the Adoration Celebration and Parade to celebrate the true meaning of the Christmas season with the family. For one special night, locals and visitors alike can come together and honor the Christmas story. Make this heartwarming celebration a part of your holiday season this year and create some old-fashioned Christmas memories with those you love.

AND THEN AFTER...

Join our church family for a cookout and fellowship.

We will gather across the street around two campfires to encourage social distancing. We will have hotdogs to roast, with chili and all the dressings. For dessert we will have the makings for s'mores. Hot cocoa and water will be provided. You can drop off your lawn chair prior to the parade (someone will keep an eye on them) and then walk or drive back up to the church. It may not be our traditional parade chile dinner but maybe this will be the beginning of a new tradition.

The fellowship team will provide all the food you just need to bring yourselves, a chair and maybe a blanket. Restrooms will be available in the youth building.

See you after the parade!!!

If inclement weather prevails, the cookout will be postponed to another day!

Join
First Presbyterian Church for a
“BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE”
HOLDING *onto*
HOPE
Wednesday – December 2
6:30 pm
420 W Main St - Branson

CDC's
recommended
social distancing and
face covering
guidelines will be
observed.

Feeling stressed out or over-whelmed? Even in the hardest and saddest circumstances, you can find hope in the love of Jesus whose birth we celebrate during the Christmas season.

First Presbyterian Church - Branson offers a **Blue Christmas Service at 6:30 pm on Wednesday, December 2**. Gather for a quiet time of hope and celebration in the midst of suffering or stress. This is less about colored lights and more about Jesus as the Light which shines into our darkness; less about sparkling holiday cheer and more about quiet, divine holiday strength. We *will not* pretend to be jolly or merry if we are not. We *will* give thanks and rejoice.

Facing a holiday after the death of a loved one or after a divorce can be difficult. Perhaps you have been unable to have a child or suffered an emotional trauma. Most of us are just worn out dealing with the complications Covid-19 brings to our lives in 2020. If you feel pressured and overwhelmed by holiday preparations, we have good news.

Sing hymns of hope, hear the promises of the Scriptures, pray and give thanks. This is a come-as-you-are event. You don't have to put on your "churchy" clothes or your "I'm fine" phony Sunday smile. Come prepared to remember what you have and what you have lost, to give thanks for friends, family and God's many blessings.