



The Bell

December, 2024

Monthly Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

WE EXTEND OUR CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS TO ANOTHER CHURCH

God's blessings and welcome to a new church calendar year.

Advent changes the preaching focus again. We will go from the gospels of Mark and John and switch to the gospel of Luke for much of the year.

Advent is a celebration of anticipation of God entering into history through Jesus Christ. The first two weeks are Hope and Peace – remembering what God told us through the prophets and the peace granted to us because God broke into our history. The second two weeks are Joy and Love – the joy of Mary being told she was chosen by God, and the love God showed Mary and Joseph and shows all of us daily.

I wanted to share with you how our church has been sharing all four of these blessings with one of our fellow Presbyterian churches over this past year.

This summer I was invited to a meeting with Kathy Reid-Walker, Pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Eau Claire, Rev. Brad Carloss, stated clerk of our Presbytery and Karen Shafer, lay pastor of North Presbyterian Church in Eau Claire. Some of you may remember North Presbyterian as over the years, they had come to several of our dinners but had kind of left our Presbytery fold.

At this meeting it was decided that I would moderate their Session as I do here. I have been doing that since August. They are a very small congregation and are in what is now a not so nice part of Eau Claire. They don't know what their future looks like so as you go through this season of Hope, Peace, Love and Joy, please pray for our brothers and sisters at North Presbyterian Church and ask that God would reveal to them what direction He would like them to go in this new church year.

God bless you all and your family at this most joyous and wonderful time of the year. I hope to see you at some point in time this season to celebrate God's breaking into human history. Hallelujah!

Ed

From the Mission Team...

Submitted by Barb Shorrel

Here we are at the beginning of the church year—Advent. It seems to catch us by surprise every year in spite of the holiday decorations in the stores at the beginning of November.

CHRISTMAS JOY As is tradition, we participate in the PC USA Christmas Joy Special Offering. You will see bulletin inserts informing you about the people that this special offering helps. Members of our team will share this information during worship service as well.

Christmas Joy contributions go to support the following two programs.

- Fifty percent of the contribution goes to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions. This program is *used to provide critical financial support and grants for current and retired Presbyterian church workers in their time of need.*
- The other fifty percent of the contribution is *used to provide education and leadership skills at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.* The schools are Menaul School in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Presbyterian Pan American School in Kingsville, Texas, and Stillman College in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

The Mission Team thanks you for any contribution that you are able to make to the Christmas Joy Offering. There are special envelopes in the pews if you wish to use them. Please make your check payable to the First Presbyterian Church with Christmas Joy written on the memo line.

REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR The Food Pantry will be collecting nonperishable food items during Advent. See Anne Welke to get a list of preferred items and bags.

LOOKING AHEAD...In January we will be asking for contributions to Carelink—the emergency gas card program. To jump start this event, we will be giving our Noisy Sunday contribution to Carelink.

In February we will again participate in the Mission Coalition project, Lather With Love. More on that later.

FPC SCHEDULES CHRISTMAS FESTIVITIES

The traditional Christmas Eve service is scheduled to begin at 4:30 on Tuesday December 24. Pastor Ed will be speaking that day. The service will include traditional scriptures, holiday music, communion, candles and blessing of the food for the Food Pantry.

FPC has planned a church-wide dinner from 2:00 to 4:00 on Christmas Day. If you have no other plans, please join us in Fellowship Hall for a good meal and fellowship. Or better yet, don't cook but bring the whole family to the church. What better way to celebrate Christmas than with friends.

REMINDER - SESSION SCHEDULES CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Don't forget the annual Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, December 1 immediately following service.

The purpose of this meeting will be to elect new leaders to serve on Session, the Board of Deacons, Financial Review and the Endowment Fund Board.

The slate of nominees is: Dr. Bill McDougall and Ruth Rosenow for Session, Mary Jo Reemstma and Barbara Williams for the Board of Deacons (Barbara will replace Margi Kohl and complete her term), John Jensen for the Endowment Board and Deb Buckli and Lynda Butek on the Financial Review Team.

STILL TIME TO ORDER POINSETTIAS

There is still time to order your poinsettias for Christmas.

As we have done in the past, the plants will decorate the chancel on Christmas Eve and then be available for the donors to take home to enjoy through the holidays. The poinsettia order form appears in this month's Bell. Place your order soon because the number of plants is limited by how many Family Fare receives and they always go fast.

SHOPPING FOR OTHERS

While you are shopping for your own holiday cooking and baking, consider adding the things on this year's Reverse Advent Calendar to your list. The list appears in this month's Bell and is also at the Welcome Desk in the Narthex.

PRESBYTERY SCHEDULES WORK TRIP

February 15 to 23 will find Presbyterians from our Presbytery in Ashville, North Carolina helping to clean up after Hurricane Helene.

Complete information about the trip is available on the Tower. See the registration form and sign up to work by mid-December.

Every year the Presbytery selects an area to help following storms, floods, or other natural disasters.

If you want more information on past trips, talk to Jan or Rick Keopke. They go every year and lend a hand where needed most.

POINSETTIAS

We are now taking orders for poinsettias that will grace the chancel area this Christmas season. The cost is **\$9.00** per plant. Please fill out the order form. Return to the church office with your payment as soon as possible. Submit your order:

- 1) during office hours (9 to 2:00) Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays)
- 2) by mailing to the church
- 3) or, put order and payment in offering plate on Sunday

(Remember to write "poinsettia" in memo blank on your check.)

The plants may be picked up after the Christmas Eve service. Of the plants not picked up, some will be saved for the following Sunday and others distributed in the community.

I want to purchase (how many) _____ poinsettias for display in our church chancel during the Advent/Christmas weekend.

I would like designation(s) in the church bulletin to read:

In Memory of:

1) _____

2) _____

In Appreciation for:

1) _____

2) _____

In Celebration of:

1) _____

2) _____

(other title) _____:

1) _____

2) _____

From:

Return to:	First Presbyterian Church	Phone: 723-5717	Amount Paid \$ _____
	130 West Central Street		CK#
	Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin 54729-2345		Cash



Reverse Advent Calendar

Each day add an item to a box or bag.

On Christmas Eve bring the bag or box to church to be blessed and given to the food pantry.

- December 1-box of cereal
- December 2-peanut butter
- December 3-cookies
- December 4-boxed potatoes
- December 5-macaroni and cheese
- December 6-cans of pears
- December 7-canned tomatoes (diced)
- December 8-canned tuna
- December 9-bag of chips
- December 10-can of Beef Ravioli
- December 11-canned fruit cocktail
- December 12-peaches
- December 13-canned chicken
- December 14-box of crackers
- December 15-package of rice
- December 16-can of green beans
- December 17-package of pasta
- December 18-spaghetti sauce
- December 19-can of chicken noodle soup
- December 20-can of tomato soup
- December 21-can of corn
- December 22-can of beef strew
- December 23-spaghetti noodles
- December 24-3 rolls of toilet paper