



The Bell

December, 2020

Monthly Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

FPC SCHEDULES ANNUAL MEETING

The annual congregational meeting of our church will be held immediately following Sunday service on December 6. This is in accordance with our church by-laws which stipulate that this meeting be held no later than the second Sunday in December.

The purpose of this meeting will be to elect church leaders for the coming year, install those leaders and approve the minutes of the August 23 special meeting. The Book of Order stipulates that the new leaders will be elected at this meeting but their installation is usually held in January. This year because of the pandemic it was decided to install the new leaders immediately after their election.

The Nominating Committee has come up with the following slate of candidates for the available positions. Nominations will also be received from the floor during the meeting.

Two Deacons are up for reelection to their second term and they have decided to return if elected. They are **Beth Cripe** and **Marlys Daniels**. Marlys has completed the term vacated by the earlier resignation of Mary Jo Reemstma who was serving her first term.

Chuck Norseng is completing his first term on the Endowment Fund board and has agreed to remain if elected. In addition **Barb Sorrel** has volunteered to join the board. Thus the board would be composed of Vance Kohl, Gwen Bauman, Chuck Norseng and Barb Shorrel. Our church by-laws stipulate that the board be comprised of three to five members and that requirement is met.

There are two vacancies on the Financial Review Team since Carmi Simonson has decided not to run for a second term and Don Babbitt, whose term isn't up until 2021, has resigned his church membership. **Rick Koepke** and **Esther Frazier** have agreed to join the team bringing it up to full strength as stipulated in section A-7.001 of our church by-laws.

There are three vacancies on the Session this year. **Bonnie Gullickson** has agreed to join the session but the Nominating Committee after numerous calls was unable to find two more members to fill out the required number for Session. The Book of Order stipulates that Elders may serve on Session for two terms (six years) and then be ineligible for reelection until one year has passed. But because the committee was unable to find two members willing to serve, the Clerk of Session has petitioned the Presbytery to allow **Kevin Litten** and **Lynda Butek** to remain on Session for a third term. The Presbytery has granted this request.

ENJOY YOUR EARLY BELL

Because we are using the December Bell to officially announce the December 6 Congregational Meeting, you are receiving this issue early. The Book of Order stipulates that you be notified in writing at least two weeks prior to the meeting. By issuing the Bell in mid-November, we are complying with that stipulation.

ORDER POINSETTIAS FOR THE HOLIDAY

It's not too late to order your poinsettias for Christmas. We plan to decorate the church with the usual Christmas wreaths, banners and trees and we will have poinsettias in front of the communion table.

If you want to purchase a poinsettia to decorate the sanctuary and later take home, you can use the order form in this issue of the Bell. The cost remains the same as last year at \$9.00.

As usual, the plants will decorate the sanctuary on Christmas Eve and the following Sunday and if they aren't picked up by the purchaser after that time, they will be donated to our shut-ins.

CHRISTMAS EVE IS ALMOST HERE

Christmas Eve at First Presbyterian will be a bit different from past years but in many ways it will be the same. Rev. Rich Estrem-Fuller will be our guest speaker that night as he was last year. The service will begin at 4:30 as it has in the past.

We will have communion and the individual battery-operated candles which we will light at the end of the service. Because of the restrictions placed on us by the virus, the candles will be placed at the door to the sanctuary for congregants to pick up on their way into the church. We will not gather around the sanctuary but will light our candles while we remain seated in the pews.

We won't be able to sing Silent Night gathered around the sanctuary as we have in the past, but we do have plans for ending the service on a high note.

We plan to have some special music fitting the season so we sure to join us either in the sanctuary or by Zoom.

YOU CAN STILL HELP SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

It's not too late to help the Spirit of Christmas. For more information on their program, check out their website at <https://www.thespiritofchristmasofchippewacounty.com/how-you-can-help.html> You can send a check to Spirit of Christmas of Chippewa County, WI, Inc., P.O. Box 831, Chippewa Falls, WI 54729. All gifts are tax deductible.

You can also adopt a family, purchase gifts to donate, or help to package up the donated items among other things. Call them at 715-944-4272 for more information.

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 (10 to 2:00 Tuesdays, Wednesdays 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

BLESSINGS AND BEST WISHES FROM THE MISSION TEAM...

SUBMITTED BY BARB SHORREL

NOVEMBER IS THAILAND MISSION MONTH...

The Mission Team designated November as Thailand Mission Month. It is our chance to support the missions of the Presbyterian Church in Thailand. We have had a long history of supporting this mission. Our special friends in Thailand are involved in holistic community development making human connections where they live. If you wish to contribute to this cause, please put "Thailand mission" in the memo line.

We recently received our latest newsletter from our missionaries. It is posted on the bulletin board in the hallway by the workroom under "Mission." If you want a copy sent to you, call Barb Shorrel (715-563-4731).

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING TAKEN IN DECEMBER...

"When we do a little, it adds up to a lot." It is important for us to remember this phrase. Sometimes we do nothing because we think that the little that we can do is just a drop in the bucket. But we are not alone. We belong to a community of faith and those drops can end up to be a flood.

The offerings that you give for Christmas Joy have two purposes.

- Half of the gifts that you give "make it possible for students to learn and grow in faith at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.
- The other half "provides assistance for current and retired church workers and their families with critical financial needs."

If you wish to read how this offering has impacted the lives of those who receive the benefits of this offering, go to this website <https://specialofferings.pcusa.org/story/when-futures-seem-bleak-gifts-restore-hopes-light/>.

If you wish to contribute to this offering, make your check out to First Presbyterian Church and write "Christmas Joy" on the memo line.

PEACE AND GLOBAL WITNESS OFFERING...

You contributed \$685 for the Peace and Global Witness Offering. We gave our local portion of 25% (\$171.25) to the Family Support Center. The remainder goes to the Presbyterian Mission Agency (\$513.75). Thank you so much for your generosity.

HUNGER AND HOMELESS SUNDAY...

On Sunday, November 15, the Presbyterian Church USA recognized Hunger and Homeless Sunday. Tiffany Wogahn, our admin, made a PowerPoint presentation about what some organizations (including ours) are doing to feed the hungry and provide shelter for the homeless. It was shown at our worship service on the 15th. To see this presentation, go to the church's website or Facebook page.

HOW DID THOSE CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS START?

Most of us will be putting up a Christmas tree this year but do we know where this tradition started?

The first Christmas tree to appear in the United States was credited to a Hessian soldier who was captured at the Battle of Bennington in 1776. He then worked on a farm in Windsor Locks, Connecticut where for the next 14 years he put up and decorated Christmas trees in the home of the family that owned the farm.

The first retail Christmas tree lot was started in 1851 by a Pennsylvanian who hauled two ox sleds loaded with Christmas trees from the Catskill Mountains to New York City where trees were scarce.

In 1882 the first electric tree lights were sold in New York City. Prior to that time, the trees were decorated with candles which were lighted with the hope they didn't burn the house down.

Franklin Pierce was the first president to set up a Christmas tree in the White House. Calvin Coolidge established the Christmas tree lighting ceremony on the White House lawn.

Then we turn to Christmas cards which were first printed in 1875 in Roxbury, Massachusetts. President Dwight Eisenhower sent out the first "official" White House Christmas card.

We can't forget Santa. The first department store Santa appeared in 1890 in Brockton, Massachusetts where he wandered about the Boston Store dressed as Santa Claus and talking to the children of customers.

The giving of gifts at Christmas dates back to the ancient Romans who gave each other presents on the first day of January. Eventually Christians moved the gift-giving custom to December 25 although many Christians still give gifts on January 6, the feast of the Epiphany which commemorates the manifestation of Jesus as the son of God to the magi.

Many of us take the opportunity to steal a kiss under the mistletoe but we don't all know much about the plant. Mistletoe is considered a symbol of life because it is evergreen and bears fruit (white berries) in the winter. But that doesn't explain the kissing part.

According to an old Norse legend, Frigga, the goddess of love, had a son named Balder who was the god of innocence and light. To protect him, Frigga demanded that all creatures, even plants, swear an oath not to harm him. She forgot to include mistletoe. Loki, god of evil and destruction, learned of this and made an arrow from a sprig of mistletoe. He then tricked Balder's brother into shooting the mistletoe arrow, killing Balder. Balder's death meant the death of sunlight which explains the long winter nights.

Frigga's tears fell onto the mistletoe and turned into white berries. She decreed that it should never cause harm again but should promote love and peace. From that time on, anyone standing under the mistletoe would get a kiss, even mortal enemies who had to declare a truce for the day.