



# The Bell

December, 2021

Monthly Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

## THE TRADITION OF THE ADVENT WREATH

One of the fondest Advent traditions for both congregations and families is the lighting of Advent candles. The tradition reaches back to pre-Christian northern Europeans. During the darkest days of winter, they lit as many as twenty-four candles on an evergreen-covered wheel or wreath. By lighting a candle a day, they marked time, anticipating the return of the sun's light and warmth. By the 1500s, both Lutherans and Catholics adapted the Advent Wreath as a devotional way to prepare for the coming of Christ, the Light of the World.

Today, the Advent Wreath is usually an evergreen wreath placed on a table or suspended from a ceiling or an arch. In the wreath are four candles (usually blue or purple, occasionally one is pink); each candle represents one week during Advent. A white candle is often placed or suspended in the center of the wreath.

The symbols of the Advent Wreath are interpreted in many ways. The circle of evergreens reminds Christians of the eternal and ever-renewing promises of Christ.

The lighting of candles, spanning the season, acknowledges the deepening of our preparation and the increasing light that bursts forth at Christmas.

The colors of the candles also vary. Often the candles are purple or blue, noting the season's expectations of royalty, liberation, redemption, and hope. For the third Sunday of Advent, occasionally a pink candle is lit. This recognizes a shift of Advent themes in the Bible.

The first two Sundays focus on the Bible's prophetic vision of Christ's future and final return.

On the third and fourth Sunday, the readings focus on the coming of Jesus, the Christ. The third Sunday traditionally recalls John the Baptizer's call for repentance, and the fourth recounts God's call to Mary and her faithful response. The third Sunday has been identified in some traditions as "Gaudete," a day of joy and rejoicing.

Finally, on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, a center white candle is lit. The light of Christ is fully present.

Jesus is born.

## **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 \$8.00.

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.

## **REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR MAKES ITS DEBUT**

You have all seen the traditional Advent Calendars that mark the days until Christmas with gifts for each day. This year we are trying a "Reverse Advent Calendar" which will mark each day until Christmas with a gift of food to be given to the Food Pantry on Christmas Eve.

Look at the calendar in this issue of the Bell and you will see the items to be collected each day beginning December 1. Just put your donations in a box or bag and bring it to the church on Christmas Eve when it will be blessed and turned over to the Food Pantry for distribution to the needy. The list has been prepared to include items needed and requested by our clients.

This is your chance to help those less fortunate during the Christmas season.

## **EXPLANATION OF CHURCH ENDOWMENT FUND**

In June of 1977 Lorna Froberg, John Frampton, Eugene Crane, and James O'Donnell, as Presbyterians established a perpetual endowment trust - The First United Presbyterian Church of Chippewa Falls Endowment Trust.

The Trust is to be administered exclusively for the benefit of, to perform the functions of, and carry out the purposes of the First United Presbyterian Church of Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin.

Its purposes are to receive gifts, collect income, invest and re-invest the trust principal, add to the principal, and from time to time pay all or part of the income to the First Presbyterian Church of Chippewa Falls.

Spending the income needs the consent of the Trustees and the Session.

It is important to know that the Trust is a distinct legal entity with its own Federal Identification number and does file an separate informational tax return.

As of June 30, 2021 the permanent principal was \$ 187,605. It is invested and earns income. The daily value fluctuates.

Vance Kohl, Gwen Bauman, Barbara Shorrel, and Charles Norseng are the current trustees.

# POINSETTIAS

We are now taking orders for poinsettias that will grace the chancel area this Christmas season. The cost is **\$8.00** 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 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.

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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-canned fruit
- December 7-canned tomatoes (diced)
- December 8-canned tuna
- December 9-3 rolls of toilet paper
- December 10-baked beans
- December 11-canned sweet potatoes
- December 12-cranberry sauce
- December 13-canned chicken
- December 14-box of crackers
- December 15-package of rice
- December 16-box of oatmeal
- 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 mixed vegetables
- December 23-can of carrots
- December 24-can of green beans

## **FPC “ADOPTS” A FAMILY FOR THE HOLIDAYS**

This year’s Spirit of Christmas has prompted FPC to “adopt” a whole family for the holiday. We have their wish lists and Chris Norseng and Jan Koepke have been busy shopping for their gifts.

Our goal is to raise \$500 for this family and donations have already been coming in. It’s not too late to be part of this holiday mission program.

## **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. The candles will be distributed when we distribute the communion elements. 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 LOSE SOME BUT THEN YOU WIN SOME TOO**

The Red Cross blood drive originally scheduled for December 17 was cancelled because the Red Cross couldn’t get enough volunteers to put it on.

We are now scheduled for Friday April 8. Put that date on your calendar and sign up to make a donation.

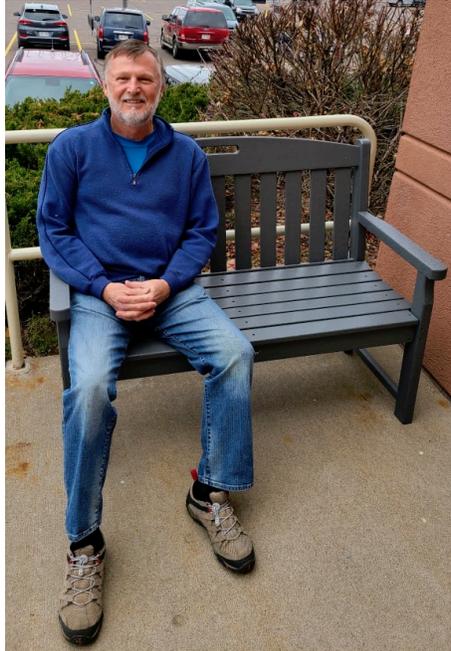
## **PLANNING AHEAD FOR SNOW**

Winter seems to be coming late this year but it’s time to think about what we might do if heavy snow means the church will be closed.

If you think church services might be cancelled, check the WEAU.com website. You will find a yellow “Cancellations” bar near the top of their Home page. Click on that and you will see all the cancellations for that period. That will include schools, the Boys and Girls Clubs, churches, etc.

If we have to cancel service this winter, that cancellation will be posted on the cancellation page of the WEAU website and it will also appear on our church Facebook page. If the church office is open, those of you who have computers will be notified by email.

This notice will be posted on the tower in the Narthex throughout the winter as a reminder



## **FPC RECEIVES DONATION OF NEW PLASTIC BENCH**

Not only do we have a new, stylish bench to call our own but we have helped the environment too.

The new bench at the top of the ramp leading into the church was donated by the Lions Club with the help of our own Jeff Buckli. The bench is made of recycled plastic film and bags, some of which we have collected. Because it is made of plastic, it requires no maintenance unlike our old bench which needed annual repainting or restaining.

For every 500 pounds of recyclable plastic we collect, we could receive a new bench. The big white box that has been in the Narthex for the past few weeks is for the collection of this plastic. Every week Jeff cleans out the box ready for new donations. These benches are made by NexTrex and being donated to local businesses.

The Lions plan to add a plaque to the bench showing that they made the donation to us.

## **2022 DIRECTORIES IN THE WORKS**

Watch your mail box for the 2022 church directory. The latest edition is being prepared and will include, 2022 leaders and officers, church committees, Shepherds list, Hospitality Teams and name, address, phone number and email address of members and friends. The new directory will be mailed early in December.

## FROM THE MISSION TEAM...

Submitted by Barb Shorrel

**CHRISTMAS JOY** “God’s perfect gift, Jesus Christ—a gift who opens a door.”

This is the season of Christmas Joy—our congregation’s fourth denominational special offering of the year. The theme is *A gift opens doors (Proverbs 18:16)*.

### CHRISTMAS JOY: How does this offering open doors for others?

- ❖ Fifty percent of this offering “assists current and retired church workers and their families with critical financial needs.” Jack Eisel served as an interim pastor for 25 years in 12 different presbyteries. Kate, his wife, lost her job before retirement leaving them facing financial difficulty. They receive an income supplement thanks to the Christmas Joy offering.
- ❖ The remaining fifty percent goes for scholarships for students attending Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. They include both high schools and colleges. The Christmas Joy offering supports these institutions: Menaul School, a high school in Albuquerque, NM; Presbyterian Pan American School, a high school with an international student body in Kingsville, TX; and Stillman College, selected as a College of Distinction since 2019, in Tuscaloosa, AL.

We will be collecting this offering during the Advent season. Be sure to take one of the brochures that you will find in the pews. Feel free to use one of the Christmas Joy offering envelopes placed in the pews. Make checks payable to First Presbyterian Church with “Christmas Joy” written on the memo line.

### REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR

We are doing something new this year to help support our food pantry. It is called a “reverse Advent calendar.” The calendar begins on December 1. Grocery bags and the list are available beginning Sunday, November 21, at the church.

How does this work? We will provide you with a list of grocery items and a grocery bag. Each day you will put the grocery item for that day in the bag. For example, day 1, December 1, asks you to put a box of cereal in your shopping bag. Continue following the daily suggestion for each day. On December 24, bring your filled bag to our Christmas Eve service where they will be blessed and the contents given to the Food Pantry.

Make this a daily reminder of the many blessings that you have. You might also wish to say a little prayer each day for the person who will be the recipient of your generosity.

### SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS UPDATE

Thank you to all who contributed to our Spirit of Christmas adopted family. We have such a generous congregation. You gave \$664 to help our family have a Merry Christmas. We have spent \$400 on the children which is the assigned limit by Spirit of Christmas. Thanks to Jan Koepke and Chris Norseng for doing the shopping. The remaining \$264 will be split between a gift card for food for the family and a contribution to the Spirit of Christmas.

**Remember, when we each give a little, it adds up to a lot.**