

The Bell

December, 2025

Monthly Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

God's blessings and welcome to the new church year. Advent and the birth of Jesus Christ are upon us.

Advent is a celebration of our anticipation of God entering into history through Jesus Christ. The first two weeks - Hope and Peace - remember the hope that God gave us through His revealing through the prophets, and how God showed an influx of peace as he broke into our history. The second two weeks - Joy and Love - remember 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.

As our new calendar year begins, we await the coming of Jesus Christ with hope and anticipation for what God will show and tell us this year. Please join us in our journey this year to Bethlehem and seeing the Christ child, along with the shepherds. During advent, church service is at our normal 10:15 A.M. time.

A few new events this year that are going on at our church during December including Wednesday night dinner at 5:00 followed by decorating on December 3. The movie "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever" will be shown on December 10 at 4:30 P.M. We will also be showing "Christmas with the Chosen: Holy Night" a week later on December 17 at 4:30 P.M., There will be popcorn, drinks and snacks to go along with the movies.

Over at Trinity Methodist Church on December 21, they are hosting the Madrigal Singers concert at 2:00 P.M.

Then on Wednesday December 24, we will have our normal Christmas Eve Candle Light Service at 4:30 P.M. You will read more about this service and how it is changed this year in another article in the Bell.

Then, as a final and new tradition to conclude our Christmas events, Christmas Day will culminate with our 2nd Annual Christmas Day Dinner from 2:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M., sponsored by the Presbyterian Women and Men. All are invited from the churches and community to come and eat. Anyone can volunteer to help or just come and eat, enjoy fellowship with our brothers and sisters in the Chippewa Valley and partake of a great meal.

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

Ed

SESSION SCHEDULES CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Don't forget the annual Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, December 14 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: Corine Boos for Session, Beth Cripe for the Board of Deacons (Beth will replace Corine Boos and complete her term), Gary Reich for the Endowment Board and Scott Legwold on the Financial Review Team.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE IS A BIT DIFFERENT

Our traditional Christmas Eve service will begin at 4:30 and will be somewhat different from years past.

This year the service will close with lighted candles rather than the battery-operated ones we have used in the past. Other churches in Chippewa Falls use real candles and it was decided that we should too.

DON'T SPEND THE HOLIDAYS ALONE

Christmas is traditionally a time for families to get together to celebrate and enjoy all the good cooking associated with the holidays. Unfortunately, however, not everyone has family to spend that with. But we are family too!

If Christmas finds you lonely, plan to spend the afternoon here at FPC where dinner with all the trimmings will be served. Dinner will be served in Fellowship Hall from 2 to 4 on Christmas Day.

ORDER POINSETTIAS FOR THE HOLIDAY

Time is running short to order poinsettias for the church and to take home.

As usual we plan to decorate the church with 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 is \$9.00 per plant. As usual, the plants will decorate the sanctuary on Christmas Eve and Christmas morning and if they aren't picked up by the purchaser after that time, they will be delivered to our shut-ins.

TIME TO DECORATE!

Many of our usual Christmas decorations will be in the church before the first Sunday in Advent but our trees will be bare!

That is unless we all come to First-Wednesday-Night-Supper on December 3.

In addition to enjoying pizza, we will trim our trees and tables for the holiday. We have lots of decorations but we need people to put them where they need to be in the Narthex and Fellowship Hall.

LATEST MISSION TRIP NEWS

As most of you will have heard by now, our PNW work crew is heading back to Black Mountain, NC to continue working on rebuilding after Hurricane Helene. The storm did a tremendous amount of damage to the area which will take years to recover from.

We'll be staying at Montreat, our Presbyterian College and Retreat Center. Presbytery response has been so good this year that our roster is already full, and we have a waiting list. But you can still help, and I'd encourage you to do so if possible.

We try to hold trip fees to \$200 per person. But the cost for the week is actually more like \$400 per person. Would you or your congregation be willing to contribute to help cover our volunteer's expenses?

In my opinion this is one of best mission projects we do together in the PNW. Even if you can't come with us, you can still make a difference and be part of the effort. Checks can be sent to the Presbytery of Northern Waters, 2105 Woodland Ave, Duluth, MN 55803. Please write "February work trip" on the memo line.

Thank you!

Richard Blood, Mission Coordinator

DIRECTORIES ARE IN THE WORKS

Work has begun on the 2026 Church Directory which will be distributed soon.

In order to have all the correct information for each family, we have sent out a short form asking you to verify your name, address, phone number and email. Those forms will also be available in the church office.

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

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING FILLS REAL NEEDS

December brings us the last chance for 2025 to give to church-sponsored offerings. In December, we will be collecting donations for the Christmas Joy Offering, which will be taken up on Christmas Eve.

This offering is split in half with 50% going to help current and retired church workers and their families who are in need. The remaining 50% is used to prepare students to learn and grow in their faith at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges.

The pamphlets in your pew explain more about how this money will be used. Offering envelopes are also in the pews or you can put your check in the Sunday collection plate. If this is your choice, be sure to write "Christmas Joy Offering" in the memo line.

SESSION SCHEDULES 2026 COMMUNION DATES

In preparation for the coming year, Session has approved the following Communion dates. These include all the first Sundays as well as church holidays. This year we have added Maundy Thursday (which is traditionally celebrated at Trinity United Methodist Church) just in case that service might move to FPC.

January 4	First Sunday, and Epiphany
February 1	First Sunday
February 18	Ash Wednesday
March 1	First Sunday
April 2	Maundy Thursday
April 5	First Sunday and Easter
May 3	First Sunday
May 24	Pentecost
June 7	First Sunday
July 5	First Sunday
August 2	First Sunday
September 6	First Sunday
October 4	First Sunday and World Communion Sunday
November 1	First Sunday
December 6	First Sunday
December 24	Christmas Eve

WHERE ARE THOSE CATERPILLARS?

According to folklore, if a woolly bear caterpillar has long black bands, the winter will be longer, colder, snowier than in past years, but this may not be so. In fact the caterpillar's coloring may indicate its age and how long it has been feeding more than what the weather will bring.

Regardless of what you believe, first you have to find a woolly bear caterpillar. Seen any lately?

THE CHIPPEWA FALLS YEARS

By Irene Robertson

Editor's note: Following is the fourth installment of Irene Robertson's letter about the years she and her husband, Rev. Wallace Robertson, spent in Chippewa Falls between 1938 and 1941. Mrs. Robertson's letter goes into detail about life in Chippewa Falls and at the church.

Due to the length of the letter, portions of it will appear in subsequent issues of the Bell.

The young people in the church played a very important and rewarding part of our lives. We started a Senior High group and had great fun with them. We met each week and had many fun outings such as hayrides, baseball games, dances, picnics. I remember when the kids tried to teach me to jitterbug – a popular and strenuous dance. One time we planned an ice-skating party. Wally didn't know how to ice skate so someone brought a kitchen chair to the rink for him to hang on to while they instructed him in the art. It didn't work. He never did learn to ice skate. Meetings were held in the Manse most of the time, and after hayrides the group came back to the Manse for refreshment. We also started a Junior High group and that became my responsibility. I'll never forget taking them on a hayride and bringing them back to the Manse for pea soup and rolls. Stella Crane offered to make a big kettle of pea soup and I made the rolls. We borrowed soup bowls from the church and spread newspapers on the living room floor and prayed there wouldn't be any spills. I had nightmares about cleaning pea soup off the carpet. I needn't have worried. No one spilled and they devoured all the soup and rolls. I can't help wondering if today's Junior High would think that pea soup was a treat.

Somebody donated a Ping Pong (table tennis) table to the church and the kids decided to each me how to play the game. I was a tennis player so I thought table tennis would be easy. I was wrong, and I was horrified when the kids entered my name in the city Ping Pong tournament. I won the tournament, but my family has never stopped teasing me and reminding me that there weren't many entrants.

Wally gave me a set of golf clubs as a wedding gift. He was a golfer and wanted me to learn the game. I was a tennis player. I tried golf on a while but then gave it up. Wally soon had a group of golfers to join on the available courses – the Elk's Club Course and the Ojibway Course. He had golfing privileges at both. He made a hole in one once, on the Elk's Course. I continued to play tennis and my favorite person to play with was a very nice High School student, Tommy Noble. Very few of the girls were interested in tennis.

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.

The donations will be blessed as part of our traditional Christmas Eve service before becoming part of the food to donate to others through the Food Pantry. Bring your donations to the church right before Christmas Eve and place them on the west steps to the chancel.