



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

E-Link

December 16, 2020

Worship
Join us weekly on
our website:
Firstprescf.org

Pastor's Ponderings

This week's ponderings were inspired by a question from Carol Dotseth during our Zoom Fellowship Hour last week. "What's the meaning of the pink candle in the Advent wreath?" The simple answer is that the pink candle symbolizes the joy that accompanies the inbreaking of God into the world. Often, the pink candle is lit the Sunday on which Mary's song (The Magnificat) is read and sung. The origin is more complicated, and you will find many explanations online. If you are interested in digging deeper, check out this blog by Rev. Kurt Wiesner, [The Pink Advent Candle](#). He provides several links to the history of this liturgical practice.

But, as we have been pondering the history, mystery, and majesty of Advent, I thought we might also benefit from pondering our pink candle as mystery. When we see it perhaps we can be reminded to rejoice in the mystery of the many ways Christ still comes to us now and of the ways Christ continues to address the inequities in this world. I invite you to read The Magnificat and then contemplate the reflection of artist and pastor, the Rev. Lauren Wright Pitmann below.

Luke 1:46 Mary said:

"My soul proclaims your greatness, O God,⁴⁷
and my spirit rejoices in you, my Savior.⁴⁸
For you have looked with favor
upon your lowly servant, and from this day
forward all generations will call me blessed.⁴⁹
For you, the Almighty, have done great
things for me, and holy is your Name.⁵⁰
Your mercy reaches from age to age
for those who fear you.⁵¹
You have shown strength with your arm;
you have scattered the proud in their conceit;⁵²
you have deposed the mighty from their

thrones and raised the lowly to high places.

⁵³ You have filled the hungry with good things,
while you have sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴ You have come to the aid of Israel your serv-
ant, mindful of your mercy—⁵⁵ the promise
you made to our ancestors, to Sarah and Abra-
ham and their descendants forever."



"Contours of Mary's Dream" by Lauren Wright Pitmann



"Analogous Colors" by Titus Kaphar

"As I read Mary's song this year, I felt a sting of grief, one that I hadn't felt in response to this text before. In the wake of George Floyd's murder, artist Titus Kaphar created an image for Time magazine devoted to Black mothers. In his image, "Analogous Colors," he depicts a Black mother fiercely and lovingly holding her child. However, her child is cut out of the image, leaving a harsh, blank hole with shadows where the child should be.

When I read the Magnificat, Kaphar's image came into sharp relief. How could I image Mary holding the contours of her dreams for the world, while also holding the contour of her loss? Mary's son would be publicly murdered at the hands of the State. Mary's song reverberates for all mothers who have had dreams for their children shattered by senseless violence." - Rev. Lauren Wright Pitmann

This Sunday we will be lighting the last (purple) candle of the Advent wreath and we will be reading and singing the Magnificat. As we do so may we remember that the peaceful manger scenes that we imagine should be accompanied by a revolutionary soundtrack. As we seek to live into the Kin-dom of God, may we recognize our continuing need to address the brokenness in which we live. O come, O come Emmanuel – the world is about to turn!

Priests for Equality. The Inclusive Bible (pp. 2310-2311). Sheed & Ward. Kindle Edition.

Church Birthdays

Dec 16-Tim Mercer, 17-Lynette Cline, 21-Bruce McCart

Sympathy to...

Don Erusha upon the death of **Pat Erusha** this morning. Funeral arrangements are pending.

For your prayers...

Caryl Nielsen at Deery Suites recovering from a broken hip.

Marlys Folkers' grandson Eli will have another MRI and then start 7 weeks of radiation at the U of I Children's Hospital.

Marlys Folkers' brother, Delmar Benning is still in the Methodist/Mayo Hospital. He was diagnosed with bacterial blood infection and continues to have lots of pain. He has the blood disease Polycythemia Vera.

Zoom Meetings

Wednesday, Dec. 16

6:15-7:00 pm Elementary AND Jr. High age 'Shine' Christmas Zoom

Sunday, December 20

11:00 am (link below)
[Fellowship Hour.](#)

No SHINE Dec. 23 & 30

Thanks for serving last week:

Pianist: Connie Herbon

Worship Leader: Patti Humpal

Vocals: Beth Culberson

Snow Removal: Jim Seeley & Gary Sabey

Grant Reports: Brad & Sandy Jensen

Adopt-A-Family Coordinators: Julie Rokes & Sue Weinberg

SHINE Christmas Zoom

The Elementary AND Jr.

High age 'Shine' will log on together for a group Christmas Zoom time

Wednesday, December 16, 6:15-7:00 pm. There

will be no SHINE activities on December 23 and 30.



Prayer for the Fourth Sunday of Advent

Inbreaking God, your love is magnified in the coming of your Son,

In the long-awaited birth of the promised Messiah.

May we, like Mary, proclaim your justice as we rejoice in our Savior,

Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

This Weekend's Worship – Fourth Sunday of Advent - Love

Scripture Reading: Luke 1:26-38 & 46b-55

Advent Story: "Angels and Other Strangers" by Katherine Paterson

Prepare your worship area with a light source to be lit when we light the Advent candles.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel!

CROP Walk Results

The challenges of this pandemic dominated year led some of our usual participant churches and individuals to put their time and mission emphasis elsewhere this year, and that is perfectly understandable.

However, we did have eight congregations participate, raising \$6,230 for hunger relief, and for that we are very grateful! 25% (\$1,558) will go to the Northeast Iowa Food Bank to alleviate hunger locally.

- St. Tim's United Methodist Church of Cedar Falls led the way, raising \$2,055!
- Cedar Falls Mennonite Church raised \$1,400!
- First Presbyterian Church of Cedar Falls raised \$1,075.
- Cedar Heights Community Presbyterian raised \$1,050.
- First United Methodist, Cedar Falls donated \$200.
- Trinity Episcopal Church of Waterloo donated \$175.
- Our Savior Lutheran Church of Waterloo donated \$100.
- St. Luke's Episcopal of Cedar Falls donated \$75.
- Our regional Church World Service director, Lenny Blue, gave \$100.

Cedar Falls Mennonite Church was the only one to report their participants. They had some creative "walkers," including one person who swam laps for CROP!

Thanks to everyone who participated this year.

~Brad Braley, Local Walk Coordinator



Christmas Joy Offering

In Jesus, we receive the perfect gift of God being with us. Even when we are apart, we are together in spirit, in faith, and in mission.

By supporting the Christmas Joy Offering, you honor God's gift of Jesus Christ by providing assistance to current and retired church workers in their time of need and developing our future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

- 50% of your gifts to Christmas Joy provide assistance for current and retired church workers and their families with critical financial need.
- 50% of your offering makes it possible for students to learn and grow in faith at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

First Presbyterian Book Study

The book study group from First Presbyterian is planning on starting up again after the first of the year with Zoom discussions of the book **Caste--The Origins of Our Discontents** by Isabel Wilkerson. This book examines the unspoken caste system that has shaped America and shows how our lives today are still defined by a hierarchy of human divisions. It ends with ways America can move beyond these destructive separations toward hope in our common humanity. All are welcome to join in. Contact Jean Boller if interested, 277-8149 or bollerama@cfu.net.



Christmas Eve Candlelight Service and Zoom Fellowship

Celebrating Christmas will be quite different this year, but the “reason for the season” continues. Pastor Julie and Pastor Bob from the Mennonite congregation will lead a service of lessons and carols. We will have a recording of our Christmas Eve candlelight service posted as we do our Sunday Services. Have a candle or other light source ready for our “Silent Night”!

We will also gather live via Zoom for a special Christmas Eve Fellowship at 3:00pm. We would love to see your face! Wear your Christmas regalia, bring your favorite holiday drink and invite a friend. Click here: [Zoom Christmas Eve Fellowship](#)

Meeting ID: 966 8577 9412
Passcode: 080065
Phone in:
+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)



NOTICE! The church building will be LOCKED during office hours until further notice. To be let in, call 277-3930. The number will be posted on the door.

Year-End Notes

- The office will be closed on Thursday and Friday, December 24 & 25.
- The deadline for sending in your 2020 offerings is Wednesday, December 30, 3:00 pm! The final deposit will be taken to the bank the next morning.

Worship Leaders Needed

We are looking for people to lead worship with Pastor Julie on Thursdays at approximately 3:30 pm. Please sign on the Google doc: [Worship Leaders](#) or call the office.

Lectionary Study Suspended until January 11, 2021

Our lectionary study is taking a break until the new year. Look for announcements in early January to sign up for a spot when we return!

The Grand Sweep Bible Study

We will continue our journey through the Bible with the Grand Sweep Bible Study beginning Tuesday, January 12. The class is led by the pastors from the PCUSA churches in the Cedar Valley. We pick up our reading with the New Testament. New travelers are welcome on our journey through God's word. We begin with the gospels and will work our way through to the final 'Amen' of Revelation by the middle of April. The class meets weekly on Tuesday evenings at 6:00 p.m. and lasts until 7:30 p.m. The class will be shared via Zoom at 6:00 each Tuesday night. The link is recurring and can be found in our weekly emails. Missing a few classes is fine. We encourage you to keep up your reading.