



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

December 9, 2020

Worship
Join us weekly on
our website:
Firstprescf.org

This Weekend's Worship – Third Sunday of Advent - Joy

Scripture Readings: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

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

Prayer for the Third Sunday of Advent

God of Joy, through Christ we are set free.

Help us to joyfully testify to how he turns our ashes into garlands;
and how he builds up what was ruined.

Help us to joyfully join in the work that sets others free,
pointing others to Jesus, the Light of the World. Amen.

Guest Ponderings by Richard Francis, Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Prospect Hill

The other day on one of the morning news shows I heard someone say, "It won't be the holiday without the Macy's Parade!"

We have to stop saying—and thinking—things like that.

I don't just mean the parade. I mean the many things we associate with celebrations like Thanksgiving and Advent and Christmas that may be wonderful in themselves, but which aren't really central to the holiday or commemoration.

For example: in our church in Carroll we are not putting up the Christmas tree in the sanctuary since we aren't planning to have face to face worship until after the first of the year, and squeezing an eight-foot- tall decorated tree onto our video feed would be a little too much.

But it will still be Advent and Christmas without a tree. After all, there was no tree in the manger at Bethlehem. There were no wreaths, no candles, no colored lights, no carols, none of the things we associate with Christmas. But Jesus was born without all those things. Our traditions don't make it Christmas; it's the birth of Jesus that makes it Christmas.

One of my mentors was an Army Chaplain, and he says that his most memorable Christmas was spent in Korea, where all the traditional trappings of the day were absent, and the only thing left was the Incarnation of Emmanuel, God with us. And that, he says, was enough.

Traditions are vital. They can keep us grounded and call our attention to things we might otherwise miss. But the most valuable traditions, paradoxically, don't look back but forward. The Advent readings set by the Revised Common Lectionary, for example, follow a very old tradition of focusing, not on the birth of Christ, but on Christ's return. We are reminded every year that as we look back in gratitude we also look forward in hope—and that enables us to look around and see signs of God's presence in ways we hadn't expected. Jürgen Moltmann writes, "Tradition is forward-moving mission, into the new situation of the promised future...Christian 'tradition' is mission that moves forwards and outwards... It is not through birth, but through rebirth, that faith is propagated."

We usually think of Easter as the season of rebirth. Maybe it's time to start thinking of Advent that way, too. As the Apostle Paul wrote to the Romans, "You know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to awake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, and the day is near." (Romans 13:11-12a). Or, as Jesus put it, "Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." (Luke 21:28)

Blessings, Richard Francis

Church Birthdays

Dec 9-Jane Seeley, 10-Walt DeKock, 11-Dick Goering, 16-Tim Mercer, 17-Lynette Cline

Sympathy to...

Ken TeSlaa upon the death of his brother

For your prayers...

Caryl Nielsen

Jean Boller

Doug & Sandy Lawry's son

Marlys Folkers' brother
Ellie Tompkins

Zoom Meetings

Wed., December 9

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

Sunday, December 6

11:00 am (link below)

[Fellowship Hour.](#)

Wednesday, Dec. 16

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

Thanks for serving last week:

Pianist: Connie Herbon

Worship Leader: Jan Thedens

Vocals: Steve Moon

Electrical Modifications: Jim Duncan, Neal Leeper, Jim Seeley

Office Help while Lynette was quarantined: Nancy Hoppe, Kay Leeper, 'Pete' McCart

Dave and Sue Luck for the donation of the Christmas tree in the west entry

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.

Usual Office Hours Resumed

Lynette has returned to the office after cautiously quarantining in response to a COVID-19 exposure. She tested negative and has resumed usual office hours: Monday-Friday, 8:00 am-3:30 pm (closed over the noon hour.)

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!



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 gifts to Christmas Joy make it possible for students to learn and grow in faith at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

Presby Spottings!

There may be very few of us in the building lately, but Sandy Lawry makes sure we don't miss out on the feeling of the season! Thanks for sharing this bit of joy and peace on our bulletin board, Sandy!



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.



Adopt-A-Family

The deadline is this Friday, Dec. 11th to return your gifts to the church!

Please **wrap and put a tag on the gift that tells who it is for and what it is.** Your gifts should be taken to the church library in the basement. A cart is available.

Click on the link/s, choose the item/s you wish to shop for, then click 'submit and sign up' at the bottom of the screen. You'll be directed to the next page; enter in your name, email and phone number then click 'Sign Up Now' at the bottom. Your information is confidential; only the church office will see it. You will receive a confirmation email.



13 yr old: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0D4BA9A728ABF4CF8-adopt>



9 yr old: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0D4BA9A728ABF4CF8-adopt1>



Household: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0D4BA9A728ABF4CF8-adopt2>

Or, please consider sending a check to First Presbyterian Church and put Adopt-A-Family in the memo. We would be happy to do your shopping for you.

Stewardship/Year-End Contributions

- 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.
- Thank you to all who have responded by mailing in an Estimate of Giving card for 2021. If you have not yet sent in a card, please do so at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your generosity and support.

The Deadline for Ministry Team annual reports is Friday, Jan. 8, 2021.

Worship Leaders Needed

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

Fellowship Hour Link

Sundays at 11:00 am
To join click the link: [Fellowship Hour.](#)
To phone in: 1-312-626-6799
Meeting ID: 960 0560 9426
Passcode: 716125

Community Mission Fundraiser

'Quota' is a non profit service club in the Cedar Valley. It gives all their monies back into the community each year; last year it was \$27,000. They support many of the same causes that our church does ---- Love, Inc., the Northeast Iowa Food Bank, the Waterloo schools, the Salvation Army Women's Shelter; a parents program at the YWCA; various programs for House of Hope and many, many more.

They currently are having a fund raiser selling fresh nuts that they bag themselves. Their fundraisers have been down this year due to the virus. The sale is over *December 15*. Go to their web page for more information: waterlooquota.com.

Prayer for Putting on a Mask

By Rev. Richard Bott, United Church of Canada

Creator,

As I prepare to go into the world, help me to see the sacrament in the wearing of this cloth.

Let it be an 'outward sign of an inward grace,' a tangible and visible way of living love for my neighbors, as I love myself.

Christ,

since my lips will be covered, uncover my heart, that people would see my smile in the crinkles around my eyes.

Since my voice may be muffled, help me to speak clearly, not only with my words, but with my actions.

Holy Spirit,

as the elastic touches my ears-remind me to listen carefully-and full of care, to all those I meet.

May this simple piece of cloth be shield and banner, and each breath that it holds, be filled with your love.

In your Name and in that love I pray.

May it be so.

Thanks to Margaret Clark for sharing this prayer.

