



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

January 6, 2021

**Worship**  
Join us weekly on  
our website:  
[Firstprescf.org](http://Firstprescf.org)

**This Weekend's Worship - The Baptism of Jesus**

Sermon: The Heavens Torn Apart

Scripture: Mark 1:1-11

We will be remembering our baptisms together this Sunday. You are invited to prepare your worship space with a dish of water for this meaningful practice.

**Church Birthdays**

Jan. 8-John & Michelle Luzaich, 9-Caryl Nielsen, 10-Rob Gerken, Stephanie Marra, 11-Rik Anderson, 12-Mary McCalley, 15-Sue Gerken

**For your prayers...**

Mel Reimer  
Caryl Nielsen  
Mark McCalley,

**Zoom Meetings**

**Wednesday, January 6**

6:15 pm Jr. High Aged SHINE  
7:00 pm Chancel Choir

**Thursday, January 7**

6:30 pm Esther Circle

**Sunday, January 10**

11:00 am (**NOTE!** New link below effective through May)

[Fellowship Hour.](#)

**Ministry Team annual reports are due Friday, January 8!**

**Pastor's Ponderings - Water Words**

The time has come! This Sunday is the Sunday we contemplate the significance of the baptism of Jesus by John in the Jordan River. It was a baptism of water and the Holy Spirit where a voice from heaven claimed Jesus as a beloved child. It is also a time when we remember that we, like Jesus, through baptism are named as God's own.

You may remember that just five months ago I led worship as your solo pastor for the first time. That day I shared with you my moving experience in a seminary class that secured "remembrance of baptism" at the top of my liturgical favorites list and I am bursting with joy to be leading us in this practice again on Sunday.

A couple of years ago, I began a tradition of distributing "water words" on this day as well. It is very similar to the tradition of "star words" or "star gifts" which some of you might know. Worshipers are invited to take a waterdrop shaped piece of paper with a word written on it. Then we all reflect on our word for the coming year. We ponder what the significance of the word might have in our lives, and how God might be speaking through it.

Often, looking up the word in the dictionary opens definitions we haven't thought of. Googling the word can show us where it is showing up most often in our context. And looking for occurrences in scripture can illuminate how believers have encountered the word through time.



Of course, distribution of our water words has presented a challenge this year. In order to get words out to the greatest number of people, words will be sent in giving statements and in the family blessing bags this month. If neither of these ways get a water word to you, please email me, [pastor@firstprescf.org](mailto:pastor@firstprescf.org), and I will send one along.

I look forward to sharing our insights with each other as we listen for God's guidance in 2021. Whatever God is calling us to through our word this year, we know that the grace we have received in our baptism is sufficient for that call!

Grace and peace,

*Pastor Julie*

## Thanks for serving last week:

**Pianists:** Connie Herbon

**Vocalist:** Beth Culberson

**Communion Preparer:** Lynette Cline

**Custodial substitute:** Jean Boller

**Taking down Christmas trees:** Mike & Julie Rokes, Jim & Jane Seeley

## Save the Date for the Annual Meeting – January 31

Our annual meeting will occur on January 31. We will be voting on our budget, the pastor's terms of call, and new officers. Please save the date and look for forthcoming information on ways you can participate in this important meeting. We are working on a variety of ways for members to attend and vote.

## Fellowship Hour

There is a NEW Zoom link for the Sunday, 11:00 am Fellowship Hour. This link will be the same, reoccurring link through May and will be in our regular Friday email.

Topic: Fellowship Hour

[https://zoom.us/j/97475746240?](https://zoom.us/j/97475746240?pwd=RXlwT1FncXhuMTk4MIZ3OGc4NEdDUT09)

[pwd=RXlwT1FncXhuMTk4MIZ3OGc4NEdDUT09](https://zoom.us/j/97475746240?pwd=RXlwT1FncXhuMTk4MIZ3OGc4NEdDUT09)

Meeting ID: 974 7574 6240

Passcode: 504524

To Phone In: 1-312-626-6799

## Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Virtual Banquet January 17

2020 was a year that went a long way to bring to light injustices in our communities. It is imperative that we not let that light dim. As we enter 2021, we will continue to encourage one another to work toward the "Beloved Community" that Martin Luther King, Jr. envisioned. The 42<sup>nd</sup> annual Cedar Valley MLK, Jr. banquet will go virtual this year as a prerecorded video. Mrs. Willie Mae Wright, who has been a voting rights advocate in the Cedar Valley for decades, and Rev. Larry Stumme, who marched with Dr. King in Selma will be the speakers. For more information, see <https://www.facebook.com/SocialActionInc.IA/>.



## Prayer for Baptism of Jesus Sunday

God of heaven and earth,  
we will gather in the name of Jesus  
to hear your holy Word  
and to be immersed in your Spirit.  
Speak to us with grace and truth  
and pour out your love upon us  
so that we may resound  
with joyful shouts of glory;  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Lectionary Study Returns on January 11, 2021!

Our lectionary study is starting back up in-person on January 11. Each Monday we will explore the sermon texts for the following Sunday. It is always a good time of conversation and fellowship. Check out the **available slots** at this link <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0D48A8AC2EABFCC16-lectionary1>

Please make sure to sign up so that we are sure to stay within our COVID-19 protocol. Masks and distancing are required.

## First Presbyterian Book Study

The First Presbyterian Book Group is starting on Friday, **January 15, 10:00 am** with Zoom discussions of the book *Caste--The Origins of Our Discontents* by Isabel Wilkerson. There will be seven sessions. This book examines the unspoken caste system that has shaped America. It ends with ways America can move beyond these destructive separations toward hope in our common humanity. All are welcome to join in.

## The Grand Sweep Bible Study

The Grand Sweep Bible Study will resume Tuesday, January 12. The class meets via Zoom weekly on Tuesday evenings at 6:00 pm and lasts until 7:30 pm through mid-April. The **NEW LINK** listed below is recurring and is in our weekly emails.

[Grand Sweep Bible Study](#)

Meeting ID: 822 0157 7459

Passcode: 879309

To phone in: 1 312 626 6799

### Snow Shovelers Needed!

We need you! If you are willing to be on a calling list to help shovel the church sidewalks, please contact Jim Seeley, 266-8874 or the office.



### Stewardship Notes

- Boxed offering envelopes are available in the entryway for anyone who wishes to use them.
- If you have received your stimulus check and would like to share all or part of it for a good cause, please consider donating it to the church. Your donation will help us meet our mission and programming goals for 2021.

### 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.

### Circle Meeting

Sarah Circle will meet in the church dining room on Saturday, January 9, 9:30 am. Contact the office if you'd like to come. A mask is required and you may brown bag your breakfast.

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### First Pres Spottings!

Send us your photos of Presbyterians in action! We love seeing your selfies and snapshots of encounters with other Presbyterians; whether it be socializing, learning or doing mission work. Please send your photos to Lynette at [office@firstprescf.org](mailto:office@firstprescf.org).

### Thank You

The staff at Lowell Elementary School thank you for your kind and generous hearts [for participating in the Adopt-A-Family program.]



Gifts at the home of our Adopt-a-Family recipients.



Thanks to Julie Rokes (pictured above) and Sue Weinberg for coordinating the effort!