

## PresbyterianTimes December, 2015

First Presbyterian Church  
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...”to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.”  
Luke 2:11

### **A Message from Our Pastor Rev. Lou Ellen Hartley**

One of the great contrasts between northern Minnesota and southern Missouri is darkness and light. During this time of year in northern Minnesota, darkness comes early, by 4:00 in the afternoon and leaves late, by 8:00 in the morning. For some, the darkness is difficult to manage. We aren't made to live in the dark. Our bodies can't make vitamin D. Our sleep cycles get disrupted, eating habits change, our brains make less happy chemicals, and we can grow depressed. We human beings, in general, must adapt to living in the dark. Imagining so long ago when there was only a fire or the moon to light up the darkness, we can understand why people would celebrate the solstice when days grew longer and the darkness retreated.

So much of this season is the tension between the darkness and light. So often we want all darkness to be pushed out of our lives. We want to live happy lives with nothing of the dark to bring us down. There are other times, however, when darkness may be a shadow, not of death or sadness, but may be a shadow of God reminding us God is close by.

In her book [Amazing Grace](#), Kathleen Norris writes about the incarnation and the angel's first visit to Mary. She writes, "When the angel Gabriel first addresses Mary, it is in exalted, even imperial language: 'Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee.'" Norris reflects on the unlikely setting in which this conversation takes place. Gabriel comes to a vulnerable young woman who is about to become more vulnerable as she will be pregnant and unwed. She is poor and powerless, yet here is this angel bringing a great declaration into her life. The angel tells her she will be the mother of a king whose kingdom will last forever. After a moment of silence, Mary asks, "How can this be?" Then the angel answers her. "The power of the most high will overshadow you; therefore the child will be called the

Son of God.” To which Mary responds the only way one possibly could in those circumstances, “Here I am. Let it be.”

Kathleen Norris writes, “When a time or place seems touched by God, it is an overshadowing, a sudden eclipsing of my priorities and plans. But even in terrible circumstances and calamities, in matters of life and death, if I sense that I am in the shadow of God, I find light, so much light that my vision improves dramatically. I know that holiness is near. And it is not robed in majesty. It does not assert itself with the raw power of empire (not even the empire of the self in which I all too often reside), but it waits in puzzlement, it hesitates. Coming from Galilee, as it were, from a place of little hope, it reveals the ordinary circumstances of my life to be full of mystery, and gospel, which means ‘good news.’”

During this Advent season, may we all sense where God is in our lives. When darkness overwhelms us, may we all find God in the midst of the shadow. As we prepare the way for the Lord’s coming, may we pause to notice the mystery and the good news we may otherwise ignore. God is with us, friends, in darkness and in light. Halleluiah! Amen.

Pastor Lou Ellen

Brett and I would like to wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. We appreciate how you have all reached out to welcome us into this community and congregation. Best wishes to you all!!!

Pastor Lou Ellen and Brett

### **Announcement for Congregational Meeting Rev. Lou Ellen Hartley**

The session has called a special congregational meeting immediately following the worship service on December 6, 2016 for the purpose of transferring property to the City of Rolla and for electing officers nominated by the congregational nominating committee.

**TRANSFER OF PROPERTY:** Two years ago the Session approved the donation of the east parking lot to the city of Rolla with the following understanding:

1. The Church has unrestricted parking on the lot for overflow during Church events or Church sponsored events.
2. The City would grant an easement for any sewer work that had to be done by the Church.
3. If the City opts to sell the land at a future date, the Church has first right of refusal.
4. Any cost associated with the transfer, such as survey or an updating of the legal description of the property would be assumed by the City.

John Calvin Presbytery has also approved the transfer of the property. In accordance with the Book of Order, the congregation must now vote to approve the transfer.

#### **NOMINATIONS:**

The Congregational Nominating Committee nominates the following officers:

Elders for 3 Year Term: Bob May, Melba Read, Marilyn Schmidt  
Deacons for 3 Year Term: Dixie Finley, Marian Pruitt, Jan Roberts  
Trustees for 3 Year Term: Bill Cottingham, Eugene Zanders

**Presbyterian Women**  
**Melba Read**

Circle V is hosting the Annual Cookie Walk/Bake Sale and Christmas Bazaar to be held on Saturday, December 5<sup>th</sup> from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm.

**Fellowship**  
**Mary Kwantes**

We are in need of folks to sign up for fellowship during the months of December and January. If you are able to help, please sign up on the sheets outside the office. Thank you.

**From the Kitchen**

As the Holiday season is upon us and food is in abundance, please remember to always bring home what food stuffs you have brought to the church. If, however, your food can be frozen and prior arrangements are made with deacons for it to be used in the Deacon freezer, then make sure the item is labeled and appropriately boxed or bagged. As staff takes vacation time there is no need for even milk, butter, dressings, cream cheese, or other items to accumulate in the fridge.

**Mission News**  
**Frank Jessop**

The Christmas Joy Offering has been a cherished Presbyterian tradition since 1930. The Joy Offering is divided equally 50/50. Fifty percent goes to Assistance Programs of the Board of Pensions. The Assistance Program provides integral financial support to church workers and their families. It provides financial assistance to support them through life's challenging circumstances.

The other fifty percent goes to Presbyterian related schools and colleges who provide education and spiritual leadership, while nurturing racial and ethnic heritage. This has been a Presbyterian commitment for nearly 140 years.

We will dedicate our Joy Offering the last of December. Thank you for your support of this vital offering.

**Personnel Committee**  
**Britt Whitaker, Chair**

Christmas is the time to not only celebrate the birth of our Savior, but a time of gratitude for the gift of the Christ child. It is a wonderful time, when in the spirit of generosity, we can show our appreciation for others who daily share their talents with us. If you would like to show your gratitude for any OR ALL of our staff, please feel free to present them with a card/or monetary gift, individually. If you prefer your gift to be anonymous, feel free to give your Christmas gift to one of our Personnel Committee members (Britt

Whitaker, Ken Kwantes, Marilyn Schmidt, Eleanor Van Horn, Steve Zap or Ardel Rueff) who will happily pass it on to the designated person. What a delightful opportunity this is to show appreciation to our Pastor, our Office Manager, our Custodians, our Nursery Attendant, our Accompanist and our Music Director. We wish for you a joyous Christmas, *The Personnel Committee*.

**Membership News**  
**Mary Kwantes**

We have seen many new faces joining us in worship. Please continue to greet them warmly, introduce yourself and introduce the visitor to someone else.

We will carol to shut-ins on December 20<sup>th</sup> at 5 pm. Gather at the church and dress warmly.

Our January Game Night is set for January 21<sup>st</sup>. We will serve soup and beverages. Bring a game, a friend and snacks at 5:30 pm and be ready for fun.

The Chili Cook-off date is February 21<sup>st</sup>. More details later. May you all have a blessed Christmas.

**Stewardship Committee**  
**Barbara Ford**

Just a quick reminder regarding estimate of giving cards: There's still time to mail or drop yours by the office if you so desire. It always helps when the committee works on financial planning for the coming year. I also wanted to mention the "wrap a register for Christmas" option that can help with your taxes if donated in 2015. Each register is costing the church approximately \$2200, and we will be formalizing a capital campaign in the spring to replenish the reserve fund. I am planning to sponsor one in the coming year, though it will take me two or three years to donate that much. Some of you, however, may wish to start this year. Please indicate if a donation is for this renovation rather than the general fund.

Even though this time of year can get really busy, it is also a time when I want to thank you for your help and support. Volunteering is a blessing in itself, but even more so when folks offer help and thanks and a pat on the back. So thank you all -- and Merry Christmas.

**Worship and Music**  
**Jonathan Kimball**

We have now entered the season of Advent. The first Sunday of Advent is November 29, Thanksgiving weekend. Due to construction in the sanctuary (an upgrade to the registers), this service will be held in the fellowship hall. It will also be a "FIRED UP!" style service. Going forward, we intend to do a FIRED UP! style service (in the sanctuary) on any fifth Sunday; our next one will be January 31.

On the second Sunday of Advent, December 6, we will have a special service centered on the hanging of the greens. Similar to a Christmas Eve service, we will have readings related to the meaning of the various decorations we use.

As a modification of our normal cantata, we will have two Sundays of special music, December 13 and 20, drawn from Handel's *Messiah*. The music will include several guest soloists, and provides plenty of opportunities for people to participate who are not normally in the choir. We have already begun practicing the music during our normal Wednesday rehearsals, after working through the music for the immediate Sunday and extending until about 8:30. *Messiah* draws its text from scripture and is an excellent way to prepare for the celebration of Christmas.

Also on December 20, we will be Christmas caroling for shut-ins, starting at 6:00 pm. We have books to use, so you don't need to know every carol. Just come out for a great time of connecting with our extended church family.

Our Christmas Eve service will be held on **December 24 at 5:00 pm**. As in years past, it will be a service of lessons and carols. Please note that there will not be a FIRED UP! service on December 24 or December 31. We will resume our normal schedule on January 7.

**Thank You**  
**Janet Brown**

Dear Presbyterian Family,

The Thanksgiving Holiday reminds me that it is past time to let you know how deeply grateful I am for your support I have received since two events coincided this summer – my serious fall and Joe passing away a few days later.

Thank you so very much for the visits, cards, and phone calls, plus the delicious meal served after Joe's family memorial service. I feel very blessed.

My permanent home is now in Presbyterian Manor and all is going well. May this Christmas season be special for each and every one.

Gratefully,  
Janet Brown



We had a wonderful month in preschool with lots of fun activities and events. I am so excited to have Frank and Carol Jessop back in the preschool with us doing story time for the afternoon kids. They have been such a blessing! 😊

We applied for a program from the Missouri Humanities Council called “Read from the Start” and our application was accepted. On November 2<sup>nd</sup> we held a program with an amazing presenter who gave out over 20 families in attendance great information about early literacy and 5 FREE books to each family!! Our attendance was so high that they have offered us a second follow-up program in the spring with 5 additional free books for our attending families.

Our PE classes this month were hampered by rain. The first group left only to be stranded for an hour and fifteen minutes because of heavy rain but NEVER underestimate the ingenuity of preschool teachers! One teacher had the idea to use the play parachute as a huge umbrella to “parachute” our kids back! It was hilarious but effective!

We had our traditional Thanksgiving Feast right before break. This year we had the added bonus of eating our own harvest from the tower garden. We served up a huge salad of the greens we have been growing in the hall all fall! How cool is that?!

On Veterans Day I was very proud and humbled to see our kids make and deliver cards to our very own Veteran, [Horace Jeffery](#), who happened to be volunteering in the building that day! Thank you to all of the Veterans in this church!

I could go on and on about everything we are doing on but I want to take a minute to be THANKFUL for all of YOU! from Pastor Lou Ellen to Betti Jo and the members of the Preschool Management Committee (Mary Alofs, Eleanor Van Horn, Bill Neely and Ray Fox), and all the rest of you who have been so involved and helpful. I could list names all day! Thank you from the bottom of my heart for all that you do, for the Church, the Preschool and your community! You are a blessing!

We are gearing up for the very busy month of December! You are welcome to attend our Christmas Program on Friday, December 11<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 if you are prepared to stand the cuteness! 😊

God Bless!

Rachel Allison. Preschool Director

**From the Office**  
**Betti Jo Pyatt, Office Manager**

As 2015 is coming to a close, there are a lot of exciting things happening here at First Presbyterian Church. Our main focus however, is on the birth of Jesus.

The PW will have their annual cookie walk/bake sale and bazaar on Saturday, December 5<sup>th</sup>; the Preschool children will be presenting their Christmas program on December 11<sup>th</sup>; and the choir will be presenting the Messiah on December 13 and 20 during worship. The annual Christmas dinner will be on December 13 following our worship service.

The office will be closed on Friday, December 25<sup>th</sup> for Christmas. The Preschool will be closed from December 21<sup>st</sup> through January 04<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

Articles for the January, 2016 Newsletter will be due in the office by Monday, December 28, 2015.

The office will be closed on Friday, January 01, 2016 for New Year's Day, and Monday, January 18<sup>th</sup> for Martin Luther King's birthday.

I have received information that the Per Capita amount for 2016 for each member will be \$31.00.



*John Denbo, Pam Skyles, Brett Hartley, Paden Long, Bill Morgan, Caleb Rose, Dace Murray, Michael Bennett, Bud Pumfrey, Bill Winch, Glenda Knight, Ida Ponzer, Caitlin Bennett, Barbara Ford, and Betti Jo Pyatt*

*Happy Anniversary*

*Jim and Mariesa Crow-Drewniak  
Angela and K.M. Isaac*

*I have enjoyed working with everyone again this year, meeting new folks, and look forward to what the Lord has in store for us in 2016.*

*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!*

*Have a safe, healthy and happy holiday season with family and friends.*

*Betti Jo*