

january
FIRST FOCUS
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Dear Friends,

Each turn of the calendar year can serve as a marker in our faith journey. We are reminded that all life is uncharted territory. Every moment, every day, is a step into the unknown and a chance to exercise trust in the Lord. In Christ, we can let go of past sins, and embrace God's future. We follow Christ's lead joyfully, knowing that He will guide us in right paths and holy endeavors.

On January 15, I will begin my sabbatical. Pastor Matt Wilcox will once again serve as acting Head of Staff. He will see to the needs and ministries of the congregation, including worship, funerals, weddings, baptisms, and pastoral care. Matt will be supported in ministry by our fine staff, Session, Deacons, and all our members.

I will return on May 15, and will work through June 15. I hope to share a slideshow of my travels in Eastern Europe and elsewhere, on a Sunday, in the first part of June. My retirement officially begins on July 1, 2019.

All of you will be in my prayers throughout this time. Leslie and I will always be grateful for your love and kindness toward us. May the Lord richly bless and uphold you in 2019, and in all the days to come.

Grace and peace,
Larry

AT A GLANCE

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JANUARY 6TH
KIDS OF THE KINGDOM
YOUTH GROUP

5:30-7:30pm

It's GAME NIGHT! Bring a friend!

JANUARY 6TH
SUNDAY SCHOOL RESUMES

JANUARY 11TH
ALMOST LOCK- IN (K-2nd)

6-9pm, \$5 per child

There will be pizza and ice cream!

FEBRUARY 5
SUMMER IN WINTER FUN

6-8pm in the Great Hall

Activities and inflatables!

Plan to come!

COFFEE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

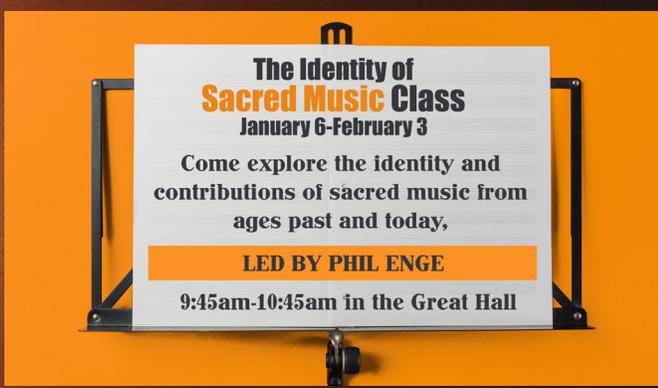
We need a volunteer to help with coffee on the 2nd Sunday of each month, starting in February. Please call Nancy Wolter at 452-1094 if you can help. Thank you!



AFTER THE MANGER

AFTER THE MANGER SERMON SERIES

Throughout Advent and the Christmas season, we take intentional time to explore and rest in the nativity scene of Jesus' birth. Through song and story, our hearts are warmed by the account of shepherds, angels, and a manger. But what about the months after the manger? In this message series we will explore three accounts in scripture that reveal what occurred in Christ's earliest years.



THE IDENTITY OF SACRED MUSIC

Join our Music Director, Phil Enge, for a 5-week class (Jan. 6 - Feb. 3) exploring the identity and contributions of sacred music from ages past and today. This class will foster a broad conversation as well as a chance to examine specific pieces of sacred music. We'll meet 9:45-10:45am in the Great Hall, during the Adult Christian Ed. hour.



BASIC SERMON SERIES

Maybe you've heard someone say it's time to "get back to the basics". It's a decision to return to the fundamental truths and realities before moving forward. This is good practice in business, education, but also in Christian faith. During our next message series, Basics, we'll spend some time exploring the Apostles' Creed, one of the most universally professed and cherished confessions of the Christian faith.



JANUARY CARE & SHARE

January donations will go to the Salvation Army. Their needs are: peanut butter, canned meats, ravioli and other canned meals, macaroni & cheese, Ramen noodles, baby diapers (size 5 & 6), dish soap, and laundry detergent. Donations can be dropped off into the carts, available at the College and Hershey entrances. Thank you!



WOMENS RETREAT MEETING

Women high school age and up are welcome to attend the Women's Retreat, for relaxation, fellowship, and spiritual growth. The retreat will take place at Timber Pointe Retreat Center, in Hudson - Friday, February 15 at 6pm - Saturday, February 16, until 4pm. The cost is \$30 per person. Join us for a brief informational meeting following the 11am service, January 13. Please RSVP to the retreat by signing up outside the library. We'll see you at the meeting!

PER CAPITA OFFERING

\$34 PER MEMBER IN EACH HOUSE HOLD

“Per Capita” is the amount every congregation in Great Rivers Presbytery pays annually for each member on the rolls. For First Presbyterian Church, the total comes to approximately \$16,425. First Presbyterian Church pays this amount whether or not members have contributed toward it, so your help is greatly appreciated! This money goes toward administrative costs of Presbytery,

Synod, and General Assembly, including the salary of our Lead Presbyter. Great Rivers Presbytery has the lowest Per Capita charge of any presbytery in our synod (Synod of Lincoln Trails, encompassing Illinois & Indiana). Each year, we ask our members to cover this cost. Please pay \$34 for each church member in your household. Write checks to “First Presbyterian Church” and mark for “Per Capita”. Envelopes for this purpose will be available in the pews through mid-February. This provides a good boost to our annual local church budget for First Presbyterian Church. Thank you very much!



EMBRACING THE FUTURE - LEGACY GIVING

First Pres members and leadership have achieved several major milestones the last couple years, including paying off the mortgage on our church building in August 2017, celebrating our 150th anniversary this past June, and most recently - pledging our gifts for 2019.

We know being good stewards in the long term requires both long range planning and near term action. The Legacy Giving Committee reminds us that we should regularly consider planning for the future of our family and others we care about. As part of those considerations, we may choose to designate a future gift, whether through your will or via some other approach, to those special people - as well as to First Pres Church and the charities of your choice.

Now is a good time to reflect about your potential short and long term gifts of any kind in the year(s) ahead. In addition to thinking about plans for family, your church and other charities, etc., a side benefit may reduce your future income taxes. Examples of possible gifts:

- IRA distributions,
- Appreciated securities – give the stock
- Securities with a loss – sell first to take the loss and write a check
- Designate the church as a beneficiary in your will (you DO have one, don't you?) or of a retirement plan, after taking care of your family.

Want to know more? Check the Legacy Giving notebooks in the cupboard outside the office or contact Legacy Giving Committee members Carole Ringer at carole.ringer@gmail.com or Margaret Wolf at wolfland1@comcast.net.

January Birthday List

Fred Lamkey	1/3	Evan Walles	1/12	Irene DenBesten	1/25
Mary Kay Stimpert	1/4	Noah Litwiller	1/13	Kay Franz	1/25
Gloria Kelley	1/7	Jason Han	1/14	Claire Meyer	1/25
Lucy Patterson	1/8	Marianne Bullard	1/15	Kurt Benckendorf	1/26
Peggy Steinkraus	1/11	Leslie Walker	1/15	Tom Harms	1/26
Brent Evenson	1/12	Michele Kinley	1/16	Kelsey Kinley	1/26
Dave Franz	1/12	Aprile O'Keefe	1/17	Beth Smith	1/26
		Carol Kehl	1/19	Sheila Smith	1/26
		Marti Barwick	1/20	Heidi Lichauer	1/28
		Don Merritt	1/20	Bill Bartley	1/30
		Tony Tidei	1/21	Pat Michaels	1/30
		Shawn Homler	1/22	Lauren Bartel	1/31
		Dylan Elder	1/23	Rory Doss	1/31
		Clara Fry	1/23	Taylor Kern	1/31
		Kelsey Kern	1/24	Judy Lindsay	1/31

If you would like to be added or removed from this list, contact Anne at 452-4459.

