

THE CHURCH FAMILY

Presenting Everyone Complete in Christ

FROM YOUR PASTOR'S DESK

This Advent season we are exploring the Christian attribute of JOY! There is an interesting book teaching the Five Points of Calvinism called "The Joy Project" by Tony Reinke. The Five Points are an important part of our Presbyterian Reformed system of doctrine (summarized in the Acronym TULIP), but they are not usually associated with the word "joy." But in these great Scriptural truths we discover the secret of true lasting joy.

Reinke writes: "God's plan for us is not bound by the circumstances of this fallen, joy-killing planet. God's plan for our joy rests on a foundation deeper than our daily resolutions. It is bigger than our anxieties and fears. It is brighter than our darkest secrets. It searches our hearts and exposes the roots of our passions and steers us toward eternal joys." (Cruciform Press, Minneapolis, MN 2018, p. 9)

For those of you new to Presbyterian circles and Reformed Theology, our teaching boils down to this fact: God is in control- not us! He is sovereign over all matters of this world including our salvation. One of the reasons I believe and teach Reformed theology, (besides the most important fact that it is Biblically based), is this connection with joy.

- Joy is found in the truth that despite our sin Jesus was born, lived a perfect life, and died as our sinless substitute. His sacrifice is a divine display of love infused grace. "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8.
- Joy is found in God's plan for our salvation that is His work beginning to end. He is able to accomplish that which we cannot. "For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son...and those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified." Romans 8:29-30.
- Joy is found when we accept that a truly Sovereign God can take even our most painful moments and orchestrate them into His perfect plan for our lives. "God works all things for good to those who love Him and are called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28)
- Joy is found, finally, in the assurance that God has us in His arms and will never let us go. We have complete salvation security through Christ. What God has completed in our lives is irrevocable. "If God is for us, who can be against us?" And "nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:31,38-39)

May you find true JOY this Christmas Season as you reflect on the great truths of God's Word, especially this most pivotal event in our salvation: the birth of Jesus.

Still Discovering Joy in Jesus,





CHRISTMAS SCENES UPDATE

The opening of "A Christmas Journey" is just around the corner! Here are a few important things for you to know:

1. **DRESS REHEARSAL: Sunday, Dec. 9 at 5:15pm.** Our only chance to do a full run through of the production. This is critical for **all drama participants, all greeters, parking lot/security crew, basically everyone who will be involved.** A light meal will be provided.
2. **PRODUCTION TIMES:**
Thursday, Dec. 13 - Scenes run 6:30 - 8:00 pm.
Friday, Dec. 14 - Scenes run 6:30 - 8:00 pm.
Saturday, Dec. 15 - Scenes run 6:30 - 8:00 pm.
*****Participants should arrive by 5:45 pm each night to get dressed and to enjoy some finger foods and drinks.**
3. **CLEAN UP DAY: Sunday, Dec. 16 after church.** Help pack everything away until next year!

OTHER IMPORTANT NOTES:

PRAYER TEAM: There are still 1/2-hour slots available for our "prayer chair" during the event. Email Lennie at eelahb@aol.com to sign up.

FOOD TEAM: If you are baking cookies/brownies/other treats (4 dozen) please have them in a **disposable** airtight container or bag labeled "Christmas Journey" and deliver them to Founders Hall no later than Thursday morning December 13.

FINALLY:

TAKE A CHRISTMAS JOURNEY FLYER AND INVITE A FRIEND SO THAT...

"Those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand." Romans 15:21



BEST YEARS CHRISTMAS LUNCH

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 20, 12:00 - 2:00 PM

Join us for a Christmas lunch with ham, corn, sweet potato casserole, green beans, roll and a dessert. We will play games, decorate sugar cookies and even have a photo op with Santa Claus.

A big thanks to our Assistant Pastor Search Committee for their perseverance in a process that ended up taking a couple years! But God's timing is perfect, and He used this Committee to help guide FPC to an amazing candidate, Thad Davis. We look forward to the fruit of this committee's labors as Thad and his family begin their ministry here among us.

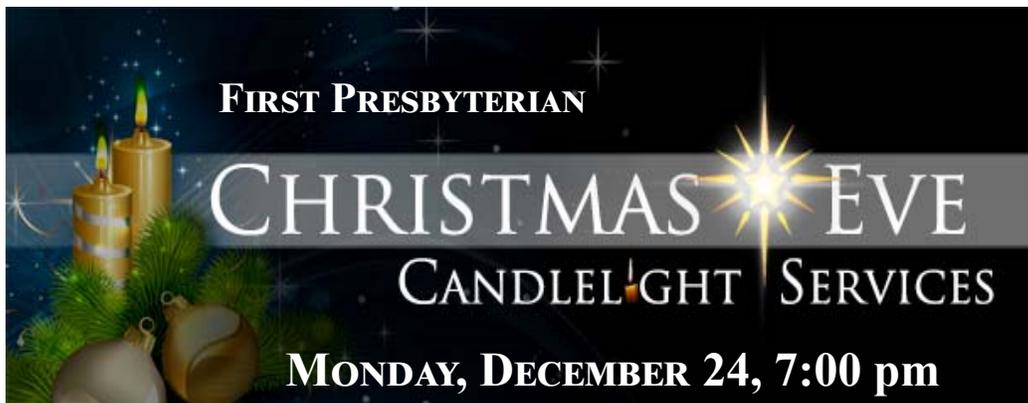
The Search Committee members are: **Chris Baker, Ed Faggart (Chair), Lorie Hamrick, Steve Jessen, Rebecca Lasley** and **Martha Sue Mitchell**. When you see these folks be sure to express your gratitude for their prayers, hard work, extra time served, and wisdom.

A NOTE FROM OUR ASSISTANT PASTOR by Thad Davis

If we had to pick one word to describe how we feel toward God's call to pastoral ministry at FPC, it would be "humbled." We are humbled that God has guided us toward ministry, meeting so many caring members at FPC and grace-guided leaders asking insightful questions.

Looking back, we are amazed at how God has directed our steps, through many previous life experiences, sometimes with closed doors along what we thought our career path should be. We are humbled that we are part of God's family and our heavenly Father has chosen us to be part of the family at FPC. We are thrilled that we get to live life with God's people and see God's steadfast love guide us in joy and sorrow, through homework, sports tryouts and college choices, new jobs and job losses, retirements and new births. And we are incredibly blessed to see the Spirit apply grace to our hearts and lives so that we are newly captivated by new morning mercies and shown new glimpses of the glory of Christ.

God is answering so many prayers, the prayers of our family for a church home for our kids and a new home to live in, for new friends and being able to say goodbye to old friends, and for God's glory to shine brighter, even in the ordinary details of everyday life.



FPC FACILITY NOTES

NEW DOORS

New security doors have been installed at the office entry hallway and at the entrance to the daycare hallway. We are still working to fine tune the functionality of the system. If you come by the church during office hours, you will be buzzed in through the door on the right. If you are a master key holder, please note your key will **not** fit the new doors. We apologize for any inconvenience as we work through the details.

BORROWING OF CHURCH PROPERTY

Dear Church Family,

We, the Deacon Board, have been tasked with communicating to the congregation about borrowing church property (tables, chairs, table cloths, tools, etc.). At our church, the current policy, is an “open borrowing policy” that does not require notice, documentation, or permission. Also, the items borrowed should only be borrowed by a church member and not loaned openly to the public. The current policy is based on the general understanding that the item borrowed will be used and returned in the condition it was found.

It has been brought to our attention that items borrowed from the church are being returned in an unsatisfactory condition or are not being returned. We do not feel this is happening out of malicious intention but merely oversight by the member borrowing the item.

We feel it is only fair that we write this letter to ask our members to please be mindful when borrowing church items. We ask that you remember these items were purchased and donated for the use of the church to aid in spreading God’s word and allow the church the ability to hold and host services to further God’s message. We do believe that church items are available for members to use to help in their daily needs, but we do ask that the items be cared for, so the church is not burdened with additional expenses of having to repair items, replace items, or clean items.

God has blessed our church with many tools to help serve Him and spread His word in our community and to the world. We simply ask that we continue to be good stewards of what God has gifted our church. We, the Deacon Board, do not feel a formal policy is necessary and do not wish to add additional steps for borrowing church items. But we do feel it was necessary to bring this to the attention of the congregation.

As always, we pray that God continues to bless you and your families.

First Presbyterian Church Deacon Board



FPC P-MAIL IS BACK IN BUSINESS!

Send Christmas cards through the FPC mail system. As you address your cards, please consider if the recipient has been attending. This system only works for our church family that is active.

For those folks that have not been attending, we hope that you will still send some Christmas cheer their way via the postal service, or better yet, hand deliver it to them!

Please keep in mind our newcomers or visitors that might not be in the directory.

Feel free to call the church office if you need addresses for our shut-ins, inactive members and visitors.

Boxes can be found in the main hallway. Just place cards in the boxes based on the first letter of the recipient's last name. Remember to check your appropriate box for cards addressed to your family!

NEWS FROM OUR MISSIONARY FAMILY

A.J. and Krista Babel are eagerly awaiting the birth of their third daughter (due right after Christmas). The Babels serve with Cru in Tennessee.

Charles and Bonita Davidson's daughter Anna and husband Eric Graham are now in Bogotá, Colombia where they are beginning their 2 year commitment with MTW. The Davidsons are MTW missionaries in Mexico.

Tyler and Carrie Dirks' three-year-old son underwent open heart surgery at Boston Children's Hospital recently. The Dirkses are church planters at East Charlotte Presbyterian Church.

Andy and Karen Weaver's daughter Stephanie was released from the hospital on October 24th and is making good progress in regaining strength and caring for medical needs on her own at home. Karen has been staying with her at her apartment. The Weavers serve with Wycliffe Bible Translators in Papua New Guinea.

NOTE: Missionary Prayer Commitments for 2019: 310!!

Check your P-Mail boxes for your prayer bookmarks and refrigerator magnets.



SOAR YOUTH COED VOLLEYBALL 2019

ARE YOU READY? PASS, SET, HIT

**REGISTRATION OPENS DECEMBER 15TH
FOR GRADES 4TH - 12TH!**

Register on our website: www.fpcstanleysoar.org

Cost: \$50 per player
The season runs January 12 - March 23, 2019.

****Don't wait to register. Registration fills quickly.**

Are you interested in helping during the SOAR volleyball season? We can always use coaches, referees, and committee members.

If you are interested in helping in anyway, contact Lisa Revels at lisa@fpcstanley.org. We would love to have you join us in this exciting ministry to our youth and community.

2019
2018

END OF YEAR BREAK FOR CARE GROUPS, CHILDREN & YOUTH

Our care groups, children's ministry and youth have wrapped up for 2018. We hope you can enjoy some fellowship with your family and friends during this time. All activities will resume starting Sunday, January 13.

WITH OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Clyde Haley is at home recovering from surgery. Clyde had a cancerous section of his colon removed on November 27.

Lynn Holcomb was released from the hospital and is at the TLC for rehab.

The Stanley Police Department
invite all our **Senior Adults** to a

Christmas Breakfast **Wednesday, December 19**

Drop in from 7:00 - 11:00 am
at

Christ Lutheran Church, 203 South Main Street, Stanley

WITH LOVING THANKS

A very special thank you to Steve and his hard working Man Day workers. They gave their time and energy to replace 2 skylights and complete a couple of other projects Parke was unable to do. It's wonderful to be part of such a great church family that you can call on for help when needed.

*Christian Love,
The Sweigarts*

Dear family in Christ,

Thank you for your prayers and for all you have done to encourage, support and care for us in the aftermath of our car wreck on November 16. You have demonstrated the love of Christ to us in countless ways. You are indeed a special people!

*We love and treasure you,
Jimmie and Martha Sue Mitchell*

The United in Action of Stanley Churches extend a sincere word of thanks to the pastor and church family of FPC for your hospitality shown as host for this year's Community Thanksgiving Service. A thanks also to those who provided lots of scrumptious "delights" following the service.

Birthdays to Celebrate in December

16 Caitlyn Bumgardner
David Griffin

17 Brenner McMinn

18 Craig Mesimer
Jerry Ratchford

19 Mona Kelly

20 Bobby Blackman II
Hannah Mosely



22 Janice Barton
Skip Ribbeck

23 Hayley Rutkowski
Roxi Rutledge

26 Ellen Beam
Joseph Treat

28 Julia Treat

29 Michael Ham
Rhys McAllister
Phyllis Withers

30 David Rust

The Church Family is a twice-monthly publication of First Presbyterian Church
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E-mail: info@fpcstanley.org • Website: www.fpcstanley.org
Pastor Steve Jessen • Assistant Pastor Thad Davis
Sunday School 9:00 AM • Worship 10:15 AM



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED