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2020

## Pastor's Pen

### *"Come to Bethlehem and See"*



The season of Advent, the four weeks leading up to Christmas, is upon us. Advent is a time of preparing, waiting, and expecting our Savior to come into our world. Waiting is often very difficult as we want things instantaneously. We have become accustomed to fast food restaurants, microwaveable meals, and high speed internet. When we have to wait, whether at the doctor's office, in line at the grocery store, or for the light to turn green, we can grow impatient.

As we await Christmas there are several things the church is offering to help us draw closer to God during this special season:

Advent devotionals are available for free in the gallery. These daily devotionals, titled *Prepare Ye*, include a short devotional reading, scripture verse, and prayer. I would invite you to pick up one of these devotionals to use during the season of Advent to prepare our hearts and minds in Christ.

I will be leading an Advent series class titled, *A Turning Point* beginning this Sunday, December 6 at 9:15 AM in the Fireside Room. This three week class will be looking at the Old Testament book of Isaiah and discover why it provides a turning point in our faith. Although written 700 years before the birth of Jesus, the prophet Isaiah had the wonderful gift of being able to look ahead to discover what awaits us. Amid our pandemic, what can we learn from this book that enables us to look forward to what God has in store for us? This class will also be available online at [www.facebook.com/fpcbllings](http://www.facebook.com/fpcbllings).

Our Angel Tree is in the gallery with various tags to help people during this Christmas season. We will be helping three groups this Christmas: low income kids in our community, those served through the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and some of our shut-ins who have been isolated during this pandemic. We invite you to take a tag and then return the items before December 15. Questions? Talk with Sue Bentley or Pastor Dave.

I am preaching an Advent sermon series titled, *Come to Bethlehem and See* based on the birth stories of Jesus as told in Matthew and Luke. This series is centered around the aspects of recognizing, responding, receiving, and returning...all intending to draw us into a deeper relationship with Christ.

*Zoom, Zoom, a Caroling* will be held on Sunday, December 20 at 2 PM. Join Sandi Rabas and I for 45 minutes as we sing and share some of our favorite Christmas carols via Zoom. Watch for the Zoom link that will be published in the e-news and bulletin as the date gets closer.

Christmas Eve services will be offered on Thursday, December 24 at 5 PM and 10 PM. Due to social distancing protocol, we are asking you to choose to attend just one service this year. Both services will include carols, candle lighting, and a lesson of hope from the birth narrative of Jesus. Both services will also be offered online at [www.facebook.com/fpcbllings](http://www.facebook.com/fpcbllings).

I look forward to what God has in store for us this Advent season as we wait and prepare.  
Dave

### Upcoming Events:

Our annual meeting will be held after worship on Sunday, January 31. The meeting will be offered on Zoom for those who would like to attend virtually. The Zoom link will be shared as we get closer to the meeting date.

Women's Retreat: Coming! February 27, 2021—a day-long gathering of Presbyterian women and friends to laugh - share - listen - be inspired - be comforted. Because this last year has been an unusually difficult one for so many, this gathering, continuing in Pastor Dave's months of comfort and support, will specifically address our faith during troubled times. There is no cost for this day which will include lunch. Please note: the occasion will be dependent upon the Covid situation in February. Watch for further information and details or call Cheryl Johnson at 697-3153.

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### **Online giving option increases with our mobile giving app!**

We offer online giving through our church's website at [www.fpcbllings.org](http://www.fpcbllings.org). You can go to the online giving tab on the homepage of our website. In addition, our church has a giving mobile app. You can simply text fpcbllings to 77977 and give a one-time gift or set up reoccurring gifts. We appreciate all of the ways you give to the ministry of our church. If you have any questions about this you can talk with Jeanne or Pastor Dave.

### **Volunteer Schedule**

Our volunteer schedule is on hold during this time of pandemic. If you would like to volunteer to serve as a worship assistant, please talk with Pastor Dave. We will resume our volunteer schedule when the restrictions lift. We will provide updates through the weekly bulletin and e-news publications.



**Church Info**

**Office Hours:**  
**Mon—Thurs**  
**8:30 AM— 4 PM**  
**406-252-3434**  
 mainoffice@fpcbillings.org  
 www.fpcbillings.org  
**Worship:**  
**Sundays @ 10:30 AM**  
 Facebook.com/  
 fpcbillings

**STAFF**

**Pastor:**  
**Dave Thompson**  
**Office Manager:**  
**Jeanne Raney**  
**Accompanist:**  
**Sandi Rabas**  
**Choir Director:**  
**Janie Sutton**  
**Custodian:**  
**Kent Fellingham**

**Birthday's**

2 John Limbach  
 Judy Wallinder  
 Dorothy Leeds  
 5 Lowell Butler  
 6 Jim Graff  
 8 Bob Dayton  
 10 Shirley Shirley  
 11 James Haefer  
 Jeanie Hekkel  
 12 Merry Osman  
 16 Tom Kreger  
 19 Ann Chase  
 20 Teri Pattee  
 Edna Carlson

20 Haley Kouba  
 Maliyah Stennerson  
 Lori Hall  
 22 Gary Schneider  
 Jean Grocholski  
 23 Jane Myhre  
 Louise Graff  
 26 Robert Muir  
 Pam Harr  
 27 Tim Janiak  
 Doris Backus  
 30 Jessica Grabow  
 Kurt Grabow  
 Jay Kouba  
 31 Jenanne Luse

Allison Dubs  
 Isabella Stennerson

**Anniversaries**

19 Marv & Janet Brown  
 27 Bob & Barbara Muir  
 28 Bill & Amy Letson  
 29 Jim & Louise Graff

**Church Mice:**

Now more than ever, the church mice are looking for ways to be helpful. During this holiday season we encourage everyone to give resources, for goods, time and energy to those in our community who are in need. Let's help others!



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		<b>1</b> 12 Property Committee meeting 1 ReFuel Group	<b>2</b> 9 BSF Leaders 10 Grief Support 6 Youth group 7 College group	<b>3</b> 9 Bible Study Fellowship 7 Christian Ed meets in Fireside	<b>4</b> 9-1 Preschool	<b>5</b>
<b>6</b> 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 6 ReFuel groups	<b>7</b> 9-1 Preschool 10 Worship Comm 10:30 Retreat Plan 12 Men's Group 2 ReFuel Group	<b>8</b> 1 ReFuel Group 7 Session meeting	<b>9</b> 9 BSF Leaders 9:30 PW Board 10 RLI Group 6 Youth group 7 College group	<b>10</b> 9 Bible Study Fellowship	<b>11</b> 9-1 Preschool 12 Christian Study Group meets in Fireside	<b>12</b>
<b>13</b> 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 6 ReFuel groups	<b>14</b> 9-1 Preschool 9 Monday work crew 12 Men's Group 2 ReFuel Group	<b>15</b> 10 Grief Support Group 1 ReFuel Group	<b>16</b> 9 BSF Leaders 9-1 Preschool PW Circles Meet 6 Youth Group 7 College group	<b>17</b> 9 Bible Study Fellowship 12 Congregational Care Team Meets 7 Mission Comm.	<b>18</b> 9-1 Preschool  <b>Newsletter Deadline</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>20</b> 9:15 Sunday Sch 10:30 Worship 2 Zoom, Zoom, a Caroling	<b>21</b> No Preschool	<b>22</b> 6 Stephen Ministry Supervision	<b>23</b> No Preschool No Youth Group	<b>24</b> Christmas Eve Services 5 PM & 10 PM		<b>26</b>
<b>27</b> No Sunday School 10:30 Worship	<b>28</b> 9 Monday work crew No Men's Group	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> No Preschool No Youth Group	<b>31</b> No Bible Study Fellowship	<b>2020</b>	

**SESSION NOTES:** On the stated meeting of the session on November 10, elders voted to hold the Annual Congregational Meeting after worship on Sunday, January 31, 2021. The session also voted to approve the baptism of Izabella Grace Lafko, daughter of Ryan Lafko and Mariah Martinez on Sunday, November 29, 2020 during worship. The Nominating Committee will soon begin its work of finding a new group of elders and deacons for the coming year. These individuals will be presented for election at the annual meeting in January.

**On a Personal Note**

We extend our condolences to the family of Chuck Maris who passed away. A memorial service will be held in the spring.  
 We extend our sympathies to Dave and Jackie Carrol on the recent death of Jackie's mother. David Culbertson, son of Bob and Cathy, will be having surgery on December 7 in Durham, North Carolina, to remove a tumor on his brain. A biopsy will follow to determine if it is malignant or benign.  
 Bob Shirley has returned to St. John's United after being hospitalized recently.  
 Rodney Thompson, one of our church's newest members, is dealing with cancer under the care of hospice.  
 Jerry Broderson has returned home from the hospital after falling recently.  
 Mike Talmadge has returned home after being hospitalized recently.  
 Amy Cebull, the daughter of Bob and Penni Nance, has returned home after being hospitalized recently.  
 Pastor Dave's sister, Liz, remains hospitalized in Seattle after having extensive stomach surgery last month.  
 Prayers for many family members and friends related to those who are dealing with the effects of Covid.  
 Tonya Appelt's dad, Marvin Varner, has been hospitalized in Billings and Miles City with heart surgery and then issues dealing with Covid.  
 Jeff, Tonya, Morgan & Kaden Appelt have asked that we share this note of appreciation, "A special thank you to our church family for all of the calls, cards, gifts and most importantly prayers for our special delivery. Kaden is a true blessing in our lives, and we look forward to the day we can introduce all of you. Also, thanks for keeping my dad in prayer. Surgery was successful, and he is on to recovery. We are humbled by God's blessings and are grateful for your support. Merry Christmas."

**Financial snapshot**

2020	Income	Expense	Net
<b>November</b>	<b>\$ 38,510</b>	<b>\$ 39,204</b>	<b>\$ (694)</b>
<b>Year to Date</b>	<b>\$395,892</b>	<b>\$351,431</b>	<b>\$ 44,461</b>

Thank you for your continued support of our church during this pandemic. Your financial support during this time remains important to the ongoing mission and ministry of our church.

**Christmas decorating appreciation!**

Thanks to those who came and helped decorate the church for Christmas. Without our annual Hanging of the Greens event, we relied upon several individuals to come and help us this year. These individuals decorated the trees in the sanctuary, gallery, and fireside room; hung the wreaths in the sanctuary; arranged the nativity displays; hung the Christmas banners on the wall; put up the greens on the handrails; and decorated the tables in the fellowship hall. Thank you to a great group of people who came and helped!

**Flower Sponsorship Opportunities**

Our flower sign-up sheet is located on the back table in the narthex. We invite you to sign up for a particular Sunday to sponsor the flowers either in honor or memory of someone or a special event such as an anniversary, birthday, etc. Suggested donation is \$25. Special thanks to those who donated flowers during the month of November: Pam Harr in celebration of Don Harr's 97th birthday on October 30; Gary and Judy Lohnbakken in memory of all of their family; Priscilla Laird, in memory of her husband Walt; Vicky Zimmerman, in memory of her father Larry Shriver; Peggy Wilson in honor of faith, family, and friends; Bruce and Bernice Philipps in celebration of their 61st wedding anniversary on November 28.