



The Compass

November-
December 2020

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH—Portland, Indiana

Pastoral Perspectives... Waiting While Wanting in the Wake of Wonder



The beginning of this bimonthly issue signals the end of Daylight Saving as we anticipate the annum turning of ecclesial seasons from All Saints' Day through the Reign of Christ Sunday into Advent. I have just recently, once again, as if for the first time, rediscovered a reason why I am, at times, drawn to watch news reports and read articles in the paper and periodicals. Suddenly reacquainted with a keen awareness of what keeps driving me to keep abreast of issues and becoming more deeply prescient upon the recent and ongoing plights of our society today, still I endeavor to remain in hope.

The sordid significant streams of self-disquietingly thoughtful reflection serendipitously sought by stewardship that, eventually, seemingly inundate, satiate and suffuse one's inner life, apparently help reconnect me further with a continual desire to remember my father's love and loves of life, family and friends along the journey of journeys unto eternity.¹

I miss my Dad. I yearn for whatever semblance of insightful paternal wisdom and fatherly advice he would generously, keenly and timely provide throughout life lived together with loved ones.

I remember watching Dad in his retirement, intently viewing television for hours on end with focused concentration and undistracted attention toward various items in a variety of news broadcasts. There would be several sections of journalistically reputable newspapers strewn about after his reading them each day throughout the week and especially the Sunday edition of prominent publications hot off the press along with a diverse plethora of weekly and monthly magazines from subscriptions and sometimes nearby newsstands in town. This would inevitably well inform his contributions to stimulating dialogue in the casual course of engaging conversations with others.

By his example, Dad inculcated in me a cultivating, captivating curiosity for currency in national and world affairs that would have untold repercussions on my developing certain principled views on civics and international issues. A lawyer, labor and business leader in his decades long career following higher education and training, subsequent to service in the Philippines under U.S. General Wainwright's command during WWII, my veteran father's acute and heightened sense of duty, righteousness and responsibility concerning liberty and justice for all was a poignant influence on his son's worldview. It would later serve to strengthen my vocation in ministry upon encountering the theological approach of holding the bible in one hand and the published news in the other while praying through daily devotions with the offering of intercessions unto the One able to accomplish that which would address our concerns for the day.

I am continuously seeking, searching for such tethered feeling of ancestral embrace with my father, imagined as though face to face. I constantly aspire toward that experience of parental approval uniquely obtained from the relationship key to a sense of identity as a man's man can only derive from that one filial connection. It speaks to a familial interconnectedness. One realizes, albeit posthumously, that such transcendent inheritance is more pertinent and important to a farther extent than they had even already been aware of before. The reality of a parent's impartation of prosperity in perspectives prior to their passing is wrought with similarity of sentiment on to one's own progeny for posterity in perpetuity.

We plan to revisit his grave on Veterans Day, Mom and I, plus a few among my younger daughters. They, their "Lola"/my mother, and I will mark the time together in loving remembrance on 11/11 eleven years and two months after his departure from this earth, now over nineteen years since our nation's terrible experience of world events on 9/11. We are left upon the aftermath in the wake of unspeakable grief and loss continuing on amidst times of global uncertainty amongst hundreds of thousands more afflicted and multiple millions affected through the present pandemic. I am bereft of sensibilities it seems at this point potentially desensitized to the dearth of dread for deathly disease plaguing the nation's most vulnerable among us. I wonder what Dad would say today.

With Gratitude for the Gift of Grace and Peace to Count it All Joy at Thanksgiving,

—The Rev. M. Rex Espiritu

IN THIS ISSUE

Happy Birthday	pg. 2
Daylight Saving Time Ends	pg. 2
Facebook Services	pg. 2
2020 Pledge Payments	pg. 2
Remembering the Saints	pg. 2
Stewardship Sunday	pg. 3
Congregational Meeting	pg. 3
Thanksgiving Dinner	pg. 3
August Bread of Life	pg. 3
Thanksgiving Office Closings	pg. 3
Advent/Christmas Services	pg. 4
Christmas Joy Offering	pg. 4
You've Got Mail	pg. 5
Ford/Cayetano Wedding	pg. 5
Hope	pg. 5
Calendar	pg. 6

¹"Now unto the [One] Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, the Only Wise—be honor and glory forever and ever, Amen."



November

- 02 Jenny Stout
- 03 Abby Arnold Champ
- 06 John Goodrich
- 08 Lynn Boolman
- 09 Jordyn Champ
- 12 Wil Goodrich
- 14 John Engle
- 17 Lauren Runkle
- 19 Katherine Byrum
- 22 Matt McCord
- 25 Allison Byrum
- 30 Mary McCord

December

- 01 Bill Knight
- 05 Derek Arnold
- Lauren Haggenjos
- Morgan Trinidad
- 09 Jennifer Rupe
- 11 Pete Vogler
- 15 Liza Haggenjos
- 18 Carley Trinidad
- 24 Pastor Rex
- 31 Mim Ludy
- Vivian Morehous

SUNDAY SERVICES ON FACEBOOK

Pastor Rex continues to officiate Sunday morning worship via video on Facebook.

You can access his posts and worship videos by clicking the Facebook icon at the top of the home page on the church website. You do not need to be a member of Facebook to enjoy the posts and videos.

You can access the Sunday bulletin and children's bulletin on the church website to download before enjoying the Sunday service. Just go to www.firstpcportland.org.

**Daylight Saving Time Ends
Sunday morning, November 1.
Don't forget to set your clocks
back one hour before retiring
Saturday night.**



2020 PLEDGE PAYMENTS

Contributions for the 2020 tax filing year must be postmarked or delivered to the church office by December 31, 2020 in order to appear on your 2020 Contribution Statement.

We appreciate the faithful stewardship displayed by our church members once again this year. May God continue to bless you in 2021!



**REMEMBERING THE SAINTS
OF FPC**

All Saints' Day-November 1

Jerald E. (Jerry) Schwomeyer
Joined FPC - April 3, 1991
Passed Away - March 15, 2020

Gretchen Young
Joined FPC - November 5, 1958
Passed Away - March 26, 2020

Martha Read
Joined FPC - December 12, 1977
Passed Away - May 19, 2020

Glen Priest
Joined FPC - October 4, 1953
Passed Away - June 29, 2020

*Stewardship Sunday is
November 22.*

*Please turn your 2021
Pledge Cards in to the office
before that date.*

*Congregational Meeting
will be held Sunday December 13
in order to approve the
Nominating Committee's
2021 Slate of Officers.*

THANKSGIVING DINNER ITEMS NEEDED

Once again, our church has been asked to provide the ingredients for turkey dressing for the upcoming Community Thanksgiving Dinner. Items needed include loaves of bread, celery, eggs, and large cans of chicken broth. If you would like to provide donated items, please call the church office at 260.726.8462. You will then be given instructions on where and when to deliver your donated items.

Due to Covid-19, the meal will be available only in the Asbury United Methodist Church parking lot. Those attending are asked to park and open their vehicle trunks. Then, volunteers will deliver pre-packaged meals. The dinner will be held on Thanksgiving Day, November 26 beginning at 1:00pm.



BREAD OF LIFE

The next Bread of Life Community Dinner First Presbyterian Church will host is on Monday, November 30.

If you want to help serve or if you would like to provide some of the food, please contact Julia Schwomeyer at 726.4761 or call the church office at 726.8462.



**Church office closed
the week of
Thanksgiving
Monday, November 23-
Thursday, November 26.**

AUGUST BREAD OF LIFE MEAL UPDATE

By Julia Schwomeyer

On Monday, August 31, our group of helpers from our church met at the Asbury Methodist church to put together brown bag meals. We created an assembly line which included Phil and Linda Frantz, Pam Rogers, David Lloyd, Mary McCord, and Julia Schwomeyer.

The meals included sandwiches donated by Sarona Goodrich, Jennifer Rupe, Linda Frantz, Mary McCord, and Julia Schwomeyer. The applesauce cups were given by David Lloyd and the cookie people were Leora Engle, Suzie Arnold, Pam Rogers, Meg Mauer, and Carolyn Scott. The individual chip bags and a few extra cookies were purchased with money from our account. Brad Miller, from the Asbury Methodist church, was also very helpful.

We gave out 101 meals to people parked in vehicles in the parking lot (and one on foot). The operation went quite smoothly for our first time at "brown bagging" it. A lot of fun was had by all as usual.

A big "thank you" to all who participated! We will see what November 30 brings.

ADVENT AND CHRISTMASTIDE AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

By Eric Rogers, Worship & Music Chair

It will come as no surprise that the liturgical seasons of Advent and Christmastide will be observed differently at First Presbyterian Church due to the pandemic. Yet, our congregation can gather in a manner that will be every bit as meaningful as in past years.

The four Sundays of Advent begin on November 29. Advent is a time of expectant waiting and preparation for both the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus at Christmas and the return of Jesus at the Second Coming. It is a time of hope. That state of mind is always appropriate. But, during the current crisis it can also be critical to our well-being.

A special service of lessons and carols will celebrate the coming of the Christ child on Christmas Eve, Thursday, December 24 at 7:00p.m. The service will include readings from the Old and New Testaments, safe congregational singing of traditional Christmas carols, and instrumental music. The sacrament of Holy Communion will be celebrated. You may be surprised at how many elements of our traditional Christmas Eve service we are retaining by simply being a little flexible to keep everyone safe.

There are many ways you can help First Presbyterian Church make our Christmas Eve service especially significant. We need several readers for the service. If you would like to be one, please contact Pam (729-1941) or Eric (726-0717) Rogers at eprogers@embarqmail.com). We also need ushers and a sound operator. Please contact Barbara Cortner (260-726-8462 or office@firstpcportland.org). She will put you in touch with the appropriate committee chair. For those who choose to attend, we will make the experience of the service as safe as possible.

This will be an especially good year to remember that the Christmas season does not end with Christmas Day. December 24 marks the beginning of our annual commemoration of Christ's birth with the twelve-day celebration at Christmastide, which lasts from Christmas Eve until Epiphany on January 6.

If you are wondering how to make Advent and Christmastide special during this difficult time, I encourage you to read the October 20 edition of *Presbyterians Today* (which Barbara Cortner recently forwarded to all members). You will find ways to prepare and celebrate at home, as well as ideas for making the most of our in-person services.

Editor's Note: If you would like to receive a digital copy of the Presbyterians Today edition mentioned in this article, please contact the church office.



A PERFECT GIFT THIS ADVENT SEASON

As important as gifts to loved ones are, we have an opportunity to give gifts that help many people we do not know through the Christmas Joy Offering.

During this Christmas and Advent Season, we celebrate leadership; past, present and future through support of the Christmas Joy Offering. We do so because church leaders greatly impact our lives of faith, walking with us down the path to be more like Jesus.

We want those church leaders and their families who find themselves grappling with a critical financial need to have the resources they need which are provided through the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions.

We also support the offering to help our future leaders in the church and world, like those educated at our Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. Supporting these students helps the whole church develop leaders who reflect the wideness of God's intended diversity.

For those supported through the Christmas Joy Offering, this help is truly a gift from above. May our gifts, and the leaders who receive them, point us always to the truth of the one whose birth we celebrate, Jesus Christ — the truly perfect gift. Please give generously. The Christmas Joy offering will be collected in our church on Sunday, December 20.

HOPE

By Mary Callahan, former FPC member

I look with hope to see green that remains and growth where growth should be. Nibbling at the edges of my hope are the weeds dying in the woods and the fence rows and the tell-tale cracks opening in the earth. The sky over me is, indeed, like brass and the ground like iron as the wind blows the dust that seems to fall like rain. The corn, still bravely green, curls its leaves to protect their moisture from the hot winds. I know that we have reached full drought and the hope still rises that the blessed, healing rains might come. Drought in your trees and fields is a heavy sorrow within me—an inexplicable hurt—from the death of things that should be living and fruiting.

As I pray for mercy on these things, I know that hearts, too, can know drought, and deadness and the ugly cracks of loneliness.

First of all, Father, send the mercy rains of Your healing into lives who know only drought. Heal them and bring them to life in You.

Please dear Lord, keep me from a drought of soul and should You bring me to that dry valley, leave with me the hope of Your promise that my soul might be again as a watered garden. Thank You, for Your showers of blessings.

FORD/CAYETANO UNITED IN MARRIAGE



Audi Ford, FPC member and daughter of Dennis & Debbie Ford, was married in Indianapolis on October 3 to Nick Cayetano. The couple reside in Indianapolis. *Photo provided.*

You've
Got Mail

Dear Church Family -

Thank you so much for all the prayers and love this summer after losing Grandpa. It hasn't been easy, but we're doing OK and have been spending a lot of time at the lake, which has been great! Thank you so much for the Bible and scholarship, too!! I started my general education courses online through Ivy Tech on October 26, so it's really, really, appreciated. Miss you all!! See you someday.

Much love, Emma Rodden

Greetings, church family! I would like to say how grateful we are for all the love and prayers we received while Daddy was ill, not to mention all the cards, gifts, and flowers! Just so very kind of you! We are staying safely isolated at this time, not visiting with anyone except our kids. Mom has not spent one night alone since Daddy became ill on April 11th. We have been with her at her house, or at the lake since that time. We sure have been missing church and the choir too, though! When this pandemic is past and we can safely sing together again, please know I will be thrilled to be back to lead us in song! Until then, please know you all are loved and thought of daily.

Love, Linda and family



**FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

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Our Vision Statement

“To provide a ministry which will lead people to strengthen their faith in Jesus Christ and reach out with God’s love.”



CALENDAR



NOVEMBER

- 01 Daylight Saving Time Ends
Communion
- 10 4:15pm Worship & Music Comm. Mtg.
6:30pm Deacons Meeting
6:45pm Session Meeting
- 22 **Stewardship Sunday**
- 23-26 Church Office Closed
- 26 **Thanksgiving Day**
- 29 1st Sunday of Advent
- 30 Bread of Life Community Meal

DECEMBER

- 06 2nd Sunday of Advent
Communion
- 08 6:30pm Session Meeting
- 13 3rd Sunday of Advent
Congregational Meeting
- 14 9:00am Newsletter Deadline
- 20 4th Sunday of Advent
Christmas Joy Offering Collected
- 24 Church Office Closed
7:00pm Christmas Eve Service
- 28 Church Office Closed
- 31 Church Office Closed

**Sunday Morning Worship 9:00am
in person & via Facebook**

**Church Office hours:
Monday-Thursday 9:00am-3:00pm
Closed on Friday.**