



# The Compass

November-  
December 2019

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH—Portland, Indiana

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## Pastoral Perspective — *On Praying in the Presence: God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit*

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As we move through these days of harvest from fall into winter, I am reminded of times past when I would read chapters of various stories to my children before their bedtime prayers when they were little. There is an adaptation of a phrase excerpted from “The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe” in *The Chronicles of Narnia* series of novels by C.S. Lewis that comes to mind.

It was “always winter, [but] never Christmas” in Narnia.

I am not sure if I can ever fully imagine or actually know what it might be like to experience a time and place when and where this would be the case. It seemed upon reading the author’s description of this other worldly existence magically entered into by sons and daughters of Adam and Eve that it was a dreadful, dreary, depleting, debilitating, diminishing, depressing denotation of declination for an entire land and its inhabitants. It was simply awful for its residents. As unpleasant as it was for strangers who would become their prophesied friends to encounter, how much more so for those who had already been enduring, suffering and persevering through it.

For it to be “always winter, never Christmas” sounds unbearable to the ears of one in western Christendom. Yet, in some significant ways, there are aspects of the human experience which belie such reality as bearing truth in light of scriptural narratives along with theological reflection upon the doctrine of total depravity. One need not attempt to refute that the holidays can be challenging for those among us who have experienced loss and grief in such times of hardship, unspeakable tragedy, and despair. Christmas is supposed to be a time when hope springs eternal, isn’t it? Even so, I am reminded that the Christ child born to us was destined to die for us on the cross at Calvary.

Our celebrations at Christmastime are not to be without ample opportunity to dive into deeper devotional derivation upon doctrinal depictions for such thoughtful followers of Christ. Indeed, the times we are presently in beloved may be darker than we are able to comprehend this side of eternity. But God demonstrated love for us in this: while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. And Christ Jesus the Son of God was born, died and was resurrected to ascend to be at the right hand of God the Father that God the Holy Spirit might descend to be with, in, upon and among us forever. This is truly what matters. Even when it seems our experience might be “always winter,” it is also, I submit and acknowledge, always and forever Christmas in our unceasingly prayerful experience of our triune God as believers in Christ. As Clive Staples Lewis (“Jack”) states re the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit with us in *Mere Christianity*:

*The thing that matters is being actually drawn into that three-personal life, and that may begin any time—tonight, if you like. What I mean is this. An ordinary simple Christian kneels down to say his prayers. He is trying to get into touch with God. But if he is a Christian he knows that what is prompting him to pray is also God: God, so to speak, inside him. But he also knows that all his real knowledge of God comes through Christ, the Man who was God—that Christ is standing beside him, helping him to pray, praying for him. You see what is happening. God is the thing to which he is praying—the goal he is trying to reach. God is also the thing inside him which is pushing him on—the motive power. God is also the road or bridge along which he is being pushed to that goal. So that the whole threefold life of the three-personal Being is actually going on in that ordinary little bedroom where an ordinary man is saying his prayers.*

—C.S. Lewis, “Mere Christianity”

Giving Thanks for God’s Grace with Blessings to you and yours this Christmas always, I am and remain

Prayerfully yours, and His,

Pastor Rex

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Rally Sunday 2019 featured recognition of our 2018-2019 Acolytes: Reny, Madeline, Morgan, Sam, Kadin, and Carley (pictured right) thanking them for their past year of service.

Third Graders, Madeline, Reny, and Morgan, (pictured below) were presented with Bibles as part of an annual presentation by the Christian Education Committee. Photos by Claire Smith.



Church newsletter photographer, Clair Smith, became trapped mid-bite in her own camera lens when Emma Rodden decided to use Claire's own camera against her during the Rally Sunday luncheon. Photo by Emma Rodden.





RALLY SUNDAY 2019



*Photos by Claire Smith.*





## 2019 PLEDGE PAYMENTS

Contributions for the 2019 tax filing year must be postmarked or delivered to the church office by December 31, 2019 in order to appear on your 2019 Contribution Statement.



We appreciate the faithful stewardship displayed by our church members once again this year. May God continue to bless you in 2020!

## Hanging of the Greens



Hanging of the Greens will take place on Sunday, November 24 following the morning services. Once again this year, the Deacons are asking everyone to participate in this exciting time of fellowship and decorating the church for the Christmas season.

If you plan on participating in the Hanging of the Greens, you are encouraged to dress casually. A light luncheon will be served following this event.

## REMEMBERING THE SAINTS OF FPC

*All Saints' Day-November 1*

*Stuart (Stu) G. Ronald*

*Joined FPC - June 6, 1954*

*Passed Away - February 5, 2019*

**Reminder:** You can view, download and print a color copy of this newsletter from the church website [www.firstpcportland.org](http://www.firstpcportland.org).

**Daylight Saving Time Ends  
Sunday morning, November 3.  
Don't forget to set your clocks  
back one hour before retiring  
Saturday night.**



## ADVENT WREATH WORKSHOP

Back by popular demand, the old tradition of creating Advent wreaths will be held again this year.

On Sunday, November 17, an Advent wreath workshop will be held during Fellowship.

If you'd like to participate in this workshop, please bring your flower clippers and a willingness to experiment. You will be shown how to craft your own Advent wreath.

The following materials will be provided: wreath rings, candles, greenery and wire.

We hope you will all get involved in creating a holiday centerpiece for you and your family to enjoy during this Christmas Season.

Please see Meg Mauger if you have any questions.



**Stewardship Sunday is  
November 10.**

**Please turn your 2020 Pledge  
Cards in to the office before  
that date.**

## Christmas Eve 2019 Service

By Eric Rogers  
Photo by Becca James

First Presbyterian Church will celebrate the birth of the Christ Child with our annual Christmas Eve service of lessons and carols on Tuesday, December 24 at 7:00pm. The service will include carols, anthems, hymns, instrumental music, as well as readings from the Old and New Testaments. The sacrament of Holy Communion will be celebrated.

There are many ways you can help First Presbyterian Church make our Christmas Eve service a meaningful occasion for you, your family, members of our congregation, and especially for those who might visit our Church. Please consider taking one or more of the following steps:

**Sing in the Christmas Eve Choir:** If you already sing in our main choir, please join us. As well, if you like to sing in a choir but don't have enough time to commit to our main choir's season, this may be a joyful alternative.

Christmas Eve choir rehearsals begin on Monday, December 2 at 5:30pm. There will be four Monday rehearsals plus an abbreviated rehearsal on Christmas Eve before the service. Your participation will be warmly welcomed. Please contact Eric Rogers (260-726-0717; [eprogers@embarqmail.com](mailto:eprogers@embarqmail.com)) if you want to sing in the choir. This will help us to order sufficient copies of the music.

**Serve as a Reader for the Lessons:** We need several readers for the service. If you would like to do this, please contact Pam Rogers (260-729-1941; [eprogers@embarqmail.com](mailto:eprogers@embarqmail.com)).

**Volunteer for another responsibility:** We need acolytes, ushers, greeters, a sound operator, and nursery care. Please contact Barbara Cortner (260-726-8462 or [office@firstpcportland.org](mailto:office@firstpcportland.org)). She will put you in touch with the appropriate committee chair.

**Invite someone to come with you to the service:** The Christmas Eve service is one of our best opportunities to bring a visitor through our doors or welcome back a non-attending member.

**Do you know someone who sings but is un-churched?** You could add joy to this individual's life with an invitation to participate in the Christmas Eve Choir. Please let me know if there is interest. I will reach out to assure that individual his or her voice will be welcome.

**Do you have an un-churched friend who may be dealing with loss, loneliness, or a crisis?** While we think of Christmas season as a joyous occasion, for some it is an especially difficult time. Yet, we can help make Christmas a transformative experience for someone by attending the service as a friend. Visitors may feel self-conscious about their unfamiliarity with our Church. Sitting with you can help. A positive experience may even lead to a return visit.

**Are you a friend of a member who no longer attends First Presbyterian Church?** Your invitation to join you at the service could help reconnect this individual with our Church.

**Please consider going beyond your comfort zone and reach out with God's love. You could change someone's life...maybe even your own.**





## PW CELEBRATES AUTUMN

By Claire Smith

The Presbyterian Women's Association gathered for their annual Fall Brunch on a beautiful and chilly October 12 morning. Speaker Suzanne (Green) Guingrich informed us about a recent mission trip to San Juan, Puerto Rico which was devastated by Hurricane Maria in 2017. Her group provided Bible school activities to children in an impoverished area and also some health checkups for the poor. Suzanne always feels blessed when returning home from mission trips.

Our Presbyterian Women's Association will soon be providing Christmas gifts for Head Start children and for a student at the Portland Youth Service Bureau.

Plan to enjoy the fellowship at our next Presbyterian Women's brunch in the spring.



*Photos by Claire Smith.*



### November

02 Jenny Stout  
03 Abby Arnold Champ  
06 John Goodrich  
08 Lynn Boolman  
09 Jordyn Champ  
12 Wil Goodrich  
14 John Engle  
17 Michael Hecko  
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 Rex Espiritu  
31 Mim Ludy  
Vivian Morehous



## K-6 HOSTS FELLOWSHIP & TEACHES EVERYONE A LESSON



The K-6<sup>th</sup> Grade Sunday School class recently hosted Fellowship following worship. In preparation for Fellowship, the youth created their own table decorations; a painted jar with a heart in the middle. A candle was placed inside the jar, the light of which, shown through the heart. The light represented Christ's love shining through us.

During the jar painting process, one jar was accidentally dropped and broke. Sunday School teacher, Debbie Ford, decided to try gluing the broken pieces back together, which, to her surprise, worked.

Then an object lesson occurred to her which was explained by the cards placed beside each jar. "There is one jar that is broken. The broken jar shows us that even when we are broken, Christ can use us, just as we are. Christ's love will still shine through us."

If you attended Fellowship that Sunday, did you find the broken jar?

Photos top and middle by Debbie Ford. Bottom photo by Claire Smith.



### BREAD OF LIFE

The next Bread of Life Community Dinner First Presbyterian Church will host is on

Monday, December 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.

*Congregational Meeting  
will be held Sunday December 8  
in order to approve the  
Nominating Committee's  
2020 Slate of Officers.*

**Christmas Joy Offering  
will be collected Sunday,  
December 22.**



**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 All Saints' Day
- 03 **Daylight Saving Time Ends**  
Communion/Food Pantry Collection
- 06 10:00am Presbytery Meeting @ Tabernacle  
Presbyterian Church-Indy
- 07 5:30pm Choir Practice
- 10 **Stewardship Sunday**
- 12 4:15pm Worship & Music Comm. Mtg.  
**6:30pm Deacons Meeting**  
**6:45pm Session Meeting**
- 14 5:30pm Choir Practice
- 17 Advent Wreath Workshop
- 21 5:30pm Choir Practice
- 24 **Hanging of the Greens**
- 28 **Thanksgiving Day-Office Closed**

**Sunday Morning Worship 9:00am**  
**Fellowship 10:05am**  
**Sunday School 10:15am**

**Church Office hours:**  
**Monday-Thursday 8:00am-2:00pm**  
**Closed on Friday.**

December

- 01 1st Sunday of Advent  
Communion/Food Pantry Collection
- 02 5:30pm Christmas Eve Choir Practice
- 05 5:30pm Choir Practice
- 08 2nd Sunday of Advent  
**Congregational Meeting**  
Christmas Pageant Rehearsal
- 09 **9:00am Newsletter Deadline**  
5:30pm Christmas Eve Choir Practice
- 10 **6:30pm Session Meeting**
- 12 5:30pm Choir Practice
- 15 3rd Sunday of Advent  
Christmas Pageant
- 16 5:30pm Christmas Eve Choir Practice
- 19 5:30pm Choir Practice
- 22 4th Sunday of Advent/Christmas Joy Offering
- 23 5:30pm Christmas Eve Choir Practice
- 24 **Church Office Closed**  
**7:00pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**
- 25 **Christmas Day-Office Closed**
- 26 5:30pm Choir Practice
- 30 Bread of Life Community Meal