

First Church News

VOLUME 7 ISSUE 12

DECEMBER 2018

Chip's Chatter

DECEMBER



I can't believe it is Advent already! It seems the days, weeks, months, and years seem to fly by faster and faster the older I get.

There is a good mathematical reason for this phenomenon or feeling. It has to do with the number of days in a year divided by our total living days. When I was sixteen, one year passed as a ratio to the 16 years I had lived thus far. In other words, the year I was sixteen represented 1/16 of my life. Now, compare this formula to today. I will soon be 70 years old. Therefore, one year is a ratio to 70 years; 1/70th of my life. This is a much smaller number and explains why times seems to go so fast for us as we get older.

With the acceleration of the sense of passing time comes the inevitable change in our lives. Look all around and we see changes in medicine and technology and travel to name just a few. The changes also accelerate as we age. We even see a change in our vocabulary. We learn terms like ödongleö, files and folders, twitter, tweet, e-mail,ö etc. The changes happen so fast it is very hard to keep up. We are even shortening our speech. For example, we used to say öI graduated *from* college in 1971.ö Today, in the interest of speed speaking, we shorten it to say öI graduated college 1971ö Notice the word öfromö is dropped.

But, Advent is different. With the arrival of advent, we are caught up into the demand to spend our resources, watch intense commercials to purchase gifts for our loved ones, and to be brought into the remembrance of special family times. Most of us have good memories, but sadly, some do not. Some of us wrestle with the change in our lives that has occurred after the death of a loved one. Some of us are retired and miss the friendships we had at work. Advent offers something quite different than what the world of commercialization brings us. Why? It is during this season we take time to remember Jesus first entrance into the world and to reflect on His second coming.

Advent offers us a great reminder there is still stability in the world. The hectic daily lives we lead are countered by the stability of a life of faith. Hopefully, we all sense this stability in our weekly worship, but the sentimentality of the season should heighten this sense. Advent gives us a öspringboardö into the coming year and guides us back into worship. Change may be occurring all around us, but Jesus never changes. In Hebrew 13:8, Paul writes öJesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.ö

Today, I have been able to grow beyond the commercialization of this holiday period and direct my focus on öthe reason for the seasonö. It is a freeing action the offers me a chance to reflect, remember, meditate, and look optimistically to the future. My annual Advent private retreat sets my mind straight and places the focus where it needs to be.

I have recently come to realize I sometimes fail to fully appreciate all that has happened during the different segments of my life. I was so busy doing my job, that I failed to take notice of the excitement contained in each of my previous careers. The holiday season is no different. We get so wrapped up in excitement we fail to fully appreciate what God has done for us in giving Jesus to us. We sometimes miss the perfect timing God used when öthe Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.ö Yes, we accept this

as the beginning of a story and Jesus' long march to the Cross. But do we fully appreciate what that means? We easily use big church words like "sanctification" and "justification" and "redemption by grace" but do we fully appreciate what they mean to each of us?

One of the mistakes we often make is to fully appreciate Christ's arrival did not begin at Advent. A study of the Old Testament reveals God's plan for a Savior from the time of the Creation. For you see, Jesus and the Holy Spirit were present at the time of creation and were made manifest to us by God's timing and His great love for us.

My hope for all of us is that we focus on "the reason for the season" and take some serious time to fully appreciate all that our Father has done for us through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. If you don't do it now, why not take time on Christmas Eve to explain the story to our children, our grandchildren, our friends and neighbors. Imagine what a gift you could bring to your children and grandchildren if you shared your own faith journey and meaning of Christmas with them?

I look forward to seeing all of you as we celebrate the season of Advent together. May we spend time together sharing the real gifts Jesus has given us during a years of following Him.

May we appreciate those gifts in not only ourselves, but with others. We can learn a lot by listening to those gifts.

Enjoy this Holiday Season and appreciate the excitement of Jesus!



Tubs of Love

First Presbyterian Church, in partnership with Churches United, will again sponsor the "Tubs of Love" mission. This mission ensures that local families in need will have presents for Christmas.

Beginning December 2nd, the small giving tree in the narthex will be decorated with ornaments. Each ornament will be labeled with a specific gift item. The congregation is encouraged to select an ornament, purchase and wrap the gift item, and bring it to the church by Sunday, December 18th.

Please contact Libby (444-9774) if you have any questions. Thank you on behalf of the Outreach Committee.

Mary-Martha circle will have their Christmas Party on Wednesday, December 19th at 1:30 at the home of Donna Dickinson. 1026 Birchmont Beach Road NE. Carpool from church at 1 pm. All women of the church are welcome and invited to attend.



From the Church Office

9	Morris Damp	11	Dixie Wirkus	12	Velma Ward
15	Brenda Reed	18	Dianne Roholt	19	Kathy Bahr
	23	Brenda Strowbridge	29		Bob Naylor

December Service Chair: Judy Rossi (218) 751-3965

Barb McGregor	751-1781	Jenny Miller	444-9647
Gini Sande	751-1260	Helen Spaulding	751-1234
Brenda Strowbridge	444-7609	Libby Underhill	444-9774
Vera Weis	751-2595		

Communion in November:

Set-up: Bob and Nancy Weber

Serving/helping with clean up: Duane/Mary Hayes, Gloria Phelps, Cheryl Hiltz, LeRoy Hill

Communion in December

Set-Up: Bob and Nancy Weber

Serving/helping with clean up: Bob Weber, Gini Sande, Bera Weis, Brenda Miller, Libby Underhill

Head Usher: Gloria Phelps

Ushers:

December 2

December 9

December 16

December 23

December 30

Greeter

Liturgists:



Supper Club
December 21, @ 5:30 at
The Green Mill



Supper Club will be meeting Friday, December 21st at 5:30 at The Green Mill.

Please sign up at the church office: by email;
presbji@paulbunyan.net –or– by phone; 444-5016, on or before Wednesday, December 19th.

This is an evening full of joy, laughter and good food.
All are welcome!

FINANCIAL REPORT—Month Ending October 31, 2018

Total Income	\$ 8,509.71
Total Expenses	\$ 5,681.08
Net Income	\$ 2,828.63
Memorial Fund	\$13,475.59
Endowment Fund	\$70,689.46

Communion Served—40

IMPORTANT DEADLINES TO REMEMBER

If you have items for the **Newsletter**, Please call or email the office by **Monday, December 24th for the January Newsletter.**

Bulletin items need to be into the office by the Wednesday prior to the Sunday you wish it to appear. To avoid confusion, please send information for the bulletin and newsletter to the church office via email at presbji@paulbunyan.net. If you don't have email, call the office at 444-5016 or stop by the office during office hours, Monday—Friday, 10 a.m.—2 p.m.



The First Presbyterian Church CHOIR will continue to rehearse before church at 9:00am.

If you wish to become a member of the choir, please contact Gloria Phelps at 218-308-1113.



We are available
tual lift for them-
or just needs the prayers of his or her friends. Call the church office at 444-5016 or
Libby Underhill at 444-9774.

Prayer Chain

to all members who need a spiri-
selves or for a loved one who is ill

Pastor Chip's hours will be:

Monday—Thursday, 10:00am to 2:00pm

Other times by appointment

To reach Chip after hours, call 444-5016 and press 1 when prompted. It will call his cell phone.



Fourth Sunday Benevolence for December

<http://specialofferings.pcusa.org/christmasjoy.html>

Each year during the Advent and Christmas season, we turn our eyes to Bethlehem and celebrate the wondrous gift of Jesus Christ, our Savior. By giving to the Christmas Joy Offering, you honor this gift by providing assistance to current and retired church workers in their time of need and developing our future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

How your gift is used:



50% | PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE LEADERS (RACIAL ETHNIC LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT)

Providing assistance for students to attend Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges to pursue their professional and leadership goals.



50% | GIVING BACK TO THOSE WHO GIVE THEIR ALL (ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OF THE BOARD OF PENSIONS)

Offering financial assistance for current and retired Presbyterian church workers in their time of need.



Please give generously to the Christmas Joy Offering.

Statistical Report of Consecration Sunday Results

Many thanks to all who have prayed for, participated in and pledged to First Presbyterian during our Consecration Sunday Stewardship Program. As of November 26, with 25 pledges and an estimate for 2019 "Other Income" (based on an average of 3 years of records for all other forms of income such as interest and rentals) we can expect an operating budget of \$99,414. The budget for 2019 will be built on this figure by Session.

This statistical report has already had one update since it was announced on November 25 at the Consecration Sunday Luncheon. Past experience has shown that more pledges are likely to come in which will positively affect the operating budget plan.

The church budget is an important tool for First Presbyterian in our work to spread God's word. Thank you letters to those who pledged have been mailed. A follow-up letter and Estimate of Giving card have been sent to those who were unable to attend on November 25. If you did not receive one of these letters, please contact the church office.

Third Quarter Statements Sent

It was brought to Session's attention that statements of recorded giving have not been sent quarterly in 2018. A report for the period January 1, 2018 through November 4, 2018 has been mailed. If you have questions, please contact the church office.

**First Presbyterian Church
Bemidji, MN
November 20, 2018**

The monthly stated meeting of the session of First Presbyterian Church was held in the church conference room on November 20, 2018 at 9:00 am. The meeting was opened with prayer by Moderator Pastor Chip Holt.

ELDERS PRESENT CONSTITUTING A QUORUM: Duane Hayes, Cheryl Hiltz, Leroy Hill, Bob Weber, Donna Dickinson

ELDERS ABSENT AND EXCUSED: Bill Beck,

OTHERS PRESENT: Clerk of Session Mary Hayes

QUORUM DECLARED

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

MEETING MINUTES The minutes from the October session meeting were accepted.

CORRESPONDENCE Our church information in the Presbyterian Directory was updated.

A check from the Northwest Foundation was received and the check number recorded. An acknowledgement letter will be sent to the fund donor.

Presbytery Minutes from the October meeting were received.

The 2019 Per Capita will be \$32. MSP to pay the Per Capita. The Administration Committee will review the member list.

A thank you note was received from the First City Singers.

Notice was received and posted for a Presbytery Disaster Assistance Work Trip to be held Feb. 16-24, 2019.

CLERK'S REPORT was accepted.

First Presbyterian Church, Bemidji, MN, Clerk's Report November 20, 2018

Weddings: Trevor Smith and Alyssa Allen, October 6, Officiant Pastor Chris Hess, Calvary Chapel.

Baptisms: none

Deaths: none

New Members: none

Return to Active Membership: none

Request Transfer of Membership: none

Removed from Membership Roll: none

Communion: November 4 39 served Serving: Barb McGregor, Dixie Wirkus, Betty Hanson-Lehman, Donna Dickinson, Bill Beck

Membership as of November 20, 2018: ---109

FINANCIAL REPORT The financial report was accepted. A Statement of Giving for 2018 will be mailed to recorded donors by Dec. 1. Funds in the budget line item ‐Deacons Fund‐ will be transferred to other appropriate areas of need.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Administration/Worship/CENurture

The Consecration Sunday Luncheon will be held at Super Buffet with seating in their banquet room. Touch up painting has been done. A Christmas Eve service will be held at 4:00 pm.

Outreach Churchs United Tubs of Love will be available for donations from November 26-December 16. Two tubs will be for the congregation one tub for the Scouts, and one for Circle.

OTHER BUISNESS

Handling of prayer needs during worship and in the bulletin was discussed.

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation was set for Sunday, January 20 at 11:00 following worship.

Shirlee will use November 23 as a vacation day and the office will be closed. **Approved.**

Communion will be served on December 2 as part of the Hanging of the Greens worship service.

MSP to host a meeting with luncheon of the Net of the North pastors group. It will be scheduled.

Volunteer helpers were organized for the Taize service, Community Remembrance Service, and Photos with Santa.

A rehearsal of all those involved in the Hanging of the Greens service will be held on Dec. 2 at 9 am. Chip's scheduled days off are December 4-7.

Chip will get #3 registered door key back that has been held by Headwaters Music for emergency use.

Administration Committee still needs to review the building use for weddings policy.

An update was given for the eagle scout project which operates under our 501c3 tax free status. If a donor can only give directly to a 501c3 rather than to the project fund itself, consensus was to receive the donation and immediately give the funds to the project.

The savings on electric bills realized from replacing lighting will be published in the annual report.

Chip presented further from the article ‐Rediscovering the Office of Elder‐ from *Theology Matters* magazine.

One role of elders is to shepherd the congregation which is an old testament model. The second role is to oversee business which is a new testament model

The jobs of elders as shepherds are: Lead the estranged to Christ; Restore those who have been led astray; Assist in the reformation of the fallen Re-establish strength in those fallen in faith; Keep the faithful.

Guidelines for interactions between elders and the faithful include remembering that God's thinking takes precedence over any individual or group's thinking. St. Benedict said, ‐Listen with the ear of your heart.‑

Next Meeting: December 18, 9:00 am at church with Pastor Chip Holt moderating.

The meeting was adjourned with prayer by Chip at 10:57 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Hayes, Clerk of Session

Sundays
10:00 Worship Service
11:00 Fellowship

December 2018



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2 Chip Holt Preaching Communion “Hanging of The Greens”	3 Meals on Wheels 5pm-Bell Choir 6pm-Boy Scouts	4 Meals on Wheels	5 Meals on Wheels 6:30-Calvary Chapel	6 Meals on Wheels	7 Meals on Wheels Boy Scout Lock In	8
9 Chip Holt Preaching Bell Choir Playing	10 6pm-Boy Scouts	11 9AM Admin Mtg.	12 6:30-Calvary Chapel	13	14	15
16 Chip Holt Preaching	17 6pm-Boy Scouts	18 9AM Session Mtg.	19 6:30-Calvary Chapel	20	21 5:30-Supper Club at Green Mill	22
23 Chip Holt Preaching Choir Singing	24 Christmas Eve Service @ 4:00 pm	<i>Merry Christmas</i> 	26 6:30-Calvary Chapel	27	28	29
30 Duane Geisler Preach- ing	31 					

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