

# The Missive December 2021

## First Presbyterian Church

8047 Church Street  
Richland, MI 49083  
269~629~4944  
fpcrich@firstpresrichland.org  
www.fpcrich.org

Rev. Dr. Mark W. Jennings  
revmarkwj@gmail.com  
269~598-0966 cell

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### *“Shared Blessings”*

*It is at this time of year that we remember how much we have been blessed. As I am writing this, it is Thanksgiving week and we are focusing on all the things for which we are thankful: our material blessings, certainly, but also thankful for the blessings of friendship and of family, thankful for our church and our faith which keep us going through trying times, thankful for purpose and goals that are set before us, thankful for the blessings of nature and the beauty of creation and the determination to be good steward of that beauty. I'm sure you all can make a list of your blessings, this seems to be the time of year to do that.*

*But we also remember that the beginning of the relationship between God and the Abrahamic faiths starts with the words from Genesis 12, “Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.” Abraham and Sarah are blessed by God so that they may be a blessing to the world. Blessings are given so that they may be shared.*

*For the last two months a group of people from our church has gathered to talk about how God might be calling us to live a more active faith. Presbyterian churches around the country have been encouraged to discuss what it would mean for us to take the parables of Matthew 25 seriously. The concluding parable of this chapter encourages us to treat “the least of these” as if we were serving Jesus himself. This “Matthew 25 Initiative” has been taken by folks at our church and adapted to explore what it means for us. We are still meeting and discovering and hoping that more will become involved. So far we are wanting to explore how to be more active in*

*environmental awareness as a Earth Care Congregation, also how to be more welcoming to people with disabilities or limited mobility, and to be able to welcome and speak constructively with folks of differing experiences and opinions on the topic of race in America.*

*But we are doing all this knowing that we have been blessed by God. We have some material and financial means, we have a wonderful building (actually a “campus” now!) and we have generous, loving and faithful people. And our group felt strongly that our focus should be on sharing those blessings with the community and the world around us, so we are calling our group “Shared Blessings.” We will announce the next meeting of Shared Blessings and hope you might want to be part of this effort. We have been blessed to be a blessing! Thanks be to God.*

*Grace and Peace,*

*Mark*

# December Togetherness

	<u>Greeters</u>	<u>Ushers</u>	<u>Coffee</u>
5		D & M Fisher	
12		J & G Gibson	
19		Carahaly	
26		Irey	

We will be watching how things are, from week-to-week, and will notify everyone if your job responsibilities are not needed. Thank you so much for your patience!

I heard a bird sing in the dark of December. A magical thing. And sweet to remember. We are nearer to Spring than we were in September. I heard a bird sing in the dark of December.  
*Oliver Herford*

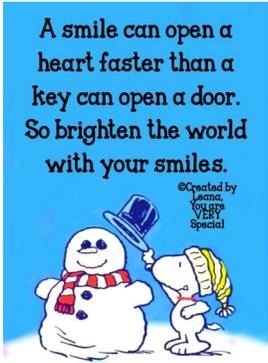
**To appreciate the beauty of a snowflake it is necessary to stand out in the cold.**  
*Aristotle*

December, being the last month of the year, cannot help but make us think of what is to come.  
*Fennel Hudson*

I heard the bells on Christmas Day  
Their old, familiar carols play, And wild and sweet the words repeat  
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!  
*Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

It is never over,  
though we are in December.  
*Ernest Agyemang Yeboah*

How did it get so late so soon?  
*Dr. Seuss*



New

★

According to my chocolate advent calendar, there are only 3 days left until Christmas.



Old



# December 2021



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			<b>1</b> 12:00 Seasoned Senior luncheon at New Hope 7:00 Mission Meeting	<b>2</b> 11:00 Bible Study 4:00 Choir Rehearsal 6:30 Girl Scouts	<b>3</b> 6:30-8:00 4-H group using GPR	<b>4</b> 1:00 Interment of Dave McConnell in Garden
<b>5</b> 9:45 Worship - Communion 11:00 Congregational Meeting in GPR 5:30 Youth Group Christmas Party Here	<b>6</b> 9:00 PEO Meeting in GPR 1:00 Care Team 2:30 Personnel Mtg. 6:30 Boy Scouts	<b>7</b> 10:00 Connected Threads 10:00 Food Pantry	<b>8</b> 10:00 Food Pantry 12:00 Worship and Music Meeting 5:30 Girl Scouts 6:00 Session 6:30 Mom's Group	<b>9</b> 11:00 Bible Study 4:00 Choir Rehearsal 5:30 KAR Reindeer Run 6:00 Deacons	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 9:00 Pageant Rehearsal
<b>12</b> 9:45 Worship - Christmas Pageant 10:30ish Youth Group Bake Sale/Fundraiser	<b>13</b> 10:00 CE Meeting 6:30 Boy Scouts	<b>14</b> 10:00 Connected Threads 10:00 Food Pantry 6:00 Girl Scouts	<b>15</b> 10:00 Food Pantry Serving Hot Chocolate at Kz 1st	<b>16</b> 11:00 Bible Study 4:00 Choir Rehearsal 6:30 Girl Scouts	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>19</b> 9:45 Worship 5:00 Young Adults at Eastland Bowling	<b>20</b> 1:00 Care Team 6:30 Boy Scouts	<b>21</b> 10:00 Connected Threads 10:00 Food Pantry	<b>22</b> 10:00 Food Pantry 5:30 Girl Scouts	<b>23</b> 11:00 Bible Study 4:00 Choir Rehearsal	<b>24</b> 7:00 Christmas Eve Service	<b>25</b> <i>Merry Christmas!!</i> 
<b>26</b> 9:45 Worship	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> 8:00 Men's Breakfast 10:00 Connected Threads 10:00 Food Pantry	<b>29</b> 10:00 Food Pantry	<b>30</b> 4:00 Choir Rehearsal	<b>31</b> Please be safe tonight! 	

# Presbyterian Women



*Our next meeting is November 3rd at 1:00,  
at Wanda Clawson's home, 1507 W. Gull Lake Dr.  
EVERY WOMAN is welcome.*

## Mitten Tree



It's getting down to the wire! We are still accepting home-made or purchased hats, scarves, mittens, and gloves. Many families will be needing and counting on these lovely gifts to stay warm this winter. Drop off any items at the church from 9 to 1, Monday thru Thursday.



\*\*\*\*\*

## PRAYER SHAWLS



A reminder that we have two cabinets FULL of gorgeous prayer shawls of all shapes, sizes, and colors. If you know someone who could use a "hug" with one of these shawls, please come on over and look for one.

I have grandchildren who live very far away, and I picked out one for each of them! The shawls can be for any reason - not well, recovering, comfort, or like me, just sending love!

\*\*\*\*\*



## *The Membership and Fellowship Committee invites you to Wassailing!*



Join us for fellowship and a delicious warm cup of our world famous wassail, (at least in Richland it's famous!). December 2nd is the kick-off to the holiday season, as we join the neighborhood in bringing good cheer to everyone! We plan on hosting a table outside and hope for obliging weather! See you there!



**PW PURPOSE:** Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to nurture our faith through prayer and Bible Study, to support the mission of the church worldwide, to work for justice and peace and to build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (USA) and witnesses to the promise of God's Kingdom.

**2022 Stewardship**  
**First Presbyterian Church of Richland**  
For the Glory of God  
**Giving Period --- January 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022**

On November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021, we join together with First Presbyterian Church of Richland members and friends to celebrate and support First Presbyterian Church of Richland. I/we have reflected upon the Church's influence upon the community, the world and myself – and submit this pledge with faith and gratitude.

General Fund

Total Annual Pledge

\$\_\_\_\_\_/week or \$\_\_\_\_\_/month or \$\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ = \$\_\_\_\_\_

Building Fund

\$\_\_\_\_\_/week or \$\_\_\_\_\_/month or \$\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ = \$\_\_\_\_\_

Please be sure to use your pledge envelopes to aid in the administrative task of tracking offerings.

Do you want envelopes in 2023? (PLEASE CIRCLE ONE)

Weekly      Monthly      No

Name(s)

Address

City, St, Zip

Telephone

Email

IMPORTANT – Please save this form on your computer and add your last name to the file  
(Example: 2022 Stewardship Pledge Form – Electronic – **Mike Smith.docx**)

**Options for returning your completed form:**

Email to the Financial Secretary: **firstpresbyterianchurch49083@gmail.com**

Mail to:                      Financial Secretary  
                                    First Presbyterian Church  
                                    8047 Church St  
                                    Richland, MI 49083

**Please submit your pledge sheet as soon as possible!**

**THE DEADLINE IS DECEMBER 15th!**

It's not too late to get in  
your 2021 per capita fee  
of **\$35.23** !

A reminder that the  
2022 per capita is  
**\$36.73** per member.

# YOUTH GROUP

## YOUTH MISSION FUNDRAISER

The youth will be hosting a Bake Sale and Donation fundraiser immediately following the Christmas Program on December 12.

- ❖ All youth are encouraged to bake a batch of Christmas cookies of any variety for the sale
- ❖ Please bag them with 6 cookies per bag
- ❖ Deliver to the church no later than 9:30am December 12
- ❖ We will need several youth to help "work" the fundraiser table. Let Meredith know if you can help!

*Helpful hint – cookies can be made in advance and frozen to stay fresh until December 12!*

**NEW**

**In January we will be kicking off a NEW group for 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders!!**

This group will meet Sunday evenings right before 7-12 grade Youth Group.

Stay tuned for more information! We are EXCITED to offer this new group and have an opportunity to better meet the needs of more of our church kids!

## YOUTH GROUP CHRISTMAS PARTY

The annual Youth Group Christmas Party for both middle and high school students is

Sunday, December 5 from 5:30-7:30pm at the Richland church.

- ❖ Bring a gift for the exchange – either something found around your house to re-gift or purchase a gift for \$5 or less.
  - ❖ Wrap your gift, but *no tag!*
- ❖ The youth will also be helping to stock a little Christmas shop for the Wednesday night dinners the Kalamazoo church hosts for their downtown neighbors! Please bring one of the following to donate to those needing a little extra help this year:
  - Long underwear (mens L or XL) – **MOST NEEDED!**
    - Hats
    - Gloves (large sizes)
    - Socks (mens sizes)
    - Chapstick
    - Blankets
  - New or gently used toys: dolls, books, etc.

## YOUNG ADULT GROUP

The college-age lunch bunch is going go *bowling* together on **December 19 from 5-7pm at Eastland Bowl on Gull Road!**

This group is for all young adults who have recently graduated from high school up to age 25. If you know someone who would like to be a part of this group, even if they haven't participated in our youth programs, please extend an invite!

All are welcome!



# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



## CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

December 12 during worship  
*IN PERSON!*

Immediately following worship, we will be having a Youth Mission fundraiser!

We will have a bake sale and offer an opportunity to donate to the mission trip on behalf of a loved one, in lieu of a gift.

We will have cards available for you to send your loved one announcing the donated gift.

### FAITH IN ACTION – MEALS NEEDED!

As another way to show our faith in action, we are partnering with FPC Kalamazoo to help with the Wednesday night meal they provide for the homeless downtown.

Our church will lend a hand on one Wednesday a month by providing soup and dessert to feed 35. This can be done by committees working together, families combining efforts or a really ambitious individual! There is also an option to be reimbursed for meal supplies if needed. The dates we still need help providing a meal are:

February 16 – soup only  
March 16 – soup and dessert  
April 20 – soup and dessert  
May 18 – soup and dessert

**Contact Meredith for more information or to sign up!**



### FAITH IN ACTION – CALLING KIDS AND YOUTH!

In order to better help our children and youth understand what it means to see faith in action, we are asking one family to help serve hot chocolate on the Wednesday night our church provides dinner for the downtown Kalamazoo neighbors.

- ❖ Wednesday meals are served outdoors to provide a Covid-safe opportunity for us to serve.
- ❖ Families will serve hot chocolate and are welcome to bring marshmallows or whipped cream, etc. to add their own special touch!

- Dates we need a family to serve:
- December 15
  - January 19
  - February 16
  - March 16
  - April 20
  - May 18

**Contact Meredith for more information or to sign up!**



### MOMS GROUP

Will meet Wednesday, December 8 from  
6:30-8:00pm  
at the 8023 house.  
There will be snacks!







# Christmas Joy Offering



At Christmas we celebrate the joy of belonging to Christ, of being part of the family of God. For decades Presbyterians have chosen Christmas as a time to affirm that indeed we care for one another as members of one family.

Every year at Christmas, Presbyterian churches receive the **Christmas Joy Offering**. Through this offering we share our joy with members of our extended church family.

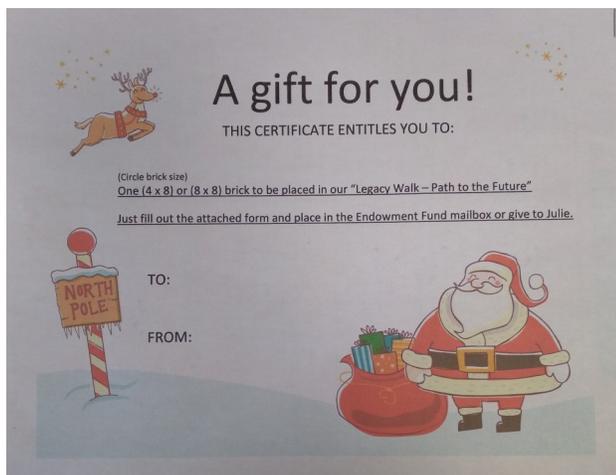
About two-thirds of the **Joy Offering** goes to supplement the benefits of retired church workers, workers who have taken risks in the faith in the belief that God will provide for them as they give their lives to God's work. The **Joy Offering** helps a former missionary whose salary was too low to provide a sufficient pension. It helps the family of a pastor whose early death leaves them emotionally and financially drained. It is one way for us to reach out to members of our church family as God reaches out to us.

The other third of the **Joy Offering** supports seven racially ethnic colleges across the country. The **Christmas Joy Offering** helps schools to create a family environment that nurtures each student's gifts.

At Christmas we celebrate God's gift of Christ to us, his confirmation that he will indeed take care of us. In Christ we are one family. And, as in any family, we sometimes receive comfort and at other times have the opportunity to offer comfort to others.

This year, December 19th is the Sunday designated for the annual support of this most valuable program. Prayerfully consider your stewardship offerings and include the **Christmas Joy Offering** as a part of your contributions this year. An envelope is enclosed, and one will be provided on the 19th. Thank you!

*A gift opens doors. \* Proverbs 18:16*



A reminder that the Endowment Fund Committee has these certificates you are very welcome to take! They offer you the chance to gift a brick to someone else! How cool is that! You can find them on the little table by the double doors close to my office!

*Please note the earlier-than-normal date!!*

## TO ALL COMMITTEE CHAIRPEOPLE

Just a friendly reminder that Annual Reports are due in Julie's office by **January 10.**

Please call if you have any questions or need help or want a copy of your report from last year! 629-4944



# FOOD PANTRY CORNER



## FOOD PANTRY Giving Suggestions

The Richland Food Pantry is about to embark on getting our guests back in the “shopping themselves” mode! We are very excited to be planning this, and think all the guests will enjoy getting back to picking out their own grocery supplies!

We’re still in the planning phase, although we should be trying things out over the next week or so. When the plan goes into action, we’re going to be open Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 10:00 to noon.

Thank you. Paul Gobble and Marsha Zick



### DECEMBER

From the Latin word decem, “ten,” because this had been the tenth month of the early Roman calendar.



### Winter Driving Tips for Car Safety

Keep your gas tank filled above halfway.

Stuck on ice without sand or cat litter? In a pinch, use the floor mats.

Fog-proof your mirrors and inside of windshields with shaving cream. Wipe off with paper towels.

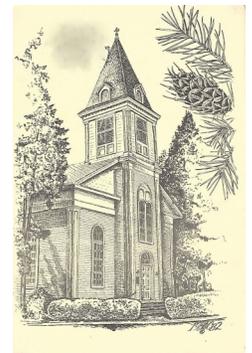
Avoid driving when you have the flu, which can reduce your reaction time almost six times as much as moderate alcohol intake!

The Old Farmer's Almanac



### Carillon Hymns and Honoree for December

Date	Selection	Honoree
12/13	Jesus Loves Me	Zackery James Anderson
12/14	Amazing Grace	Olga E. Boyer
12/15	The Old Rugged Cross	Emma Hubbard
12/16	Joyful, Joyful	Ellie Lynch
12/24	Wedding March	Kay and John Polzin ❤️



# December Birthdays



1 Andrew Fiordalis  
1 Joseph Juodawlkis  
2 Brian Schaadt  
2 Casey Sunden Albertson  
3 Brandon Delf  
3 Katie Venner  
4 George Lovequist  
4 Grant Slezak  
6 Georgie Lovequist  
7 Josh Weigel  
8 Kevin King  
8 Jean Sowers  
8 Carson Miller  
9 Nancy Hess  
9 Matt Reinhardt  
9 Alanna Wyckoff  
10 Kendall Jennings  
10 Kathleen Rothenberg  
11 Gordon Mahieu  
11 Jane Morrow  
11 Lindsey Scribner  
11 Holly Scribner  
14 Mara Cazars  
14 Evan Odar  
14 David Snyder  
15 Sarah Myland

15 Lars Ruser  
16 Marty Rench  
16 Harry Stolt  
18 Jarred Barts  
18 Pam Moseley  
19 Nathan Brundage  
19 Hoyt Fonger  
20 Cathy Layson  
20 Michael Wright  
21 Ashleigh Webb  
22 Mike Juodawlkis  
22 Laura Monk  
23 David MacQuarrie  
24 Jake Larson  
24 Jeni Steele  
25 Jan Petersen  
26 Jennifer Stupica  
27 Amy Juodawlkis  
29 Laurie Alexander  
29 Karen Urban  
30 Ashlee Connell  
30 Maggie MacRitchie  
31 Eric Bryer  
31 Jan Fisher  
31 Kay Polzin  
31 Arlene Kuizema



# and Anniversaries



12 Jim Collier and Stuart Verseman ~ 8  
16 Larry and Kay Irej ~ 54  
18 Lib and Jerry Wittwer ~ 56  
20 Jeremy and Cindy Simon ~ 1

21 Liz and Allen Matthews ~19  
27 Kay Gross and Gary Mittelbach ~ 46  
27 Julie and Matt Pausch ~ 35  
29 Chuck and Joyce Farho ~ 17

First Presbyterian Church  
8047 Church Street  
Richland, MI 49083

*ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED*

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STAFF**

Dr. Mark W. Jennings, *Pastor*  
Gretchen Ferris, *Treasurer*,  
Chris Gobble, *Financial Secretary*  
Larry Myland, *Director of Music*  
Owen Rushford, *Director of Choirs*  
Meredith Alspach, *Director of Faith Formation*  
Connie Slater, *Sexton*  
Julie Pixley, *Administrative Secretary*

