

# The Missive December 2020

## First Presbyterian Church

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### *“Christmas Vacation”*

*Perhaps the happiest two words in the English language, don't you think? At least when we were kids could you think of anything better, anything we looked forward to as much as Christmas? Unless it was vacation from school. And to have them both at once, Christmas vacation, was double the joy. But how that has changed this year. Vacations were wonderful when our kids were in school because it meant that we had them home with us for a long stretch and we might even take time to pile in the car and go visit relatives in New York or Colorado. We'd certainly have family outings during Christmas break to go out to dinner, to go see a movie, or visit friends. But now, for so many families that has all changed. The kids are home all the time now because many of the schools are meeting virtually. And we don't want to take the chance of big family gathering or going to a restaurant or to a theater. But it is still important to celebrate the season. I've always thought of this as the lesson of the Grinch. You remember the story of "How the Grinch Stole Christmas," of course. And the lesson of the story is that you can't steal Christmas. Even without the presents or the trees or the meals, Christmas still comes. That's why the Deacons gathered to decorate the sanctuary last Sunday, because even though we won't be there on Christmas Eve to light our candles and to be together in the same place, Christmas still comes. And it's important that we celebrate it, even if we are only seeing the church Christmas tree on our computer screens. So, we will celebrate this year on Christmas Eve at 7:00, just like we do every year and I hope you will make time to gather virtually with us on that special evening.*

*And it's important to take vacations too. It's important in these times of stress that you take time to relax, that you have some down time. Erin and I are discovering that also. We're going*

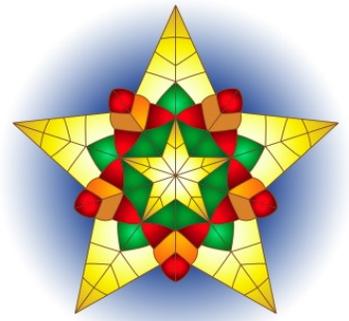
*to have a bit of a "Christmas Vacation." It has been since March that we have taken a Sunday off, because it has been important that we be together with you each Sunday through these difficult times. But it is time for a short break, a vacation. So, on Sunday, December 27<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, January 3<sup>rd</sup>, worship will be a little bit different. There will be a shorter service of devotion that we will record beforehand and schedule to broadcast at 9:45 each morning, but it won't be as "complete" as the services that you are used to. We will have scripture reading, prayers and a short devotional message, but we're giving Branden and Larry those weeks off also, so the music will be selections that we have used previously. We will be back with full services on January 10<sup>th</sup> so we can celebrate Epiphany and kick off a wonderful new year of 2021. Erin and I aren't going anywhere, and of course I am here for any pastoral care needs, we're just having a little "Christmas Vacation" and doing some puttering around the house and trying to "train" that new puppy!*

*We are looking forward to a wonderful Advent and Christmas season with all of you. God keep you and stay safe!*

*Grace and Peace,*

*Mark*

# December 2020



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<b>1</b> 10:00 Devotional  6:00 Girl Scouts  <i>Giving Tuesday!</i>	<b>2</b> 10:00 Devotional	<b>3</b> 11:00 Bible Study  6:30 Girl Scouts  7:30 Story Time	<b>4</b> 6:00 Girl Scouts	<b>5</b>
<b>6</b> 9:45 Worship  	<b>7</b> 10:00 Devotional  6:30 Boy Scouts	<b>8</b> 10:00 Devotional  6:00 Girl Scouts	<b>9</b> 10:00 Devotional  Session  6:00 Girl Scouts	<b>10</b> 11:00 Bible Study  Deacons  7:30 Story Time	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>13</b> 9:45 Worship 11:00 Book Zoom 3:00-5:00 Youth Grp virtual Christmas prty  	<b>14</b> 10:00 Devotional  6:30 Boy Scouts	<b>15</b> 10:00 Devotional  6:00 Girl Scouts	<b>16</b> 10:00 Devotional	<b>17</b> 11:00 Bible Study  6:30 Girl Scouts  7:30 Story Time	<b>18</b> 6:00 Girl Scouts	<b>19</b>
<b>20</b> 9:45 Worship  	<b>21</b> 10:00 Devotional  6:30 Boy Scouts	<b>22</b> 10:00 Devotional  6:00 Girl Scouts	<b>23</b> 10:00 Devotional  6:00 Girl Scouts	<b>24</b> 11:00 Bible Study  6:30 Girl Scouts  7:30 Story Time  	<b>25</b>  	<b>26</b>
<b>27</b> 9:45 Worship	<b>28</b> 10:00 Devotional  6:30 Boy Scouts	<b>29</b> 10:00 Devotional  6:00 Girl Scouts	<b>30</b> 10:00 Devotional	<b>31</b> 11:00 Bible Study  6:30 Girl Scouts  7:30 Story Time  <i>Be safe tonight!</i>		

# December Togetherness

	<b><u>Greeters</u></b>	<b><u>Ushers</u></b>	<b><u>Coffee</u></b>	<b><u>Nursery Help</u></b>
6	<b>YOU</b>	<b>YOU</b>	<b>YOU</b>	<b>YOU</b>
13	<b>ARE</b>	<b>ARE</b>	<b>ARE</b>	<b>ARE</b>
20	<b>COMPLETELY</b>	<b>THOUGHT</b>	<b>CARED</b>	<b>DEFINITELY</b>
27	<b>MISSED!!!</b>	<b>OF OFTEN!!!</b>	<b>FOR!!!</b>	<b>LOVED!!!</b>

May you have the gladness of Christmas which is hope; The spirit of Christmas which is peace; The heart of Christmas which is love.  
*Ada V. Hendricks*

December's wintery breath is already clouding the pond, frosting the pane, obscuring summer's memory...  
*John Geddes*

Chill December brings the sleet, Blazing fire, and Christmas treat.  
*Sara Coleridge*

Christmas is a time when you get homesick even when you're home.  
*Carol Nelson*

At this time, no need to put up our monthly lists!  
We'll be back to normalcy before you know it!  
Keep hanging in there! You are so loved!

"If there ever comes a day when we can't be together, keep me in your heart, I'll stay there forever."  
- Winnie the Pooh



It is December, and nobody asked if I was ready.  
*Sarah Kay*



## TO ALL COMMITTEE CHAIRPEOPLE

Just a reminder that  
**ANNUAL REPORTS**  
are due in Julie's office by January 15th.

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



# Presbyterian Women



Our next meeting is not known, but will be at Wanda Clawson's home  
1507 W. Gull Lake Dr, Richland  
**EVERY WOMAN** is welcome.  
If you have questions, please call Terry Vantine, 629-5381



## FROM CONNECTED THREADS

Not much time left! The Mitten Tree is sitting next to the Fireplace Room, just waiting to be overloaded with new or homemade hats, mittens, gloves, and scarves. The office is open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 to 1. If you need another time to drop off your goodies, just call Julie, 629-4944.

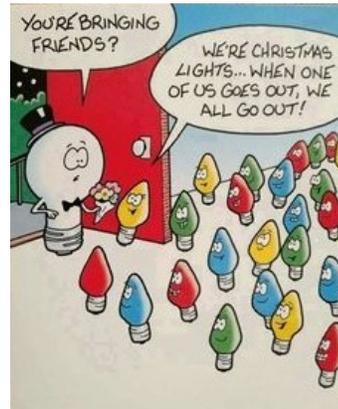
The folks who'll be receiving these nice things are in need, and very appreciative!



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## Name That Christmas Carol

*Tin tintinnabulum*  
*Adorn the vestibule*  
*Perambulating through a December solstice fantasy*  
*I spied my maternal parent osculating*  
*Desire a pair of incisors on December 25*  
*Homo sapien of crystallized vapor*  
*Befell during the transparent bewitching hour*  
*A dozen twenty-four hour yule periods*  
*Fantasia of a colorless December 25*  
*Hollowed post meridian*  
*Assemble, everyone who believes*  
*Cherubim audited from aloft*  
*Yonder in the hay rack*  
*Trio of monarchs*  
*Listen, aerial spirits announcing*  
*Quadruped with crimson proboscis*  
*Ancient benevolent despot*  
*Exuberance directed to the planet*



# MONEY MATTERS

## STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

As of November 29, we have received 24 General Fund pledges totaling \$93,670. This represents roughly 34% of the income needed to cover operating and Mission expenses for an average year. There were 8 Building Fund pledges totaling \$5,850.

If you have already made your 2021 pledge, thank you! If you have not had an opportunity to do so, you may email our Financial Secretary at [firstpresbyterianchurch49083@gmail.com](mailto:firstpresbyterianchurch49083@gmail.com), or mail your form to the church office. Our mailing address is 8047 Church Street, Richland, MI 49083.

THANK YOU for your commitment! Pledges are a critical piece of the budgeting equation, assisting Session in maintaining fiscal responsibility.

## FINANCE UPDATE

At the close of October, **we are projecting a full-year surplus of \$588**. This is slightly below last month's projections, but still close to break-even for the year which is wonderful considering the challenges we have all been facing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. **Thank you** to everyone for your continued dedication to our church and its missions.



**Grace, peace and good health to all. We look forward to seeing you again, hopefully soon.**

*Questions? Comments? Contact Sandy Carahaly or Sharon Rothenberg, Finance Elders.*

**2021 Stewardship**  
**First Presbyterian Church of Richland**  
For the Glory of God  
**Giving Period --- January 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021**

On November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020, 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	/week	or	/month
Building Fund	/week	or	/month
<b>Total Annual Pledge</b>			

Additional pledge of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for the designated purpose of \_\_\_\_\_

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

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: 2017 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



It's not too late to get in your 2020 per capita fee!

**\$35.20 per member**

Thank you! This helps the church in a HUGE way!!

FYI, 2021 per capita will be **\$35.23**.

# YOUTH GROUP

*Virtual*  
**Youth Group  
Christmas Party!**

**Sunday, December 13**

**3-5:00pm**

*Zoom link to follow*

As always, we will be doing a gift exchange!  
Gifts must be \$5 or less *or* find something  
fun in in your home that can be re-gifted!  
Stay tuned for more information!



Socially-distanced  
November Youth Group  
and a fun game of  
live foosball!



*An update from Meredith:*

The journey of faith formation . . .

We hope you'll join the Christian Ed team in an all-church read focused on where the Christmas story begins, based on what each Gospel says about it. "*Christmas in the Four Gospel Homes* reimagines the season and inspires new and exciting reflection for Advent." This short book is a whimsical, yet thought provoking, reflection of the meaning of Christmas through the lens of the four gospels. It's a quick, easy read and another way we can connect with one another through this season of hope.

We will then have a Zoom discussion about the book on

**Sunday, December 13 at 11am.**

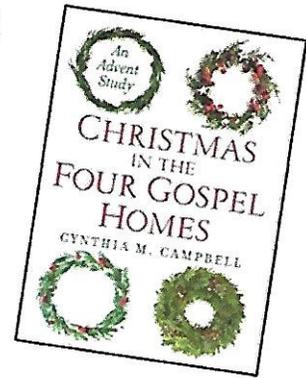
*Look for the Zoom link in a future email.*

*Advent*

**Book of the Month**

*Christmas in the Four Gospel Homes*

Cynthia M. Campbell



In November, four of our youth were confirmed in a short, outdoor service behind the church. This was the culmination of a year-long process for them, that was then extended even longer due to COVID-19.

While this was not how we imagined their confirmation to take place, it was a big moment for them and we are thrilled to welcome them as the newest members of our church.

*All* the youth put in a lot of time and effort in this confirmation journey and we are incredibly proud of them *all*.



# 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.

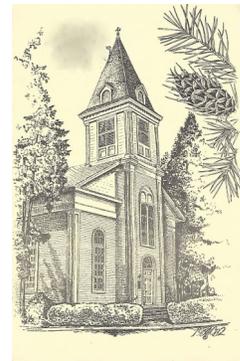
This year, December 20th is the Sunday designated for the annual support of this most valuable program. Prayerfully consider your stewardship offerings and include the **Christmas Joy Offering** as a part of your contributions this year. An envelope is enclosed in this mailing, and since we can't gather on the 20th, please send your donation to the church with "Christmas Joy Offering" in the memo. Or, Julie can send you a mailing envelope.

Thank you!

*God is with us. —Mathew 1:23*

## *Carillon Hymns and Honoree for December*

<i>Date</i>	<i>Selection</i>	<i>Honoree</i>
12/13	<i>Jesus Loves Me</i>	<i>Zackery James Anderson</i>
12/14	<i>Amazing Grace</i>	<i>Olga E. Boyer</i>
12/15	<i>The Old Rugged Cross</i>	<i>Emma Hubbard</i>
12/16	<i>Joyful, Joyful</i>	<i>Ellie Lynch</i>
12/29	<i>Wedding March</i>	<i>Kay and John Polzin</i>



**FOOD  
PANTRY  
CORNER**



## **FOOD PANTRY Giving Suggestions**

**Since our pantry now has a drive-thru distribution, working with Loaves and Fishes, we can really use:**

### **PERSONAL CARE ITEMS:**

**Deodorant, Shampoo/Conditioner, Soap, Toothpaste, Body Wash, Dish Soap, Tampons, Laundry Soap/Fabric Softener**  
*Monetary donations are very welcome too!*

# December Birthdays



1 Andrew Fiordalis  
1 Joseph Juodawlakis  
1 Jana Turpin  
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 Juodawlakis  
22 Laura Monk  
23 David MacQuarrie  
24 Jake Larson  
24 Jeni Steele  
25 Jan Petersen  
26 Jennifer Stupica  
27 Amy Juodawlakis  
29 Laurie Alexander  
29 Karen Urban  
29 Nancy Woods  
30 Ashlee Connell  
30 Maggie MacRitchie  
30 Chad Storer  
31 Eric Bryer  
31 Jan Fisher  
31 Kay Polzin  
31 Arlene Kuizema



# and Anniversaries



1 Ed and Marilyn Davis ~ 31 years  
12 Jim Collier and Stuart Verseman ~ 7  
16 Larry and Kay Irej ~ 53  
18 Lib and Jerry Wittwer ~ 55

21 Liz and Allen Matthews ~18  
27 Kay Gross and Gary Mittelbach ~ 45  
27 Julie and Matt Pausch ~ 34  
29 Chuck and Joyce Farho ~ 16

# *'Twas the Night Before Christmas* by Clement Clarke Moore



'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse. The stockings were hung by the chimney with care, in hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there.

*The children were nestled all snug in their beds, while visions of sugar plums danced in their heads. And Mama in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap, had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap.*

When out on the roof there arose such a clatter, I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter. Away to the window I flew like a flash, tore open the shutter, and threw up the sash.

*The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow gave the lustre of midday to objects below, when, what to my wondering eyes should appear, but a miniature sleigh and eight tiny reindeer. With a little old driver, so lively and quick, I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.*

More rapid than eagles, his coursers they came, and he whistled and shouted and called them by name:

"Now Dasher! Now Dancer! Now, Prancer and Vixen! On, Comet! On, Cupid! On, Donner and Blitzen! To the top of the porch! To the top of the wall! Now dash away! Dash away! Dash away all!"

*As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly, when they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky so up to the house-top the coursers they flew, with the sleigh full of toys, and St. Nicholas too.*

And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof the prancing and pawing of each little hoof. As I drew in my head and was turning around, down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.

*He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot, and his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot. A bundle of toys he had flung on his back, and he looked like a peddler just opening his pack.*

His eyes--how they twinkled! His dimples, how merry! His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry! His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow, and the beard on his chin was as white as the snow.

*The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth, and the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath. He had a broad face and a little round belly, that shook when he laughed, like a bowl full of jelly.*

He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf, and I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself. A wink of his eye and a twist of his head soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread.

*He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work, and filled all the stockings, then turned with a jerk. And laying his finger aside of his nose, and giving a nod, up the chimney he rose.*

He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle, And away they all flew like the down of a thistle. But I heard him exclaim, 'ere he drove out of sight, "Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night!"



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*  
Branden Burris, *Director of Choirs*  
Meredith Alspach, *Director of Faith Formation*  
Heather Putt, *Nursery Supervisor*  
Connie Slater, *Sexton*  
Julie Pixley, *Administrative Secretary*

