

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

650 2nd Ave. N., PO Box 327
Fargo, ND 58017
(701)293-6311

Return Service Requested



December 1 - January 9, 2009

Volume 12

Pastor's Reflections

This month we prepare for and celebrate the birth and coming of Jesus Christ among us. Theologians call this the incarnation. With culturally relevant images, language and symbols, the gospel of John tells us, "And the Word became flesh and lived among us and we have seen his glory, ...full of grace and truth...no one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known (John 1:14 &18)." The central way that God reaches you and me and draws us into God's dream for the world is through God becoming one of us and living and walking and working among us for the good of all. This is great news for us and our world. It is also a model for us as a church. In Jesus' incarnation we have an image of what a community of faith might look like and behave like.

Alan Hirsh in his book, *The Forgotten Ways* talks about the incarnation of Jesus and its implications for the church in four ways: presence, proximity, powerlessness and proclamation.

Presence

In Jesus Christ, God came and lived with us. In Christ, God is not above us but right here with us. For us as a community of faith, the incarnation implies that we are to be present and part of the very fabric of the FM community. As God is with us in Christ, so we are to be with others, engaged in our community offering God's hospitality and well-being to others.

Proximity

In Jesus Christ we understand who God is and through Him, we have access to God. In Christ, God lived close by to the outcast, the forgotten, the broken and the lost. As a church, the incarnation and God's proximity to us means that we are to be in relationship with and available to those people who struggle with faith or seem disconnected from a faith community.

(Continued inside...)

FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH



Fargo, North Dakota

Upcoming Events:

December 6
**Poinsettia Order
Deadline
Cookie Walk**

December 8
PW Christmas Tea

December 14
Man Up

December 20
Carols by Candlelight

December 24
**Christmas Eve
Worship**

December 25
Christmas Day

December 27
**10:45am Worship
Only**

January 1
**New Year's Day—
Office Closed**

THE MESSENGER

A Publication of First Presbyterian Church, Fargo, North Dakota ~ www.firstpresfargo.org

Spend Your Holidays with Us

First Presbyterian Church has a number of opportunities for you to spend your holidays with us.

The holidays can be a challenging time if you are experiencing anxiety or loss. Join us for **Loss in a Season of Joy** at Soul Space worship on Wednesday, December 9 at 6:55. (Please see article inside for more information.)

If you leave the F-M area for Christmas, join us on Sunday evening, December 20 at 7:00 pm for **Carols by Candlelight**. This distinctive musical event will feature all of our church's and instrumental ensembles, as well as congregational carol-singing in a celebration of word and seasonal music. Our Quest for Kid's Christmas Program will be incorporated into this event. (Please see article inside for more information.)

On **Christmas Eve**, we invite you to make worship a part of your family plans. We will celebrate Christ's nativity together at **5:00 and 9:30 pm**. Join us at 5:00 for a bright, festive, family-friendly service featuring choirs, instruments, carols, and preaching. 9:30 will be quieter in its tone with candlelight, communion, and the Christmas story interspersed with carols and other music. Plan to make one or both of these distinct worship experiences a part of your personal holiday tradition.



MSUM Christmas Concerts

First Presbyterian will host the MSUM Orchestra and Choir Christmas concerts on Friday, Dec 4 and Saturday, Dec 5, 2009 at 7:30pm in the sanctuary. Tickets can be purchased at the door.

1st Sunday After Christmas

We will have one, combined worship service on Sunday, December 27 at 10:45 am.

Adult Education

Sunday mornings in December classes continue...

“Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes” is a book by Middle Eastern scholar, Kenneth Bailey who will help us lift away the obscuring layers of modern Western interpretation to reveal Jesus in the light of the cultural and historical situation of the 1st Century. The four weeks of Advent we will study the different birth narratives of Jesus. Class meets in the Jennie Roberts Room at 9:50am.

We celebrate the 500th anniversary of John Calvin’s birth with a class on the book, “John Calvin: Reformer for the 21st Century.” We will continue to explore the life and teachings of the father of Presbyterianism and discover its significance for today. Class meets in Meeting Rooms 2 and 3 at 9:50am.

Wednesday evenings through December 16, 6:05pm

Pastor Shive continues his study of Ecclesiastes, included as wisdom literature of the Old Testament. Class is held in Meeting rooms 2 and 3.

Wednesday evenings starting January 6, 6:05pm

Discovering Your Practices and Path of Spiritual Growth

Our individual lives are strengthened and built up by a variety of spiritual practices, different types of prayer, reading of scripture, journaling, serving others, etc. This class will help you discover some of those practices that are uniquely fitted for you.



New Members

We welcome into the life and membership of this community of faith the following people:

Kim & David Waale: Kim and David have two children, Annie & Nicholas. They are joining by Letter of Transfer from Glen Avon Presbyterian Church in Duluth, MN.

Karen & Cordell Bosma: Karen and Cordell have two children, Allyson and Lincoln. They come to this church by Letter of Transfer from Bethel Presbyterian Church, Reading, MN, and from American Reformed Church, Worthington, MD.

Letter from Pastor Julie

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Thank you for the wonderful send-off on Sunday, October 11, 2009. I am grateful for the years that I was able to be a part of this congregation. The confirmation classes, potlucks, adult education, worship services and fellowship times are just a few of the areas where I felt fortunate to be in your midst. It will take me some time to get settled in, but I begin my new position October 15th at the funeral home where I will continue my work as a Certified Preplanning Consultant/Grief Support Coordinator. It is hard to leave Fargo and so many of you that I consider family, but I am looking forward to meeting new people at First Presbyterian Church in St. Cloud. I do not plan on having any “official” role in their congregation, other than active volunteer!

Once again, thank you for your mutual ministry and your prayers as I embark on this new journey. I love the hand-crafted vase that was presented to me on behalf of the congregation and can’t wait to have a home, fill the vase with flowers, and reminisce on the beautiful friends that have graced my life through First Presbyterian, Fargo.

With love and gratitude, Pastor Julie

Annual Contribution Statements

Statements for 2009 contributions will be completed and mailed by January 15, 2010. Contributions must be received by December 31, 2009 to be included in these statements. If you have questions, please contact Mary Wittenberg, Business Manager.

For the Record in November

New Members: *Kim & David Waale and Karen & Cordell Bosma* were welcomed as new church members November 15.

Baptisms: *Abigail Marie Deckard and Kendelyn Jene Deckard* were baptized in the Sanctuary November 15. *Thomas Frederick Hudson* was baptized in the Sanctuary November 22.

October Financial Summary

| | YTD 2009 Actual | YTD 2009 Budget |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Income | \$583,559 | \$619,806 |
| Expenses | \$623,990 | \$676,063 |
| Net income (loss) | (\$40,431) | (\$ 56,257) |

Church Staff

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| The Rev. Dr. Stephen A. Shive | Pastor/Head of Staff |
| The Rev. Mary Jo E. Holtey | Associate Pastor for Congregational Nurture |
| The Rev. Dr. Steve Kisslinger | Parish Associate |
| The Rev. Emery Roy | Pastor Emeritus |
| Penny Andrist | Co-Coordinator of Children’s Ministry |
| Gail Benson | Co-Coordinator of Children’s Ministry |
| Mary Beth Berg | Assistant Director of Music/Organist |
| Ansley Cameron | Youth Director/UCM Downtown Coordinator |
| Laura Caroon | Communications Specialist |
| Dr. David Fandrich | Director of Music |
| Rick Fiebiger | Facility Manager |
| Julie Jensen | Part-time Custodian |
| Rene Mynatt | Part-time Custodian |
| Diana Peterson | Receptionist |
| John Smith | Part-time Custodian |
| Bonnie Stam | Nursery Staff |
| Mary Wittenberg | Business Manager |

Office Hours

Mon-Thu 8:30am-5pm
Fri 9am-1pm

Deadlines

Deadline for January Messenger article submission is Wednesday, December 30. Please e-mail articles to Laura Caroon: lcaroon@firstpresfargo.org

The Session

Eric Johnson & Marty Hoag, Personnel; **Candy Cox**, Fellowship & Events; **David Stastny**, Building & Grounds; **Mary Staahl & Jocie Iszler**, Management & Finance; **Greg Post & Vicki Laraway**, Worship; **Ray Bauske, Alexa Mazaheri** (youth) & **Shila Tobosa**, Spiritual Nurture & Education; **Jim Johnson & David Johnson**, Support & Endowment; **Mike Lochow**, Communications; **Mary Simle & Bruce Maylath**, Mission

Board of Deacons

Marion Anderson, Penny Andrist, Chad Backes, Dick Blaine, Sue Cacioppo, Anne Durbin, Kate Frappier, Nan Froelich, Patricia Gilbertson, Krista Johnson, Barb Kessel, Christine Kloubec, Jeff Olson, Kendrick Pifer (youth), **Georgia Resell, Joe Stanley, Phyllis Sunderland, Paula Thomas, Brad Zietz**

Gracia Fulwiler, Health Ministries Coordinator

YOUTH @ First

December 5th: In preparation for our annual *Cookie Walk* we will be baking cookies in the afternoon of Dec. 5th. The Youth and volunteers are asked to come and help frost and sprinkle cookies to ensure we have a plenty of beautiful cookies of our annual *Cookie Walk*. Please let Ansley Cameron know if you are able to help.

December 6th: Attention All Bakers and Cookie Lovers! The annual Christmas Cookie Walk is approaching. The Middle School and Senior High Youth need your help! The Youth are selling cookies. The *Christmas Cookie Walk* is the Youth's biggest fundraiser! All of the earning will help to fund the cost of the trips that we take. We are asking for you to help by baking a dozen cookies. On December 6th, the youth will sell all the beautiful tasty treats. We need lots of cookies because we sell out every year! If you heart is interested in helping, please contact Ansley Cameron, the Director of Youth Ministry.

December 29th: The Youth are taking a day trip to *Andes Tower Hills*. It will be a day of tubing, downhill and cross-country skiing. We are asking each youth to pay \$20.00 to cover trip costs. We are also inviting member of our congregation to volunteer as youth leaders. It will be a great day of food, fun, and activities. Please RSVP to Ansley Cameron by Dec. 13th.

Check out the youth blog for the latest info:

<http://youthatfirstpres.blogspot.com>

Merry Christmas &

Happy New Year!



From the First
Presbyterian
Church Staff

Pastor's Reflection Continued...

Powerlessness

Alan Hirsh says, "In becoming one of us, God takes the form of a servant...he does not stun us with sound and laser shows, but instead lives as a humble carpenter in backwater Galilee for thirty years before activating his messianic destiny. In acting he shuns all notions of coercive power and demonstrates for us how love and humility (powerlessness) reflect the true nature of God and are the key means to transform human society." Christ's powerlessness calls us to be servants to our community and humble in our relationships with each other in the church and city.

Proclamation

Christ's birth heralded a new day and called for a new way of living. That is why in Advent, each and every year, we read the story of John the Baptist, preparing the way for the incarnate deity. As a church our mission statement says, "We will proclaim the Good News of God in Christ." We all have a story to tell of our faith in Christ. As we gather this Advent and Christmas, we proclaim that God has become incarnate among us and as we go into our world we are to do so as well.

As we prepare for Christ's birth in Advent and celebrate it during Christmas, let us capture with our hearts and minds its meaning and significance for us!

Peace,
Steve

Weather Cancellations

If inclement weather forces cancellations of services/ events, the information will be posted on the following:

www.firstpresfargo.org

in-forum.com

WDAY - TV & radio

KVLY - TV

KFGO - radio

If Fargo Public Schools close or cancel activities because of weather, First Presbyterian Church will automatically follow their decision.

Mission

Festival of Trees

A series of "mission trees" have been placed in the Gathering Space during Advent. Each tree represents a mission endeavor in which our congregation has been involved. You are invited to walk through the trees and find areas that inform your faith and calling. If you prefer you may make a donation rather than go "shopping." You may give your donation to any of the mission volunteers staffing the trees or send it clearly marked to the church office.



The Giving Tree

This tree will be decorated with the names and needs of many local children. You are asked to take one or more of the tags, buy presents for each and return them at the appointed time. Bring UNWRAPPED gifts to the church by December 13 (2 gifts for each tag).

The Toothbrush Tree

All proceeds from this tree go to the Patient Subsidies Fund at Kikuyu Hospital Dental Clinic. This Fund is administered by the clinic so all people may receive dental care. Toothbrushes, which make great stocking stuffers, will be available for a minimum donation of \$10 each.

The Bdecan Tree

The Bdecan Presbyterian Church in on the Spirit Lake Reservation and has various seasonal needs including winter outerwear for children ~ new and gently used coats, boots, hats, mittens and scarves.

The Mitten Tree

Fill our tree again this year with warmth and love for the children of Nokomis Childcare Center, by covering the tree with hats, scarves, gloves and mittens!

The Food Tree

Bring in nonperishable food and place under the tree. All donations will be given to local food banks.

Youthworks Tree

Youthworks is a local organization that tends to the needs of homeless and transitioning youth. This Christmas we are collecting twin sheets, bath and hand towels and cloths, \$10 gift certificates to grocery stores and gas stations.

Christmas Joy Offering: *What Child Is This?*

A Presbyterian tradition for almost seventy years, the Christmas Joy Offering is one of the four special offerings designated by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to provide congregations direct ways of supporting specific causes that help those in need. The receipts from the Offering are distributed equally to the Board of Pensions for assistance programs and to Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries/ Presbyterian Women of the General Assembly Mission Council to support Presbyterian racial ethnic education. Envelopes have been placed in the pew racks in time for Advent. Please give your prayerful consideration for this worthy offering and mission.

Bell Ringing

Thank you for your overwhelming positive response to ringing the bell for the Salvation Army. The sign up sheet remains on the Volunteer Opportunities Board to remind you of your commitment. On behalf of the Salvation Army and the needy of Fargo-Moorhead, thank you for your willingness to ring those bells!

Gift Cards

Do you like to give gift cards for presents? Do you like to be a part of the Giving Tree ministry? A "Yes" answer means you can do your shopping at church and benefit the mission trip to Louisiana. After Thanksgiving, look for the table set up in the Gathering Space where these gift cards will be sold. Each card that is sold will generate a commission for the trip. Gift cards will be available for immediate pick up for Kmart, Visa, Barnes & Noble, Best Buy and Hornbachers. Your favorite place isn't on this list? A gift card for that business can be ordered and arrive the next week.

Please note: It's not too late to sign up for the trip!

New Life Center

Remember the New Life Center when you do your Christmas shopping. They need socks, stocking caps, work or winter gloves, long underwear, T-shirts and personal products for their Christmas gifts to the men.

Bring these items to the church and place in the New Life Center box in the coat room. They will be brought to the center. Thank you so much for your giving!

Caring Ministries

“Loss in a Season of Joy”

What are you to do at Christmastime when you don't feel like rejoicing or celebrating? Perhaps you are stressed out or lonely, or grieving or feeling down, or perhaps you wish to come together to acknowledge the struggles others may feel this Christmas season. This service of “Loss in a Season of Joy” will be **Wednesday, December 9, 6:55 pm** in Celebration Hall and led by our Soul Space musicians and Pastor Mary. It will be followed by a time of refreshments and Christian fellowship. All are invited to this time of worship and togetherness.

Pastoral visits in the hospitals

Due to recent flu outbreaks and visitation restrictions, Pastors Shive and Holtey will not be visiting routinely in the hospitals. If you or a family member is in the hospital, please call the church office and speak with one of the pastors. We will respond as advised by the medical community.

Home Communion Volunteers

Elders and deacons, past and present, are being asked to consider helping to serve communion to those unable to attend worship. If you are able to help on a frequent or occasional basis, please sign up on the Volunteer Opportunities Board. Pastor Mary will train all interested officers. If you have already received communion training, please, sign up as well.

Christmas Eve Offering

All the otherwise undesignated offering on Christmas Eve and Maundy Thursday is given to the Board of Deacons for their Emergency Relief Fund. These donations are used to assist members and friends who find themselves in emergency financial need. The Fund has been used for shelter, food, clothing, utilities and medical concerns. Please give generously.

Soul Space

Important Dates for Soul Space Worship

No worship on Wednesdays, December 23 and 30. Soul Space resumes on Wednesday, January 6 at 6:55 pm.

Soul Space Gratitude Journal Online

Read or participate on our online gratitude blog: www.soulpaceatfirstpres.blogspot.com/

Music Ministries

Holiday Musicians

If you have family or friends with musical talent to share who will be home this holiday season, contact David Fandrich, director of music (dfandrich@firstpresfargo.org). There are opportunities for instrumentalists and vocalists to play in ensembles or do solo playing on **Christmas Eve** at 5:00 or 9:30, and on **the First Sunday after Christmas**, one service at 10:45 on December 27.

Choral Singing This Holiday Season

Consider being a part of the Sanctuary Choir for our December 20 **Carols by Candlelight**, particularly if you will be worshipping elsewhere on Christmas Eve. Similarly, we invite anyone who enjoys singing to join us as we prepare to sing on Christmas Eve at 5:00 pm.

If you have been unable to participate in the choir this fall, it is a wonderful time to step in. In addition to regular Sunday rehearsals (9:00-10:30), join us for special Wednesday evening rehearsals on December 9 and 16 from 7:30 to 8:45 to prepare music for those services.

We will also have a rehearsal for all Christmas Eve musicians early in the evening on Wednesday, December 23.

Contact director of music David Fandrich (dfandrich@firstpresfargo.org) for more information or visit our blog at www.firstpresfargochoir.blogspot.com



Children

Christmas Party

On December 20th during the Quest hour (9:30 – 10:30) we will be having a family Christmas Party. Parents – please join your kids and our teaching staff upstairs for goodies and activities! We want you to stay for the hour and spend time with your kids and other families in fellowship.

Christmas Program

The children will be participating in the Carols By Candlelight service, “Love Will Come” at 7:00 p.m. on the evening of December 20. There may be a rehearsal on Wednesday, December 16 in the evening. Please mark these two dates on your calendar and stay tuned for more details.

There will be NO Quest for Kids on Sunday, December 27. Quest will resume on January 3.

Fellowship

Man Up

Please note the time change for this month: Man Up will meet on the second Monday of December, the 14th, at 6:45am. It is early, yes, and you are invited to join a group of men to study Exodus: Leadership Principles. The group dismisses promptly at 7:45. Donuts and coffee are provided. Invite a friend and engage your faith and connect with others!

PW Christmas Tea

A Christmas Tea, sponsored by Presbyterian Women, will be held on Tuesday, December 8 at 1:00pm in the Jennie Roberts Room and Gathering Space. We are again privileged to have the North High Carolers, directed by Shelley Zietz, as our program. Everyone welcome!

Church Women United Christmas Coffee

Friday, December 4th at The Evergreens (512 3rd St S, Moorhead) at 9:30am. Please bring unwrapped gifts for Churches United for the Homeless and for the YWCA's Unique Boutique such as: paper products, toiletries, gloves, gifts, puzzles, games, books, etc. Invite your friends to come for coffee and goodies!

Nurse's Notes - Gratitude Attitude

Gracia Fulwiler, RN, Parish

Today when I write this it's Veteran's Day and as a veteran, I get a little teary eyed about this great country of ours and how thankful I am to be here. God was gracious and let me be born in the land of freedom and continues to bless all of us with people that help to keep it great and free. Over these two hundred years, thousands of men and women have sacrificed a lot to keep it that way. You are probably wondering, what a strange way to start an article for December. Well, here's the answer, it's all about gratitude. I am going to do a condensed version of the Reader's Digest condensed version of, “Life is better with a gratitude attitude” by David Hochman, Nov 2009.

Every morning we get up and a lot of us start the day grumbling about how gloomy it is or how tired we are or how much we hate to go to work. Then how does that day continue to unfold? A good share of the time I'd be willing to bet that day continued to be a bad day. Hochman realized this and had had enough. He decided it was time to “end my reflexive complaining”. He wondered, “Shouldn't I be celebrating my relative good fortune?” He did some research, read some books, talked to some well known people e.g. Robert A. Emmons who is an expert on positive thinking.

One thing he learned was that even if you pretend to be thankful this raises the levels of the chemicals associated with pleasure and contentment: serotonin and dopamine. Keeping a log of things to be grateful about for a week/month can help to heighten your awareness of those things you may take for granted. One major study found that writing gratitude things down made people feel 25% better. But be careful, too much of a good thing can cause the “Pledge of Allegiance effect”, it loses its meaning, or worse, becomes a chore.

Emmons is quoted, “Gratitude is never so important as during those times when everything appears to be lost. Finding something to appreciate, he said, can save us from absolute despair—in a way that abject complaining cannot.” So in this season of joy and giving that is engendered in Christmas, please take a look at your gratitude attitude. The best gift you can give anyone is your gratitude of them and all that is around you. This makes a happier you and in turn a happier environment in which you live.