



THE CARILLON

Monthly Newsletter
December 2022

First Presbyterian Church
Rev. Matt Lang, Pastor
Vol. 57 No. 10
Web Site: www.fpchw.org

P. O. Box 1519
Homewood, Illinois
708-798-0490
E-mail: fpchw@sbcglobal.net



Not Just Another Story

CHRISTMAS IS COMING!

The Christmas season is full of hustle, decorations, gift buying, parties, family gatherings, carols, worship, etc. Most important among all of that is the birth of Jesus. We must reflect on the humble shepherds, the gifts of the Magi, and the baby that would become our savior. In remembrance of that time, First Presbyterian Church of Homewood provides ways to look past the glitter and commercialism and participate in the real reason for the season.



What gifts can we give to the humble people in need? We have a Mitten+ Tree in the cloister. As the weather turns colder, let us remember our friends of all ages at the Jones Memorial Center in Chicago Heights in need of warm mittens, gloves, hats, and scarves. Be aware

that Jones Center needs these items by **Thursday, Dec. 15th**. The Jones Food Pantry also needs spaghetti, sauce, and healthy cereals (see another article on a later page).

How can we share our talents to highlight the birth of Jesus? We have pop-up choir rehearsals. Come one, come all, and join in as we sing praises to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, this Christmas Eve on Saturday,

December 24th. All are welcome to join the combined choirs of First Presbyterian Church of Homewood and Calvary United Protestant Church of Park Forest for this event. The rehearsals are scheduled on **Wednesdays, December 7th, 14th, and 21st at 7 p.m.** in our sanctuary. Warm-up and rehearsal will also be held on Christmas Eve one half hour *before* performance (time-frame TBA) in Westminster Hall at Homewood. Please contact Mary Ann Wenzelman at 708-955-9433 or at ladybugc512@gmail.com if you are interested.



How can we be financially charitable and/or decorate the sanctuary for Christmas Eve? It is time for Christmas flowers and Respond Now donations. The Worship Ministry Team invites you to participate in the return of one of our traditions. It began as a simple gesture by individuals placing poinsettias in the sanctuary for the beauty of the Advent season. Over the past years, members of our congregation have given poinsettias to commemorate or honor relatives, friends, or events. This year the tradition continues.

In preparation for the celebration of Christ's birth and as a way to share the joy of Jesus, the Worship Ministry Team is offering three options.



Choose poinsettias (\$10), mumsettias (\$25), or donation to Respond Now (\$10). The Christmas Eve bulletin will acknowledge these gifts. **Order forms will be available in the Sunday bulletins.** Please make checks payable to First Presbyterian Church of Homewood and write *poinsettia* or *Respond Now* on the memo line and use a **separate check from your weekly offering.** Turn order forms with the check in to the church office or mail to P.O. Box 1519, Homewood, IL, 60430. **The deadline for orders and checks is Monday, December 12, 2022.** Flowers may be picked up after Christmas Eve service and through January 8. [There is also an order form at the end of this newsletter.]



Please choose one or more church activity as part of your Christmas Is Coming festivities. And add the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service on December 24 to the list. This service is at the Homewood church, but watch the church bulletin or emails for the time. This is a Communion service.

COMMUNION SCHEDULE

- December 4 11 a.m. sanctuary & live streaming
- December 24 Christmas Eve sanctuary & live streaming



SESSION REPORT

Regular Session Meeting, November 21, 2022

The Chicago Presbytery has approved Rev. Lang's installation. The actual ceremony will be scheduled for January or February (date to be determined).

We need "at large" volunteers for the Nominating Committee. We will schedule a Congregational Meeting for December 11 to install nominating committee members. We will also have more positions to fill, due to Session members leaving the area.

Church facilities usage and fees were revised and approved.



Advent events (poinsettias, donations for Jones Center, mitten tree, Christmas tree,

and Thanksgiving offering) were all approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Douglas R. Bonthron, Clerk of Session

FROM THE PASTOR

"Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." 2 Corinthians 9:7

I see being cheerful as a faithful obligation, so it might help to define why we might be cheerful. We might be cheerful because we have a choice to be here. God did not make us be here. The President did not make us be here. The Morality Police did not make us be here. We are not here out of fear or threat. We are here only because we want to be here.

If we want to be here, we must find value in this place. If we find value in this place, we must want this place to remain. If we want this place to remain, we must support it. We must support it because we want it, not because we need it, not because we are compelled by fear or threat to be here. We want this place. No one is making us be here. Therefore, let us *be here* and *be glad* that we are here.



The flipside is, because we want it, we must tend to it. If we want flowers on our windowsill, we can't look across the street to our neighbors and wish and hope and dream that they will plant flowers and water them for us. We can't complain that the neighbors are not doing enough to grow the flowers that we want to bloom on our windowsill. If we want flowers, we have to grow the flowers.

How nice it is to have a house with windowsills on which we can grow flowers! What a wonderful gift! What a joyous opportunity we have been given! Thanks be to God that we have this wonderful work to do!

Matt Lang

[PS: I met with the COM to discuss my scruple regarding "furthering the purity of the church." After a faithful mess of a conversation (and I mean that in a good way), the COM agreed to "register" my scruple, and the "way is now clear" for my installation. Date to be determined, but it will likely be sometime in February.]

A HISTORY UPDATE PROJECT

Paul Gerrish and Phil Dillman are working to update our history book of 2009 for First Presbyterian Church of

Homewood. They need events and staff and highlights of them. They want the following list added to and dates checked and volunteers to write about them:

Events

- New Beginnings (2012-2014)
- Festival of Psalms (2012)
- Bike Ride (2013)
- Community Dinners (2015)
- Pastor Dederer's Sabbatical (2015)
- 160th Birthday & 100 Years of Women's Assn (2018)
Remember! Rejoice! Reflect!
- Alma College Concert—housing the singers!
- Purdue male quartet, female quartet, chimes, glee club
- Farmers Market
- Lenten Lunches
- Lenten and Christmas Cantatas with Zion
- Beautification Awards from Homewood
- Thanksgiving Baskets
- Chicago Submarine Gift Packing
- Pandemic (2020) virtual worship & Perks, online giving, live-streaming
- What else?



Staff

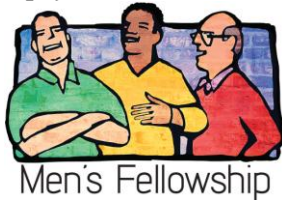
- Pastor Dederer
- Pastor Elvery
- Pastor Lang – Yoked!
- Directors of Music: Lynn, Jason, Jayson, Tim, Mary Ann
- Secretaries, Treasurers, Custodian
- Who else?

Help if you can. All suggestions welcome.

CHICAGO HEIGHTS MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Chicago Heights Men's Fellowship Lunches with our men invited are still meeting on Fridays, but scheduling has gone off the third Friday—so pay attention!

In December, lunch will be on **December 16**. Lunch is at 12:30 p.m. at Paulie's Pub in South Chicago Heights, 2736 Chicago Road. Come for Christian fellowship.



TRUSTEE REPORT



The Trustees met on November 8, 2022. No report of the business conducted was sent to the editor.

STEWARDSHIP/FINANCE MINISTRY TEAM

If you used the Thanksgiving Offering envelope in your box of stewardship envelopes, here is an explanation of where the money goes. The Pastor's Discretionary Fund is a special fund outside of our operating budget that is used to help congregation members and folks in our community in times of deep need. We have used these funds to pay for utilities, mortgages, medical treatment, counseling, educational needs, and food. These financial gifts become a sign of *hope* for people who feel their back against a wall or whose financial savings are depleted, who have nowhere left to turn or whose circumstances have changed dramatically. The gifts meet both physical and spiritual needs, reminding people that they are not alone and that *nothing* can separate them from God's love in Christ. The special Thanksgiving Offering is one way you can help support the Pastor's Discretionary Fund. You can still use that envelope! Make your check payable to First Presbyterian Church of Homewood with "Pastor's Discretionary Fund" on the memo line. These (identified) gifts are tax deductible and will be included on your year-end statement. Please consider how you might support the ministry of Jesus Christ to your church family and our community.

In your box of offering envelopes for December, there are four regular Sunday offering envelopes, a special Christmas Offering envelope, and a special Christmas Joy Offering envelope. These are all different and serve different purposes. **Christmas Joy** is the most misunderstood. This special offering is one of four church-wide Special Offerings of the Presbyterian Church (USA), and its purpose is to benefit church workers in need: retired, current, and future. Please help! **Christmas Joy** asks that we think beyond our congregation, as we do not retain any of this money. Think younger (schools and colleges), think older (pensions), and think bias-free (leadership). Think about **JOY**. [There is also a Christmas Offering. Please do not confuse the two.]



Last Reminder!

There is a Monday, December 26, 2022, deadline for each of the following categories for 2022 charitable giving to be included in your 2022 federal and state tax returns:

- 1. If you are an annual pledge member and have not yet paid your 2022 pledge.**

2. If you are behind and are completing your 2022 pledge.
3. If you have a Required Minimum Distribution from an IRA that you must take for 2022 and can donate it tax-free to the church.
4. If you have shares of highly appreciated stock you wish to donate to the church in 2022 free of capital gains taxes and income taxes.
5. If you wish to make a donation to the Memorial Fund in memory of someone in 2022.
6. If you wish to remember the church with an extra donation above your pledge to help with our shortfall.
7. If you have not made a pledge in 2022 and wish to contribute to the church from your income in 2022.
8. If you wish to make a donation to the Mission and Ministry Endowment Fund in 2022.

All charitable contributions to the church are tax deductible to the extent provided by law.

The financial report was not sent to the editor, so the box of financial numbers is missing.

MEMBER CARE MINISTRY

Member Care reports that there was one visitor on Nov. 6th and we hope he felt welcome and will visit again.

Laura Dillman, Paul Gerrish, Rod Dunlap, and Matt (from Monday Community Dinners) gave out treats to 96 costumed people at the church steps on Halloween. Lots of candy was donated. Thank you to all involved.

Following the suggestion that we hold Heavenly Perks in the Parlor, we had our first one in the Parlor on Oct. 23 with 12 in attendance. It was a nice surprise! We will continue to use the Parlor except for special occasions. On October 30, Charlene Hansen took the initiative to host a farewell party in Westminster Hall for Ed and Jan Wahl. It was very well attended. Char also planned a special Thanksgiving Perks for Sunday, Nov. 20 with about 14 attending. We hope you enjoy HP in the Parlor, but we need some help. For January refreshments, there will be a signup sheet on the Welcome Center in the Narthex for bringing goodies to serve 20 for one Sunday for Heavenly Perks in the Parlor.



One December Heavenly Perks will also be in Westminster Hall. On Sunday, December 18, we will celebrate the 165th birthday of First Presbyterian Church of

Homewood. Char Hansen is asking us to attend this party following worship and enjoy ice cream and cake! Mark the calendar for this special event.

Shirley Armistead & Kim Hamilton

OUTREACH MINISTRY

Food pantries are seeing more and more new clients now, and the Food Pantry at the Jones Memorial Center in Chicago Heights needs healthy cereals, spaghetti, and spaghetti sauce. A **Missional Venture** this year is to donate the items needed to Jones Center. A box for collecting items will be in the Narthex through Sunday, Dec. 18. (We will deliver any non-perishable items you might want to donate.) Any cash donations will be used either to purchase more needed items or maybe donated directly to the organization. Questions can be directed to Shirley Armistead at sarmis1@aol.com or text or phone Shirley at 1-630-712-4697. And don't neglect the Mitten Tree that also benefits Jones Center. Please decorate it with mittens, gloves, hats, and scarves. These have a deadline of December 15.



FAITH FORMATION MINISTRY

Please continue your personal faith formation journey with our Zoom classes. Tuesday Bible Study meets each week at 10:30 a.m. From the church website at www.fpchw.org click on the link for Tuesday morning Bible Study at 10:30 a.m. on any Tuesday. Tuesday Apologetics Study meets at 7 p.m. Contact Tim at tlvannasdale@gmail.com in order to get links to the Tuesday evening class at 7 p.m. and email notices for previews of each lesson.

PRAYER CARDS

The following members, friends, and staff of First Presbyterian Church of Homewood will receive a card telling them that the church is praying for them. Please pray for those listed each week.



Week of December 4

Brian & Kelly Tufts
Sylvia Tufts
Laurie Ulrich
Sandy VanHorn
Tim VanNasdale

Week of December 11

Dean & Linda VanNasdale
Ed & Janet Wahl
Debbie Way
Nolan Way
Jay Webster

Week of December 18

Leighton Whitaker
Carolyn Wiley
Dave/Mary Ann Wenzelman
Susan Zorns

Week of December 25

Joan Alvers
Joyce Anders
Earl Anker/Jan Bunker
Dave/Shirley Armistead
Marilyn Austin

HOSPITALIZED



In the hospital during the past month were Johnnie Dorsey, Sheri Hansen Bolliger, Matt Clark (nephew-in-law of Bob James), Jack Pontinen (cousin of Kathie Hazlett) Ed Wahl.

SYMPATHY

Church sympathy is extended to the families of Glenn Stehr, Bill Deady, and to Carol Bruggman on the death of her sister Doris.



I am the Resurrection and the Life saith the Lord: he that believeth in me though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.

FREE HOLIDAY CONCERT



Our very own treasurer, DJ Karwatka invites you to a “free” holiday concert presented by the Tinley Park Community Band on **Sunday, December 4**, at 3 p.m. at Central Middle School, 18146 Oak Park Avenue, Tinley Park (enter at door #3). DJ plays the flute with the band! This year’s concert features an emphasis on English composers and a tribute to the recently departed Queen Elizabeth II. You’ll also enjoy holiday favorites including a holiday sing along!

A MOVING EXPERIENCE

“Let the movers pack everything.” Good idea—impressive! They packed the house in one day. They packed the semi-truck in less than a day. They arrived on schedule in Tennessee—November 11, 8:30 a.m. and were unloaded by 5:30 p.m. Great job!

Oh, then come the moving surprises. I expected empty shelves, but not shelves removed and pegs not left in, so I do not know how far apart the shelves were. I expected Books boxed up, but not without information. Some boxes don’t even say which room. I expected top shelf, 2nd shelf, etc. Wardrobe rods callapsed so that clothes were a jumble at the bottom of the box. I am sure that there are other such surprises in the almost 400 boxes (including Ed’s model collection, of course). Will I find my Christmas decorations before Christmas?



But we are here in Gallatin—safe and sound. The cats have adjusted well. We are comfortably settled—among lots of boxes. And our realtor found a lady from NAWS to collect the cats of Hamilton Wood.

Thanks for the send-off. Just, Janet



TIMES HAVE CHANGED

Although we think we are being modern in our practices, what is modern in one era no longer exists in another. Take our example of moving our membership in 1984 versus today. 1984 could be considered, by their terms, “a modern move.” Our residence changed location within the church’s attendance boundaries, but little effort was required on the part of the church to accept a local move without serious repercussions to church membership. In 2022, a total household move required complete upheaval both in the household and in the local church. Relationships will end, the strength of bonds will be tested, and the acceptance of responsibilities will be needed. The trauma of such changes increases as the timeframe for adjustments decreases. One thing is certain: a decision to do nothing does not mean that nothing will change. We who leave offer prayers for the success among those who accept new roles in leadership and learning the elements of strength and power in their new avocations. So as before when the boundaries of change in leadership have been adjusted, God provides answers to questions that may or may not have been considered before. We who leave face adjustments in our relationships just as those changes are examined from the perspective of those who remain. New friends and new ties are just as important to travelers facing an empty unknown at the beginning of their adventures. God will surely bless all those who face walking into the unknown future with the spirit of challenge and determination in their steps toward the future.

From my hospital bed, Ed Wahl

JANUARY CARILLON

HELP WANTED: My appointment as editor of the church newsletter, *The Carillon*, ends December 31, 2022. As we are moving to Tennessee in November, the December issue will be my last one. That means a new editor must prepare January 2023, Vol. 58, No. 1. **Who can take over?** I will help as much as possible, but a re-design would be the best track to take. When I took over from Barbara Senior in March of 1995, I had no idea I would have a 28-year term! At that time, it was typewriters and stencils; now the newsletter is emailed in color. Someone, please, answer the help-wanted ad.

Janet C. Wahl

 **BIRTHDAY GREETINGS TO:**

December

Shirley Smiddy
Pastor Matt Lang
Nicholas Hamilton
Emily Hanley
1st Presby Church
(165 yrs)

December

Jessica Lopez-Jursa
Jay Ruklic
Lee Hilario
Jean Bonthron Conover
Janice Rolls

May God grant birthday blessings on you all this coming year.

 **THE CHRISTMAS WREATH**

(*The Old Farmer's Almanac*, Robert B Thomas, 2022)



“Whatever your family traditions are, at its very core, a wreath celebrates the cyclical nature of life. This time of year, Christmas wreaths are hung in every place imaginable—from doors and fences to lampposts and windows—even the front grille of the car! How did a round bit of greenery

come to symbolize the holidays?

“Wreaths are part of many ancient traditions dating back to the earliest civilizations. The circle is a symbol of immortality; throughout history, wreaths have been associated with life, rejuvenation, and renewal. Originally, wreaths were worn around the head, neck, or waist. The Greeks awarded laurel wreaths to their triumphant athletes; in the Persian Empire, they were worn on the head as a symbol of importance; and ancient Romans wore them like crowns. In Sweden, candles were incorporated in the wreaths to celebrate the return of light after the winter solstice. Nowadays, we use them in a window or on a door as a sign of welcome during the holidays. They can be used flat on a table for decoration or as an advent wreath, which also contains candles, one for each Sunday between Thanksgiving and Christmas.”

*Let **CHRISTMAS**
come into our world
and bring us warmth and cheer.
Bring us **FAITH** in place of doubt
and strength in place of fear.
Bring us **HOPE** and bring us **LOVE**
to guide our hearts forever.
Let **CHRISTMAS** come
into our world
and bring us all together.*

Merry Christmas to All!

*First Presbyterian Church
of Homewood Staff:
Rev. Matt Lang
Debra Campbell
DJ Karwatka
Johnnie Dorsey
Mary Ann Wenzelman*



Is this the end??



CHRISTMAS FLOWERS & RESPOND NOW DONATIONS

Giver's Name: _____
 (Please list name/s as you would like it printed in the Christmas bulletin.)

Number of ___ **Poinsettias** at \$10.00 each Total _____
 ___red ___white ___pink ___marbled

Number of ___ **Mumsettias** (white mum with red poinsettia center) at \$25.00 each Total _____

Number of ___ **Respond Now** donations at \$10.00 each Total _____
 (Respond Now donations are tax deductible.)

GRAND TOTAL \$ _____

Please remember to return this form with your check to the church office by **Monday, December 12.** If writing a check, please use a **separate check** from your weekly offering. Make check payable to First Presbyterian Church with "Flowers/Respond Now" written on the memo line. Flowers may be picked up after Christmas Eve Service and through January 8th.

For the Christmas bulletin, please specify how you would like name/s listed:

___ In Memory of _____

___ In Honor of _____

___ In Celebration of _____

___ I would like my plant delivered to a shut-in.

DECEMBER 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3
4 11:00 Worship (sanctuary & live streaming) Communion Heavenly Perks in-person & on website	5	6 10:30 Tuesday Bible Study on Zoom 7:00 Tuesday Study w/ Tim on Zoom	7 7:00 Choir rehearsal	8	9	10
11 11:00 Worship (sanctuary & live streaming) Congregational Meeting Heavenly Perks in-person 7 on website	12 Poinsettia Deadline Stewardship Team on Zoom	13 10:30 Tuesday Bible Study on Zoom 7:00 Tuesday Study w/ Tim on Zoom 7:00 Trustees in Parlor	14 7:00 Choir rehearsal	15 Mitten Tree Deadline 	16 12:30 Chicago Heights Men's Fellowship	17
18 11:00 Worship (sanctuary & live streaming) Church 165th Birthday Celebration at HP Deadline for Food Pantry	19 Church 165th Birthday 7:00 Session on Zoom	20 10:30 Tuesday Bible Study on Zoom 7:00 Tuesday Study w/ Tim on Zoom	21 7:00 Choir rehearsal	22	23 	24 Choir Rehearsal (times not known) Christmas Eve Service of Candlelight and Communion
25 Christmas Day ?????? 	26	27 10:30 Tuesday Bible Study on Zoom May not meet (?) 7:00 Tuesday Study w/ Tim on Zoom	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve 