

presbyterian profiles

WORSHIPPING, SERVING, AND LIVING WITH A FRESH
VISION OF GOD'S VIBRANT ENERGY AND GRACE FOR ALL..

A CHRISTMAS CAROL IN BETHLEHEM

On December 20, 2015, FPC members performed an intergenerational musical, *A Christmas Carol in Bethlehem*. Thank you to all who participated!



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Christmas Performance.....1
- A Message from Linda.....2
- A Message from Scott.....3
- Church Staff.....3
- A Message from Lori.....4
- Remember when.....4-5
- A Message from Teresa.....5
- Midtime Ministries.....6
- Non-violent Comm.....6
- Book Groups.....7
- Film Group.....7
- Calendar Updates.....7
- Save the Dates.....8-9
- Kitchen Fixin' Campaign...10
- Time & Talent.....10
- Per Capita.....11
- Note from the Fabers.....12
- Presbyterian Women.....12
- Valet Parking.....13
- Keep Holland Warm.....13
- Note from Anne Du Mez...14
- FPC Prays.....15
- November Birthdays.....15
- Art Alcove.....16
- Save the Date.....16



Ah,

another fresh year.

The slate is clean, and Old Man Time has exited stage right as Freshness of Innocent Newborn enters stage left. New Year's Eve services are a rare event as 2015 ends and 2016 rolls in, but there is a wisdom in marking the end of the old and beginning of the new with spiritual reflection.

I propose that the Bible text for New Year's Eve is "God is making all things new", Revelation 21:5. The spiritual grace is forgiveness and reconciliation. The liturgical words to live into are "anyone who is in Christ is a new creation; the old life has gone; a new life has begun!"

I vote for Alfred Tennyson, "Ring Out Wild Bells" as the best classical poem for the beginning of a new year. Here's an excerpt:

*Ring out false pride in place and blood, the civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right, ring in the common love of good.
Ring in the valiant souls and free, the larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the sad-ness of the land, ring in the Christ that is to be.*

And for the best traditional hymn (no longer in our Presbyterian hymnal), "How Beautiful The March of Days". Here's the second verse:

*O'er white expanses, sparkling pure, the radiant morns unfold;
the solemn splendours of the night burn brighter through the cold;
life mounts in every throbbing vein, love deepens round the hearth,
and clearer sounds the angel hymn, "Good will and peace on earth."*

And finally, a powerful and necessary prayer. As a congregation we will be leaning into the theme of "Peace, Shalom, Salaam" as we prepare for and move into the Season of Lent. This prayer, attributed to Francis of Assisi, can be prayed by anyone of any religion. Let us pray this prayer, and allow ourselves to be molded by its words.

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.
O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.*

Happy New Year!

May yours be filled with possibility, peace, and the growing sense of God's presence in your life!

- Linda

A MESSAGE FROM SCOTT

Happy New Year! Are you ready for Lent to begin?

Yes, the season of Lent is coming quickly this year. What better way to start the New Year off on a positive note than joining a Lenten Small Group where you can get to know and grow with some other great people from First Pres. These small groups will meet weekly for the 6 weeks of Lent, beginning the week of February 7-13. Groups will meet at a variety of locations, including the church, individual homes and Freedom Village.

This Lent, our focus is on the topic of PEACE. We will be exploring the personal, practical and transformative ways that we can individually and collectively become people of Peace. Peace often becomes such a large or abstract idea that we struggle how to truly engage, so we often put the pursuit of Peace back on the shelf as quickly as our New Year's resolutions are broken. So, what better way to explore, learn and share our questions about Peace than with a Lenten small group? Using a variety of scriptures, poems, articles and current events to guide our small group discussions, they are sure to be dynamic and fun.

Sign-ups for these small groups will take place **Sunday, January 24 - Sunday, February 7**. We will need a number of facilitators for these small groups, so please contact me if you are interested in learning more. Facilitator training will be provided.

Let us journey together this Lent as we become peacemakers. - Scott

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. (Matthew 5:9)



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WORSHIP CENTERS



Do you ever wonder what is happening with our kids on a Sunday morning during the Midtime Ministry hour?

Come seek us out, worship with our children in one of our three Worship Centers. We are in need of adding Celebrants (teachers) and Assistants to our current Worship Centers, and would love to share a morning with you and answer any questions you may have.

Looking ahead to Fall 2016; I have a vision of opening another Worship Center for our 3 and 4 year olds. Curriculum/stories, space, furnishings and children are all set. We just need loving folks who would like to share the love of Christ the Good Shepherd, with our little ones. We offer training, support and Celebrant dinners hosted by Judy & Jack Faber! Please contact me if this is something that warms your heart and you might be interested in being involved with.

May the Peace of the Christ Child's birth be present in your heart.

Sharing our gifts and love with others,

- Lori Klinesteker, Children's Ministry

REMEMBER WHEN...

The first Sunday in Advent the congregation joined together with the children during the Midtime Ministry hour. M&M Café was served in the Fellowship Hall along with crafts for kids. Heartland Home residents were adopted. We decorated over 115 placemats for the residents to enjoy at their party. It was wonderful to see our Church Family sharing this time together!





YOUTH@FIRST

A MESSAGE FROM TERESA

I was standing in the church parking lot bundled up in three layers watching the adult chaperones scratch their heads over how they were going to fit all of our stuff into the vans for our annual youth winter retreat. It was very cold outside, but I didn't care. The energy and the buzz I was feeling inside and from my friends was enough to keep us patiently waiting. We looked forward to winter retreat all year, and we were just hours away from fun on the tubing hill, meaningful worship and long chats over hot cocoa in the lodge.

Taking a step back to relax, reflect and be present with one another is something we don't get to do nearly as often as we should, and I am excited for the chance to do so with the youth as we attend our own winter retreats!

Each youth group will have a separate weekend away at Cran-Hill Ranch for fun, fellowship, worship and small group discussion. Ask anyone who has gone; **winter youth retreats are unlike any other youth event we will do this year**, so don't miss your chance to be a part of this exciting opportunity!

The senior high retreat will be **January 22-24**, and the junior high retreat will be **February 12-14**. Registration is now live! Please be in touch to save your spot for what is sure to be an experience you are not going to want to miss.

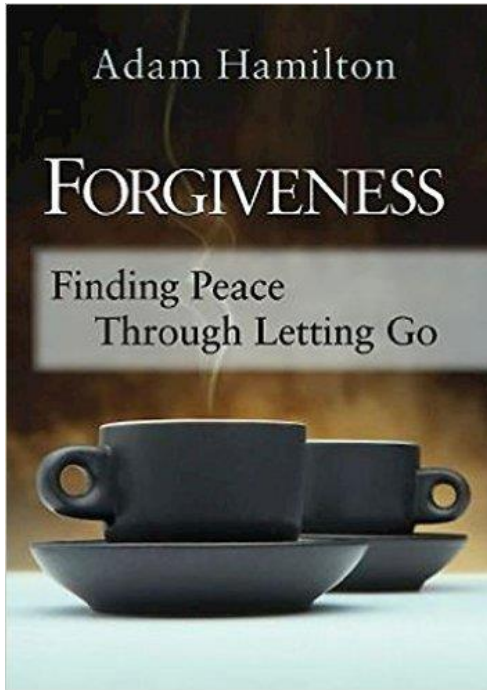
YOUTH@FIRST JANUARY DATES TO REMEMBER:

- January 3: No youth gatherings- enjoy your last day of break!
- January 10: Senior high, 6:00-7:30p
- January 17: Junior high, 6:00-7:30p
- January 22-24: Senior high winter retreat (no evening youth gathering)
- January 31: Junior high, 6:00-7:30p



MIDTIME MINISTRIES

This Winter-Spring, FPC is placing an emphasis on Peace; in our sermon topics, Lenten Small groups, along with a few other special gatherings and activities. Learning to forgive and be forgiven is one of the most essential parts in becoming a Person of Peace. Admitting our failures, seeking to repair and restore relationships, and accepting forgiveness are necessary practices to live as healthy and whole people.



In his book *Forgiveness: Finding Peace Through Letting Go*, bestselling author Adam Hamilton explores forgiveness in our relationships with God, with our spouses or romantic interests, with our parents and siblings, and with others in our lives. If you desire to experience the freedom that comes through forgiveness, regardless if you are the one that has been hurt or the one that caused the hurt, this study is for you.

This 4-session group study will meet Sunday **January 17, 24, 31 & February 7** from 10a-10:50a in the Michigan Room. We will watch a 10-12 minute video each week in which Adam Hamilton, using stories and Scripture, presents and expands upon key points from the book. We will spend the remaining time discussing the topic. It is recommended that you purchase the book (we will have a limited number to sell) though the study is designed so that all can fully participate either way. Our facilitators for this study are Bill & Janet Haines. No need to pre-register; just show up on January 17.

NON-VIOLENT COMMUNICATION

As part of our ongoing program of promoting Peace at FPC, the Watchers is presenting a program on Non-Violent Communication on **Sunday, January 10th at 10a**. It will be presented by Theresa F. Latini, Associate Dean of Diversity and Cultural Competency and Professor of Practical Theology and Pastoral Care at Western Theological Seminary. Professor Latini is a Graduate of Princeton Seminary and an ordained Presbyterian Pastor. Among other publications, she is the author of *The Church and the Crisis of Community*. In a variety of settings, Theresa has sought to cultivate communities of compassion and care in response to God's ongoing ministry of listening, healing and reconciliation. **Given the divisive times in which we live and the ease with which we can be violent in our communication, this is a class that you do not want to miss.** We hope you will join us for this class and, more importantly, continue our journey together toward a more peaceful and respectful way of life. While you may think that, in times such as these, you cannot make a difference, with love and caring you can, and we as a church can as well. Please sign up in the M&M Café.



BOOK GROUPS

SPIRIT READERS

Spirit Readers meets the second Tuesday of each month at 1:00p in the M & M Café. All are welcome!

- JANUARY:** *Amazing Grace*
by Kathleen Norris
- FEBRUARY:** *Seasons of Your Heart*
by Macrina Wiederkehr

Contact: Kathy Heimstra at KMHiemstra@msn.com.

WOMEN'S BOOK GROUP

The Women's Book Group meets the second Sunday of each month at 2:00p in the M & M Café.

- JANUARY:** *Dancing With the Enemy*
by Paul Glaser
- FEBRUARY:** *The Rosie Project*
by Graeme C. Simsion

Contact: Bev Plagenhoef at rbplagen@live.com or 335-3942.

MEN'S BOOK GROUP

The Men's Book Group meets the first Monday of each month at 7:00p in the M & M Café.

- JANUARY:** *The Quartet: Orchestrating the Second American Revolution, 1783-1789*
by Joseph Ellis
- FEBRUARY:** *Dead Wake: The Last Crossing of the Lusitania* by Eric Larsen

Contact: Larry Lynn at oldrun09@gmail.com or 399-0799 .



FILM GROUP

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Mark your calendars for the new season of the Friday Night Film Series hosted by Jack Hyde. Food For Thought meets on the second Friday evening of each month at 7:00p in the Michigan Room.

Join us on January 8 for a showing of *The Cider House Rules* (1999; 125 min.) - An orphanage and the people therein. (Tobey Maguire, Michael Caine)



CALENDAR UPDATES

MEN'S GROUP - DATE CHANGE

The Men's Group will resume their every other Friday morning meetings with the next one being **January 8 at 7:30a**. Peace in violent times will be the discussion following a short DVD viewing on the subject..

Please contact Don Williams at williams@hope.edu if you have any questions.

PRESCHOOL EARLY ENROLLMENT

JANUARY 25-29



**First Presbyterian
Preschool**

Classes fill fast! Take advantage of your closed enrollment opportunity. Learn more about our play-based preschool program for 3 and 4 year olds at www.fppreschool.org. Our curriculum enables each child to independently and cooperatively develop the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical components needed for Kindergarten Readiness. Ask about our new 4's Enrichment Program!

Contact Lise Zinck for enrollment details (616-322-9339 or fppreschoolholland@gmail.com).

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

January 24

Save the Date! The Annual Report will be presented at the annual congregational meeting. The report will be available no later than January 16.

MARDI GRAS & FAT TUESDAY POTLUCK

February 9 at 6p

Watch upcoming bulletins and e-blasts for more information about this fun celebration!

ANNUAL WOMEN'S RETREAT

Friday evening February 26 - Saturday afternoon February 27



WHERE: Haworth Center & Western Theological Seminary

COST: \$125. Scholarships available.

THEME: *We Go Together*. The retreat will provide a variety of experiences through large group presentations by the leader, small groups, silence and personal reflection.

Brochures with RSVP information are available at the "Sign Up" bulletin board near the South main doors. *Questions?* Please contact Bonnie Cowie at dbcowie@sbcglobal.net.

SAVE THE DATE



First Presbyterian Church and Preschool are partnering to provide the following parenting class.

- TITLE:** The Nurtured Heart Approach
PRESENTER: William J. Rowell, Ph.D., NHA certified Trainer
DATES/TIME: 5 consecutive Monday evenings, 6-8pm
starting February 22, concluding March 21.
LOCATION: First Presbyterian Church

The Nurtured Heart Approach® is a relationship-focused methodology for helping children (and adults) build their Inner Wealth® and use their intensity in successful ways. It has become a powerful way of awakening the inherent greatness in all children while facilitating parenting and classroom success.

Registration information coming soon!

KITCHEN FIXIN'

campaign

After a long hiatus of inactivity, the kitchen is coming back. The re-build plans have been completed and work will begin shortly. Our goal is to have the refurbished kitchen ready for the Easter Breakfast in the Spring. A significant reason for the long hiatus has been sorting out the various and sometimes conflicting requirements and regulations of the multiple regulatory entities. Thanks to the diligence of Elder Jon Kreple, everything has been sorted out, remodel plans developed, bids received and authorized.

All of this comes at a price. The total cost is estimated at between \$100,000 and \$125,000. Some funding will come from the Capital Campaign. For the remainder we are initiating the *Kitchen Fixin'* campaign. If you've been "itchin" about the absence of a kitchen (who hasn't?) this is your opportunity to make a contribution large or small to the *Kitchen Fixin'* campaign.

We are pleased to announce that the campaign has already generated an anonymous seed gift of \$25,000! **Special campaign envelopes are available in the pews or you can drop off or mail your check to the church office.** Let's get this kitchen going!

TIME AND TALENT PLEDGES



Thank you to everyone that completed *Time and Talent* pledge cards for 2016, and posted them on the *Faith: It's a Trip* pillar or turned them in to the church office. We received pledges from 121 of our members and you committed to fulfilling 362 needs. We are grateful for your commitment to FPC! ***Together there is no limit to what we can do to further God's kingdom here on earth as the hands and feet of Christ!***

Please note: There are some areas that we did not receive any pledges for so in mid-January we will provide everyone with a list of these opportunities and give you another chance to make a pledge for one of these opportunities.

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he earliest mention of something like a per capita apportionment dates back to the 1700s. In the mid 1800s, a “plan of mileage” was adopted by the General Assembly to defray the expenses of commissioners attending General Assembly meetings so that everyone could be present to participate regardless of distance or financial resources. Over time, per capita has been used to fund “ecclesiastical and administrative” functions that are shared by the whole church. In 1995, the following definition was developed:

Per capita is an opportunity for all communicant members of the Presbyterian church through the mid councils to participate equally, responsibly, and interdependently by sharing the cost of coordination and evaluation of mission; and of performing ecclesiastical, legislative, and judicial functions that identify a Reformed Church, while at the same time strengthening the sense of community among all Presbyterians (GA Minutes, Part I, 1995).

In essence, per capita is a set amount of money (apportionment) per member that congregations pay to the larger Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Every Presbyterian shares in the benefit of the PC(USA)’s system of government, so every Presbyterian is asked to share the expenses associated with coordinating and performing the functions of that system.

Why per capita? Per capita exists as a way for all Presbyterians to share costs that belong to the whole church, to give meaning to the interdependent nature Presbyterian polity. Per capita is part of the glue that holds Presbyterians together. It exists to allow the whole church to share equitably in those things that make us Presbyterian: our theological identity, our connectedness, our system of mid councils that allow elders and ministers together to discern the mind of Christ, our ecumenical connections that make us part of the church universal, our core structures that keep us together as a church, our call to work for full participation in decision making

Per capita allows us to work with other churches to further the mission of Jesus Christ around the world.

FPC per capita apportionment for 2016 is \$25.37. Your apportionment envelope is the first envelope in your offering envelope box. Please contact office@fpcholland.org or 616-392-9002 if you have any questions or have misplaced your envelope. Thank you!



Dear Church family,

In June when my simple shoulder surgery became something much bigger than we anticipated and recovery took all summer, you surrounded us with your love and support. Then in November when Jack had his serious scary brain surgery; there you all were *holding* us again. You brought meals, sent cards and emails, made phone calls, responded on Facebook and prayed. You showed up in our lives and we experienced the presence of God. We both want to thank all of you from the bottoms of our hearts. You made a huge difference!

- Judy & Jack Faber

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN (PW)

All women are cordially invited to participate in Presbyterian Women Circles and Events!



DATES TO REMEMBER

January 6	2:00p	Study Leaders meet with Rev. Linda
January 7	10:00a	PW Coordinating Team
January 13	9:30a	Miriam Circle
January 14	1:30p	Hannah Circle

BIBLE STUDY: *Come to the Waters* by Judy Record Fletcher with *Suggestions for Leaders* by Larissa Kwong Abazia. Scripture for Lesson Five is Matthew 14:22-33.

LESSON FOCUS: The disciples encountered stormy times in their faith and so do we. What does it mean to be people of faith? How does our faith sustain us?

OPPORTUNITIES TO SHOW OUR GRATITUDE:

Special Gifts for those fleeing domestic violence:

The clothing drive is being extended through January for women and children fleeing domestic violence in their homes. They often must leave quickly with very few belongings. Please remember to buy underwear for women and children. It is important to leave the price tags on the garments to show that the garments are new. Please place the garments in the basket on the PW shelf in the M&M Cafe. They will be taken to The Center for Women In Transition.

Birthday Offering: Those who have a birthday this month will find the Birthday Offering Envelopes on the PW shelf in the M&M Cafe. Money given in celebration of the blessings in life enables donations to national and world missions. Please place these donations in the offering plates during worship.

Reminder: We are not collecting Spartan Brand Products barcodes because they have discontinued that program.



Winter weather is coming! The FPC deacons will be offering a Valet Parking Service for our Sunday Services. Those who might wish to use this service should contact Steve Gardiner at steve.gardiner44@gmail.com for more information.

HOW WILL IT WORK?

Those interested will pull their car up to the parking lot church entrance on the North side of the building. A valet driver will assist you inside the church, then park your car and return the car keys to you with a slip of paper telling you where your car was parked. After the service, you will give your keys and slip of paper to one of the valet drivers, and your car will be returned to you near the rear entrance. The valet will assist you back to your car.

HELP KEEP HOLLAND WARM

There are fellow members of our Holland community who need help to keep warm this winter. During the month of January, Outreach will place collection bins in the M & M Café for blanket donations. Please help fill the bins. Blankets will be distributed with the cooperation of Community Action House.

On Friday, December 4, ten members of FPC visited and observed the prayer time at the Masjid At-Tawheed Islamic Center in Grand Rapids. We were welcomed to the Center and remained through the 1:30PM prayer time held every Friday at the Mosque. Following the congregation's prayers, Pastor Linda was introduced and invited to speak. It was a moving experience to observe the reaction of the members of Masjid At-Tawheed as they heard Linda's words. She has asked me to share with you my reflections included in an email I sent to her the morning after our visit.

- Anne Du Mez



ood Morning, Linda,

December 5, 2015

Thank you for speaking to the congregation of Masjid At-Tawheed on behalf of the community of First Presbyterian Church.

The words you shared spoke of hope for understanding and the unity of our faiths in seeking peace. You reminded all of us that God is with us always.

Our visit was timely in light of the Paris attacks and now the equally horrible event in California. We listened intently to Imam Morsy's words about **justice**, followed by your words of **hope**. It may not have been planned that way but it was very effective.

I want to share with you our observation as you were introduced and began to speak. Sitting with the women of Masjid At-Tawheed we were able to watch their reaction as you were introduced. Many were preparing to leave; they stopped, aligned with their sisters and listened to your words. Others who were already out of the prayer room returned in order to hear your comments. When you finished the women made their way to where we were sitting, hands outstretched and thanked us for coming to their mosque. It was a beautiful experience. The sincerity in their eyes and their handshakes were real. Kris and I left the mosque through the front entrance where many of the men had remained, talking among themselves. Two men approached, thanking us for visiting and for remaining thru their prayers. Your assuring words of hope spoke volumes, Linda.

And a timely FYI for you:

Last night on the 11:00 PM news ... TV 8 aired a news segment from Masjid At-Tawheed. Following the announcement out of California confirming the gun people were in fact aligned with ISIS and the killings were determined to be a terrorist attack, TV 8 was looking for a reaction from the Grand Rapids Muslim community. They reached out to the Imam Morsy and with a film crew visited the Islamic Center last evening, intending a film-at-11 type news story. The Imam refuted the terrorist acts, referencing his comments on the teachings of the Quran. However, an interview with a member of the congregation indicted he was feeling negative reactions from some people in the community. He did not say he was fearful but conscious of the impact terrorist attacks are having on people of the Islamic faith. I could not help but think *if only TV 8 could know efforts at understanding and peace had occurred just a few hours earlier and report that message, too*. Thank you.

Anne Du Mez



ART ALCOVE

A display of Prayer Shawls will be displayed in the Art Alcove in mid-January. We hope to also include stories - when and why you were given a shawl, and who gave/made you a shawl. We would also love to hear stories from those who have participated in the knitting of prayer shawls and why this ministry is important to you.

If you are willing to share your story, please contact Anne Du Mez at taadumez@charter.net or Chris Urbaniak at cmurbaniak@comcast.com. Thank you!

SAVE THE DATE

Pastor Linda says,
"This January,
EMBRACE Epiphany!"

JANUARY 6
EPIPHANY

JANUARY 10
NON-VIOLENT COMMUNICATION

JANUARY 22-24
SENIOR HIGH RETREAT

JANUARY 24
CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

JANUARY 24
LENT SMALL GRP SIGNUP