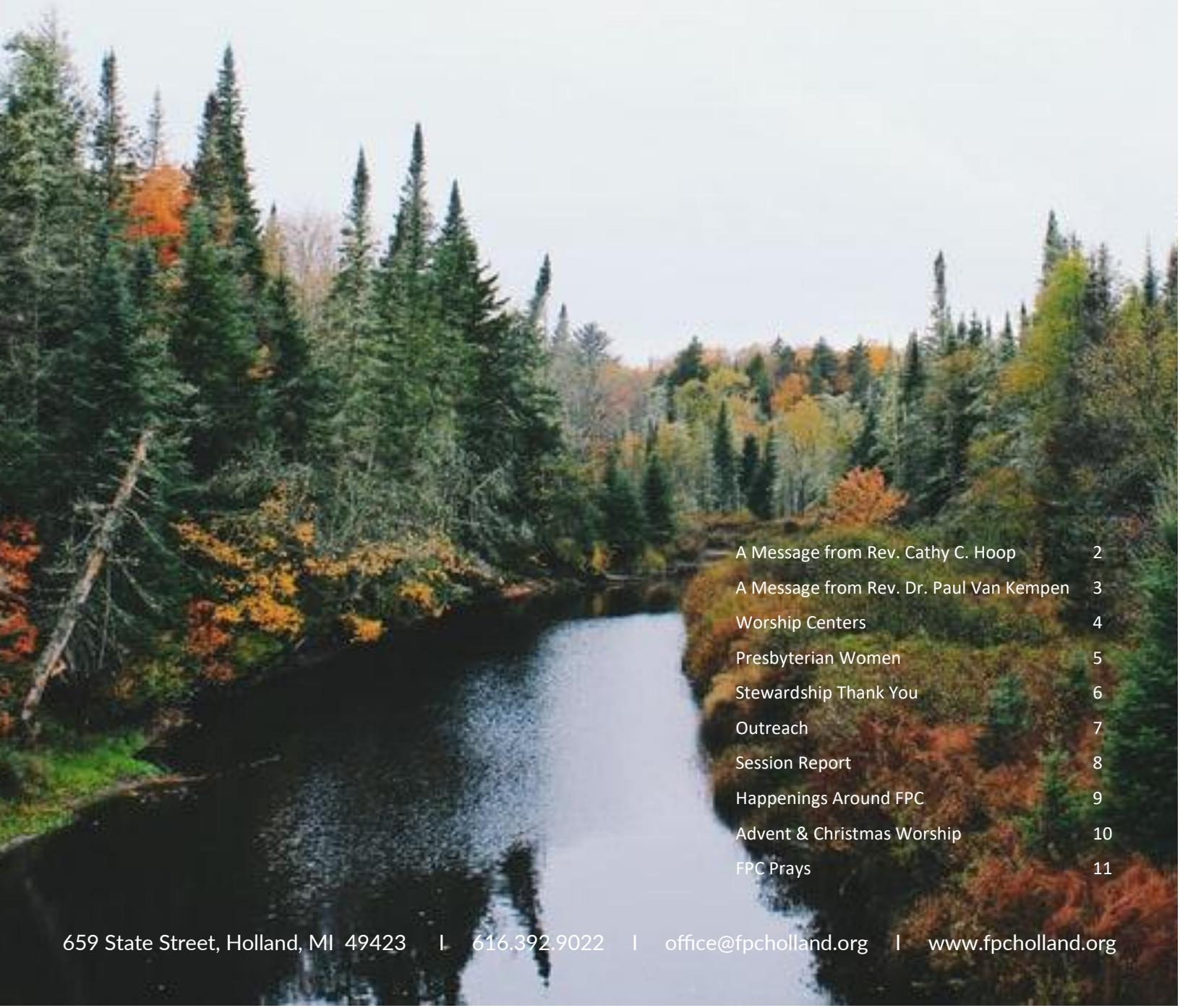


# presbyterian *profiles*

A PUBLICATION OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH / NOVEMBER 2025



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**Rev. Cathy Caldwell-Hoop**

**Senior Pastor**

## Melding of the Seasons

I have a very short commute between church and home, but I can take a variety of routes, and I love to explore the neighborhoods. This time of year is such a funny melding of the seasons. Some houses still have their carved (but rotting) pumpkins on the porch or the ghosts hanging from the trees, while others have transitioned to gourds and corn stalks, and fall wreaths on the doors. Others, (like one of my neighbors) are full out Christmas! The lights are up (and on!), the tree is sparkling through the windows, and the evergreen wreath is on the door.

These various choices – are they a reflection of the residents' favorite holiday?

A throwback to how the previous generation said it should be done? "No Christmas decorations until after Thanksgiving!"

Is the tree up early because the inhabitants will be away soon and won't have time to enjoy it at Christmas?

Is Thanksgiving skipped because of our late realizations that its origins are embedded in racism and violence towards indigenous peoples?

Or is a home that has known religious trauma, and so the idea of a baby born to a virgin, coming to undo all the world's injustices is just a step too far. Santa, sure, but a baby redeemer?

So many possibilities behind the lights and wreaths and pumpkins. So many stories to be shared. A reflection of our varied experiences, the different paths we have known, the choices we have made. As a new church year begins on November 30th, the first Sunday of Advent, could we all seek to listen more deeply to one another (our neighbors, our colleagues, the clerk at the register?) To listen to one another's stories so that we might have deeper understanding of each one's struggles, sorrows and joys? In a deeply divided world, let us do whatever we can to find commonality, to strengthen our commitment to compassion, for they will know we are Christ followers by our love.

Blessings,

Cathy



Rev. Dr. Paul Van Kempen

Associate Pastor  
and Director of Music

## Hymn Sing Service

This past month we had our first (at least since I have been here) Hymn Sing Service. It was a lot of fun, but harder to plan than you would think! 69 hymns were suggested—many of them more than once—and narrowing them down was no small task, but it was a lot of fun!

As I looked through the list, a few things stood out:

### **Lots of old favorites.**

Classics like Great Is Thy Faithfulness, Amazing Grace, For the Beauty of the Earth, and Morning Has Broken continue to be dearly loved. These songs are part of the soundtrack of our faith, and it shows.

### **Some newer selections, too.**

It was great to see hymns from the last few decades—pieces like *Christ, Be Our Light, Let Us Build a House, and Spirit, Open My Heart*. (“Newer” meaning the mid-1990s—practically yesterday in church music time!)

### **Several hymns I didn’t know that I got to look up!**

I like to think that I know most hymns, but there were some surprises on the list. I love that! It reminds me that our congregation’s musical life is wider and richer than any one person’s experience.

### **Keep suggesting songs.**

We can’t sing them all, but I genuinely enjoy hearing the hymns that matter to you. Your suggestions help shape worship in meaningful ways.

### **A beautiful diversity in our music.**

I often tell people that when you come into worship, I hope you get to sing a song you love and that your neighbor gets to sing a song they love (even if it isn’t your personal favorite). Our hymnody holds all of us, together. Thank you for such a wide, joyful, heartfelt set of suggestions. I love singing with all of you!





Lori Klinesteker

Children's  
Ministry Leader

## Worship Centers: Keeping In Touch

### **Children Anticipating the Birth of Christ Through Advent**

Advent is a season of waiting—a holy time when we quiet our hearts and prepare for the coming of Jesus, the Christ Child. For children, this season invites wonder, imagination, and joyful expectations. Their excitement reminds the entire congregation what it means to look forward with hope.

This year, our children are journeying through Advent by learning the stories and promises that lead to Christ's birth. Each week, they light a new candle, listen to Scripture, and talk about how God's love breaks into the world in unexpected ways. Their questions, enthusiasm, and awe help all of us rediscover the miracle of Emmanuel—God with us.

### **An Advent Event of Love and Service**

One of the highlights during the Advent Gathering on November 23, was the many handmade crafts that were made to deliver to our shut-ins. The crafts are more than decorations—they are reminders that every member of our church family is cherished and remembered. Through this act of kindness, our children learn that preparing for Christ isn't only about waiting; it's also about sharing love, compassion, and Christ-like service.

As the crafts are delivered by our Deacons, we pray that each one carries with it the warmth of our congregation and the light of Christ's presence.

### **Walking Together Toward Christmas**

May this Advent season deepen our sense of hope as we follow the children's lead—looking forward with joy, serving with love, and preparing our hearts to welcome Jesus once again. Let us journey together toward the manger, celebrating the gift of God's Son who brings peace to the world.

Waiting with you for the promise of Christ's Light,  
Lori Klinesteker  
Children's Ministry





## Presbyterian Women

The Main Idea: God offers grace and love, not because of what we do, but because of who we are – beloved children of God. As a (much) younger woman, a busy mother of two, settled with my little family in Wayne Township, NJ, we joined Preakness Reformed Church. It was organized in 1798 and had gravestones to prove it. I joined a Bible study of Paul. I recall the room, the moment. It hit me like a thunderbolt. **God loves us**

**unconditionally – not for our good works – just because we are God's children.** I won't

apologize for not finding the Presbyterians there in NJ where we wanted to be churched. They still had folding chairs and not much for our children. So, I was helping with the nursery, chairing the women's group annual fundraiser, shepherding the youth group to the Jersey shore. This is the good works thing I was taught growing up, but I had missed the point. I was going to "get to heaven" in this way. The lightning hit me in that room and it was an undoing about understanding my faith. Yes, I continue being kind, helpful, engaged, vocal; but life is more meaningful when we can sing Melvina Reynolds song "Love is Something if you Give It Away". Kind of like Jesus preached about who is our neighbor.



"The Prodigal Child, the Eldest Child, and the Devoted Parent."

Artwork for Lesson 4 is by Deborah Nell

Look it up! We might sing together at our December 10 Circle meeting.

Continuing on December 10 – please check the sign-up area in the narthex and join us for our **Holiday Soup Luncheon** at Noon in the narthex. \$5 will let you sample 3 soup choices, breads, and dessert. We will welcome Jean Flower, who painted the icon art displayed this fall in our narthex, as our speaker. It's always fun to be together over a simple meal.

Don't forget to pick up some new underwear for women and children that we gather for RESILIENCE. There is a basket for new, unwrapped socks and undies right by the elevator!

Janet Magennis,  
PW Communications

**Lesson 4 on December 10 @ 9:30 am in the Michigan Room.**

**GET THE LATEST NEWS from PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN**

We are adding more content on our Facebook page! // Facebook: **FPCHollandPW**

Online: [PresbyterianWomen.org](http://PresbyterianWomen.org)

## <> Deacon's Caring Corner <>

There are many ways to get involved serving our congregation through the Deacon care teams, using your gifts to care for each other and strengthen our community. Current ministries coordinated by the deacons include:

**Visitation:** homebound members and those living in nursing homes can be assigned to a visitor from the congregation who will visit about once a month. These visits are a delightful way to connect with our friends who can no longer make it to church regularly. We also have visitors who sign up to visit folks during hospitalizations or grieving to provide extra support.

**Cards:** The card team receives regular emails when there are special needs in our congregation so that we can express support, care, joy, and celebration.

**Meals:** The Nourishers team receives invitations to provide meals for families after surgeries, hospitalizations, births, etc.

**Transportation:** The Transporters team provides rides to medical appointments for folks who are unable to drive.

**Handy Workers:** The handy worker team provides light home repairs or other practical needs around the home.

**Care Closet:** Deacons maintain a list of durable medical equipment available to borrow from members of our congregation and connect folks with items as needed.



**Home Communion:** Any member who has been previously ordained as an elder or deacon can be part of our home communion program. We bring communion to homebound folks as an extension of our celebration of the Lord's Supper in worship on the first Sunday of the month. Teams of at least 2 elders or deacons serve communion to those who request.

If you would like to learn more about how to be involved in any of these ministries, contact [deacons@fpcholland.org](mailto:deacons@fpcholland.org) or call the church office.



**Thank you** to all who lifted their voices and pledges in our, *Chorus of Generosity* stewardship campaign. It was a wonderful expression of our gratitude for all the gifts we have received and an affirmation of the mission of our church. Your pledges will be recorded and tallied in the next few weeks and will allow the finance committee to prepare our budget for next year. Thank you. If you were not able to present your pledge before now, please drop it off at the church office.

Thank you - Stewardship Committee

## <> Outreach <>



**Mission:** Nestlings Diaper Bank nurtures the health of babies by partnering with family support organizations to bridge the gap in diaper need. Diaper need is defined as a lack of sufficient diapers to keep a child clean, dry, and healthy.

>**Prevalence:** Over 1 in 2 families struggle with diaper need.

>**Assistance Gap:** There are currently no government programs that provide assistance for diapers.

>**Consequences:** Families are forced to stretch diaper use, leading to increased health and physical abuse risks and negative effects on brain development in children under the age of three.

**Impact and Reach:** Since its founding in 2011, Nestlings has distributed over 3,000,000 diapers locally.

> **They provide** a monthly average of over 35,000 free diapers and baby wipes.

> **These supplies** are distributed to over 37 social service agencies in the community that work with families in need.

**How to Help Nestlings** runs diaper drives and fundraisers year-round and accepts donations of both supplies and money:

> **Diaper Donations:** They accept all diaper donations, including open packages. The most needed sizes are 4, 5, and 6, as well as baby wipes.

> **Monetary Donations:** These are appreciated because the bank can purchase diapers at less than retail cost. **Monetary donations** can be made directly on their website:

[www.nestlings.org](http://www.nestlings.org)



**Habitat for Humanity** // Future Habitat work days are scheduled for December 11 and January 15. Questions can be directed to Bill Haines, [wehaines@icloud.com](mailto:wehaines@icloud.com).

### Calendar of Events

Mark Your Calendars for these upcoming events (and there will be more!)

**January:** 21 – Young Families Sledding  
25 – All Church Talent Show (performance and created items)

**February:** (Date TBD) Young Families Central Wesleyan playground OR Ice skating  
14 – Holland Community Theatre *presents* Mom's Gift  
28 – Women's Retreat led by Barb Schreur

**March:** 14 – Dinners for 7

**April:** 11 – Holland Community Theatre *presents* Suite Surrender

## <> Connect Together <>

**Men's Book Group** // Join us December 8 (second Monday of each month) at 2:30pm at FPC. We will be discussing the book, *The Last Secret Agent* by Pippa LaTour. Contact Don Cowie with questions.

**Grief Support** // Once a month, a small group gathers for grief support...we listen, we share, we pray. The group is open to all who need a safe space as they journey with grief. We meet the fourth Wednesday of the month at 2pm in the Superior Room. Our next meeting will be held December 17 (a week earlier due to Christmas Eve). Contact Cathy with any questions. All are welcome.

**Men's Discussion Group** // We meet at FPC every other Friday morning at 7:30am in the M&M Cafe. Our next meeting is planned for December 12. Join us! Contact Ross Hamlin 616-399-0509 or Bob Gansen 269-753-7024 if you have any questions.

**Women's Book Club** // The Women's Book Club meets the second Sunday of each month at church at 1pm in the M&M Cafe. Our next meeting will be December 14 discussing the book, *The Frozen River* by Ariel Lawhon. Contact Bev Plagenhoef at [rbplagen@live.com](mailto:rbplagen@live.com) if you have questions.

**Common Threads Group** // We hope that "Common Threads" reflects the fact that all are welcome. Many of us are crocheting or knitting prayer shawls, hats, scarves, and chemo socks. Feel free to come and work on other needlework or crafts or just come for the fellowship! We meet the third Monday of each month from 1-3pm in the Ontario room. Come and go as you are able. We hope you'll join us! Our next meeting is December 15.

## <> Session Report <>

The Session of FPC held its regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, November 18th at 7:00 pm.

Elders present: Carleen Bauer, Cassie Kregger, Jen Laux Ludwig, Tom Salley, Tim Staal, Lauren Stouffer, Chris Urbanik. Elders excused: Bill Evenson, Jon Kreple, Bruce Rosensteel. Staff: Cathy Hoop, Paul Van Kempen, Lori Klinesteker. Guest: Luke Rund-Scott (youth elder nominee)

After a time of sharing of joys and concerns, the meeting was opened in prayer by Cathy and Paul.

Councils gave updates on their work, including the Finance Council's work on the budget, which will be presented next month. (As Bob Knittel completes his role as treasurer, he is continuing to transition Rob Colten to this position.) The church's finances are healthy and stable, and the hope is to complete the capital campaign in the coming year.

Outreach Council provided an update on the request from FUMC to serve as overflow warming center space for a family during the winter months. FUMC operates a warming center on nights when the temp

(with windchill) is 10 or below. Very rarely, they have a family with children who have not been able to secure a space in a shelter, and FUMC needs a place where they can be housed separately from the guests who come to their church. A dozen people from FPC attended a training at FUMC to learn more about how their warming center is run, to learn from mental health professionals about the various mental health issues that may be encountered when volunteering (Anxiety, PTSD, etc.) and to receive practical advice. Cathy and Tim Staal will continue to meet with representatives from FUMC regarding this initiative.

The Nominating Committee brought forward a recommendation to hold a congregational meeting on December 7th, at which time they will bring forward the nominees for elder, deacon, and the nominating committee.

The meeting was adjourned with prayer.

The next meeting will take place on December 16th.

*Please note this is a summary of the meeting. Complete minutes are available upon request. FPC's Session meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00pm.*

# <> Happenings Around FPC <>

**Congregational Meeting** // Session is calling for a congregational meeting for the purpose of electing Elders, Deacons and a Youth Elder. The meeting will take place Sunday, December 7 immediately following worship.

**Advent Study** // Sunday, November 30 we started our discussion of, *Calling All Angels* by Erin Wathen at 11:15 in the Michigan Room. There are still a few copies of the book available at the church or it is available as an e-book.

**Nativity Display and Lanterns** // The Worship and the Arts Council would love to display your Nativity scenes again in the M&M Cafe during our season of Advent. If you would like to contribute your Nativity scene, please drop them off in the office. Make sure your box is clearly labeled so we can return them to you after Epiphany.

Do you have a “decorative” lantern you could loan to the church for Advent? As we welcome the light of Christ, we hope to add a variety of lanterns to our worship space. Thank you for your contributions!

**First Presbyterian Preschool – Annual Car Wash** // The Preschool is once again partnering with Quality Car Wash to raise funds for scholarships. You can purchase individual car wash passes or monthly subscription passes—perfect practical gifts and excellent stocking stuffers this holiday season! If you'd like to support the Preschool, please see Bev Plagenhoef to make your purchase. The fundraiser runs through Sunday, December 7.

**Volunteers Needed** // We are in need of volunteers for the Christmas Eve service(s) to make sure everything runs smoothly. Would you consider volunteering for one of the following? Usher, Bus driver and helper, Tech Team, Nursery, 5pm Communion Servers. If you are interested, please let Lori Lepard know at [office@fpcholland.org](mailto:office@fpcholland.org) or 616-392-9022.

**Confirmation Class Meals** // Our Confirmation class continues to meet over the next few months on Sunday afternoon from 12-1:30pm. We have three confirmands and their mentors (a group of seven, including Pastor Paul). We're inviting members of the congregation to provide a meal for the group — either by bringing something from home or picking up takeout. It's a simple but meaningful way to support our youth and their mentors as they grow in faith together. If you'd like to provide a meal, please sign up at the Outreach Desk.

**Charity Sew-In Opportunity** // Tuesday, January 20th, 10 am – 3 pm at FPC. Big Red Quilters' Guild (BRQG) of Holland is grateful to First Presbyterian Church for the opportunity to have some storage and meeting space for their Outreach Committee. The BRQG Outreach Committee and BRQG members make quilts to donate to Lakeshore Pregnancy, Hope Packages, Resilience and sometimes others as need arises. The guild members donated 110 quilts January – July of 2025! The BRQG Outreach Committee would like to invite First Presbyterian members who like to sew to their Sew-In event on Tuesday, January 20, from 10-3 downstairs in the fellowship hall. Or just stop in to say, hi and see what it's all about! There will be fabric and kits available to sew, you can make a few blocks or work on a whole quilt. Bring your own machine and sewing basics if you want to sew. There will also be opportunity to help by ironing blocks, and cutting fabrics for kits. We will have irons and ironing boards available but if you want to cut, you will need to bring your cutting mat and rotary cutter. If you have any questions, contact Janet Haines, [janethaines24@gmail.com](mailto:janethaines24@gmail.com).

*Continued on page 10*

## ◇ Happenings Around FPC *continued* ◇

**FPC Talent / Untalent Show** // FPC will be hosting a Talent/ Untalent Show on Jan 25 at 3pm. You can perform by yourself, by couples, or groups doing skits, musical instruments, singing, etc.

Presentations need to be five minutes or less. For those that are not stage performers, there will be an opportunity to display your talents, such as quilting, painting, woodworking, etc. Watch for more information to come along with sign-up sheets. Please email Cindy Helder with your questions, cindyloubear6@gmail.com 616-848-7204

**Save the Date** // The Annual Women's Retreat will be held on Saturday, February 28 from 9:00 am until 4:00 pm at First Presbyterian Church, Holland. Our speaker will be Rev. Barb Schreur.

We would love to have you join us! Invite a friend to share the day with you!

Brochure including a registration form will be available in January. Online registration will also be available on the FPC website.

Stay tuned for more information.



### Adult Education Hour Advent Study

**Sundays at 11:15am** in the Michigan room.

Sunday, November 30 Sunday, we began our discussion of, *Calling All Angels* by Erin Wathen at 11:15 in the Michigan Room. There are still a few copies of the book available at the church or it is available as an e-book. Join us if you haven't already.

### Advent Devotional, **What Do You Fear?**

Look for an Advent devotional resource, which was sent out via email on Saturday, November 29. May this resource be a blessing to our Advent preparations.

### Service of Longest Night // **Wednesday, December 17 at 5:00pm**

The Christmas season brings joy and sorrow, hope and stress.

Please join us for this time of worship as we acknowledge the realities of our lives.

Whether you are missing a loved one or just overwhelmed by the Christmas rush, we invite you to be with us for a time of honesty and hope.

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### Christmas Service Times // **Wednesday, December 24**

*Join us in celebrating the birth of the Christ Child!*

Family Christmas Eve Service with Communion at 3pm

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service with Communion at 5pm



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*Worshipping, serving, and living with a fresh  
vision of God's vibrant energy and grace for all.*