

# First Things First

December 2017/ January 2018

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## Immanuel

עִמָּנוּאֵל

We can see it: Mary's boy-child Jesus, wrapped in swaddling cloth and lying in a manger. It's the picture we reconstruct each Christmas as we sing dear and beautiful hymns like "O' Little Town of Bethlehem" and "Silent Night". And every Christmas we say again that a manger really wasn't a proper place for the one whom we hail as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He should have slept in a feather bed, right? Well, maybe not. Maybe the manger is the most right, the most fitting bed for the one promised to be "Immanuel (which means 'God is with us')". [Isaiah 7:14]

When we think of God being with us, we probably like to think of God walking with us in a garden, when the dew is fresh on the roses, or maybe celebrating a baptism or preaching from our pulpit. (That would be some Pulpit Supply!) And Jesus **is** God-with-us in all those ways. But our God is with us in so many more ways. Jesus is God-with-us as we pray for peace and self-control, God-with-us when we lose a job, God-with-us when we can't beat that old addiction, God-with-us when we grieve beside the grave of a beloved child.

But there's more. Take a look in the upper right corner of this article. "Immanuel" is a Hebrew word and that's the spelling. (Just read it right-to-left.) Think about the conditions for the Israelites under King Herod—injustice, oppression, struggle—and consider **that** is the world into which Jesus was born. That is where God-with-us celebrated a wedding and preached from a hillside. That is where God-with-us advised "love your enemies", silenced the crowd who wanted to stone an adulterer, and laid down his life for us all.

We face a life today that is different, but in some ways maybe not so different. God is still working the garden with us, smelling the roses and digging in the dirt. God is with us in the blessing of new grandchildren. God is with us when we are alone. God is with us as we walk into the valley of the shadow. God is with us as we climb the mountain of glory.

Go with God, knowing God is with you.

-Andrew Byshenk, Clerk of the Session

**First Presbyterian Church of Waukesha**

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# December Calendar

## DECEMBER 3

- 10:00 AM **Worship**  
**Communion Sunday**  
Sanctuary
- 10:00 AM **Preschool Sunday School**  
Nursery
- 11:00 AM **Coffee Fellowship**  
Oak Room

## DECEMBER 6

- 6:30 PM **Combined Session/Deacons' Meeting\***  
Avalon Square

## DECEMBER 10

- 10:00 AM **Worship**  
Sanctuary
- 10:00 AM **Preschool Sunday School**  
Nursery
- 11:00 AM **Coffee Fellowship**  
Oak Room

## DECEMBER 17

- 10:00 AM **Worship**  
Sanctuary
- 10:00 AM **Preschool Sunday School**  
Nursery
- 11:00 AM **Christmas Tea\***  
Oak Room

## DECEMBER 21

- 8:00 AM **Men's Breakfast**  
Dady-Oh's

## DECEMBER 24

- No 10:00 AM Worship
- 7:00 PM **Christmas Eve Service**  
Sanctuary

## DECEMBER 25

- Christmas Day**  
No Worship at First Presbyterian

## DECEMBER 26

- Office Closed**

## DECEMBER 27 & 28

- Abbreviated Office Hours**

## DECEMBER 31

- 10:00 AM **Worship**  
Sanctuary
- 10:00 AM **Preschool Sunday School**  
Nursery
- 11:00 AM **Coffee Fellowship**  
Oak Room

## JANUARY 1

- Office Closed**

## JANUARY 3

- 5:30 PM **Session Meeting**  
Office

## JANUARY 7

- 10:00 AM **Worship**  
**Epiphany (celebrated)**  
**Baptism of the Lord**  
**Communion Sunday**  
Sanctuary
- 10:00 AM **Preschool Sunday School**  
Nursery
- 11:00 AM **Removing the Greenery\***

## JANUARY 10

- 6:30 PM **Deacons' Meeting**  
Oak Room

## JANUARY 14

- 10:00 AM **Worship**  
**Ordination/Installation of Elders and Deacons**  
Sanctuary
- 10:00 AM **Preschool Sunday School**  
Nursery
- 11:00 AM **Soup Cook-Off Fellowship**  
Dining Room

## JANUARY 18

- 8:00 AM **Men's Breakfast**  
Dady-Oh's

## JANUARY 21

- 10:00 AM **Worship**  
Sanctuary
- 10:00 AM **Preschool Sunday School**  
Nursery
- 11:00 AM **Coffee Fellowship**  
Oak Room
- 11:15 AM **Adult Education (TBD)**  
Oak Room

## JANUARY 28

- 10:00 AM** Worship  
Sanctuary
- 10:00 AM** Preschool Sunday School  
Nursery
- 11:00 AM** Coffee Fellowship  
Oak Room
- 11:15 AM** Adult Education (TBD)  
Oak Room

\*see article

## December Birthdays

- 12/8 Russ Volmar  
12/12 Edna Churchill  
12/21 Russell Volmar, III  
12/22 Charles Franzke  
12/26 Krista Dittrich  
12/29 Charlie Davies



## January Birthdays

- 1/13 Derek Noska  
1/17 Sue Root  
1/19 Kaelyn Van Essen  
1/29 Karen Schmidt  
1/30 Linda Volmar  
1/30 Mackenzie Van Essen



## Bell Ringers Needed!

The Salvation Army is seeking volunteers to ring bells on Friday afternoons at the downtown Waukesha State Bank location. If you can help with this, please sign up on the sheet located on the table in the Oak Room. For further information, please contact Earl Davison.



## Do you shop on Amazon.com?

If so, now you can **earn money for First Presbyterian** every time you do! To make it work:

- Go to [www.Smile.Amazon.com](http://www.Smile.Amazon.com)
- Sign in, if you're not already logged in.
- On the right-hand side, you should see a featured charity; below that is a search field. Search for "First Presbyterian Church of Waukesha"
- Click to choose us as your charity.
- After that, every time you want to shop, start on Smile.Amazon.com (not Amazon.com).

Register now, before you finish your online Christmas shopping! Every time you shop on Smile.Amazon.com, 0.5% of whatever you buy on Smile.Amazon.com will go to us!

See Jim Ziegler if you have questions or need help signing up.

## Christmas Eve Readers

As part of our Christmas Eve service of lessons and carols on **Saturday, December 24 at 7:00 P.M.**, we are looking for several volunteers. If you would be willing to read one of the lessons, please contact Jim Ziegler by **December 1** so he can get you your reading. Thanks!

Please note office hours are  
**Monday through Thursday,**  
**9:00 AM to 2:00 PM.**  
Office will be closed  
**December 25 & 26 and**  
**January 1 & 2**

## Christmas Poinsettia & Giving Catalog due 12/3

Please contact Carol if you need an order form. All ordered poinsettias can be taken home after the Christmas Eve service.

## Christmas Mission Outreach

The **Christ Church Mitten Tree** is now up in the Oak Room and is looking bare. The following would be greatly appreciated:

- warm hats
- warm scarves
- warm gloves or mittens
- toys
- puzzles
- children's books
- crayons
- markers
- children's activity books
- large print playing cards

**ERAs** gives Christmas care packages to low income seniors. Our donation basket will be in the Oak Room starting the first Sunday in November. Items in need are:

- books of Forever postage **stamps**
- thin **puzzle books** - Sudoku, crosswords, word search
- thin **gripper socks** (Medline is a good brand)
- **combs**
- individually wrapped **toothbrushes**
- blank Birthday, Get Well, Sympathy, Valentine, and Christmas **cards**
- **\$10 gift cards** to Walgreens, Pick & Save, or McDonald's (please write the value on the card)
- large print playing cards

The last day to contribute to both will be **Sunday, December 3.**

## Combined Session / Deacons' Meeting

The annual combined session and deacons meeting will be on **Wednesday, December 6**, at Avalon Square, beginning at 6:30 PM with a potluck meal and continuing with our combined meeting and then separate session and deacons' meetings.



## Advent

Please mark your calendars for upcoming Advent events.

### Worship during Advent

Rev. Elizabeth McCord will return to First Pres and will lead worship throughout Advent, including for our beautiful, traditional Christmas Eve service. As always, we will cap the Christmas Eve service by singing Silent Night by candlelight. If you're in town, be sure to join us, and bring family and friends!

### Advent Coloring / Fellowship Evening at Southminster

Take a Break from the Hectic Holiday Season! On **Wednesday, December 13**, members of First Pres are invited to an Advent Coloring evening at Southminster Presbyterian Church. Join them at **5:45 P.M.** for a simple soup and bread dinner and stay to color Advent posters. No artistic ability required.

### Christmas Tea Fellowship Sunday, December 17

Please join us after worship in the Oak Room on **Sunday, December 17**, for our annual Christmas Tea. We will share cookies and tea, along with coffee, hot chocolate, cider, and the ever-popular peppermint bark. If you are able, feel free to bring a plate of your Christmas cookies to share.

### Christmas Eve Worship Services:

**Sunday, December 24**

**Advent Lessons and Carols, with Holy Communion 9:30 A.M.**

Southminster Presbyterian Church

**Christmas Eve Service, with Holy Communion 4:00 P.M.**

Southminster Presbyterian Church

**Christmas Eve Service 7:00 PM Service**

First Presbyterian Church

# Finding PEACE in a World of Struggle

This world can be a dark place many days. News reports of shootings, innocent lives being lost too soon, terrorist attacks, unrest, and struggle, are constant reminders that we live in uncertain times. Sometimes we wonder, if finding peace in the midst of all this is even possible.

“Peace doesn't mean, to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble, or hard work. It means to be in the midst of those things and still be calm in your heart.”

Often, living a peace-filled life comes down to a choice. Choosing to come to God, choosing to set our minds on His Word, choosing to trust Him no matter what, choosing to pray in all that we face, choosing not to be anxious, choosing to believe that He's always with us and in control, choosing to set our thoughts on those things that are true and right.

God reminds us in His word that peace will not naturally just come our way, He says to *“seek peace and pursue it,” Ps. 34:14*. Some may offer their own advice, “Get away for a few days, relax, be happy, take a vacation, tune out, just don't think about stressful stuff.” But it's only temporary relief in a crazy, struggling world.

The peace of God is vastly different. It's lasting, confident, real, and adds deep reassurance in the midst of all that we face – past, present, or future. It helps us to rise up against the fear that would seek to choke our lives, bringing comfort and freedom. God's words give strength, purpose, grace. They alone are what can bring inner calm to a whirlwind of crazy.

*“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” John 14:27*

Peace and Joy to you and your families during this Holiday Season.

Barb Klemp  
Elder for Mission

(Portions of this message taken from an article in Crossroads Magazine).

## Christmas Meals for the Homebound

On Christmas Day, we will be delivering a **FREE** Christmas meal to anyone who may be homebound or alone, or just having a hard time making ends meet. The meals are prepared at St. William's Church, and are available to be delivered or picked-up **between 11:00 AM and 1:15 PM**. If you or someone you know is in this situation, please contact Marcia Slowinski at (262) 798-1520 to arrange for a meal, and we'll make sure that they receive a warm Christmas dinner and friendly visit. Please help us meet the needs of those whose hunger for food and friendship are so much greater than our own!

Thank you and Merry Christmas!  
Marcia J. Slowinski

## Removing the Greenery

Just as the tree must come down in your home, so must the tree (and garland and poinsettias and wreaths and pew decorations) in the sanctuary. Please join us after worship on **Sunday, January 7**, as we ready the church again for Ordinary Time.

Have something for the **February 2018 newsletter**? Please send it to

presby1@sbcglobal.net

or drop it in Carol's mailbox by **Monday, January 15** to have it included. Any items received after the 15th will be included in the March newsletter.

## Soup Cook-off!

Join us January 14, after worship for a soup cook-off. Dig out your favorite soup recipe and compete to place 1st, 2nd, or 3rd. Don't miss out on this time of good fellowship and a little friendly competition. We will provide crackers, bread and beverages. If you do not want to enter a soup, please consider bringing a dessert or side dish.



## Session Recap

The session met on Wednesday, November 1.

We were advised of issues the Deacons are tackling and the activities of the Nominating, Mission, Worship, Congregational Life, and Membership Committees. We identified Pastoral Care coverage for November. We considered items related to the property and reviewed the financial reports. We reviewed and approved the 2018 Budget and approved an adjustment to the effective date of the church Commercial Insurance policy. We arranged for Staff Reviews and approved salary adjustments. We agreed to hire an accountant to assist with church financial records.

In addition to those business items, we discussed the status of our Pastor search and approved requesting a Stated Supply Pastor from the Presbytery. We reviewed the last "Open Door" meeting and planned the next (which was already held on November 19).

## Presbytery Recap

The November 14 presbytery meeting was the final Presbytery Gathering of 2017. It was graciously hosted by Grace Presbyterian Church in Beaver Dam. The focus of the Gathering was stewardship of God's bounty.

Monday and early Tuesday saw Meet and Greet social occasions for the Presbytery members to converse with Elder Rachel Yates, who was later voted in as the next Presbytery Executive. She was also enrolled as a member of the Presbytery.

During the Business Meeting, the new Minister Members and the new Elder Commissioners were introduced. The Consent Agenda was unanimously approved; it included reports to be received and visitors to be seated with voice. Mary McClung, Transitional Presbytery Leader, spoke about the unique ways each congregation serves, yet we are all united in Christ. The Nominating Committee presented its nominations for 2018. There were no additional nominations from the floor and the motion to accept the slate as presented carried. The motion to accept the officers was carried.

The Bills and Overture Committee of the Presbytery of Milwaukee moved to concur with the Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee in limiting investments with fossil fuel companies.

The Council report included approval of the 2018 budget. Ann Gibbs was welcomed as lending bright, capable and organized gifts to her new role as Interim Congregational Care Coordinator. There was a special acknowledgement of the dedication and capability of Chris Halverson, Office Manager/Associate Stated Clerk, during the transition.

The Rev. Rob Ater, Council Moderator, shared a thank you to Mary McClung for her energy and enthusiasm, communications skills, humor, and help in clarifying the Presbytery's priorities and core values. Mary will be with us until December 31, 2017. We are grateful for her leadership.

The meeting was followed by a panel discussion on food, and being good stewards of God's bounty, a fitting topic for the coming holiday of Thanksgiving.

Happy  
New Year