

# First Things First

December 2020/ January 2021

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Due

to COVID

concerns,

there will be NO

In-Person Christmas

Eve Service this year.

Andrew, Brianne, Karen, Erin,

David, the Bell Choir and Pastor

Glen will provide a recorded Christmas

Eve Service with which you may worship

in the safety of your living room. There will be

a link to the recorded Christmas Eve service on

First Presbyterian Church of Waukesha's Webpage:

<http://www.firstpreswaukesha.org> beginning Tuesday

December 22. The Session and Deacons of First Presbyterian Church of Waukesha send our blessings to you during this holy

time

of year.

**First Presbyterian Church of Waukesha**

810 N. East Avenue, Waukesha, Wisconsin 53186

(262) 542-4243 presby1@sbcglobal.net

## What is it about the Advent Season that tugs at our heart?

I know that most of the world calls this time of year “the Christmas Season”, yet we Christians know better. We know that on the first Sunday in Advent, (November 29<sup>th</sup> this year) the church calendar flips, and we begin a “New Year”. We are just so out of step with the commercialized, consumer-driven world. Let’s admit it: we are an awkward people.

First, we celebrate New Year’s Day an entire month+ before January 1. And then, we (mostly) don’t sing Christmas carols until it is Christmas Day. No matter what the radio stations might play.

Further, during this Advent Season, unlike the consumer-driven world, we do not get amnesia about the darkness of our world: families being forced out of their hometowns, immigrants fleeing oppressive regimes, children being targeted and murdered. In fact, we embrace this dark story. Each year, during Advent and Christmastide, we remind ourselves of a family back then.... which connects us to what happens all too frequently now to families in our own time.

We Christians don’t flinch from this darkness; we don’t deny this darkness; in fact, despite what our world does, we hold this darkness close because that is exactly where God chose to be born, where God’s LIGHT flickered on and began to shine. It makes no sense, but.... That is what God did and does.

God allows us to see that God is not done with our world YET- that is what **hope** is; next, as we begin to honestly confess the role we play in consenting, tolerating and promoting the darkness of our world, we unexpectedly are gripped by God’s forgiving **peace**; as we become more honest, we see through the false promises of happiness and embrace our darkness which allows us to be surprised by God’s **joy**; it is then that we have a greater capacity to accept God’s **love** for us.

No, our Christmas story is not all happiness and presents; It is filled with unexpected twists and turns, disquieting visits and disturbing dreams which give us hope, peace, joy and love- the true gifts of Christmas. I am glad that we are on this journey together- it is a journey that promises to give us the Christmas that we have always wanted.

Peace, Rev. Glen



# December Calendar

## DECEMBER 6

10:00 AM Worship  
Communion Sunday  
On-line\*

## DECEMBER 9

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

## DECEMBER 13

10:00 AM Worship  
On-line\*

## DECEMBER 17

8:00 AM Men's Breakfast  
TBD

## DECEMBER 20

10:00 AM Worship  
Sanctuary  
TBD



## DECEMBER 24

Christmas Eve  
No Worship at First Presbyterian  
On-line\*

## DECEMBER 24 and 25

Office Closed

## DECEMBER 25

Christmas Day  
No Worship at First Presbyterian

## DECEMBER 27

10:00 AM Worship  
TBD

## DECEMBER 31

Office Closed

# January Calendar



## JANUARY 1

Office Closed

## JANUARY 3

10:00 AM Worship  
Epiphany (observed)  
Baptism of the Lord  
Communion Sunday  
TBD

## JANUARY 4

6:00 PM Session Meeting  
Via Zoom

## JANUARY 10

10:00 AM Worship  
Ordination/Installation of  
Elders and Deacons  
TBD

## JANUARY 17

10:00 AM Worship  
TBD

## JANUARY 21

8:00 AM Men's Breakfast  
TBD

## JANUARY 24

10:00 AM Worship  
TBD

## JANUARY 31

10:00 AM Worship  
TBD

\*See article

## December Birthdays

12/8 Russ Volmar  
12/9 Therese Dorna  
12/21 Russell Volmar, III  
12/22 Charles Franzke  
12/26 Krista Dittrich  
12/29 Charlie Davies



## January Birthdays

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



## Session / Deacons' Meeting

The annual combined session and deacons meeting will be on Wednesday, December 9. The Elders will participate via Zoom with the Deacons joining in the teleconference from their meeting place at the church.

**Please note office hours are Monday through Thursday, 8:30 AM to 1:00 PM. Office will be closed December 24 & 25 and December 31 & January 1**

## On-line Sunday Services

Until we can meet in person, you can listen to Sunday's service by going to our website, [www.firstpreswaukesha.org](http://www.firstpreswaukesha.org) and from the homepage select Sermons/Podcast; select the MP3 audio link from the service you wish to listen to - it should download automatically and on the bottom left of your screen select Open file and it should start playing.

## The Session at Work

In November the Session reviewed the Committee reports included in the Annual Congregation Meeting, which was held November 8th. The main topic was preparing the 2021 budget. Because of several changes within the church, namely the filling of the Bridge Pastor role by Pastor Glen Reichelderfer, more funds were allocated to salary and less to Pulpit Supply. While the church will increase the amount drawn from the Endowment Fund, the fund continues to perform well. Much less was drawn than budgeted in 2020.

With the increase of COVID cases in the area, it was recommended by Presbytery that we have a formal response policy. The Session determined how we would handle positive tests of staff, member and visitors. These are in line with the guidance from both Waukesha County and the Presbytery.

The Presbytery of Milwaukee asked member churches to participate in the Mathew 25 Challenge on Medical Debt. The goal was to raise \$10k to help eliminate medical debt in the Milwaukee area. The Session approved a \$2500 donation toward this effort. It should be noted the Housing Action Coalition of the Association of Waukesha Congregations was able to secure housing overflow for the winter.

Maintenance of the church building and grounds continues with the repair of the gutters and other drainage work. The Caring Place was successful in securing a grant to replace the floor in the Dining Room. The scope of work did not include any trim work, which will be needed due to the settling of the floor. David Schultz agreed to provide the labor for this with the church providing any materials.

As we continue to discern the future of the church we spent some time discussing the blessings and limitations of the church property itself. The goal was to gain a sense of potential uses for the property. While there are many possible uses for the building, we should ensure these are in line with the values of our congregation.

# ADVENT

## HOPE



## JOY



## LOVE



## PEACE



## Advent Devotionals and More...

A team from our Presbytery of Milwaukee has put together a weekly Advent faith formation series—think way beyond Sunday School. The theme of the series is Witness to: Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. It is based on both the traditional Advent candle themes and the Matthew 25 initiative.

Below is a link to the first week of Advent Activities for Home and Church in our Witness to Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love Advent series.

<https://conta.cc/3ltq8C5>

**Week 1 is Witness to Hope.** Each week will follow a similar pattern of introductory devotion followed by opportunities for individuals and/or small groups (kids, families, youth, adults) to dive deeper into the week's theme. This link is intended for church members as a wholesale package for the week to engage as they will. We will also have each piece available separately on the Presbytery website, <https://www.pbymilwaukee.org/>

As an alternative, there are Advent Devotionals booklets, **“Our Hope and Expectations: Devotions for Advent and Christmas 2020-2021”** available on the entry table.



Have something for the **February 2020** newsletter? Please send it to [presby1@sbcglobal.net](mailto:presby1@sbcglobal.net) or drop it in Therese's mailbox by **Monday, January 18** to have it included. Any items received after the 18th will be included in the March newsletter.

## God Knows

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:

“Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.”

And he replied: “Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God.

That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way.”

So I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night.

And He led me towards the hills and the breaking of day in the lone East.

*So heart be still:*

*What need our little life*

*Our human life to know,*

*If God hath comprehension?*

*In all the dizzy strife*

*Of things both high and low,*

*God hideth His intention.*

*God knows. His will*

*Is best. The stretch of years*

*Which wind ahead, so dim*

*To our imperfect vision,*

*Are clear to God. Our fears*

*Are premature; In Him,*

*All time hath full provision.*

*Then rest: until*

*God moves to lift the veil*

*From our impatient eyes,*

*When, as the sweeter features*

*Of Life's stern face we hail,*

*Fair beyond all surmise*

*God's thought around His creatures*

*Our mind shall fill.*

*~Minnie Louise Haskins*



# *The Year*

*What can be said in New Year rhymes,  
That's not been said a thousand times?*

*The new years come, the old years go,  
We know we dream, we dream we know.*

*We rise up laughing with the light,  
We lie down weeping with the night.*

*We hug the world until it stings,  
We curse it then and sigh for wings.*

*We live, we love, we woo, we wed,  
We wreath our brides, we sheet our  
dead.*

*We laugh, we weep, we hope, we fear,  
And that's the wonder of the year.*

*~adapted from a poem by Ella Wheeler Wilcox*