



The Presby Bulletin

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)
240 Standish Street Elgin, Illinois 60123-6421
Member of Blackhawk Presbytery & Synod of Lincoln Trails
Phone (847) 742-6365 www.fpce.org
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/FPCElgin/>
Rev. Karen Schlack, Pastor
Rev. William H. Clark, Pastor Emeritus
Deborah A. Walters, Director of Music
Colette McDonough, Office Manager
Peggy Ognacevic-Engels, Organist

DECEMBER 2017



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Word from your Pastor...

A Christmas Interruption

“They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.” -Isaiah 2: 4

By 1 December 1914, British soldiers were having friendly visits from German officers to “see how we were getting on.” A regular half-hour truce each evening was held to recover dead soldiers for burial, while French and German soldiers exchanged newspapers. The young Charles de Gaulle wrote on 7 December of the lamentable desire of French infantrymen to leave the enemy in peace, while other commanders wrote of the unfortunate consequences when men became familiar with their neighbors across enemy lines.

These were the events that led up to the Christmas truce held on Christmas Day, 1914. On that day, roughly 100,000 troops ceased hostilities. Germans placed candles in their trenches. Germans and British sang Christmas carols. Each side made excursions to No Man’s Land, where small gifts were exchanged. Joint services were held. There was even a football game.

In the years that followed, soldiers were no longer amenable to such truces. The war had become increasingly bitter after devastating human losses suffered at Somme and Verdun, and the incorporation of poison gas. World War I trudged on and soldiers fought right through Christmas.

When I reflect on this unique moment in history I wonder. Is war a natural thing, or is it something we learn? In 1914, peace seemed to burst out on the days leading to Christmas. Is it possible that “practicing war,” which is what happened in the years after 1914, causes the infliction of pain, death and suffering to become easier, while the “natural” state of peace finds less access to our lives?

It seems that women were behind the truce in 1914. The *Open Christmas Letter* addressed to women of Germany and Austria was signed by a group of 101 British suffragettes, urging a truce at Christmas. Even Pope Benedict asked, “that the guns may fall silent at least upon the night the angels sang.”

The story of God coming down to us, born to a teenage girl whose husband refused to forsake her, in a cold dirty stable, visited by the grimy, shiftless shepherds, will just NOT go away. God came in peace. Vulnerable. Appearing in the most surprising place imaginable. Surrounded by the little people, the ones who didn’t count. An event unnoticed by the world. Yet...an event we seem to want to recreate in our lives, even on a battlefield in the middle of a war. May that longing to create God’s peaceful visit to us always linger and never leave our hearts. We must learn to remember. To remember peace.

Pastor Karen

FAMILY CARE

Our thoughts and prayers are with those who face health issues:

Laura Keating Jacque & Roger Eads Family Lois Lindoerfer

Finnian Shea McCarthy was baptized on Sunday, November 12, 2017 with happy parents Nicole & Rory McCarthy and grandparents, Rhonda & Wade Anderson looking on. Welcome Finnian to First Pres!

PRAYER FAMILIES

As Presbyterians we certainly believe in the power of prayer, not only during times of trouble or joy, but every day! Here are the names of church families to include in your daily prayers for the following weeks:

WEEK OF DECEMBER 3rd:

Shirley Koehler
Lowell Koester
Becky Koester
Sue & Gary Leaver

WEEK OF DECEMBER 10th:

Shawn & Audrey Leaver; Garrett, Logan, MacKenzie, Tate
Cathy & Jason LeBlanc; Samantha, Allison
Lois Lindoerfer
Ralph & Carolyn Maguire

WEEK OF DECEMBER 17th:

Betty Manchester
Betty Mangum
Anne Marblestone
Pam Merrill

WEEK OF DECEMBER 24th:

Dave & Jeannette Miller
Shirley Minster
Bob Mogler
Brian & Jane Mooberry

WEEK OF DECEMBER 31st:

Nicole & Rory McCarthy; Reegan, Gavin, Kellan, Kinsey, Finnian
Colette & Dave McDonough
Lois McDonough
Loa McLean

COMMITTEE NEWS

CHURCH & SOCIETY

Elgin CROP Walk October 2017 Update

Thank you to all our walkers and sponsors especially to Audrey Leaver for heading up the Bake Sale. Your support and commitment is greatly appreciated. We are happy to report that our church collected **\$2,568** (including the Bake Sale revenue). So again, many thanks to all who helped make our Elgin CROP Walk so successful!

NICARAGUAN SCHOLARSHIPS

For 2018, First Pres is sponsoring 8 college students and 1 high school student in Nicaragua. Thanks to YOU we have surpassed our goal and through your generosity raised **\$4,400.00!**

Thank you letters from last year’s recipients will be posted on the bulletin board in the church hallway. Take the time to read about these young people and their stories and how terribly thankful they are for the opportunity that an education brings to them. Thank you!

Check out the following items in “Things To Know” section (page 7):

WHITE GIFTS

ELGIN TOY GIVEAWAY

As always, we thank you for your generosity!

2018 CALENDARS

Feel free to pick up a couple of 2018 calendars in the back of the sanctuary. We will make it easy for you to fill in the myriad of activities that you don’t want to miss here at First Pres!

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

NURSERY FOR CHRISTMAS EVE DAY AND NEW YEARS EVE DAY

The Christian Education Committee has decided to have a nursery for infants through kindergarten age for our worship service on Christmas Eve morning and New Year’s Eve morning. There will not be a nursery on Christmas Eve night.

YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES CANCELLED

Since the Christmas Pageant will be performed by our youth on Christmas Eve morning, there will be Sunday School on the morning of December 24 at the regular time of 9:15 a.m. There will not be Sunday School on New Year’s Eve morning, December 31. We **will** resume with Sunday School on January 7, 2018.

YOUTH CAREGIVER OF THE MONTH

Our youth nursery caregiver for the month of December is Jack Sitter. Jack is 17 years old and is a senior at Elgin High School. Jack has worked in our nursery since he was in the 5th grade and we will miss him next year. When I asked him what his favorite subject was in school, he said “Science, because it really interests me.” Jack is hoping to major in Environmental Science starting next year in college. Thank you Jack for helping in our nursery.

WORSHIP & SACRAMENTS

Saturday, Dec. 2 – 9:00 AM - Decorate the Sanctuary! All are welcome!

Sunday, December 3 - 1st Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 10 - 2nd Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 17 - 3rd Sunday of Advent

The church members will be caroling to shut ins after worship on this day. Please join us for chili with all the fixings after worship before we set off on this very meaningful experience!

Sunday, December 24 - 4th Sunday of Advent

In the morning worship service we will be blessed with the children's Christmas Pageant. This is always a special day – don't miss it!

***CHRISTMAS EVE
CANDLELIGHT
SERVICE***

(No Nursery Services will be available)

***7:30 P.M.
Sunday, December 24th***



Sunday, December 31 – New Year's Eve Worship Service at our regular morning time (10:30 AM)

I & S COMMITTEE

End of Year Giving

Just a reminder that, if possible, please catch up on your pledge before the year ends. Keep in mind that the last Sunday in December is also New Year's Eve day. We encourage you to consider doing your end of year giving the Sunday before which, of course, is Christmas Eve.

Gifts given on Dec. 31 will show on your church statement as given in 2017 but they will not show on your own bank statement in 2017 since it will be 2018 before the check gets to the bank. Keep your tax preparation person happy and give your final giving and Christmas offering early so it clears your bank in 2017.

Christmas Offering

Please once again consider a generous Christmas Offering. Our budget counts on a substantial Christmas Offering to end in the black for the year. Please place the church and our Lord high on your giving list.

Thank you!

THINGS TO KNOW

THE LUNCH BUNCH

The Lunch Bunch will meet at **12:00 PM** on **December 19th** at the Sweet Berry Café in South Elgin.

Please sign up on the bulletin board in the back hallway so that we know how many people will be coming.

If you have questions, please ask Loa McLean or Ellen Vogel.

Waiting and Pausing During Advent

Hugh Prather has said, “Life is lived in the pauses, not the events.” How can we be intentional about pausing each day? This year, I offer you a few suggestions:

- Attend our Advent study during **the first 4 Sundays of December**. The class is at **9:15 on Sunday morning in the parlor** and we will use the book, “While We Wait.” If you don’t have a copy of the book, just let the office know and we will get you one.
- Read the book “While We Wait,” and do the daily devotions suggested for each day of Advent. Answer the questions and spend time in breath prayers to pause this year. You can do this on your own or with a friend.
- Read the daily devotions in “Pauses for Advent” by Trevor Hudson. If you want the e-copy just let the office know. You can also order the book on Amazon. You can do this on your own or with your family or a friend.

Whatever you do, please take time to pause for Advent. You will be so glad you did, for God will bless you richly!

Pastor Karen

Backpacks for Gallup

The Presbyterian Women are collecting money for “Food For Kids” in Gallup, New Mexico. This has been our Christmas project for over 10 years. This money is used to purchase food that is put in back packs and given to the children to take home so that they will have food for the week-end. Our collection will be on **December 10th & 17th** following church service. We ask you to prayerfully consider making a contribution to this worthwhile project. Please make any checks payable to Presbyterian Women.

Thank you!

P.S. Please take a look at the Thank You note from The Community Pantry on page 8 of this *Presby* for our previous donation.

2017 Elgin Toy Giveaway

It's that time of year again! Time to help make the holidays a happy time for thousands of children in need from Elgin and South Elgin! The Elgin Community Holiday Toy Giveaway will be held at Hemmens Cultural Center on Thursday, December 14th. Our church will be collecting un-wrapped toys through **Sunday, December 10th**. If you wish to drop off a toy, please place them in the bins located in the back hallway.

Here are suggested toys:

- Dolls - Barbie & Monster High
- Cars/trucks
- Hot Wheels cars
- Basketballs, soccer balls & footballs
- Baby & Toddler toys
- Teens items such as gift cards, jewelry, journals, purses, perfume, art supplies, make-up

If you have any questions, please contact Sue Leaver at 224-280-6550.

Or you can donate your TIME! Visit the **Elgin Toy Giveaway Volunteer** page at <http://elgintoygiveaway.org> to sign up for a shift.

Thank you!

White Gifts Update

Thank you to all who are participating in the White Gifts program this year. We have 50 kids our church has committed to supporting for this program which include Elgin and South Elgin kids in need. Here are the details:

- Each gift (or gifts) for each child should total about \$30.
- **Wrap the gift in white paper (or regular paper turned inside out)**
- Secure the name tag to the gift.
- Bring the gift(s) to church on or before **Dec. 10th, 2017**
- Place your gift(s) under the Christmas tree in front of the Sanctuary.

If you have any questions, please contact Sue Leaver at 224-280-6550. Thank you!



The Community Pantry
PO Box 520
Gallup, NM 87305
505-726-8068

Friday October 27, 2017

Dear Presbyterian Women,

There are not words to express by gratitude for your generosity. What a surprise to see a check in the amount of \$1230. for the Food for Kids program. Your generous donation will go a long way to helping us end child hunger in the McKinley County area. In fact, with your gift, I will be able provide more well-nourished meal items. You have made a real difference in the lives of the children we serve. Thanks to you our children will go to bed on the weekend well-nourished and better off than the night before.

Thank you once again for your donation. It means the world to ME and The Community Pantry.

With gratitude,

Hilda Garcia- Kendall
Chief Operations Officer

December 2017						
◀ November						January ▶
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 9:00 am – 10:00 am Decorating of the Sanctuary
3 WIEL BAPTISM 9:15 am ADVENT STUDY 9:15 am YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:30 am WORSHIP	4	5	6 2:15 pm Bible Study 7:00 pm Chancel Choir Practice	7 8:30 am Men’s Breakfast @ Big Skillet	8	9
10 9:15 am ADVENT STUDY 9:15 am YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:30 am WORSHIP White Gifts Returned	11 7:00 pm CH & SOC	12	13 2:15 pm Bible Study 7:00 pm Chancel Choir Practice	14 8:30 am Men’s Breakfast @ Big Skillet	15	16 5:00 pm Christmas Cookie Baking
17 9:15 am ADVENT STUDY 9:15 am YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:30 am WORSHIP CHRISTMAS CAROLING	18	19 NOON – LUNCH BUNCH @ Sweet Berry Café South Elgin 7:00 pm SESSION	20 2:15 pm Bible Study 7:00 pm Chancel Choir Practice	21 8:30 am Men’s Breakfast @ Big Skillet NOON – December Presby deadline	22	23
24 9:15 am ADVENT STUDY 9:15 am YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:30 am WORSHIP 7:30 PM Candlelight Service	25 CHRISTMAS DAY CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED	26	27 2:15 pm Bible Study	28 8:30 am Men’s Breakfast @ Big Skillet	29	30
31 10:30 am WORSHIP	COME CELEBRATE THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST – TWO SERVICES ON SUNDAY, DEC. 24TH – 10:30 AM (Children’s Christmas Pageant) and 7:30 PM CANDLELIGHT SERVICE					