

PRAYER LIST

Each month we remember First Pres families in prayer,
this month please pray for:

Todd & June Howatt, 3309 Keokuk Ave, Spirit Lake

Kirk & Becki Huisenga, 13481 253rd Ave, Spirit Lake

Dan and Peg VanBeek, 1609 Chalstrom Beach Rd #C301, Okoboji

Bernie and Marcia VanRoekel, 1803 Boston Ave, Spirit Lake

Please pray for our members and friends of this church family who are facing various health concerns: Maddie DeWitt, Chris Koehler, Jody Ferguson, Lori Johnson, Pat Kelly, Mike Wiley, Kathy Huitink, Denice Wiersma, Bart Duncan, Dietrich Knabe, Macy Jennings, Elaine DenHerder, Kristen Martin, Marty Jenkins, Bill Cramer, Connie Rohlk, Tom & Sherry Fuhman, Bob & Martha Graham, Colin Jensen, Denise Beimer, John, Jacinda & Braylynn Tracy, Joan Sterner, Mary Larsen, Todd Livingood, Ashlyn Clark, Terry & Bev Cother, Dave Ashlock, David Render, Norma Thompson, Curtis Stover, Ron Harris, Paul DenHerder, Travis Caskey, Niles Swancutt, Jack Burrell, Barry & Lois Holtgrewe, Laurel Webber, JoAnn Asa, Ken Westergard, Betty VanderZwaag, Thea Ennema, Rick Hayes, Marilyn Rees, Jeff DeWall, Oz Nelson, Sharon Caskey, Jean Croft, Jaris Bronson, Laurie Phillips, Mike Ewen, Phyllis Walburg, Jamie Nebelsick, Ron Jenkins, Doug Kies

Please pray for our members and friends who serve in the Armed Forces: Staff SGT Jamie Lewis, 1st LT Whitney Lewis, 7017 Arnold Ave., Unit A, JBER, AK 99506; SFC Frederick, Jesse; SSG Amy Frederick, 134 Newburg St., Ft. Leonardwood, MO 65473; 1st Class PO Billy Joe Travis, 8583 Aero Drive, Apt 2043, San Diego, CA 92123; PFC; Colton Petersen, CPT James Fliss, PSC 41 Box 6588, APO, AE 09464-0066, United States; SGT Kenten Murray, Unit 4090, Box 2011, DPO, AP 96521-2011; Dillon VanderWilt, PSC 201, Box 6240, APO AE 09522-9998, Justin Theisen

Each month we pray for Missionaries that we support:

UPPER DES MOINES OPPORTUNITY, 1575 18TH ST, SPIRIT LAKE, IA 51360
UpperDesMoinesOpportunity, Inc. (UDMO) is one of 17 community action agencies (CAAs) in Iowa and one of approximately 1,000 community action agencies across the United States. CAAs are non-profit private and public organizations established under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 to fight America's War on Poverty.

UDMO promotes self-sufficiency by providing a variety of programs to fight poverty, improve health and increase educational attainment for family members of all ages. During the 2014 fiscal year, UDMO served 20,364 individuals in 8,367 households in Northwest and North Central Iowa (12 counties). Of those households, 63% had incomes below 100% of the federal poverty level.

JIM AND AMY TREWIN, 13738 CANOPUS DR, ORLANDO, FL 32828

After nearly 35 years ministry mostly to students, we are excited to be joining Campus Crusade or Cru's Ministry with the Jesus Film. This will ultimately have us based out of Florida. The Jesus Film has been translated in over 1500 native languages and has been directly involved in launching over 1 million local churches. But there are still people who haven't heard of the name of Jesus. A revised strategy is to translate the Jesus Film to the next 500 smaller language groups finding narrators who can translate the story of Christ. Because of consistent security threats, it is more prudent to have smaller showings using tablets and small projection equipment for ongoing showings of the life of Jesus. Jim and Amy have three children. Jim and Amy have been indirectly supported by First Presbyterian through ministry partners from the congregation for nearly 30 years and became part of the First Presbyterian mission budget in 1998.

First Presbyterian Church of Spirit Lake

DECEMBER 2019

FROM YOUR PASTOR

Endings and Beginnings...

I am sure this is not news at this point, but by the time you read this, our Office Manager, Cheri Grau, will no longer be at First Pres. After 21 years of faithful and outstanding service, Cheri has decided to step down from her position. She has been a wonderful fixture of FPC and she will be deeply missed. We wish her all the best as she transitions into whatever comes next and we are grateful for Cheri and her countless contributions to this church and its members. If you have not already done so, please take the time to convey our thanks and appreciation to Cheri.

Because Cheri's departure coincides with the end of the year, I can't help but think about transitions and how difficult they can be. However, I also remember something I once heard about challenges also being opportunities. Without a doubt, we will struggle for awhile as we try to figure things out and put a plan in place for what happens next. It will take some time, some planning, and likely a little good luck, but we will do our best to meet the challenge in the most productive way forward. We will keep you posted as decisions are made.

In regard to the larger picture at First Pres, things are pretty good. We continue to keep an eye on our budget and we have some catch-up to do at the end of the year. We are optimistic as we are slightly ahead of where we were at the same time last year, but we still have about \$30,000 to make up to meet our budget. We typically receive several year end gifts, and we hope that will be the case again this year. If you are not current on your church giving and able to get caught up, please know that it is both needed and appreciated.

As the Advent season dawns and we turn toward Christmas, we remind ourselves again how blessed we are. It is a wonderful theological coincidence that the Christmas season continues the Thanksgiving season. That is fitting, as it should always be with extreme gratitude that we consider the gift God has given us in Christ. I hope that as we move into December, you can find or make some quiet moments for prayer, reflection, and gratitude. It is very easy to get caught up in the fray and miss the deeper rhythms and meaning of the journey to Christmas. Don't let that happen to you.

Blessings, and as always, thanks for all you do.

In Christ,

Clint

PS - Thank you for reading through the New Testament with us. It has been a great journey and I hope helpful for those who have participated. We will be thinking about similar experiments we might try in the future.

GROWING IN FAITH

"In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.'" Luke 1:26-30 (NRSV)

Christmas is, on its surface, one of the most surprising times of the year. Indeed, a majority of all US households have a Christmas tree somewhere in their homes with wrapped presents lying under its branches. Each and every present is a mystery, a surprise waiting to be unwrapped. And most of us can remember at least one Christmas in our youth when we were overcome with restless expectation, feeling like we couldn't wait any longer, and absolutely needing to unwrap the gifts we found under the tree.

Yet, on the other hand, Christmas may be one of the most highly structured seasons of the year. Even before the season begins, most of us can mostly predict what will happen. First we'll make Christmas cookies, then we will go to the staff Christmas party, then visit the in-laws, then go to the church Christmas program, and soon. By the time it is done, we are all tempted to live out our annual "Christmas script" where all of the mystery has been replaced with our yearly traditions.

In truth, neither the presents under our trees nor the traditions we build around the Christmas season get us even remotely close to the full mystery and surprise of the original Christmas story. Can you imagine what Mary must have felt when an angel appeared in her living room and informed her that she would give birth to the Son of God? She wasn't expecting a visit that day and furthermore she couldn't have possibly predicted the message that she was given. And yet that's exactly the point. The coming of Christ interrupts our best laid plans. It is a cosmic surprise. It is far more like receiving a random present in July than opening an expected present from under our Christmas trees on Christmas day.

So I pray that this Christmas you might be overcome by the surprising truth and mystery of this season. May your eyes be open to the remarkable grace and love of Christ that knows no bounds. I truly hope that the traditions of our Christmas celebration this year will give way to a unique and even unexpected experience of God's desire to be with us. And if we do, we will know something of the wonderful, surprising, and life-changing truth that Mary experienced that first Christmas season.

Merry Christmas,

Michael



DECEMBER CALENDAR

1	REFORMED WORSHIP SERVICE 8:50AM COFFEE AND FELLOWSHIP 10:00AM NO CONFIRMATION NO SUNDAY SCHOOL NO ADULT EDUCATION (THANKSGIVING BREAK)	15	REFORMING WORSHIP SERVICE/SS CHRISTMAS PROGRAM 11:15AM
2	REFORMING WORSHIP SERVICE 11:15AM PW SEWING 9:00AM	16	PW LADIES CHRISTMAS PARTY 11:30AM STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE MTC 5:15PM
3	WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY 1:30PM	17	WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY 1:30PM SESSION MTC 7:00PM
4	MEMORY CARE SUPPORT GROUP 10:00AM HANGING OF THE GREENS 4:00PM RECHARGE 5:30PM HANDBELL CHOIR PRACTICE 7:00PM HS YOUTH GROUP 7:15PM	18	MEMORY CARE SUPPORT GROUP 10:00AM RECHARGE 5:30PM HANDBELL CHOIR PRACTICE 7:00PM HS YOUTH GROUP 7:15PM CHANCEL CHOIR PRACTICE 8:00PM
5	LADIES COFFEE 8:30AM MEN'S BIBLE STUDY 9:00AM ACT II 11:53AM PW COORD TEAM MTC 4:30PM	19	LADIES COFFEE 8:30AM MEN'S BIBLE STUDY 9:00AM ACT II 11:53AM
8	REFORMED WORSHIP SERVICE 8:50AM COFFEE AND FELLOWSHIP 10:00AM CONFIRMATION 10:15AM SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:15AM ADULT EDUCATION 10:30AM	22	REFORMED WORSHIP SERVICE 8:50AM COFFEE AND FELLOWSHIP 10:00AM NO CONFIRMATION NO SUNDAY SCHOOL NO ADULT EDUCATION (CHRISTMAS BREAK)
9	REFORMING WORSHIP SERVICE 11:15AM WORSHIP SERVICE AT WEL-LIFE 2:45PM	24	REFORMING WORSHIP SERVICE 11:15AM NO WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICES 4:00PM & 6:00PM
10	DEACONS MEETING 6:00PM WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY 1:30PM ILCC HANDBELL CONCERT 7:00PM	25	OFFICE CLOSED - MERRY CHRISTMAS!! LADIES COFFEE 8:30AM
11	MEMORY CARE SUPPORT GROUP 10:00AM RECHARGE 5:30PM HANDBELL CHOIR PRACTICE 7:00PM HS YOUTH GROUP 7:15PM CHANCEL CHOIR PRACTICE 8:00PM	26	NO MEN'S BIBLE STUDY NO ACT II
12	LADIES COFFEE 8:30AM MEN'S BIBLE STUDY 9:00AM ACT II 11:53AM FPC CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON 12:30PM	29	REFORMED WORSHIP SERVICE 8:50AM COFFEE AND FELLOWSHIP 10:00AM NO CONFIRMATION NO SUNDAY SCHOOL NO ADULT EDUCATION (CHRISTMAS BREAK)
15	REFORMED WORSHIP SERVICE 8:50AM COFFEE AND FELLOWSHIP 10:00AM CONFIRMATION 10:15AM SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:15AM ADULT EDUCATION 10:30AM	31	REFORMING WORSHIP SERVICE 11:15AM NO WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY



MAJOR EVENTS

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

1 Rob Kroese	12 Lindsay VanderWolde	20 Jane Loveall
Grace Radcliffe	13 Serena Lynch	Carly Farmer
3 Emma Dau	Dillon VanderWilt	Steve Lindeberg
Larry DenHerder	14 Brett Kraus	Vonda Buchman
4 Andrew Broocks	15 Darren Anderson	22 Ella Beck
Chris Sill	Mikayla Brockmeyer	Nicklas Fodness
5 Ida Estes	Sharma Brockmeyer	24 Mickey Arneson
Abby Stucker	Colleen Frederick	Terry Cother
Peg VanBeek	Miranda Gebhart	Gene Ringsdorf
6 Amy Bengé	Becki Huisenga	25 Gary Rouse
Zoe Drost	Dana Kauffman	26 Reann Marra
7 Cade Howard	Sydney Wajda	27 Jani Moffit
Doug Kies	16 Croix Howard	28 Wayne Glasnapp
Rory Marra	17 Jerry Erickson	Marlene Noll
8 Carolyn Butterworth	18 Cindy Broek	Drey Peterson
Damon Radcliffe	Emma Jenness	29 Lisa Kraus
9 Susan Manuel	Paul Johnson	30 Al Maser
10 ZoeWajda	Carter Toews	Ben Drost
12 Jack Burrell	19 JoAnn Asa	
Nancy Dau	Cindy Voss	

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

1 Jim and Jen Watts	22 Josh and Anne Roberts
5 Jerry and Judy Erickson	Eldon and Nancy Haas
19 Mike and Mona Scaletta	23 Darin and Erin Radcliffe
Brandon and Laurie	28 Carlton and Lois Mitchell
Steinkuehler	Purl and Jan Partello
20 Clint and Amy Profit	29 Art and Phyllis Attema
21 Tony and Linda Weber	30 Gary and Pauly Eaton

DEACON HOSPITAL/RIDE FOR DECEMBER

1 - Ron Williams	15 - Jon Stover
8 - June Howatt	22 - Merlin Stover
29 - Jerry Erickson	

NURSING HOME MINISTRY - Dec 8 --Wel-Life--@2:45pm

CHRISTMAS CAROLING

The congregation will be sharing Christmas carols with shut-ins and community members on December 18th starting at 6:00pm. All students and families are invited to join us for our pizza/lasagna dinner starting at 5:30pm and join us as we share Christmas favorites with others!

HIGH SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PARTY

This year's High School Christmas Party will be held on December 18th starting at 7:00pm. Join us for the annual gingerbread house competition, a white elephant exchange (\$10 maximum), Christmas music, Christmas goodies, and Christmas related games. It will be a night full of fun and fellowship, we look forward to seeing you there!

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

The Christmas program featuring students from PreK-8th grade will be held during the second worship service (at 11:15am) on December 15th. The Christmas celebration will be held throughout the entire service of worship and will feature the full Adult Chancel Choir, student led music and much more. We sincerely hope that you and your family will join us for this Christmas celebration!

ACT II

All High School students are encouraged to join Pastor Michael for a Bible study and small group at 11:53am every Thursday in the Library at the Spirit Lake High School. You are invited! Come ready to dig into the scriptures with us as we seek to grow in our faith and become more faithful followers of Jesus Christ.

90 DAYS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Join us as FPC commit to read the New Testament daily for the next 90 days! Pick up your 90 Day New Testament Brochure from the table in the Narthex. A full reading schedule, study group opportunities, weekly podcast, message board and online resources can be found on our website. www.fpcspiritlake.org/90days

HANGING OF THE GREENS

Please join us on Wednesday, December 4th at 4pm, for our annual tradition of the Hanging of the Greens.

FPC ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

You are invited to our Annual Presbyterian Women Christmas Luncheon Thursday, December 12th, 12:30pm. Carolyn Butterworth will be reading devotions. Also, we will be dedicating our Thank Offering. Speaker/singer, Jill Miller, will be sharing how God has worked in her life. Through her music ministry, she shares her personal struggles honestly and never pretends to have all the answers or have it all together. She's intentional about sharing how she has seized the opportunities to grow and deepen her faith through every trial and every heartache.

HOLIDAY USHERS AND GREETERS NEEDED

With the holidays right around the corner, that means we need some extra help at the church. It has been decided to break up the month of December with separate Usher/Greeters schedules. We are looking for help on December 22nd, 24th and the 29th. If you are willing to help out with any of these services, please let Bob Peterson (332-6374) know, or sign up on the sheet located in the narthex.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

SUNDAY SCHOOL TREATS FOR DECEMBER

1 - No Sunday School (Thanksgiving Break) 8 - Mandy Fine 15-Charlene Radcliffe
22 & 29 - No Sunday School (Christmas Break)
Adult Ed Classes 90 Days in the New Testament -- Jan Bolluyt
Presbyterian Beliefs and Practice -- Clint Loveall



Recharge is a multi-generational gathering of families, youth and adults. All church members and guests are invited to participate in the weekly evening of rejuvenation, including a family style meal, educational programming, and fellowship.

Meals for December: 4--Beef Stew 11--Chicken/Noodles 18-Lasagna/Pizza

Notice: Our 2nd Semester Dues Are Due January 22nd....

Adult Education

Women's Bible Study--Rachelle Gewecke Ray VanderLaan Video Series--Art & Phyllis Attema
Ninety Days Through the New Testament -- Clint Loveall

LIBRARY NEWS

The church library has a variety of stories about Christmas for adults and children. I will be putting these books on display for the month of December. I hope you will take a minute to stop by and take some home with you to enjoy.

Richard Paul Evans has written "The Noel Diary" and an old favorite, "The Christmas Box". Linda Byler's book is titled "The Christmas Visitor". Melody Carlson brings "The Christmas Angel Project" and "No Room at the Inn". Donna Van Liere's books include "The Christmas Star" and "Christmas Town". In the non-fiction section "The Christmas Sampler" has classic stories of the season.

There are over 30 books for children. Some favorites include the "Perfect Christmas Pageant", "The Little Lost Sock" and the "Legend of the Candy Cane".

I'll be looking for you in the library.

CHRISTMAS IOI

This year for Advent, we are going "Back to the Basics" to prepare for Christmas. We will be exploring the major themes of Advent with some of the signature passages of the New Testament. Join us as we learn together how we often miss the deeper realities of Christmas, even in the midst of celebrating. Our hope is that by using this season of Advent well, we might all be fully ready and better able to welcome the true meaning of Christmas. *Dec 1--Foundations of Peace/John 14:25-27 & Selections from Romans, *Dec 8--A Survey of Hope/Romans 8 & I Peter 1:3-21, *Dec 15--Introduction to Joy/Luke 2 & Philippians 4:4-9, *Dec 22--Fundamentals of Faith/Hebrews 11 & Romans 1, *Dec 25--Love for Beginners / I Cor 13 & Romans 5:1-11

ADVENT POINSETTIAS

This year we will be supporting the Kids Against Hunger as our Mission Project. If you are willing to share a poinsettia with us and donate to the Kids Against Hunger, the cost is \$17. For a poinsettia only \$12. Please contact the office at 336-1649. Please let us know if this poinsettia is in memory of, or honoring someone.

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICES

We invite you to be a part of our church family for either of our 4pm or 6pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Services.

YEAR-END GIVING

The deadline for the 2019 year-end giving to the church is Tuesday, December 31st at noon. Any gifts and pledges received or postmarked after that time will be credited to your 2020 statements.

MEALS-ON-WHEELS

In February your church will deliver meals to community shut-ins. Delivering Meals-On-Wheel takes about 30-45 minutes. You may sign up for any amount of days. May be you prefer one day a week, for instance every Monday, or every day for a week or different days during the month. Substitutes are available so don't let the fact that you are going to be gone one time stop you from signing up. You pick up the meals at the hospital kitchen at 11:00am. This usually is done with a partner to make the job fun and faster. Meals are delivered every day of the week except Sunday. Delivering Meals-On-Wheel to our community shut-ins is a rewarding experience and you will be glad you took part in it. A calendar will be placed on a easel in the Narthex in January for you to sign up on, please include your cell phone number. If you have any questions please contact Milt Nolting at 336-4336.

ATTENTION SEWERS

The children's and lap quilts are now in the fellowship hall and ready for completion. Please take them home and complete one or as many as you like. These quilts have been given in the past to CAASA, Dickinson County Public Health for the "New Moms" program, Lakes Regional Healthcare for the new babies, Gentiva Hospice and Accura Care Center. Your help with this project provides warmth to many members of our community and beyond.

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING

We will be collecting our Christmas Joy Offering on Sunday, December 22.