



FIRST PRESS

TOGETHER WE CELEBRATE,
JOURNEY & SERVE

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A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR KELLEN

Dear First Pres Family,

Do you ever find yourself saying that it feels like Christmas preparation starts earlier every year? I've felt that way this year more than any I can remember. Usually, my rule is that I don't listen to Christmas music until after Thanksgiving. This year, I've heard plenty of Christmas music already! While Christmas day won't come any earlier this year, how do we slow down enough to appreciate this festive season?

The church has thought about this question for a long time and to help us, we have the season of Advent leading up to Christmas. Advent is a season of waiting. As we wait, we purposefully prepare for the coming of Christ. Over the four Sundays in Advent, I'll be preaching a series of messages called: Hope. Joy. Love. Peace. During the series, we'll discover again what the birth of Jesus means and how to wait with hope, joy, love, and peace. Together, we'll slow down as we prepare to celebrate the Savior's birth.

During Advent, we'll also welcome Dr. David Lauber, theology professor at Wheaton College. Dr. Lauber will teach an adult education series entitled *Advent Encounters*. The birth of Christ, or incarnation, is the wondrous mystery that God has come to us as Jesus of Nazareth. One of the most notable aspects of the four Gospels is stories that depict Jesus' personal encounters with particular people – people who saw him, heard him, and touched him. During these four Sundays, Dr. Lauber will examine a number of face-to-face encounters with Jesus. We'll learn more about Jesus and ourselves, and understand more fully what these encounters tell us about God.

It will be a joy to worship with you on Christmas Eve. Whether you'll be coming to our family service, or one of our three candlelight communion services, I encourage you to invite friends and family to join us. As part of our vision, one of our strategic initiatives is to *invite*. Advent and Christmas are the perfect seasons to invite someone to worship. Experts say that people are more open to an invitation to come to church in the month leading up to Christmas than any other time of the year. Thank you for helping to carry out our vision. I pray you and your family have a Merry Christmas!

God bless you,



Kellen Smith
Senior Pastor

HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS

The Church Office
will be closed for the
holidays as follows:

Christmas

December 24 at 1:00 p.m.
December 25

New Years

December 31
January 1



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Taize Worship

Wednesday, December 5 at 7:00 p.m. in the Chapel
Begin your holiday season with a special time for meditative worship. Join us for a 30-minute Taize service, consisting of music, silence and prayer, designed to help us step away from our busy lives and spend some quiet time with God. For more information contact: Maryanne Kyle at mkdp@jkd.com or (630) 213-8590.

Women's Ministry Christmas Social

Thursday, December 6 from 7:00-9:00 p.m.
Please come and relax and enjoy the spirit of the Christmas season in the company and fellowship of the women of First Pres. The Christmas Social will be held at the home of Carol Molino, 17 Hawkins Circle in Wheaton. Last names A-L bring an appetizer; M-Z bring a bottle of wine. Dessert will be provided! Please RSVP to the church office.

FPC Book Club

Thursday, December 20 at 7:00 p.m. in the Living Room
Lark! The Herald Angels Sing, by Donna Andrews is the FPC Book Club read for December. New York Times bestselling author Donna Andrews has delighted readers with holiday mysteries, full of Christmas cheer and starring her quirky characters. While directing a nativity pageant, Meg finds a live baby in the manger. A note attached to the baby, named Lark, claims Meg's brother is the father. She soon discovers that the baby may be connected to something much bigger, putting Meg's family and friends in danger. Join us for good discussion and great fellowship. Questions? Please contact Mary Kinsey 630-462-1294 or marykinsey79@gmail.com.

Women's Bible Study

Tuesdays at 10:00 a.m. in the Living Room
This year's study is "God's Promise: I Am With You". God's most frequent promise in the Bible is 'I will be with you'. Please join us as we explore scripture to learn the many ways that God is with us – wherever we are and throughout our lives. Taught by Pastor Kyle. We will continue to meet on the first Tuesday of each month. Books are \$10 (see Pastor Kyle).

Jesus Is Calling You to K'tizo!

Thursday, December 27 at 9:30 a.m.
Join us for a deep breath of peace and calm with a "Jesus Calling" devotion. We will meet in the K'tizo Tea & Coffee Shop, 1915 N. Gary Avenue.

Volunteer Bus Drivers Needed

The Outreach Community Center Older Adults Program in Carol Stream is in need of volunteer drivers to provide transportation in 2-3 hour shifts on Wednesdays and the first and third Friday of the month. No special license needed. For more information, visit www.outreachcommunityministries.org/volunteer or contact Mindy Inman at 630.682.1910 or email at minman@outreachcommin.org.

ISRAEL 2020: A Spiritual Journey to the Holy Land



Pastor Kellen and Sarah Smith will lead a pilgrimage to Israel and Palestine for First Pres members and friends March 20-30, 2020. Email office@firstpreswheaton.org to sign up for trip updates. An informational meeting will be held in January.

FIRST PRES WHEATON COMMUNITY CONCERT SERIES 2018 - 2019



A Festival of Lessons and Carols

Sunday, December 16 at 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

You are invited to the third concert in our Community Concert Series, as part of our Sunday morning worship. Living out our mission of inviting all generations into a growing life with Jesus Christ, the music ministry will be taking an all generations approach to Lessons and Carols. Featured in the music-making will be the Westminster Choir & Orchestra, Children and Youth, and the 2-or-More Worship Band. This musical experience will not only invite all generations, but will also unite all genres of music, from medieval chants of France to the modern music of Matt Maher.

ADULT EDUCATION

Advent Encounters

Sundays, December 2-16, 9:45-10:45 a.m.

December 23, 9:00-9:45 a.m.

Stewart Hall 102-103

Led by Dr. David Lauber, Professor at Wheaton College

During these four Sundays in Advent, in anticipation of the birth of Christ, we will examine a number of face-to-face encounters with Jesus. We will seek to learn more about Jesus and ourselves, and to understand more fully what the incarnation and these encounters tell us about God.



YEAR-END IS A PERFECT TIME FOR GIVING

As we approach the end of the calendar year, we are given numerous opportunities to reflect on our many blessings. Charitable giving is a way for us to turn our blessings toward generosity with the financial resources God has entrusted to us to provide welcome support for others.

Going out of town over the holidays? Worried about getting your check in the mail by the end of the year? You can also give securely online at www.firstpreswheaton.org by clicking on the Give Now button at the top of the home page. *All contributions for 2018 must be postmarked or must be received by midnight on December 31, 2018.*

Giving is not limited to cash. Tax savings can be even greater if you give appreciated assets, such as stocks and bonds. The IRA Charitable Rollover Contribution continues for those who are age 70½ or older. If you are in that age bracket, you may make a distribution of up to \$100,000 directly from your IRA directly to the church without being taxed. This is just one more creative way, along with gifts of stock that members can consider as a significant way to give. As always, consult your tax advisor when making any charitable contributions.

Please contact Jan Buscher at jbuscher@firstpreswheaton.org or by calling the church office if you are planning on making a non-cash contribution.

As you consider all of the opportunities to give at year-end, making an additional contribution to the ministry, mission and operations of First Presbyterian is an investment in God's work here and around the world. It will also help us finish the year in a strong financial position and ready to continue God's good work in 2019.

Generosity turns our focus and love away from our possessions and toward God's Kingdom. As we dedicate our gifts to God, what we give can be multiplied for God's mission through our church. **Thank you for your generosity.**

MEN'S MINISTRY

First Light Men's Group

Saturday mornings at 7:00 a.m. in Stewart Hall

We are studying *Awaiting the Already* as our Gospel Christmas study, through December 22. On December 29, we resume our *Man of God* study. Please join us.



WOMEN'S MINISTRY



Women's Ministry lent a hand at the Illinois Food Bank, getting Thanksgiving boxes ready for families in the surrounding counties. We packaged 272 gallons of holiday meal gravy, which provided gravy for 6,800 meals. We later took off our hair nets and enjoyed lunch at Portillo's, rounding off a wonderful day of volunteering and fellowship!

Community Art Gallery

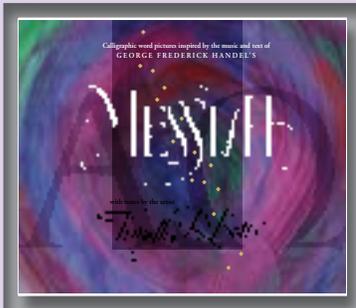
Highlighting the artistic creations of members of
First Presbyterian Church and local artists.
Located on the Link

Emmanuel, God With Us
Calligraphy by Timothy Botts

November 30 – January 31

Artist Reception:
Sunday, December 9, 9:45–10:45 a.m.

Timothy Botts began his study of calligraphy at Carnegie-Mellon University where he holds a BFA in graphic design. He was greatly influenced by Japanese brush writing and related arts while teaching conversational English in Tokyo for three years. For 40 years he designed books at Tyndale House Publishers where he was senior art director until his retirement in 2012. Tim teaches part-time at College of DuPage and also with calligraphy guilds internationally. He has 10 books of his own work published including *Doorposts*, *Messiah*, *Botts Illustrated Bible*, *Portraits of the Word*, and *Bound for Glory*.



FIRST PRES SHOPPERS

If you already shop with Amazon, AmazonSmile is a simple, automatic way for you to support First Pres Wheaton every time you shop, at no cost to you.

Simply go to smile.amazon.com and log in, using your existing Amazon credentials, or create an account. Select First Pres Wheaton as your charity, and that's it! For all your shopping with Amazon, just be sure to sign in to smile.amazon.com.



PRESCHOOL



This month, the Christmas season provides rich learning experiences. The children seem to grasp the concepts of Christmas as well as or better than grown-ups; the joy of giving, the magic of the lowly stable birth, the excitement and anticipation of something special. We are spending this month preparing for the holiday with fun projects, songs, and stories. All of our preschoolers are enjoying re-enacting the Christmas story, decorating their classrooms, making a special gift for their parents, and touring the Church to look for signs of the seasons.

Lynn Nuzzo, our Director of Christian Education, visits all of our classrooms this month to share the Christmas story in a special way while our four and five-year olds are busy preparing for their annual holiday concert. As busy as we are with the holidays in our classrooms, we are also busy enrolling for the next school year. Priority enrollment ended in November and the preschool is open to the public beginning January 1. If you have any neighbors or friends who might be interested in our preschool, please encourage them to contact the preschool at (630) 668-5147 x27 or preschool@firstpreswheaton.org.

Our art and Victory sports enrichment programs have ended for the fall. In January, we will be enrolling for winter sessions and starting our yoga in-class program taught by a YMCA instructor, our very own Beth Pomatto. We are so excited to welcome her back into our classrooms!



Our preschoolers had a wonderful time celebrating Thanksgiving!

CHILDREN

What a wonderful first half of the year we have had together! We would like to thank the dedicated volunteers who serve and grow with the children each week. You are the "hands and feet" of LOGOS and are truly appreciated!



Dec 5: Christmas Sharing Week (No LOGOS for K – 5th)

Dec 12: Duct Tape Night

Dec 19: Happy Birthday Jesus

Dec. 26 & Jan. 2: No LOGOS (Christmas Break)

Come join us! Registration for the second half of the year is \$70. Please contact Lynn Nuzzo (K – 5th) or Laurie Meissner (6th – 8th) with any questions.

Children Serving Others in Need

The children are excited to be able to reach out to those in need this holiday season! All of the children had the opportunity to participate in Operation Christmas Child. They look forward to filling a shoe box each year with lots of gifts for a boy or girl. The LOGOS families brought in bags of food and a new toy for Christmas Sharing and the Sunday School children are collecting socks and gloves/mittens. **Final date for collection is December 2.**

Meet Elijah Gwaya

Elijah is 7 years old and lives in Zimbabwe, Africa. The Sunday School children are sponsoring him through *Hope4theOrphan* this year and are very excited to be helping him go to school! Each week they take a collection and are planning a big bake sale after the holidays.



Christmas Eve

**Children-Led Family Service at 4:00 p.m.
with Pre-Service music starting at 3:45 p.m.**

Soon we will come together on Christmas Eve and share the wonderful story of Jesus' birth! Everyone is invited to come and enjoy this interactive worship service where the children will share their gifts and tell the story. All of the children will be learning a song to play using bells and tone chimes in



LOGOS and Sunday School. The worship bulletin will be filled with the children's creative art work! Parents, please let Lynn know if your child would like to play an instrument or be a reader!

GENESIS MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWS

Thank you to all who helped fill boxes for Operation Christmas Child! A few of our Middle Schoolers delivered the boxes to our local distribution center after we prayed over them at LOGOS dinner.



In December, Sunday School will be collecting diapers and wipes through December 2 to be given to District 200 families in need, when they gather here the first week of December for Christmas Sharing. Please bring them to the Middle School Education rooms (SH 105-107) where there will be a plastic tub for donations.

Sunday School classes will not meet on December 23 and 30. We will be back on January 6!

Upcoming LOGOS mission projects include making a craft and visiting our beloved senior church members around the area in mid-December. We will also purchase toys and hats at Target to be given out at Christmas Sharing. We will finish the month at LOGOS by assembling the luminaria that beautify our church grounds on Christmas Eve.

Please follow the Middle School Ministry on Facebook (Genesis - First Presbyterian Church Wheaton) and Instagram (firstpreswheatongenesis)

God Bless You during this Christmas Season!

Laurie Meissner
Interim Director of Middle School Ministry

WF HIGH SCHOOL NEWS

Hello First Pres Family!

The high school youth entered November on a spiritual high from our end of October Fall Retreat at the Stronghold Castle. We had a chilly, but super fun time growing closer to each other and growing closer to God. Our awesome guest speaker, Pastor Oliver Hersey, talked with us about what God desires for us in our relationships. We talked about how God breathed God's 'divine spark' inside each of us, and how we are uniquely designed honor that spark in our relationship with God and each other. Then, we talked about the love story of Ruth and Boaz and how we can use that as a model for our own relationships. Oliver's insights led to many thoughtful discussions. Did I mention that we also had a ton of fun? We played "Minute to Win It" games, had team games, a costume contest, made s'mores, painted pumpkins, and had a lot of hang time in our hammocks. It was a pretty amazing weekend!

We have also been very busy with fundraising for our mission trip for next year! Have you heard? We're headed to Guatemala next June to build two homes for families in need! We are SO excited, but it means we need to raise a lot of money to get us there! We will continue with our Bag and Butter Braid Sales in December. The Buy a Door, Buy a Window, Build a House giving envelopes will be available for a few more months. We would love to partner with you in Joyful Generosity to give the gift of a lifetime to two families in Guatemala!

December brings a lot of excitement and fellowship opportunities for the high school group with the Hot Breakfast, Christmas Sharing, and Progressive Dinner.

I pray that you will set aside time to deepen relationships with God and with your friends and families this Advent and Christmas season.

Peace,
Nancy

Hot Breakfast – Sunday, December 2 between services, at 9:45 a.m.

Join your high school friends in the kitchen for a fun time making bacon, pancakes, bacon, tater tots, and bacon!

Service Opportunities: Friday, December 7, 6:00-9:30 p.m. and/or Saturday, December 8, 9:00 a.m.-noon

Christmas Sharing helpers are needed to assist our guests with their shopping trips in our Ministry Center. We, as a youth group, have helped out with this event for several years! Please join us in this meaningful way to give back to our community.

Butter Braid Pick up and Sales – Sunday December 16, 9:30-11:00 a.m.

We will have some samples of these tasty pastries available (between the Lessons & Carols services), and have a limited quantity of Braids available on hand for you to purchase and take home that day! To guarantee getting the braids you want, contact me at ngoodwin@firstpreswheaton.org to order in advance! Braids are \$14 each.

Progressive Dinner – Sunday, December 16, 5:00-9:00 p.m.

Get all dressed up and we'll have a fun night eating appetizers, entrees, and desserts at different homes around town. This festive event is one that the students really enjoy attending each year. Please join us, even if you aren't a regular Sunday night youth group participant! We want to celebrate the season with all of our high school friends! Watch for an email about food sign-ups and host homes.

No Sunday AM or WF on December 23 or 30.

Enjoy your time with family and friends! See you back on January 6!



MISSION

Ring in the New Year at the BRIDGE!

First Pres will be hosting the men, women and children at the Bridge in Chicago on Tuesday January 1, 2019. We will be providing a meal for nearly 100 people and sharing the worship experience. If you would like to help we have a few slots available, we will car pool from the church. Please reach out to Anth Lechiara at anth.lechiara@gmail.com for details and to sign up.



Food Pantry

In December our food pantries are in need of canned goods: fruits, veggies and soups, especially low-salt or no sugar added; high proteins: peanut butter, tuna, beans, canned chicken, chili, or stew; whole grains: whole wheat pasta, brown rice, low-sugar cereal; personal items: shaving creams, disposal razors, feminine hygiene products, bar soap, toothpaste, shampoo, toilet paper, laundry and dish detergent; and diapers, especially sizes 4, 5 & 6. PRC and the Interfaith Food Pantry always express their gratitude for the many pantry items we send each month.

Hibernate and Hydrate

Older Adults Program Christmas Luncheon

Every year, First Presbyterian Church of Wheaton partners with Outreach Community Center and Gary Methodist Church to host a Christmas Luncheon for the Older Adults Program at Outreach Community Center. This year's luncheon is on December 14, for approximately 150 older adults from south Carol Stream. Guests are served a traditional holiday dinner with all the trimmings, enjoy a holiday musical presentation by Franklin Middle School students, and receive an individual gift of a water bottle and fleece throw blanket.

First Pres helps by providing volunteers who assist with set-up, clean-up, making food, serving seniors at their tables, and providing transportation, as well as making financial donations to make the day possible. For many of these seniors, this event is the highlight of their holiday season, and for some, their only celebration.

A \$12 donation will provide one older adult of Outreach Community Center a place at their annual Christmas Luncheon table. Watch for the holiday tablescape display in the Rotunda for donation envelopes. To donate, please mail your check in the envelope provided or leave it in the church office. Kindly make checks payable to Outreach Community Ministries. Your donation is greatly appreciated.

Thank you for helping to keep our seniors hydrated and warm with gifts, and for providing a beautiful holiday celebration for them. If you have any questions, please contact Kim Van Oss (630) 609-6956 or Alice Lechiara (630) 462-0536.

STEPHEN MINISTRY CORNER

Hospital Visitation Tips

Visiting someone in the hospital is truly a blessing to those visited. To make this caring visit, here are some suggestions that will be of benefit to the person hospitalized:

- Do not make a visit if you are ill or even suspect that you are coming down with something.
- Arrange your visit ahead of time (usually by phone/text) so that it will not interfere with doctor visits, tests, other visitors, etc.
- Be aware of any precautions listed on the entrance of their room
- If the patient is sleeping, ask the nurse/tech if it is ok to waken them. If not you can wait a while to see if they wake up or leave them a note of your caring visit.
- If there are others in the room upon your visit, be sensitive to the needs of the patient....Perhaps they are a bit tired from the previous visit and it might be good to make your appearance at another time.
- A good rule of thumb is to make your visit about 15 minutes.
- If possible draw up a chair close to the bed....Do not sit on the bed.
- Be a good listener
- Pray with them if they are comfortable with that

Your Stephen Ministry Team: Pastor Kyle, Diane Easter, Henrieta Ribeiro, Bob Young



Christmas Sharing Is Coming December 7 and 8!

Mark your calendars and start cleaning out your closets. Volunteer sign-up forms and food boxes are in the Rotunda and can be returned to the church office. Most needed items are children's clothes, toys, and all sizes of coats and outerwear. Donated items can be brought to the church December 4-6. Contact Tanya Downing at downing4ga@yahoo.com or Sharon Carroll at mc803@live.com.



CARE CARDS



Care Cards are powerful little yellow pieces of paper that provide comfort, strength, and support to others in need of prayers. They are available in the pews at each service for quick little notes to let one another know that we are thinking about them and praying for them. They can be dropped off in the offering plate during services.

They can also be sent [online](#) from this page. The church office forwards online and handwritten care cards to the recipients.

MONTHLY CALENDAR



Click calendar to view.

December newsletter submissions are due by December 15. Email them to candrews@firstpreswheaton.org. This is a monthly publication. If you move, please call the church office with your new address.

Church Office: 630-668-5147 www.firstpreswheaton.org

Advent Sermon Series HOPE. JOY. LOVE. PEACE.

Advent is a season of waiting. As we wait, we purposefully prepare for the coming of Christ. During this Advent sermon series, we'll learn what the birth of Jesus means and how to wait with hope, joy, love, and peace. Join us this Advent as we prepare to celebrate the Savior's birth.

December 2: *Hope in Jesus' Name*

December 9: *Leaping for Joy*

December 16: *Love: A Festival of Lessons and Carols*

December 23: *The Way of Peace* One worship service at 10:00 a.m.

Christmas Eve Worship

A Picture of Heaven

Pastor Kellen Smith
Luke 2:8-20

Children-Led Family Service

3:45 p.m. Pre-service music
4:00 p.m. in the Ministry Center

Candlelight Communion

6:00, 8:00 and 10:00 p.m.
in the Sanctuary

