



# Presbyterian *Tidings*

DECEMBER 2015, VOLUME 63—ISSUE 12

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GRAND HAVEN

## December Worship Schedule

During this interim period in the life of our church, we want to keep you informed of our Sunday morning schedules.

The Sunday morning worship schedule for December is:

- **December 6** The Rev. Jill VanderWal  
*Communion, 2nd Sunday of Advent*
- **December 13** The Rev. Pete Theune, *3rd Sunday of Advent*
- **December 20** Caleb Zokoe, *4th Sunday of Advent*
- **December 27** **One Whole Church Worship Service at 10:00 a.m.**  
The Rev. Linda Male

## Advent Worship Services and Soup Suppers

New this year, we are holding Wednesday evening worship services during Advent. Services of quiet contemplation, scriptures and music will be held in the chapel on December 2, 9 and 16 at 6:00 p.m. After each service we'll enjoy a time of fellowship with a soup supper in the lounge.

On Sunday, December 20, we will be offering a special service of Light and Hope at 6:00 p.m. (*no supper after this service*).

## Upcoming Events

- Dec. 1** #Giving Tuesday
- Dec. 2** Advent Service & Soup Supper
- Dec. 6** Estate Planning 101 Part 2  
PW Bling, Baked Goods & Craft Sale
- Dec. 9** Advent Service & Soup Supper
- Dec. 16** Advent Service & Soup Supper
- Dec. 17** Heritage Luncheon
- Dec. 20** Music Sunday  
Service of Light and Hope
- Dec. 24** Christmas Eve Services:  
5:00, 7:00 and 10:00 p.m.
- Dec. 27** One Whole-Church Worship  
Service at 10:00 am

## Christmas Eve Services

**5:00 p.m.**  
**Impromptu Children's  
Christmas Pageant**

Children are encouraged to wear their favorite costumes to this child-friendly service. Fairies, minions and dinosaurs are all welcome!

**7:00 p.m.**  
Presented by our church youth, this service is family-oriented and will include music from the Gathering Band

**10:00 p.m.**  
**Lessons & Carols  
Candlelight Service**

Our traditional Christmas Eve service with the Geneva Choir

## Advent Reflection

*"...I do know that if there is any chance for deep experiences of God's grace and love in this season, we need to open spaces for hope and attentiveness in our hearts. We can't compel God to move, but we can clear away what distracts us from hearing his gentle voice... We can slowly savor the biblical prophecies of the coming of the Messiah and the narratives about Jesus' birth. We can devote time to silence and solitude as well as to corporate celebration. We can learn to say "no" when we find ourselves spinning from all the invitations and seasonal stimuli. We can listen to the voices of people who are not often heard over the cultural shouting -- the poor, the hungry, the suffering around the world. We can prepare a quiet place for God to renew his love and rebirth his hope in us."*

Adam S. McHugh

### **Prayer Concerns:**

Chick Borta, Irene Heinritz, Marilew Helmers, Betty Joelson, Stewart and Margaret Johnson, Helen LaVercombe, and Mary Jane Mass

### **Our Sympathy:**

to Ron and Nancy Hunter on the death of Ron's mother, Mae Hunter, on October 26, 2015.

to Randy and Betty Jo Enell on the death of Randy's Aunt Patti on October 27, 2015

to Adam Luurtsema, Laura Boter and daughter Layla on the death of Adam's father, Allen Luurtsema, on November 2, 2015.

to the family and friends of Cathleen Pranger, who passed away on November 13, 2015.

to Allan and Marge Fettig on the death of Allan's mother, Jalene Fettig, on November 24, 2015.

### **Congratulations!**

to Sandra Peel on the birth of her great-grandson, Eli Christopher Boven, born on October 19, 2015. Parents are Alex and Chris Boven.

to grandmother Linda Green and great-grandmother Dorothy Miller on the birth of Colin Michael Birchmeier on November 1, 2015. Parents are Brandon and Kellie (VanHall) Birchmeier.

to Ed and Nancy Hanenburg on the November 11th birth of their grandson, Charles Dekker Miller. Parents are Drew and Allison (Riekse) Miller.

### **Thank you!**

"A BIG thank you to the group of scouts and leaders from troop #246 who came to our home for a Hands to Serve project and raked all of our leaves! They did a superb job in about one hour; something that would have taken us three days to do. Your help was greatly appreciated."

Ray and Sandy Harz

"Dear Joyful Noise and First Presbyterian Church:

Thank you so much for the beautiful baby blanket and burp cloths you gave baby Sawyer. Our daughter Sammy was smiling from ear to ear as she carried it out to the car and shared it with her new baby brother. May God bless you all for the work you do in our community. Our family is so grateful for your prayers and support.

With Love,  
Kristi, Paul, Sammy and Sawyer Weaver



### **and Farewell!**

Thank you to Curtis Benaway for his many years of dedicated service to First Presbyterian Church. Curtis spent many Sunday mornings perfecting the sound and lighting for our worship services.

Curtis and his wife Stephanie are moving to New Mexico to be near family living there.

## **Pastor Nominating Committee** **Nomination Procedure**

First Presbyterian Church has received approval from the Committee on Ministry to form a Pastor Nominating Committee for the Pastor, Head of Staff.

If you are interested in serving on the PNC, or know someone who is, please fill out the yellow nomination card, which can be found in the church office. Nominees must be active members in good standing.

If you are nominating someone other than yourself, please be sure to have his/her permission. We have a simple, one-page questionnaire for each nominee to complete to ensure we have a PNC that represents the breadth of our congregation. The church office will contact nominees and provide the questionnaire.

Thank you, and we appreciate your prayers as we move through this process.



Every month, we publish upcoming birthdays of our members and friends who are no longer able to come to church regularly. We are sure that cards from their church family would be very welcome and appreciated!

**Dec. 10** Evelyn Bailey  
12596 Lakeshore Drive  
Grand Haven, MI 49417

**Dec. 17** Les Ennenga  
1410 S. Ferry Street  
Room C-3  
Grand Haven, MI 49417

**Jan. 14** Ruth Mastenbrook  
1701 Woodlawn  
Grand Haven, MI 49417

**Jan. 22** Janet Boer  
930 Deer Hammock Circle  
St. Augustine, FL 32080

**Jan. 24** Carol Winton  
13397 Forest Park Drive  
Grand Haven, MI 49417



I have no memory of a season called *Advent* in my childhood. My mother was not a fan of Christmas because of bad memories from her childhood, so we never put much energy into big celebrations. There were presents and extended family Christmas parties complete with Santa, who I realized years later was really my uncle—the one who always seemed to have a church meeting on the evening of our get-togethers.... But, I also remember some years with no tree to decorate in our house. Once in high school my brother and I bought and decorated our own tree. However, we consistently attended church on Christmas Day. New Year's Eve was always a big family party at an aunt's home. It's what we did.

Sometimes I wonder how I became so counter-cultural that in 2015 I observed the New Year on November 29. Why not begin the New Year on January 1, just like everyone else in the world? WAIT A MINUTE—everyone else???

Many cultures celebrate their New Year on different dates. Think of the Chinese New Year or the Jewish New Year or the Islamic New Year or the Ethiopian New Year or the Thai New Year—you get the idea. Each culture sets its own rhythm and runs on its own time. We Christians run our lives by many calendars—the January 1 through December 31 calendar, a fiscal calendar, an anniversary or birthday calendar, the school year calendar, the dentist and doctor appointments calendar—but the one that speaks to our basic faith story is the *liturgical calendar* that begins the first Sunday of Advent. *Liturgy* can mean “work of the people,” a response to the work of God, and so our work of faith begins anew with Advent.

The central person in our faith is Jesus Christ, and the liturgical calendar begins with anticipation for the birth of Christ. Just as it takes time to wait for the birth of a baby, it takes time to prepare to welcome the infant Jesus. The question we face each year is how to balance our faith calendar with the calendar of the culture. Our western civilization ends its calendar year with the rush to close the sales year in the black. The pitch is more, more, more as we are bombarded with ads; Black Friday calls to us to spend, spend, spend!

On the other side is our effort to quiet our souls in preparation to meet our Savior. This conflict is what makes Advent so important. Intentionally taking four weeks to live in a way that is different from and in opposition to what is expected by the pervading culture gives us space to breathe and take in the fragrance of new birth.

Advent time does not necessarily keep us from participating in cultural events. It does give us a different perspective and value for those events that surround the culture's interpretation of Christmas and New Year celebrations. It brings us back to the foundation of our faith to meet again the Infant Savior Jesus Christ.

To that end our liturgical symbols such as candles, Advent wreath, lighted trees, angels and shepherds always point beyond themselves to the Light of the World. This Advent season we are giving ourselves some quiet time mid-week at 6:00 pm on Wednesdays to pray, sing, and meditate. As the culture around us becomes busier and busier, we will become quieter and quieter until we have opened our hearts fully to the miracle of Christmas love.

Join us in the chapel and afterwards in the lounge for a light supper of soup and bread as we prepare ourselves in the beginning of the year to face what lies ahead with confidence that we are in God's hands. We are called as Christians to live our faith, so let's start strong.

A second opportunity to practice our deep need for community with others and with God is an evening service of Light and Hope at 6:00 p.m. on December 20. This time of reflection and remembrance will help those of us who seek companionship during a time of loss and grief when the loud celebrations and jaunty Christmas music jars our senses. Come and experience a time of peace and healing during Advent.



## Interrupted by Hope an Advent Video Series



The purpose of Advent is to make us pregnant with hope. For many, the holiday season is not

filled with joy, family, and gifts, but anxiety, stress and despair. Advent seeks to reframe our experiences with new expectations, expectations that will not disappoint. It is the expectancy that new life will start to grow within all of us. However, we must be willing to make room for an interruption. Can we make that space to receive this gift?

## Musicians and Singers Wanted

The Deacons are looking for people to help out musically with their monthly nursing home worship services.

Instrumentalists, singers, musicians— if you have been blessed with a musical gift you would like to share, please contact Gale DeKleine at 842-9135. Thank You!



## Give Joy!

During this Advent season we reflect on the promise of salvation God made to us—a promise kept with the birth of Jesus. Through this example we understand that while we may make promises in good faith, we must keep them with our good deeds (James 2:14).

With the Christmas Joy offering we make two enduring promises for our faith: to church workers through assistance in their time of need, and to our racial ethnic leadership through education and development.

Please give generously to this special offering in December.

## Estate Planning Workshop

The Generosity Committee of First Presbyterian Church presents:

**Estate Planning 101:  
The Importance of Having an Estate Plan (part II)**

**Sunday, December 6  
10:00-11:00 a.m.**

**at First Presbyterian Church**

presented by local attorney Todd Anthes from Scholten Fant

## First Sunday Food Collection, December 6

Every month, the Mission Committee collects non-perishable food and household goods like shampoo, toilet paper and laundry detergent for local food pantries.

This month's donations will go to Love, INC.

Please bring items to church on or before Sunday, December 6.



## Journey to Bethlehem December 10-12, 2015

Step back in time to a living, interactive re-creation of the town of Bethlehem as it appeared over 2,000 years ago. On your journey, you will encounter shepherds, magi, townspeople, livestock and an imposing Imperial Roman army. You will be turned away at the inn and pointed in the direction of the stable where the most precious gift of Christmas lay, the Christ child.

Tickets are still available at St. John's Lutheran Church, 527 Taylor, Grand Haven, from 9-5 November 30-December 3, and 9-3 on December 4.



## 'Tis the Season of Giving

Christmas is almost here! As always, First Presbyterian Church offers many opportunities that will bring blessings to you, your family, and friends. Wednesday evening Advent Services followed by soup suppers will be held on December 2, 9, and 16. Christmas Eve services will be held at 5:00, 7:00 and 10:00 p.m. On Sunday, December 20, there will be a special service of light and hope at 6:00 p.m.



Christmas is also known as a time of giving. December is the best giving month of the year. Will you prayerfully consider a generous year-end contribution? A great December will enable the church to fulfill its ministry budget and missions giving and get off to a strong start in the first few weeks of the new year.

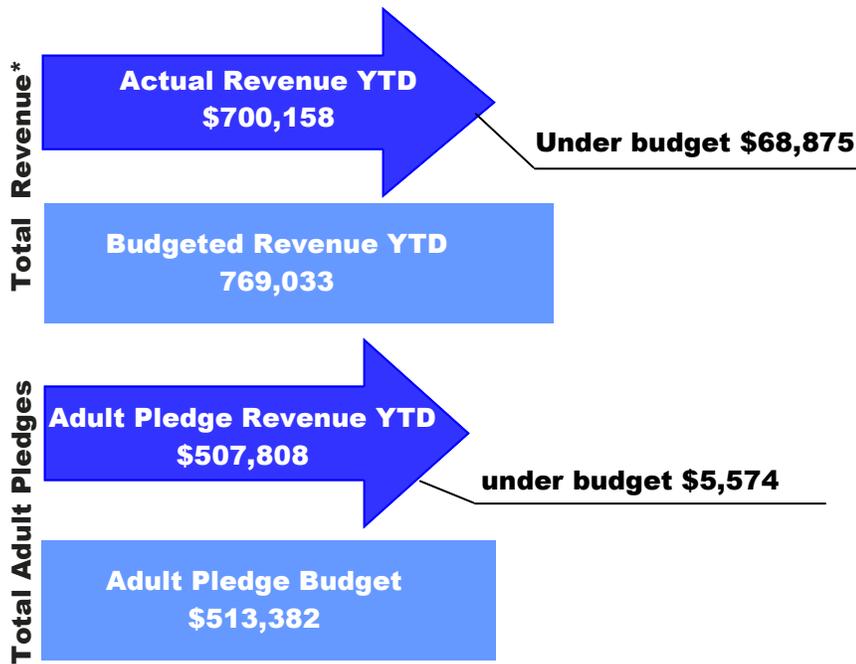
Here are a few reminders as you bless your church with a year-end gift:

- Checks may be mailed to the church office, 508 Franklin Ave., Grand Haven, MI 49417.
- Don't forget: You can always choose to give online. It's simple and safe. Go to the church website, [www.fpgh.org](http://www.fpgh.org) and click on the "Support FPC" tab.
- This is a great time of the year to give appreciated stock as a charitable gift. Give this information to your broker: DTC #0793, Stifel Nicolaus account # GH06-3217-9366, Molly Miles @ 616-846-3620.
- To receive your appropriate tax deduction, all gifts must be postmarked by December 31, 2015.

Please call the church office if you have any questions: (616) 842-6760.

## From Your Stewardship Committee

### Financial Update as of October 31, 2015



\*Total Revenue includes pledged, non-pledged, youth receipts, loose offering, per-capita, all miscellaneous revenue and transfers from designated funds

Thank you to all who support First Presbyterian Church.

Revenue is currently running behind budget. Please consider making a financial donation to support the mission and ministries of First Presbyterian.

## Generosity Sunday Update

Thank you to everyone who has turned in their Estimate of Giving card for 2016.

As of November 30, 2015, we have received 214 estimate of giving cards for a total of \$581,630.

Cards are available in the church office, online at [www.fpgh.org](http://www.fpgh.org), or a card can be mailed to you. You may also call in your Estimate of Giving to Kelli at 616-842-6760.

Thank you for all you do to make First Presbyterian what it is today.

## Baked Goods, Bling and Crafts! December 6



Calling all Presbyterian women!

Are you willing to offer your gifts and talents? We need volunteers to help out with the following:

- baking and crafting
- selling goods between services
- setting up displays
- cleaning up after the sale

Start going through your old jewelry for items you would like to donate for a special sale on gently used “bling.”

For baked goods, please package items like cookies, cupcakes and muffins in groups of six.

You will be able to drop off your goodies and gently used jewelry at the church on Saturday, December 5, from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m.

### Questions? Contact:

#### For Baked Goods:

Mary Hendon  
616-846-1734 or  
maryhendon1@charter.net

#### For Crafts and “Bling”:

Sue Ochs  
231-780-3717 (home) or  
231-750-3946 (cell) or  
s2123@aol.com

Get ready to shop in the lounge after worship services on December 6!

## Lenten Devotional

Many of you will remember the Advent Devotional booklet produced by First Presbyterian Church members in 2014. This year, we will be creating a similar booklet for the Lenten season.

For each of the 40 days of Lent we will be asking members of our congregation to submit a reflection on a specific selected scripture. Reflections could be in the form of a writing, a photograph, a poem, or artwork. All ages are encouraged to participate in this very special project.

Look for more details and sign-ups during the month of December. For questions, contact Betty Jo Enell: enellrb@yahoo.com

# Joyful Noise

## What's on the horizon for the Joyful Noise C-Fund?

The Joyful Noise C-Fund had a year of great achievement in 2015!

From offering music classes, instruments and thousands of free books to the community, to providing training for parents and caregivers, the giving program was successful in many ways.

This coming year, the C-Fund plans to facilitate the same level of accomplishment. Plans are underway for another book give-a-way, more classes and resources for underserved families and children, and continued professional development and support for both staff and parents at our early childhood center.

You can support our mission of education and collaboration within the community by making a donation to our program! The Joyful Noise C-Fund is a 501(c)3 non-profit, and your contributions are tax-deductible.

Visit our website at [www.CThePossibilities.org](http://www.CThePossibilities.org) for more information and online donation opportunities, or stop by the Joyful Noise office today to contribute to our cause. *Thank you for helping to make the lives of children in our community much brighter!*



**Tidings article deadline for January 2016 issue: December 14, 2015**

Submittals, suggestions or comments: [sbryant@fpgh.org](mailto:sbryant@fpgh.org) or [firstpres@fpgh.org](mailto:firstpres@fpgh.org)

*FPC editorial staff reserves the right to accept or decline, edit for length and content all submitted material.*

## Hand2Hand Ministries Special Request for December

Thank you to all of you for the extra donations in November to cover the long conference and Thanksgiving weekends.

We would also like to make a special request for the two weeks that our students are on Christmas break and not receiving meals normally provided by the school district.

If you are able to donate any of the following items, we would greatly appreciate it:

- **canned spaghetti sauce (no glass jars please!)**
- **1 pound boxes of spaghetti noodles**

Donations may be dropped off in the blue bin at the Children's Ministries desk. We also accept your used plastic grocery bags!

*Our Hand2Hand program currently serves over 80 students in the local schools, from elementary to high school. We thank you for your support of this important program!*



## Youth Summer Mission Trips Have Been Announced!

**Vine**  
June 25-July 2  
(open to students *currently*  
in 8th-12th grade)

This year we're headed to Denver!  
Forms and \$150 deposit will save your spot for this life-changing trip. See Caleb for forms and details.

**Roots**  
July 9-15  
(open to students *currently*  
in 6th & 7th grade)

We will be going to Charlotte, NC!  
Forms and \$100 deposit will reserve your spot for this amazing trip. See Caleb for forms and details.

***Special Note:*** All youth groups will meet at their normal times on December 6 and 13. Shine 56 begins their Christmas break on December 20 and will resume meeting on January 10, 2016. On December 20, Vine and Roots will be making Angel Tree deliveries, and then will be on Christmas break until January 10, 2016.

## Youth Groups



**Vine** is our high school youth group, and meets on Sundays during the school year from 5:15-7:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Led by Caleb Zokoe

**Roots** is our middle school youth group and meets from 6:30-8:00 p.m. during the school year in Fellowship Hall. Led by Caleb Zokoe



**Shine56** is our youth group designed for all 5th and 6th graders! Every Sunday evening, all 5th and 6th graders are invited for dinner from 6:30-7:00, followed by age-appropriate lessons. Shine56 meets in Fellowship Hall and is led by Becky Yonan.

For the most up-to-date information on youth events, visit the youth facebook page.

### Contact Info:

Visit our facebook page: FPGH Youth, Follow us on Twitter: @Roots\_FPGH; @Vine\_FPGH

Or contact Caleb Zokoe via email: czokoe@fpgh.org



508 Franklin Avenue  
Grand Haven, MI 49417  
616-842-6760

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No 132  
Grand Haven, MI 49417

*If you are unable to attend Sunday morning worship:  
Tune your radio dial to WGHN-FM 92.1  
Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m. to hear the previous week's sermon!  
Or, visit our website: [www.fpgh.org](http://www.fpgh.org)*

### December 2015

*deliver to: (or current resident)*

## Christmas Flower Dedications



Your flower dedication contributions make it possible to decorate the Sanctuary, Gathering Area and Lounge with the beautiful flowers and greenery of Christmas.

Anyone wishing to make a dedication to be listed in the Christmas Eve bulletin may do so by completing the form below and returning it by Sunday, December 13, to the church office or by dropping it in the Sunday offering plate.

Please print the name of each person you wish to honor, along with your name and telephone number. Feel free to use additional forms as necessary. Suggested donation: \$12/per dedication.

DEDICATION 1. Please check one:  in celebration  in honor  in memory of:

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DEDICATION 2. Please check one:  in celebration  in honor  in memory of:

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

GIVEN BY: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to: First Presbyterian Church, with memo notation "Christmas dedication"