



The Presbyter

December 2020

The First Presbyterian Church of Clarks Summit

Celebrate the birth of Jesus with us on December 24

Christmas Eve services

We offer three different worship services for our Christmas Eve celebration. The theme will be "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." (John 1:5) This is our testimony during a pandemic!

Family Service at 4:00 p.m. - We will gather outside on the back parking lot (adjacent to Fellowship Hall). This will be a simple service, socially distanced and masked. We will sing some favorite carols, hear a brief message, pray, and praise. **Dress warmly, suitable for the weather.**

Lessons and Carols at 8:00 p.m. - Drawing on the musical talent of our church family, this service will feature scripture readings and musical selections on the theme of light in the darkness. It will take place in the sanctuary for an audience of 50, with overflow seating for 50 in Fellowship Hall. **Reservations are strictly required.** The service will be live streamed on our church YouTube page and available for later viewing online.

Jazz Christmas Eve at 11:00 p.m. - The Presbybop Christmas Eve Band will offer a musical service in the sanctuary for an audience of 50, with no overflow seating offered downstairs. **Reservations are strictly required.** The service will be live streamed on our church YouTube page and available for later viewing online.



Please note: All services are subject to last minute changes, depending on the recommendations of the state health department and our local situation. We will not jeopardize the health of our church family in any way. If you are worried or concerned, even at the last minute, we recommend staying home and worshipping with us on the internet. Latest details will always be posted at www.fpccs.org.



Monday, December 21 is the longest night of the year. We offer a **Blue Christmas** service live from the sanctuary

at 7:00 p.m. This quiet service offers an opportunity to pray and worship God in the face of our losses and difficulties. Memorial candles will be lit by our worship leaders, as we offer prayers for peace and restoration. As with other services, we can welcome up to 50 people. **Reservations are strictly required.**

We encourage all to take part online through our church's YouTube page, as the service will be live streamed.

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**Notes from the Session Meeting
November 10, 2020**

1. Session will hold a special meeting immediately after the 10:00 a.m. service on Sunday December 13, 2020 to finalize the budget for the 2021 year.
2. Session would like to ask members to bake some sugar Christmas cookies for the Christmas Eve Service. It would be nice to have something sweet after the four o'clock service.
3. Thank you to all who helped make our Trunk-or-Treat event on Halloween successful.

Beverly Bright
Clerk of Session



Board of Deacons

Care Team Ministry Coordinators are:

Deacon Meals	Anne Rich 570-587-2802
Time of Loss	Anne Rich 570-587-2802
Emergency Home Repairs and Maintenance	Joe Waters 570-351-3620
Deacon Driver	Mick Wirth 570-587-3767

Please let the Board of Deacons Care Team Coordinators or the church office know if anyone is in need of care.

We're here to care for FPC members and friends and we count on all of you to let us know when help is needed. This is our ministry and our Christian privilege to care for you.

**The Presbyterian deadline for
the January issue is
December 18**

The Presbyter is a monthly newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church, 300 School Street, Clarks Summit, PA 18411.

All visitors are welcome to worship with us. **Worship services are held on Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m.** Child care is available. Communion is observed the first Sunday of every month.

If you do not attend a church in this area, we invite you to any and all of the events, programs, and worship services described in this newsletter. Please call the church office to arrange child care. Our sanctuary and Fellowship Hall are both handicapped accessible.

Church Office	(570) 586-6306
Fax	(570) 587-3784
Web Page	www.fpccs.org
Pastor	William G. Carter
Administrative Assistant	Nancy Owens
Coordinator of Children & Youth	Jana Schillinger
Treasurer	Wayne Griffiths
Editor	Amanda Roberts
Clerk of Session	Beverly Bright
Director of Music	Frank Jones
Director of Bells	Richard Cochrane
Director of Chapel Choir	Kay Ten Eyck
Organist	Kay Ten Eyck
Sexton	John Conklin

**FROM YOUR FINANCE COMMITTEE
FOR THE MONTH ENDING
October 31, 2020**

<u>REVENUE</u>		
Budget		\$269,451
Actual Received		<u>316,917</u>
Difference		(\$ 47,465)
		=====
<u>EXPENSES</u>		
Budget		\$324,910
Actual Expenses		<u>304,937</u>
Difference		\$ 19,973
		=====
<u>BUDGET VARIANCE</u>		(\$ 27,492)
<u>PLEDGE INCOME</u>		
Budget		\$ 270,833
Received		<u>254,568</u>
Difference		(\$ 16,266)
		=====

At the end of October, contributions for Per Capita (which is \$35 per member) were \$4,513.

From the Pastor

December 2020

Running low on hope? Here is an interchange between David Frost and Desmond Tutu (from 2005):



DAVID FROST: With all these problems facing the world, not just poverty, but the environment, the clash of cultures or religions which some people talk about - it's pretty hard to be optimistic. But I've always thought of you as an optimist.

DESMOND TUTU: David, I've never been an optimist. I am a prisoner of hope, which is different. I am aware as you are, and as so many of us are, that the world grows and there's so many awful things - poverty, Tsunami, the awfulness's that have happened in Sarajevo, ethnic cleansing, Rwanda, you go on and on and on and frequently you will say it is a real mess.

But it is important to keep remembering that in that mess good things have happened. And I have no doubt myself that this is a moral universe and goodness and love and caring are ultimately what will prevail. Not the ghastly opposite.

Bishop Tutu didn't point it out, but he was quoting one of Israel's prophets: ***"Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope; today I declare that I will restore to you double."*** (Zechariah 9:12). That phrase - "prisoners of hope - is a strong reminder that God rules over heaven and earth. As the Eternal One, God already holds the future. All the biblical promises are certainties: peace, justice, restoration, freedom from self-destructive impulses, freedom from human animosity, no more death, no more tears -- and most certainly, no more illness.

Advent is the announcement of what God holds in the future.

Our anxieties often stem from a lack of steady engagement in that future. As we hear of the promises of God in this season, weariness sinks in. We are tired of waiting. We have grown passive. Or worse, we've grown indifferent. No wonder, then, that the prophets call us to wake up! To return home! To lift our eyes! To get busy preparing for what (and Who) is coming.

To be a "prisoner of hope" is to be bound to God and what God has in store. Beyond the grim daily headlines, there is goodness, love, and caring. In the darkest time of the northern hemisphere, the night sky is punctured by the stars. We hope, not merely to convince ourselves to be cheerful, but because we trust that whatever God has in store for the world is far greater than what we have now.

So I encourage you to engage in the good work of Advent. Read the daily Advent devotions prepared by members of our church family (<https://adventfpccs.blogspot.com>), all on the theme of **HOPE**. Mark the days with Bible readings, prayers, and works of caring and generosity. Take part in our Advent worship services and sharpen your spirit. We pray regularly for God's kingdom to come, "on earth as it is in heaven." Advent is the time to welcome God anew.

With you in the journey,

Rev. Bill Carter



FPC Book Group

With the sharp rise in the coronavirus, the book group has decided to cancel the meeting on December 3rd. However, keep reading. We will re-evaluate things after the first of the year.

The Other Einstein by Marie Benedict, summary of which was included in the October Presbyterian.

Such a Fun Age by Kiley Reid is a 320-page book.

Kiley Reid's debut, *Such a Fun Age*, will make you uncomfortable, enlighten you, and make you laugh—likely all at once. Emira Tucker is a 25 year-old living in Philadelphia with two part-time jobs (typist and babysitter) and no health insurance. One night the mother of the child for whom she babysits calls upon her in an emergency, and Emira—clad in her “going out” clothes—takes the toddler to a yuppie grocery store, only to be accused of kidnapping by a security guard and fellow shopper. You see, Emira's employers are white, and she's African American. The mother, Alix, is embarrassed by this situation and immediately takes the babysitter on as a project (unbeknownst to Emira) and becomes slightly smitten with her. Emira, meanwhile, loves her toddler charge but merely tolerates the mother, whose name she can barely remember. She's busy navigating her somewhat aimless post-graduation life and trying to figure out how to be “adult” before she's off of her parent's health insurance at the age of 26.

Emira and Alix's lives, although distinctly different, intersect in a wholly surprising way, raising difficult questions about morality, forgiveness, race, class, and parenthood. switching voices from the mother to Emira's boyfriend to Emira-the-friend to Emira-the-babysitter, Reid somehow manages to make her writing effortless and authentic.



Mission & Justice Committee

Update on NEPA Youth Shelter

Maureen Grey, the Director of NEPA Youth Shelter, was recently put in touch with a young man from Allentown who was abandoned by his family on his 18th birthday. Don (not his real name), on the autistic spectrum, was dropped off at the Catherine McAuley Center with a garbage bag of belongings and \$20. The terrific folks there called Maureen and she picked him up and brought him to the shelter. Maureen was able to house him in a hotel for 4 nights using monies from the shelter's emergency housing fund while she assisted him in getting a good paying job, obtaining a photo ID and opening a bank account. Maureen jumped through bureaucratic hoops and mounds of paperwork to help him obtain an apartment in the city so he can walk to work, church, health providers and stores. He moved into his apartment on November 1.

“Don” has made friends with his co-workers and has already started to get familiar with our city. His excitement about the help the shelter has provided him is palpable! Don referred to his short time here in his adopted city as a “rainbow.”

Our church's donations to the NEPA Youth Shelter help to provide emergency housing for at-risk youth like Don who would be on the streets of Scranton, alone, were it not for the generosity of our church and others.

All-Church Recital on YouTube

Sunday, November 22, 2020 4:00 pm



This online event features the musicians and friends of First Presbyterian Church in a unique internet recital. We will enjoy music from our handbell choir, a vocal solo by Jennifer Cowgill, duets by Ariana Billiot and Riley Wescott, piano and organ solos by Kay Ten Eyck and Nate Worrell, a woodwind trio with Catherine Huhn, John and Connie Weiss, and Kay Ten Eyck, a flute solo by Catherine, and a jazz piano trio with Bill Carter, Tony Marino, and Tyler Dempsey, as well as the debut of the Presbyterian Boomwhacker Choir. After many months of isolation from the pandemic, we offer an afternoon of music designed to comfort and uplift our spirits. This program will be streamed on YouTube on November 22 at 4:00 pm. Watch for the concert link in an upcoming email and on the church website.

We also look forward to a couple of jazz events in December, so put them on your calendar now. On Sunday, December 6 at 4:00 pm, the Presbybop Quartet celebrates Dave Brubeck's 100th birthday with a jazz concert. The concert will be offered in person and also live-streamed. On Friday, December 18 at 7:00 pm, the Three Divas present a concert of Christmas jazz for a limited audience, with the concert broadcast online on Sunday, December 20 at 4 pm. Check the weekly newsletter for links to get free tickets if you wish to attend the Brubeck and Three Divas concerts in person. A free-will offering will be taken at each concert.

Christmas Joy Offering, Nov. 29-Dec. 20



During the season of Advent, all of us will have the opportunity to donate to the annual Christmas Joy Offering. We can contribute to this special offering in person on Sundays, using the Christmas Joy Offering envelope that we can find either in the church pews or in our set of weekly envelopes at home. If not in person, we can contribute to this offering electronically via our First Presbyterian Church's website (click on the big green pledge button and then be sure to specify the Christmas Joy Offering under other).

Through our faith, we are called to see the potential of students of color who will become our leaders and seek to come alongside them, to encourage them, to be with them. **50%** of our Christmas Joy Offering gifts make it possible for students to learn and grow in faith at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

Through our faith, we are called to see church workers who have critical financial needs and come alongside them, to assist them — we are with them. **50%** of our Christmas Joy Offering gifts provide assistance for current and retired church workers and their families with critical financial needs.

Thank you in advance for your generosity in gift giving to the Christmas Joy Offering!

Celebrating Advent: Prepare the Way of the Lord

The season of Advent is a time to reflect on our many blessings, remember God's promises, practice patience (hopefully slowing down our busy-ness), and prepare our hearts to celebrate the birth of Jesus.



This year, as we continue to spend time apart, we encourage you to take time as a family to explore the meaning of Advent. We encourage our families to **sign up to receive an Advent Box** filled with an Advent calendar, devotions, activity suggestions, supplies for a craft, and more. All ages and everyone in the church is welcome and encouraged to participate, so boxes will be available both for families with children and for those without.



Sign up at fpccs.org or call the church office. Boxes will be available to pick up at the church beginning the week before advent (Nov. 22) or contact Jana to make arrangements for safe drop off at your home.

“Holiday “Angel Tree”

Our annual Pajama Drive for children in local Head Start programs **is** taking place. We are excited to continue this gift to children in our community.



Pajamas for
local children

However, this year sign ups will take place **ONLINE** rather than taking a tag from the tree. Visit fpccs.org to sign up for a child and learn which size pajamas to purchase. Those who prefer may call the church office at 586-6306 to sign up.

PJ's must be returned to the church, wrapped and tagged, by Monday, Dec. 7. (Please do not add anything extra to the gift. The children receive them as a group – they need to be equal.) Contact Janet Dobson with questions at 570-563-1887.

A note concerning Advent and Christmas in a pandemic:

Though we continue programming, worship, and other holiday activities, they are on a smaller scale than usual. We will not be doing our regular poinsettia display. There will be some poinsettias, but the number will be scaled down.

At this writing, the number of virus cases is increasing significantly. There is some concern that worship services and in-person meetings may need to be cancelled for another “brief” period. We hope not, but keep an eye on our web-page (fpccs.org), listen to recommendations given by local officials, and feel free to call or email the church if you are unsure.

Clothing Donations

St. Francis is now accepting
warm, winter clothing,
including coats.



Christian Education



It's for life!

THE W.A.Y.The Wednesday Adults and Youth Christian Education

“I am the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE

Classes Offered:

Grace & Faith (4 years old - Grade 5) can be experienced virtually at fpccsway-grace.blogspot.com anytime. Each week, you can hear the Bible story, sing songs, take time for prayer, and complete simple activities. In December, we will hear about *God's Peaceable Kingdom*, how to *Say Yes to God*, that *Nothing is Impossible*, and hear how *Shepherds Glorify God*.

We Believe (Grades 6 and up) is a virtual lesson found at fpccsway-believe.blogspot.com and can be completed whenever fits in your child's schedule. Each week will feature a Bible verse or story, reflection, and questions to ponder.

Adult Education

All are invited to an online Bible study on Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m., beginning on December 2. Rev. Carter's study is called “**Advent Through the Eyes of Those Who Waited,**” and it will lead us through some of the traditional scripture texts for the season. Each week, the study materials will be available through Light From the Hill, our weekly e-note. A link to sign on will be available for that note, as well as on our church's website. The study will meet on four Wednesdays: December 2, 9, 16, and 23.

The venerable group of guys who meet for the **Men's Breakfast** bible study will meet on two Thursdays, December 3 and 17. The group will meet safely in Fellowship Hall from 8:30 am until 10:00 am.

Check out our Online Advent Devotional

HOPE

will go "live" online on Sunday, November 29, the First Sunday of Advent. Each day until December 25, church members and others will offer a brief reflection on the theme of HOPE.

You can find the devotional by going to <https://adventfpccs.blogspot.com/> When you go to that page, you can also enter your email address (in the box marked "Follow by Email") and receive each day's post in your email.

Joys

Sorrows

Thank You Notes



- 1 Maggie Woolever
- 2 Debbie Shane
- 6 Gavin Kareha
- 7 Dylan Farrell
- 8 Ginny O'Brien
- 9 Betty Keen
- 14 Lucas Kareha
Linda Young
- 15 Lori Kareha
- 18 Kevin Shane
- 19 Aaron Cole
- 20 Brian Schillinger
- 21 Fred Campbell
- 22 Jeanne Comly
- 23 Denise Reinhart
- 24 Joanie Garnecki
- 28 Lou Kareha
Shirley McLaughlin
- 30 Liam Farrell



- 23 Jessie and Bill Davis



Sympathy of the congregation is extended to:

John Weiss and his family on the recent passing of his father, James.

Joan Thomas and family on the loss of her husband, Ron.

Sandra Bailey and family on the passing of her husband, Steuart.

Lectionary Readings

December 6:

Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13;
2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8

December 13:

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Psalm 126;
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28

December 20:

Isaiah 11:1-9; Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26;
Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38

December 27:

Isaiah 61:10-62:3; Psalm 148;
Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40

CALENDAR NEWS

While most of our committees and groups are still meeting virtually, some are testing the waters with in-person meetings. Masks and social distancing protocols are in place. Sprays are available to clean chairs and tables before and after each use.

Groups currently meeting in person are:

AA	7:00 a.m. each day
AlAnon	7:00 p.m. Wednesday
AlAnon	7:00 p.m. Thursday
Men's Breakfast	8:30 a.m. 1st & 3rd Thursday

Please be patient as we learn how our room can be adapted for social distancing.

December 2020

December 3	8:30AM—Men's Breakfast—Fellowship Hall 7:00PM—Christian Ed. Committee— Zoom ; 7:30PM—A & R—Sanctuary
December 6	10:00AM—Worship—Sanctuary
December 7	7:00PM—Mission & Justice— Zoom
December 8	10:00AM—MBK Quilters—Fellowship Hall
December 9	7:00PM—Bell Rehearsal—Sanctuary
December 10	7:30PM—A & R—Sanctuary
December 13	10:00AM—Worship—Sanctuary
December 16	7:00PM—Bell Rehearsal—Sanctuary
December 17	8:30AM—Men's Breakfast—Fellowship Hall
December 18	7:00PM—Arts Series: 3 Divas Concert—Sanctuary
December 20	10:00AM—Worship—Sanctuary 4:00PM—YouTube Broadcast of 3 Divas Concert
December 21	7:00PM—Blue Christmas Worship Service
December 22	7:00PM—Deacons— Zoom
December 24	4:00PM—Christmas Eve Service for families with young children 8:00PM—Traditional Service of Lessons and Carols—Sanctuary 11:00PM—Christmas Eve Jazz Service—reservations required
December 25	MERRY CHRISTMAS!
December 27	10:00AM—Worship—Sanctuary

Reservations are required for **all** **worship services.**

Our limit is 50.

For the safety of all concerned, we must be careful.



Church Office will close on December 24 at noon and remain closed on Christmas Day. The same is true for the following week: we will lock the doors at noon on December 31 and be closed on New Year's Day, as well.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

300 School Street
Clarks Summit, PA 18411-1536

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
Permit No. 30
P A I D
Clarks Summit PA

DATED MATERIAL

Return Service Requested



Our worship service is broadcast online at 10:00 a.m. on Sundays on [our video page on YouTube](#). There is also a link on [the church's Facebook page](#).

HOPE