

THE GRAPEVINE

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SANDPOINT, IDAHO
December 2018

FROM THE PASTOR...

After worship one Sunday this month, I mentioned to someone who was shaking my hand on their way out the door about an upcoming event. They looked interested and asked, "Is that information on the website?" I wasn't sure, even though the event takes place each year. As I write this article, I don't even remember correctly which event it was. It involved something like Advent evening devotionals (Tuesdays at 5 p.m.) or perhaps decorating the church for Christmas (Saturday, December 1, 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.). Whatever it was, it was standard for the life of a congregation during this time of year. But it reminded me of the complexities of communication in the digital age, and how we fill our lives with being busy.

For me, social media and use of the internet is still a second language and not my "go to" response in sharing about life. It's a new way of thinking when a traditional church event needs mentioned beyond a paper newsletter or bulletin announcement to also include a listing on the church website as an Event, along with the church Facebook page as a Post for an upcoming event. Social media adds steps to the planning process, but also helps get the word out, and are places people look if they have questions. These "platforms" also help highlight the life of the church, like the video of the bell choir that is mentioned in this newsletter. The video is on YouTube, but it's shown on Facebook, which also allows comments and sharing with others, and the conversation takes on a life of its own.

The other morning I turned on the computer and started looking online at some pages. Before I knew it, an hour had zipped by!

Screen time has a way of consuming the clock. All these social media outlets and the digital age of our culture, although they add so much, they can also add to stresses of already busy lives.

This highlights the importance of traditional aspects of the life of a congregation: meeting people face to face, having conversations over refreshments, worshipping together and participating as we are gifted to share, gathering for special events such as decorating and devotions. The only time I sing in public is during a worship setting. Yet singing is an amazing way of sharing with others and participating in life. Intentionally taking time to slow down helps us focus on the main reason of the Christmas message: God's love as a gift to us in Christ, as Jesus is born.

So as far as I can tell, the Advent Devotionals are listed as events through various outlets. They are on Tuesday evenings, December 4, 11, and 18, from 5:00 p.m. to 5:25 p.m. and they are intentional times to quiet our hearts from the rush of the holidays. Reflection, silence, scripture, and song, balanced in a gentle mix to help keep us centered not in virtual reality, but in the Ground of Being. We are invited on an inward journey, otherwise our lives will simply be stressful, frantic, and tiring. The gift of Christmas is for peace beyond understanding. Reduce the distractions and enter in.

Peace and All Good,
 Pastor Andy



BELL CHOIR

For those who follow links, you can click on this for a You Tube video of the Bell Choir playing, “It is well with my soul,” during worship on Christ the King Sunday, November 25. Thank you Bells for sharing! (And for Amy’s husband, Matt, for recording).

<https://youtu.be/8HwX9dy3-Ro>

PFLAG MEETING

The Session approved use of the building as a PFLAG meeting space. PFLAG stands for Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, which is a support group. First Presbyterian Church partners with Al-Anon and Alcoholics Anonymous, and makes the building available for concerts, recitals, and other uses. As a church providing welcome and hospitality, this added partnership helps PFLAG meet their growing need for space. PFLAG will meet in Fellowship Hall on the second and fourth Tuesday evenings of each month, starting January 2019.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

There will be a Congregational Meeting following worship on Sunday, December 9 to receive the report of the Nominating Committee and to approve updates to the Pastor’s Terms of Call. Please come to elect new Elders and Deacons and other church leaders, and to act on recommendations from the Personnel and Stewardship/Finance Committees.

SANDPOINT AREA SENIORS



The Presbyterian Church just surprised Sandpoint Area Seniors with a donation on “Giving Tuesday!” Pictured from left to right are Ellen Weissman, SASi Executive Director, Board members Loris Michael and Leslie Marshall, Presbyterian Church representative Millie Rinker, and Board members Dorothy Kohne and Bruce Wendle. These funds will go a long way to feed and care for our community’s seniors! Thank you so much!

CREATIVE WRITING

Following many years of exploring his calling into ministry, and more recently attending a Creative Writing Retreat at St. Gertrude's Monastery and participating in an ongoing Pastor's Learning Community Cohort through the Inland Northwest Presbytery, Pastor Andy is writing more.

Recognizing that much of Pastor Andy's work and calling in ministry involves writing, the Personnel Committee recommended to the Session that more time be allocated to writing, beyond the usual preparation for sermons. This will allow other types of writing which will also reach a larger audience than Sunday morning gatherings. The Session has authorized up to 10 hours a week to allow Pastor Andy to focus on writing and the inspiration behind it.

One of Pastor Andy's short stories has been submitted to The Reader, and may be printed in December, so keep your eyes open for Watching the Watcher. This is a spiritual reflection based on an actual experience on the mountainside at St. Gertrude's Monastery in October. Also included here is a poem written during that same retreat.

Monastic Herbs

someone once cared
enough to give
their Self
to grow

herbs now overrun
try to share
their essence
among the weeds

oregano and lemon balm
patiently give their glory
when crushed
the proof is strongest

no gardener has visited
where benches crack
and pathways crumble
as neglect grows

new trees establish
filling soft voids
with hard wood
bringing change-deepening roots

as shade comes
a new day
brings
dreams to an end



Come join the fun and fellowship as we decorate our beautiful church for Christmas on Saturday, December 1st at 1:00! Don't miss this good time as we work together.

Earth Care Postscripts

After reading Margaret Ann's thoughtful article about holiday environmental concerns, I became more observant about related topics in the news and advertisements. For instance, much gift-wrapping paper can be recycled, if it has no metallic trim. (Most ribbons & bows cannot be recycled.) Lego company is making an effort to "go green", although it seems painfully slow to me. The Lego pieces that depict trees and plants are made from plant-based, not petroleum-based, plastic. By 2030 they plan to use sustainable sources for all of their products and packaging. **

If you like to give coffee as a gift, or stock up for home use, you may wish to consider a coffee club approach with the Arbor Day Foundation* for shade-grown, sustainably grown coffee, with the bonus of tree plantings and water management. Also, your Earth Care Team is considering participation in the "Presbyterian Coffee Program" to purchase fair trade, organic coffee that supports organic farming, composting, and shade growing techniques. This program also includes a bonus: a percentage of the funds go to the Presbyterian Hunger Program.

Marilyn Robertson

**More information about these programs can be seen on the bulletin board.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND BONNER COUNTY HUMAN RIGHTS TASK FORCE RECONNECTING

The First Presbyterian Church and Bonner County Human Rights Task Force (BCHRTF) are reconnecting this year, 26 years after the organization began in 1992, with its first president, The Rev. Mary Robinson Mohr, pastor of our church. The Task Force was organized as a faith based idea, and many of its first meetings were in our church basement meeting room. Gary Payton, active in First Presbyterian Church, later was BCHRTF president.

At that time our choir had an exchange with an African American church in Spokane, with our choir singing at the Spokane church, and the Spokane choir singing here at First Presbyterian.

“BCHRTF is excited to think of the many future events that could once more bring us together—in support of a peaceful community where all are welcome, in which every individual can live without fear or intimidation, and in which everyone’s contribution is valued, respected and encouraged,” Brenda Hammond, current president stated.

Our church is already busy working for a peaceful, welcoming community. We had a performance in October by the World Relief Neema Children’s Choir; in November were Peace Pole celebrations on World Community Day, first to dedicate a Peace Pole at the Bonner County Library, and then a celebration at our own church. These were community events, and the community turned out.

We will be connecting with BCHRTF in an ongoing basis, and working with them to promote peace wherever possible, in a welcoming, respectful community. Look for future activities involving both groups.

Lynn Pietz



Operation Christmas Child

Another year of collecting shoe boxes has come to a close. As was seen on Sunday, November 11, the number of boxes made quite a sight in front of the pulpit. The final count was 12 for the boys and 12 for the girls! Many thanks to all participants. The boxes were delivered to the Baptist Church on Thursday, November 15th.

Tracy Gage

Membership and Outreach

A retreat called *An Autumn Pilgrimage for Your Soul* was held on Saturday, October 13, 2018. Its purpose was to explore and learn about faith journey and pilgrimage by walking labyrinths. Jolie Monasterio, retreat facilitator from Spokane, brought 3 moveable labyrinths (30' canvas, 20' canvas, and 10' plastic). The canvas ones were used outside in the glorious sunny day and the plastic one was used indoors, inside the circle of participants. There were seventeen participants plus the two presenters, Jolie and Robbin McCrum. Feed-back was overwhelmingly positive and it was fantastic to bring in such an accomplished facilitator to share her experience of walking labyrinths. The energy and enthusiasm to move forward with a labyrinth in the Community Peace Garden was high. The photo of the canvas labyrinth shows it placed about where the permanent one will be installed.

Friday, November 2nd was World Community Day. At noon, we hosted a community peacemaking event around the peace pole we called, Pause for Peace. The program was about 25 minutes and included prayers, poems, and songs. It was a wonderful way to share the Community Peace Garden and new gazebo donated by the Sandpoint Rotary Club. We served hot drinks under the gazebo and it was wonderful to greet the 40-45 folks who braved the chill for a hot mug and a shared celebration of community.

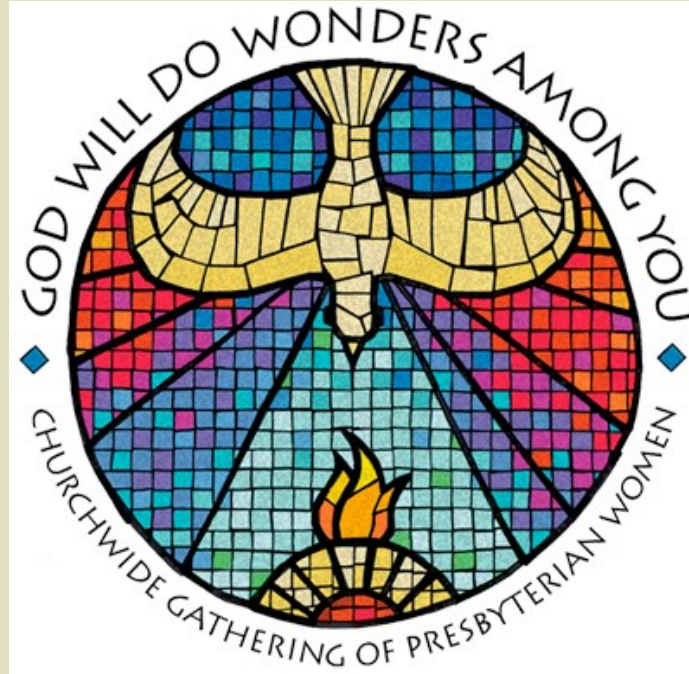
Hosting community events simply could not be done without the unwavering help from FPC members and friends. Please accept our heartfelt gratitude for your continued support.

The Membership and Outreach committee will meet again in January to brainstorm activities for the upcoming year. If you have any ideas about events or offerings and if you would like to come to a committee meeting, please do let Judy know.

As a reminder, our purpose: "The Membership and Outreach Ministry helps FPC friends and members engage in the larger community to put faith into action in positive ways. Connecting with others in a deep way helps to establish relationships. God is relational and experiential."

Blessings on the journey,
Judy Labrie, Ruling Elder - Membership & Outreach Committee





PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

The PW's met on November 13th. There was a lot of discussion regarding the Rummage Sale, Christmas decoration sale, and cookie sales. At this time, the Rummage sale is on hold. Cookie sale for benefit of the Betty Menser scholarship will be December 9th and 16th in Fellowship hall.

The Christmas decoration sale has been postponed until 2019. When taking down personal Christmas decorations, PW asks congregation members to sort and donate unwanted items to PW. Storage of decorations will be in the church basement where rummage sale items were held.

Members brought various food items for the Magnolia House Thanksgiving. Since residents all had holiday plans, the food items were donated to the Food Bank via Sylvia Humes. A Thanksgiving card was signed by members and delivered to the Magnolia House as a gesture of friendship.

Mary Sturgis lead the book study.

Due to a mix up – the speaker did not show for the Lilly Brook House program. However, Pastor Andy saved the day with a report from their website. The Lilly Brooke House addresses victims of Domestic violence, children through adult. All investigative work is done at the house rather than going to each department throughout the city. Children can play in a room until their time to go to court next door. A medical exam room is in the building permitting exam and treatment. This is a local expression of a national program.

The next meeting will be the Christmas potluck and carol sing-a-long December 11th. At that time decisions on together-in-service mission will be made.

Here is a glimpse at the last 16 hours in part of the life of the church...

After Tuesday's choir practice Sue Helander, Judy Labrie, and Mary Sturgis started creating the garland used to decorate the sanctuary for Christmas. When looking for the rope we used last year, we searched all over and couldn't find it, so one of them went and bought a new rope. In the meantime, I discovered during the search that the basement sump pump had failed, yet the water had not yet flooded. Standing in the church basement with a broken sump pump, I called Chuck Bauer, since he is familiar with this system. He asked if it would wait until morning, and it seemed like it would. The next morning, we both show up and it was about the same status. Not quite flooded, but the pump was broken. We removed the old pump, then he went and found a new pump, only better. He brought it to the church. It needed a part to connect it to the outflow pipe, so he went to the hardware store to find an adapter part and a hose piece. I got busy in the office and lost track of the process, so I went downstairs and by then Chuck had come and gone, the pump was in, and just as I stood there admiring his work it clicked on, sucked the water out, and it all is working great!

Thanks, Chuck Bauer for your behind the scenes work! You're FABULOUS! Thanks also to everyone who shared their joyful fellowship and service, like putting greenery together and decorating. The church is a people, and the people do the ministry. From ushers to elders, we are a community and YOU are appreciated and loved.

Peace,

Pastor Andy



December Birthdays

19	Brandon Casey
21	Marvelee Higgins
22	Geri Stockman
26	Lois Scott
30	Harry Menser and Phyllis Townsend

Calendar Announcements

December

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| 1 | Church Decorating—1:00-3:00 p.m. |
| 2 | Special Session Meeting after Worship |
| 4 | Advent Devotional—5:00-5:25 p.m. |
| 9 | Deacons Meeting—8:00 a.m. |
| 9 | Congregational Meeting after Worship |
| 11 | PW Christmas Potluck—11:45 at Dee Dreisbach's home |
| 11 | Advent Devotional—5:00-5:25 p.m. |
| 12 | Bella Note Christmas Concert—5:00 p.m. |
| 16 | Sandpoint Youth Orchestra Concert—3:30 pm. |
| 18 | Advent Devotional—5:00—5:25 p.m. |
| 18 | Session Meeting—6:30 p.m. |
| 24 | Christmas Eve Service—5:30 p.m. |
| 30 | Removal of Christmas Decorations after Worship |
| Dec. 25-Jan 2 | Office Closed, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! |

Regular Monthly Events

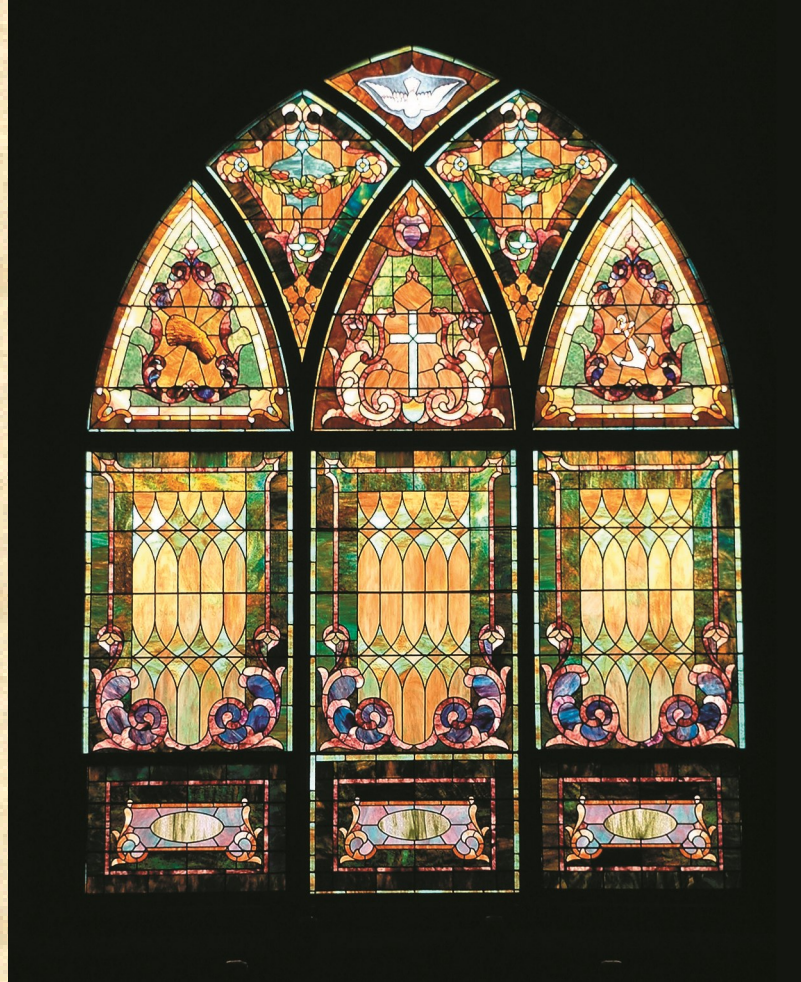
Sunday Worship—10:30 a.m.

Adult Christian Education—We are reading a book published by the Center for Action and Contemplation, the Richard Rohr group, called *Oneing – Anger*

Monday 6:00 p.m. Al-Anon

Tuesday Book Study Group—1:30 p.m.
 Contemplative Prayer Group—3:00 p.m.
 Choir Practice—5:30 p.m.
 PFLAG—Begins January 2019

Thursday 12:00 p.m. Al-Anon
 7:00 p.m.—Alcoholics Anonymous



First Presbyterian Church

Ministers: Members and Friends

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