



THE GRAPEVINE
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SANDPOINT, IDAHO
December 2019

From the Pastor

God is... God is... God is!

Usually we add other words, such as God is good, or God is love, or God is peace. The Bible uses metaphor to describe aspects of God, such as God being like a rock, or a present help in times of trouble, or a shepherd. But metaphors only point. No metaphor captures God's fullness. Only God can capture God's fullness, because capturing mystery or eternity is beyond our capacity as created beings. Saying "God is" is about as close as we can get to expressing the ongoing, living Presence of Divine goodness, love, grace, peace, etc....

As we enter into "The Holiday Season" our world encourages gift giving, which I suppose has its roots in God's gift of Jesus at Christmas. But watching or listening to the swirl of advertisements, it seems Jesus isn't featured on most sale ads. Instead we get bombarded with invitations to participate in a market economy that is based on separation of matter and spirit. Goods are cheapened. Materialism cannot fulfill spiritual hunger.

Charles Eisenstein writes about the need he sees in culture. He says, "Put succinctly, the essential need that goes unmet today, the fundamental need that takes a thousand forms, is the need for the sacred—the experience of uniqueness and connectedness...." He says, "Part of the healing that a sacred economy represents is the healing of the divide we have created between spirit and matter. In keeping with the sacredness of all things, ... I think we will love our things more and not less. We will treasure our

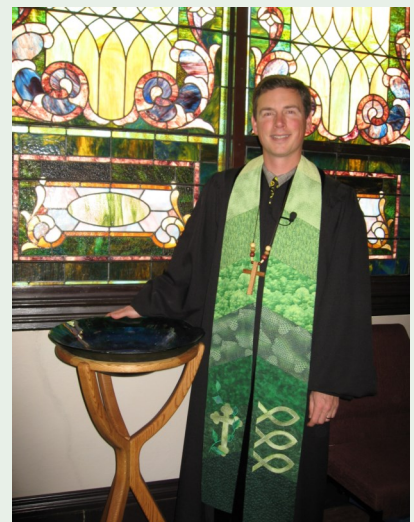
material possessions, honor where they came from and where they will go...."

Living in a Christ-soaked world, seasons like Advent and Christmas remind us that everything that "is" shares it's "is-ness" in and through Christ. Times of devotion, candlelight singing, and other special aspects of the Holidays are intended to slow us down, give us focus, and help open our hearts for God's love to both shine in, and out.

By honoring the Living Christ in all things, we take the Incarnation seriously, giving expression to the command, Love God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength, and love your neighbor, and love your Self. Life is relationship. Life is love. As we say, "Happy Thanksgiving" or "Merry Christmas" or "Happy Holidays," this is another way of inviting God's light to shine from within. That light is there, even if it sometimes feels faint or clouded over. But that light is there, because God is....

Peace

Pastor Andy



CHURCH LIBRARY

I'd like to remind everyone about the church library in the Fireside Room. There are books for everyone, from biographies to spiritual direction to secular novels to church history to Bible self-study to a variety of "miscellaneous". Checking out a book is super easy. Just write your name and the date you take the book on the checkout list in the red folder and then enter the date when you return the book. If anyone wants to donate books, just leave them in the Fireside room, but please let me know they're there.

Another thing in the Library is a cabinet of albums of photos and newspaper articles that go back quite a way. The church needs someone to maintain this archive, meaning put donated photos and articles in the albums. It takes very little time, but the church needs someone to be responsible to keep things filed. Please let Pastor Andy or me know if you'd be willing to help out.

Thanks, Anna Bates

THE PAINT BUCKET DONATIONS – THANK YOU!

The Paint Bucket has donated paints and stains to help with several projects at the church, including the Front Entry project, new office for the pastor, and door upgrades. As a shout out to their generosity, I'd like to feature a photo Jim Shirrell took as I put another coat of varnish on the new door for my office. Also, here is some wording from the website sharing a spotlight on The Paint Bucket business, which is located on Pine Street just west of Boyer Ave. There is more going on there than paint, but framing and local artists as well. If you stop by for business, be sure to say "Thanks!" for all the work we've been able to do at the church with their support.

ABOUT OUR STORE

The Paint Bucket opened in Sandpoint in January 1987. In addition to providing quality Benjamin Moore products we also sell wall coverings and tile and offer a complete custom picture framing service. The second floor gallery shows the work of local artists and photographers. We are here to help customers with all their decorating needs as well as advice on decorative painting, wood finishing, and furniture refinishing. Come in and experience the difference shopping at an independently-owned store makes. See for yourself how personalized service and premium products truly matter. And for those of you who've already experienced the difference of shopping at our store – thank you! As always, we're here and ready to help!



Pastor Andy and Jim Shirrell apply a protective coat of varnish on the new door for the pastor's office.

THE SESSION SUMMARY

November 2019

At first we were not going to have a regular Session meeting in November due to schedule conflicts. Instead we would meet briefly after a Sunday worship service to cover a couple items including recommendations from the nominating committee and the 2020 budget. But with some changes in plans, we met at our regularly scheduled time on November 19. Now you know; just in case you were wondering.

We approved the following upcoming activities:

- *Co-sponsoring a Human Rights Day Event on December 10, with the Bonner County Human Rights Task Force and the First Lutheran Church. Remember that our pastor and several members of our church were founding members of this task force.
- *Hosting a Christmas music concert by the Selkirk Brass with a tentative date of December 14.
- *Preparations are underway for Advent meditations on Tuesday evenings and the Christmas Eve Service. The offering from this service will be used for the General Fund mission of the church.
- *The open house Labyrinth Walk previously scheduled for December 10, will take place from 4:00-8:00 PM on December 3.

Finance elder, Dyno Wahl, reported that revenue projections are on target to meet the 2019 budget. Expenditures have been slightly higher than anticipated but we should end the year with a balanced budget. Budget preparations are underway for 2020.

Nominating Committee chair, Sharon Anderson, updated Session on developing a slate of elders, deacons and church officers for 2020. Please prayerfully consider service to our church.

The church is looking for a volunteer historian to chronicle the activities of our church.

The church was approached last month by a group attempting to develop a community warming center for homeless people. Their plan called for alternating between local churches with each one hosting for one night each week. After further exploration, that group decided to not go forward with this idea.

Pastor Andy announced that the World Council of Churches will meet in Germany in 2021. He is contemplating participating in this event. But being a pastor of many talents, Andy along with several volunteers have been installing new doors for the pastor's study, nursery and Fireside Room. These new doors have windows which are helpful for both convenience as well as security.

May God continue to bless our church as we approach the seasons of Advent and Christmas.

Bill Love, Clerk of Session

Prepare for Christ's birth in mind and spirit with Advent Devotionals

Mark your calendars and plan to attend our Advent Devotionals on Tuesdays at 5pm, December 3rd, 10th, and 17th. These brief, 25 minute, devotions will help us slow down, refocus, and reflect on the meaning of the season.

Ideas for Reclaiming Advent and Christmas

Here are some ideas from the Presbyterian Mission Agency to help us celebrate the birth of Christ in more meaningful ways.

Living in the Season. Society places many expectations on us to create “the best Christmas” by outdoing each other, or ourselves. Decide early in the season on what will be meaningful to you, and then plan how you will incorporate those choices into your activities.

Be Intentional. If you feel called to celebrate differently this year, be sure to talk with your loved ones to explain why you have decided to make a change. Be gentle in your explanations and invite others to journey with you through the process. Change is often hard so be prepared for questions and possibly resistance.

Pray and Renew. Holidays can be a great time to teach, learn, and write new prayers. Consider prayers from the PC(USA) Advent site: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/prayers-advent/>

Share the Work. The holidays are times of sharing, so encourage everyone to help with preparation. Decide as a family how you want to celebrate; let go of nonessentials to make room for quality time. Invite others to contribute a dish, table decoration, prayer, or other contribution, creating a table filled with the gifts of friends and family.

Slow Down, Make it Memorable. When we get caught up on shopping and preparations, it is easy to forget about Christ. Savor both the season and Christmas Day. Christmas is a holy day. Focus on activities that keep Christ in the forefront.

Remember. Take time to remember loved ones who have passed. Recall stories to honor each one. If you have experienced a recent loss, allow time to grieve and care for yourself. If you know someone else who has recently experienced a loss, reach out and connect with them. Let them know you care.

Serve and Share. Find a way to volunteer or make donations.

Retreat and Rest. Treat yourself to quiet time. Incorporate prayer, nature, art – whatever feeds your soul and engenders holy rest in this holy season.

Contemplative Advent Services

Tuesday Evenings December 3, 10, 17, 5:00 - 5:25 pm
Presbyterian Church of Sandpoint - 417 N Fourth Ave

Taize style singing & chant

Scripture readings

Devotional message

Time for silent contemplation



Labyrinth Walk Open House

Tuesday, December 3, 4:00 - 8:00 pm
Presbyterian Church of Sandpoint - 417 N Fourth Ave



Come for an experiential, self-guided prayer practice in Fellowship Hall.
Enter into the season by mindfully walking the age-old meandering path.



Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

December 24, 5:30 - 6:30 pm

First Presbyterian Church of Sandpoint

417 North Fourth Avenue

December Birthdays

19 Brandon Casey

21 Marvelee Higgins

22 Geri Stockman

26 Lois Scott

30 Harry Menser

30 Phyllis Townsend

Regular Monthly Events

Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.

Sunday 9:00 a.m. Adult Christian Education

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—Second & Fourth Tuesdays at 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday 6:00 p.m. Al-Anon

Thursday 12:00 p.m. Al-Anon

7:00 p.m.—Alcoholics Anonymous

Calendar Announcements

December

- 1 Special Session Meeting after worship to approve the 2020 budget
- 3 *Labyrinth Walk Open House—4:00 to 8:00 p.m.*
- 3 *Advent Service—5:00 to 5:25 p.m.*
- 3 *Committee Budget Deadline*
- 8 *Congregational Meeting after service*
- 8 *Betty Menser Cookie Sale after service*
- 10 *Presbyterian Women Meeting—11:45 a.m.*
Christmas Pot Luck
- 10 *Advent Service—5:00 to 5:25 p.m.*
- 10 *Human Rights Day Presentation 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.*
Held at First Lutheran Church
- 14 *Selkirk Brass Christmas Concert 5:00 to 6:00 p.m.*
- 15 *Betty Menser Cookie Sale after service*
- 17 *Advent Service—5:00 to 5:25 p.m.*
- 19 *Session Meeting 6:30 p.m.*
- 24 *Christmas Eve Candlelight Service—5:30 to 6:30 p.m.*



First Presbyterian Church

Ministers: Members and Friends

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