



THE GRAPEVINE
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SANDPOINT, IDAHO
 December 2022

From the Pastor...

Last night I was whining to my wife, Shawna about cultural confusions of Christmas. I mentioned (with a bit of sarcasm in my tone of voice) how so many people think Christmas is about Rudolph the red nosed reindeer and Santa Claus. Then we turned on the television, and I switched a couple channels. There it was: the Burl Ives hosted Rudolph show. Remember the old animation where puppets were moved, frame by frame? It's a Christmas classic and Shawna's eyes lit up when she saw it was on. Of course, we had to watch it. No more sarcasm, only fond memories of actual fear as a child in the scenes of the Abominable Snow Monster, and relief when the young dentist elf pulled out the sharp teeth. Whew! It is a fantastic show.

At the commercial break, I noticed television marketers targeted older people with gray hair looking for health insurance coverage. That was the demographic watching this show? It seems to resonate with a certain generation, and Shawna and I are now in that audience.

I also remember that my friends in Australia assume a traditional Christmas means spending the day on the beach, relaxed with family on the shore. Very different than our snowy scene and stormy travels from the North Pole.

Cultural and religious traditions seem to trip over each other this time of year. Christmas is one of those markers that is too big to pin down to one expression. Many of these view

Christmas as transactional. We exchange gifts, do what's expected, and keep the economy going. We receive Jesus and are told God (who often seems much like Santa Claus with those lists) is appeased. We set up trees, lights, and decorations, give presents, make special meals, and play songs of the season. But Christmas can be much more. Cultural traditions, religious observances, and family nostalgia are not big enough to hold the implications of the birth of Christ.

The greatest gift is not transactional, but transformational. A Christ-centered life that helps us grow more and more into Love's Essence changes everything. In Advent, we prepare our hearts because the gift of Christ to the world is received in our hearts. Christ lives there already and comes to Christ's own. We open our hearts not to prepare room, but to allow space as the Spirit grows our awareness and we live, move, and have our being.

This is the source of joy that is repeated through the ages. Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again. May our hearts continue to receive Christ, born in and through the transformational gift of God.

"What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." (John 1:4-5)

Peace and All Good,
 Pastor Andy



THE SESSION SUMMARY – DECEMBER 2022

Session met on November 15, 2022. We welcomed Lorraine Carter who presented her request to use church facilities for a Montessori-based Parent/Toddler Program.

The proposed program will be one and a half hours for one or two days per week, preferably in the morning. Toddlers, no more than four-five, and their parents will attend each session. Parents will participate in a separate weekly meeting for counseling and instruction without their children. Each session will last six to eight weeks and, if there is sufficient interest, a second session will run concurrently. If approved, Lorraine will use the former pastor's study next to the church office.

Session agreed to make a decision on this request by December 7th. In the meantime, we will review the current building use fee structure and inquire with our agent regarding our church insurance coverages for this type of activity.

In other business, Session approved a preliminary budget for 2023 based upon an anticipated revenue of \$131,000 with expenses of \$129,515. Compared to the 2022 budget, the most significant change is a \$32,600 reduction in Pastoral Leadership (pastor salary, housing allowance and benefits). This results in a 20-hour week for the pastor. The proposed budget may require amending based upon pending pledges and other sources of revenue.

Good news might be coming for those who have trouble hearing during services in the sanctuary. An audio technician gave our system a thorough inspection and recommended that we first try new microphones to see if that improves the sound quality. It's like a mechanic changing the spark plugs before replacing the engine. Keep your fingers crossed and your ears open.

We have two important congregational meetings coming up in the next few weeks. The meeting on December 11, 2022 will include approving the pastors' terms of call for 2023, election of officers and leaders, and a presentation of the 2023 budget. The Annual Meeting of the Congregation will take place on January 29, 2023. Annual reports for church programs and activities are presented during this meeting.

Thanks to 21st Century technology, approximately 18 people participated in the first Advent Devotional. Before starting the devotional, we noted folks "attending" from Washington, Oregon, Montana, Ohio and, don't forget, Idaho. Either from the fireside room or in front of a computer screen, we listened to the centuries-old words from the prophet Isaiah while singing familiar Taize chants. Join us on the next three Tuesday evenings at 6:00 PM, Pacific Standard Time.

Peace as we listen for God's call during this time of Advent,

Bill Love, Clerk of Session

Esript – Do you know about this program?

Yokes Grocery has a community giving program called Esript. Funds from your grocery shopping, by a percentage, go toward the charity of your choice. There is more than one merchant that participates, but in our area only Yokes does this. A list is on the website. Should you choose to sign up, and carry your reward card, or register your credit card, you will get credit for your shopping. On a monthly basis the church will get a check deposited and (according to the website) a report of who gave the funds.

Where is this money now? Currently the funds that come in are internally allocated to the Deacons. The Deacons meet monthly (all are always welcome) and we try and give the funds to mission work. That may be giving some to Pastor Andy for discretionary situations like a gift card for food. It may be adding toward funds we are giving to a charity, such as the Food Bank; the Senior Center; the Freedom House/Magnolia House; Food for Our Children, and others. We don't get a substantial amount, but every little bit adds up.

How do I sign up? You could go to the customer service counter at Yokes. You can go to this link:

<https://yokes.loyaltylane.com>. Or you can find a box to click on, which is located on the front page of www.yokes.com (takes you to the first link). There is also a FAQ section to answer many more questions.

Do all my funds have to go to FPC? No – you get 3 choices and if you pick more than one, your contribution is divided between your selections. Note – if you go to Yokes, and never hand the cashier your reward card, nor do you register your credit card, zero funds go to the charity. They don't automatically know unless you register your credit card.

We encourage everyone to sign up for this no cost, easy way to give to the church. It does not dilute your current pledge. It just gives us all an opportunity to give more in an easy fashion. We don't all shop regularly at Yokes, but likely we go sometimes in a twelve month period. So please consider signing up. If you need help, please let me know and I will work to help you.

Carol Curtis, Deacon

December 2022

Stewardship, Finance, Memorial

2023 Stewardship Pledge: Much appreciation to those already completing a stewardship pledge for 2023. This is a big assist in finalizing the budget for the new year. All friends and members are encouraged to submit a stewardship pledge by December 4th, 2022. (A copy of the form is included below for your use.)

Per Capita Update: Each year, FPC sends dollars to support the General Assembly, Synod, and Presbytery. The assessment for 2022 was thirty-seven dollars (\$37) per member or \$2775. For members and friends wishing to make an extra gift to offset this expense, please write “per capita” on the designation line of checks, offering envelopes, etc. At the time of this note, FPC had received \$1,918 in revenue toward the 2022 assessment.

End of Year Gifts: If you are considering a year end gift to the church, it would be helpful to receive these by the final Sunday in December (the 25th) in order to be deposited prior to the end of the fiscal year.

Session Updates related to finance and memorial:

Tentative 2023 Budget: Session approved a tentative budget of \$131,000 for next year with the final budget to be adjusted as needed based on pledges received and end of year revenue/expense information. This budget has been reduced \$25,800 dollars from the current annual budget of \$156,800. Final information will be presented during the January annual meeting.

Memorial Fund:

Session designated the gifts of \$2000 received in Lois Scott’s name to be applied to the memorial fund and utilized as needed for the care of the hand bells, tone chimes and associated equipment and music expenses.

Session passed a motion to spend up to \$15,000 for the cost of furnace repair and improvement with up to \$5000 of this cost to be applied from the memorial fund.

Building Fund: Session action to spend up to \$15,000 toward the cost of furnace repair and improvement included approval of up to \$5000 of this cost to be applied from the building fund.

Finance Update:

At the end of October, FPC had received \$11,342 dollars less than the anticipated budget and had expended \$1,135 dollars less than the budget.

FPC 2022 Revenue and Expense Budget (10 months)	Income Received (10 months)	Income Variance (10 months)		Expenses (10 months)	Expense Variance (10 months)
\$130,667	\$119,324	-\$11,342		\$129,532	\$1,135

Final revenue and expense information for November was not available at the time of this note; however, revenue received through November 20th had substantially closed the budget gap. Year to date revenue was \$141,066 or \$2667 dollars less than budgeted.

Respectfully submitted,
Paula Vincent, Elder for stewardship, finance and memorial

2023 STEWARDSHIP PLEDGE

Thank you for your support of the ministries and mission of FPC of Sandpoint. We believe God calls us to be generous and joyful givers of our time, talents and resources.

To aid in budget development, it would be helpful to receive this pledge form by December 4, 2022. Pledges and gifts may be mailed, placed in the secure drop box or placed in the Sunday offering plate at First Presbyterian Church of Sandpoint, 417 N 4th Ave., Sandpoint, Idaho 83864. Alternatively, you may give online <https://www.fpcsandpoint.org/give/#stewardship> or email this info to Susie Haskins, Financial Secretary: willandsoozie@gmail.com

\$ _____ total annual gift

I wish to pay \$ _____ per (week month quarter year). Please circle one.

Per Capita Information. FPC sends dollars each year to support the General Assembly, Synod, and Presbytery. The assessment in 2023 is thirty-nine dollars (\$39) per member. For members and friends wishing to make an extra gift to offset this expense, please write "per capita" on the designation line of checks, offering envelopes, etc.

In addition to financial support, we welcome gifts of time and talent. Please indicate areas you have interest in (check all that apply).

<input type="checkbox"/> Buildings and grounds	<input type="checkbox"/> Music
<input type="checkbox"/> Christian education	<input type="checkbox"/> Retreats
<input type="checkbox"/> Earth care	<input type="checkbox"/> Technology
<input type="checkbox"/> Fellowship	<input type="checkbox"/> Visioning Task Force
<input type="checkbox"/> Finance	<input type="checkbox"/> Worship
<input type="checkbox"/> Membership	Other: _____

Name(s): _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Three claps for...

Thank you Don Deters, Don Helander, Judy Labrie, Cynthia Dalsing and Sue Helander for cleaning and rearranging the sanctuary on November the 12th. Cynthia decluttered the room where our bells are located and also put some muscle into cleaning a white board that was never cleaned after being used many moons ago! Judy prepared the setting for our guest speaker, Becky Rempe on November 13th.

Thank you Dyno Wahl, Marian Cox, Mary Bauer, Mary Sturgis, and Lynn Pietz for contributing chili and cornbread, as well as Judy Labrie, Sally Moon, Mary Bauer, and Marian Cox with help for setup and clean up.

FOOD BANK RACE with FIRST METHODIST

We're now at the halfway point, have completed our fourth week, and Monday, Victory Oliver, Chuck and Mary Bauer, and Dave and Lynn Pietz took our food donations to The Food Bank. Thanks to the Bauers and their covered back truck, it was easy to load and transport the many canned goods and other food items.

We now have donated a total in "food" weight of 471 #. We have had several check donations which have not been counted yet. They will amount to every \$2 = 1 pound.

Now come the next two weeks cycle, with our food box ready to be filled again. Keep on bringing those food items; we want The Food Bank full to overflowing!



CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING

A Special Offering

Throughout Advent, especially on the Sunday before Christmas (December 18, 2022), we will be participating in the Christmas Joy Offering. This Offering has been a cherished Presbyterian tradition since the 1930s.

50% of the Christmas Joy Offering is distributed to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions

50% is distributed to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color

The **Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions** provides critical financial support to current and retired church workers and their families. For example, Rev. Ben Franklin Whitfield retired in 2007 and had a stroke in 2021. After hospitalization and rehabilitation, Rev. Whitfield was discharged home to be cared for by his wife. Facing financial hardship after a lifetime in ministry serving primarily rural congregations with limited budgets, the Whitfield's received support from the Assistance Program. Funds from the Assistance Program are also available to current pastors and other church workers facing hardship (pcusa.org).

Presbyterian-related schools and colleges provide education and leadership development while nurturing racial and ethnic heritage. This has been a Presbyterian commitment for nearly 140 years. Currently, \$1.1 million from Christmas Joy gifts is being used to provide education and leadership development to students attending Presbyterian-related schools and colleges, many of whom are the first in their families to enroll in higher education. Schools being supported include:

[Manual School](http://mmanualschool.com), Albuquerque, NM (mmanualschool.com)

Manual School is the most diverse private high school in the Albuquerque area, with students from 15-20 countries attending each year. It is ranked the best Christian high school and 5th best private high school in New Mexico by Niche (niche.com).

[Presbyterian Pan American School](http://ppas.org), Kingsville, TX (ppas.org)

Over the past 25 years, students enrolled in this high school have come from 26 countries. 100% of graduates are accepted into colleges and universities in their home countries or in the US.

[Stillman College](http://stillman.edu), Tuscaloosa, AL (stillman.edu)

Stillman has been selected a College of Distinction from 2019 to 2022 for Christian education, Teacher education, Support of Military and Veteran Students, Preparing Business leaders, and Equity and Inclusion (collegesofdistinction.com/school/stillman-college). The student body is 87% first generation in college.

Kyley Thompson, a Stillman graduate now enrolled in graduate school at the University of Alabama said, "The money you give goes directly to students and keeps them in college. Like me, many students often feel like they are hanging by a thread. Your donation fills in the threads and makes a rope..." (pcusa.org).

Judy McComish/Elder, Missions



Choir Practice every Tuesday 5:15 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Choir Practice Sunday's December 4, & 18, 2022 at 11:45 a.m.

Sacrament of Communion Sunday December 4, 2022 during worship

Advent Tuesday December 6, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Bella Note' Recital Wednesday December 7, 2022 from 2p.m to 8:30 p.m.

Deacon Meeting Sunday December 18, 2022 after worship

Advent Tuesday December 13, 2022 6:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Suzuki String Academy Concert December 14, 2022 6:30 p.m.

Advent Tuesday December 20, 2022 6:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Christmas Eve Services Saturday December 24, 2022 5:30 p.m.



DECEMBER

BIRTHDAYS

December Birthdays

19 Brandon Casey
22 Geri Stockman
30 Phyllis Townsend



First Presbyterian Church

Ministers: Members and Friends

Pastor Andy Kennaly

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