

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER
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Second Presbyterian Church Newsletter December 2023



Seeking and Serving Christ, We are a Place for Growing Christians.

Join us on December 24 @ 9:00 a.m. for the 4th Sunday of Advent
then again
Christmas Eve at 6:30 p.m.
for a
Service of Lessons and Carols

Preparing the Way



Sunday, December 3, is the First Sunday of Advent and communion will be celebrated during the worship service. We hold an open communion at Second Presbyterian Church which means all believing Christians are welcome to participate. We also invite you to bring non-perishable food items for **The Ecumenical Food Pantry at First Presbyterian Church**. We do so knowing that it is our privilege to feed the hungry and care for the poor as we are fed and sustained by the grace of God.

Lectionary for December

First Sunday of Advent – December 3: Isaiah 64:1-9; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; 1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37

Second Sunday of Advent – December 10: Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13; 2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8

Third Sunday of Advent – December 17: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Psalm 126 or Luke 1:46b-55; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28

Fourth Sunday of Advent – December 24: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Luke 1:46b-55 or Psalm 89: 1-4, 19-26; Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38

Nativity of the Lord (Christmas Eve)-December 24: Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14[15-20]

Nativity of the Lord (Christmas Dawn)-December 25: Isaiah 62:6-12; Psalm 97; Titus 3:4-7; Luke 2:[1-7]8-20

Nativity of the Lord (Christmas Day)-December 25: Isaiah 52:7-10; Psalm 98; Hebrews 1:1-4 [5-12] John 1:1-14

First Sunday of Christmas – December 31: Isaiah 61:10 – 62:3; Psalm 148; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40

Christmas Joy Offering

The Christmas Joy Offering will be received Sunday, December 24 at the 9:00 a.m. service. This offering supports the work of Presbyterian racial ethnic schools and also provides supplemental income and medical insurance for former ministers, missionaries, church workers, and their families. There are Christmas Joy envelopes in the pews, but you may also specify that your offering is for Christmas Joy.



Rescue Mission Lunches

Saturday, **December 2**, please join us in the church kitchen to assemble bag lunches for the Saginaw Rescue Mission. This will be a recurring event on the **first Saturday of each month**. We will meet at 9:30 A.M. in the church kitchen (Please enter from parking lot through Fellowship Hall door) to visit and share in the work of making sandwiches and lunches for those struggling with hunger. Many hands make light work! We look forward to seeing you as we gather to help those in need.





Florence Gilmour Circle

All women of the church are invited to join us on **Wednesday, December 13**, at Sullivan's Food and Spirits 5235 Gratiot Rd, Saginaw, MI 48638, at 9:30 a.m. If you plan to attend, please reach out to Carol Poole @989-793-7485.

2nd @ Second

As December is a busy month for many, 2nd @ Second will not meet for the month of December but will resume after the first of the year. Further information will be provided in the bulletin with exact dates. Have a wonderful Christmas!



Dear Friends,

I really enjoy the Christmas season. The music, cookies, and decorations add so much to this holiday, but this is especially true of Christmas lights. The lights create such a warm, comforting, and festive atmosphere. Whether they are illuminating people's homes and reflecting off the snow or giving a sparkle to the Christmas tree and providing a warm glow inside the house, I absolutely love Christmas lights.

Christmas lights can provide a respite from the stresses of this season. I am well-aware that this time of year comes with added challenges. Stores are crowded and people start to run out of patience. As Christmas day approaches, the pressure builds to get all those cards sent out and to find the perfect gifts without going broke in the process. Extra get-togethers and events get squeezed into schedules that are already packed full. There can be heartache as loved ones are missed and tension as unresolved conflicts reemerge. On top of that, all the suffering, violence, hatred, and darkness of this world continues to creep into our lives.

Even if Christmas lights provide some comfort in this darkness, those lights will eventually burn out or be taken down. They do not last. But that leads us to another kind of light. A light that shines bright in the darkness. A light that brings hope, peace, joy, and love. A light that is everlasting. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." [John 8:12] This will be our theme during these weeks of Advent. Join us as we walk through the Christmas story and celebrate the hope, peace, joy, and love that Jesus brings to us.

I encourage you to fully enjoy all the Christmas lights and everything else that is a part of this wonderful season, but let us also keep our focus on the true light, Jesus Christ. As the saying goes, Jesus is the reason for this season. Have a blessed Christmas!

In Christ,

Pastor Ruth

MISSION NEWS



The Christmas gifts for the Angel Tree mission are due **Sunday, December 10** so they may be distributed to the children before Christmas. Angel Tree provides gifts to children of incarcerated parents. Tags with suggested gift items for each child will be available for pickup at the church. Thank you for your generosity and support to those most vulnerable in our community.

Thank you to the congregation for your support of the stocking collection for homeless veterans through the "I Support the 1%" Veterans Food Pantry!! With the generosity of the congregation, we have been able to spread holiday cheer to 34 veterans this Christmas with goodies and personal items.



To keep the congregation abreast of the budget and financial needs of the church we will continue to update the congregation monthly in the church newsletter. We thank you for your commitment to the ministry and your ongoing support for the programs here at Second Presbyterian Church.

Financial Report as of 10/31/2023	
Income	183,703.32
Expense	162,193.74
Excess	21, 509.58

Give Online!



We thank those of you who have utilized our new online giving option! As you've heard, we partnered with the Presbyterian Foundation for a new, easy to use, online giving tool! You can scan this QR code with your smart phone to set up online giving. You can also visit our website, www.spcsaginaw.org, and click the "Give Now" button. You can use this for one-time giving, or to set up recurring giving! Thank you for your gifts to Second Presbyterian Church!





2023 End of Year Contributions

The IRS requires that donors must hand deliver or mail (the postmark must be on or before December 31, 2023) to claim a deduction for 2023. Giving in 2024 and predating a check for 2023 does not qualify for a 2023 deduction.

Stewardship



We have received 47 Estimates of Giving for 2024. If you have not already done so, please turn in your **2024 Estimate of Giving** slip (one is enclosed in this newsletter) by either mailing it to the church or dropping it in the offering plate. We are working on our budget for 2024 and many programs of the church depend upon your Estimate of Giving. Thank you for your faithfulness!

Inclement Weather Policy

When Saginaw Township Schools have been closed due to inclement weather (snow, ice, temperatures, etc.), any church programming for that day will also be cancelled. This includes any activity of the church or outside groups that use church facilities. Examples are (but not limited to): Session, Committee meetings, Choirs, Bible Study, Women’s Circle, Community events.



Harvest Dinner Thank You

A huge Thank You to everyone who attended, contributed to, and provided food for the Harvest Dinner on November 12. Many hands made wonderful, delicious food to share with the 105 people who attended. Thank You to our turkey roasters, Kristin Fowler, Jody Hoepfner, Kitty Myers, Alan Poplewski, and Connie Sedgwick. The dinner was an incredible success! Looking forward to next year!

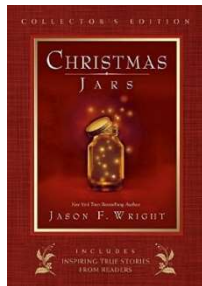


Boy Scout Troop 321



The Boy Scouts would like to express their gratitude for the Christmas wreaths and greens that members of the church ordered. This is one of the only fundraisers that the Scouts raise money for their camping trips and summer camp. Thank You! **Reminder:** If you ordered wreaths or greens, they will be ready for pick-up December 3 after worship.

Random Acts of Kindness A Book Group for Christmas



To get into the holiday spirit, we are going to have our first Christmas inspired book club. The book is “Christmas Jars” by Jason F. Wright. Grab a copy or download the book, read it over the next several weeks, then we will meet on Thursday, December 7 @ 6:00 p.m. to discuss the book, eat some treats and enjoy some holiday fellowship! Please bring a treat to share with others. Coffee, tea, and water will be provided. No need to sign-up, just show up.

2024 Per Capita Apportionment

Per Capita is part of being a Presbyterian and connecting to the Presbyterian Church as a whole. It is part of the glue that holds Presbyterians together. The per capita for 2024 amount is \$29.50 per member (not per household). It goes to General Assembly, Synod of the Covenant and the Presbytery. If each member pays their Per Capita amount above their regular giving then pressure on our budget is reduced. Please mark Per Capita on your check or envelope. If you have not paid the Per Capita for 2023, you have until December 31st.



Maintenance Custodian Second Presbyterian Church

This is a second custodial position that will help with a variety of regular maintenance tasks outside of the current custodian’s job description and be a backup for when the current custodian is on vacation or sick. It requires a person who is flexible and on call. This task is broken down into several duties performed throughout the church interior and exterior, throughout the day or at other regular intervals. Job Description and applications can be found on the cart outside the church office.



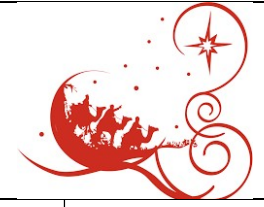
**We will have Sunday school on December 10th and December 17th.
Sunday school will then resume on January 7th 2024.**





Second Presbyterian Church

December 2023



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 Rescue Mission Lunches 9:30 a.m.
3 9:00 a.m. Worship First Sunday of Advent Communion 	4	5	6 Bell Rehearsal 6 p.m. Chancel Choir 7 p.m.	7	8	9
10 9:00 a.m. Worship Sunday School 	11	12	13 Florence Gilmore Circle @ Sullivan's 9:30 a.m. Bell Rehearsal 6 p.m. Chancel Choir 7 p.m.	14	15	16
17 9:00 a.m. Worship Sunday School 	18	19	20 Bell Rehearsal 6 p.m. Chancel Choir 7 p.m.	21	22	23
24 9:00 a.m. Worship Christmas Eve Service 6:30 p.m. 	25 Office Closed	26	27	28	29	30
31 9:00 a.m. Worship						