



The Compass

January-February
2022

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH—Portland, Indiana

Pastoral Perspectives —A Call to Prayer for Vocational Discernment at Christmastide through Epiphany into the New Year

It is a time of renewal in yearly resolutions if that should be one's sense of calling for this year. Once again, as we might rededicate ourselves, given fresh occasion, to resolve with renewed determination toward desired goals, hopes, dreams, and aspirations, it can sometimes feel daunting to give proper consideration of these with requisite due diligence and discipline. Another holiday season ending brings opportunity for shared reflection together in the bleak midwinter. Amidst currently unseasonably warm weather, a new year of new beginnings provides occasion once more—while in the wake of the winter solstice after Advent—for readers to reconsider life and living lifestyles as we venture together forward in faith.

I missed writing for The Commercial Review this time last year (2020). I am rewriting my submission for December 2021 as a prologue to 2022. I'm thinking of it as a way of exercising due diligence and praying in the new year by asking God for renewed desire, discipline, and determination as I endeavor to reup my commitment(s) for the new year at hand.

The last month at the end of a tumultuous year after the 21st century's first two decades marked a world challenging time in the new millennium. The repercussions of the initial twelve months or so following the novel coronavirus' spread amidst the continuing current global pandemic are increasingly manifest upon further transmission of ongoing variants today.

Throughout many months of thoughtful consideration and compassionate concern for public health alongside caring about one another's safety and security, we have endured lockdowns, observed social distancing, encouraged equipping with personal protective equipment (PPE), and bore the witnessing of mass protests, civic unrest, and insurrection. A growing awareness of our dire need for each other's well-being in communities of faith is an ever-prescient reality for ministry in these days.

The twelfth of last month (December 2021) marks seventeen years of my ordination as Minister of Word and Sacrament. I continually treasure observing each renewal of vows during Advent into Christmastide through Epiphany with an offering of intercessory prayers for those prayerfully considering and discerning a sense of call to ministry. I felt led in my prayer life recently to visit a midwestern seminary campus to pray on site with insight to bear upon such intercessions before the throne of grace.

While serving on presbytery's commission on preparation for ministry that supports seminary students as inquirers and candidates in ministry, I have witnessed the decline in numbers of prospective ministers in the past decade and a half. At the very moment(s) in society when people of faith have increased need of pastoral leadership and spiritual direction, a decrease among those yet to be called and raised for such a time as this remains upon us.

Along with a multitude experiencing life transitions as well as grief and loss accompanied by worldwide economic distress affecting people's living conditions, livelihood, and effecting their dislocation/relocation and/or redeployment due to need for family support and income from employment, among these are ministers who have recently left pastoral positions out of necessity. In view of these concerning events, a call to intercede through prayer seems in order.

Dear faithful witnesses in the Lord: Would you offer up a prayer with me and with others on these holy days of Christmastide through Epiphany into the New Year? With thanksgiving and praise in advance, let us pray that the Lord of the harvest would raise up pastoral leaders that will help shepherd the people of God among us. We have a sure and fervent hope that does not disappoint—the hope of glory that is Christ within you and me. By the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, we are blessed with peace, joy, and love that sustains and carries us through the difficulties we encounter in our own day and time. To God be the glory in the Spirit of our Shepherd King,

Pastor Rex Espiritu

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CHRISTMAS PAGEANT 2021



*Christmas Pageant photos by
Claire Smith*



After a one-year hiatus, due to Covid-19, the Christmas Pageant returned to FPCP with great joy on the Third Sunday of Advent. Thank you to the cast and crew for making this year's pageant so special. If you missed the pageant live, you may view it on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1759764087553626>

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT 2021



Christmas Pageant 2021 cast and crew

PER CAPITA 2022

It's that time of year again to start thinking about Per Capita giving. Presbyterians are connected in many ways, including our church government. Per capita is a way that all of the nearly 11,000 congregations, presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are connected to serve God in the wider world.

Per capita makes it possible for Presbyterians to govern ourselves the way we do. **Per Capita brings Presbyterians together — literally!** We invite you to prayerfully consider contributing **\$42.29 for each confirmed member** to this year's Per Capita Fund. **Please keep in mind that we as a church pay Per Capita on each active member whether or not you contribute to the fund.**

BREAD OF LIFE

The next Bread of Life Community Dinner First Presbyterian Church will host is on Monday, January 31.

If you want to help serve or if you would like to provide some of the food, please contact Julia Schwomeyer at 726.4761 or call the church office at 726.8462.



Monday, January 3



Annual Congregational Meeting

Sunday, February 13, 2022 following Worship

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING Please plan on attending!



JANUARY

- 04 Conner Teeter
- 05 Michelle Trinidad
- 10 JB Goodrich
- 12 Mike Ayers
- 19 Angie Scott
- 20 Gloria Green
- 26 Steve Arnold
- 27 Marsha Bisel
- Martha Sue Ronald
- 28 Susan Johnsonbaugh

FEBRUARY

- 04 Gary Smith
- 05 Eric Trinidad
- 10 Cleo Cripe
- 11 Carolyn Scott
- 14 Teresa Antonio
- Debbie Myers
- 20 Elly Byrum
- Isabelle Byrum
- 22 Bev Priest
- 25 Leora Engle
- 26 Eric Byrum



Isn't it lovely to have Church family!
Photo by Claire Smith

BIBLES PRESENTED AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

Bibles were recently presented to our 3rd Grader Sam and our high school graduating senior, Sara. Allison, our other graduating senior, was unable to attend the presentation.

Christian Education Committee presented the Bibles, as they do every year, to all of our 3rd Graders and graduating seniors. Photos by Claire Smith.

Editor's Note: It is the policy of "The Compass" to refrain from publishing names of children pictured in order to protect their privacy and identity since our newsletter is published on the church website. Adults may be identified in certain circumstances.



CHOIR MEETING SCHEDULED

Attention First Presbyterian Choir Members: It's been a long time since we gathered as a choir...twenty-one months in fact. The Worship and Music Committee and Linda Rodden think it's time we discussed getting back together to sing on a regular basis. But, we need to hear from you about your comfort level and what will work or not work for you to participate.

On Sunday, January 9 we will hold a meeting of the choir immediately following the service. The gathering will be in the Fellowship Hall. In addition to discussing your concerns for safety in the near future, we also will have a conversation about how our choir can best function once the pandemic is truly over. We want to hear all the voices of the choir at this meeting. If you will be unable to attend, please let Julia Schwomeyer know and we'll make sure you receive a brief report on what we heard and give you an opportunity to add to the comments. But, please attend if you can!



PW MEETS THE WHITE HOUSE

The Presbyterian Women held their Fall Brunch recently and enjoyed a program that had been postponed a year due to Covid-19.

Deb Johnson brought her entire collection of all 41 White House ornaments. She shared the history of the ornaments along with fascinating historical facts. She requested the help of many of those in attendance to hang the ornaments on a display tree. Thanks to everyone who made this event so enjoyable. *Photos by Claire Smith.*



GREETERS THANKED FOR 2021, NEEDED FOR 2022

Greeters play an important part in Sunday worship ministry. By giving a warm smile and friendly "hello" to everyone entering the building, Greeters help prepare the way for the congregation to encounter God during the upcoming service.

The Deacons would like to send a big **THANK YOU** to everyone who served as Greeter in 2021: Fran Austin, Sue and Tom Dunn, Debbie and Dennis Ford, Linda and Phil Frantz, Carol Green, Gloria Green, Maria and Larry Hiatt, Carol Knight, Dave Loyd, Mary McCord, Vivian and Bob Morehous, Julia Schwomeyer, Claire Smith, and Jenny Stout.

Greeters are still needed for 2022. If you would like to volunteer for this most important service to the congregation, please see Linda Frantz.



Photo by Vivian Morehous.

SUNDAY SERVICES ON FACEBOOK

Pastor Rex continues to officiate Sunday morning worship via video on Facebook.

You can access his posts and worship videos by clicking the Facebook icon at the top of the home page on the church website. You do not need to be a member of Facebook to enjoy the posts and videos. You can access the Facebook page, the Sunday bulletin, and children's bulletin by going to or clicking this link www.firstpcportland.org.

HANGING OF THE GREENS 2021



Photos by Claire Smith.

HANGING OF THE GREENS 2021



This year the Deacons were once again able to ask the congregation to assist with the Hanging of the Greens that prepares the Sanctuary for the Advent season. Thank you to everyone who took part in this event. *Photos by Claire Smith.*



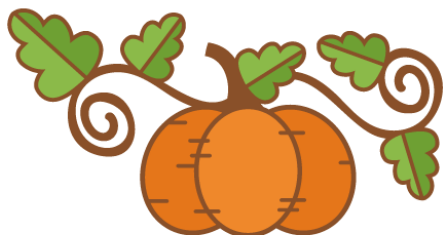
ADVENT WREATH MAKING

Meg Mauger once again led her popular Advent Wreath Making Workshop. Those attending were provided with all the necessary ingredients and instruction to make their own wreath to celebrate the Advent season. *Photos by Vivian Morehous.*



HALLOWEEN AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

The Christian Education Committee was once again able to take part in the Portland Merchant's Trick or Treat night following a year off due to Covid-19. Even though the night was damp, approximately 150 children visited the decorated church basement for treats. Thank you to the Christian Education Committee for participating in this outreach to our community. *Photos by Claire Smith.*





**FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

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Our Vision Statement

“To provide a ministry which will lead people to strengthen their faith in Jesus Christ and reach out with God’s love.”



CALENDAR



JANUARY

- 01 Happy New Year
- 02 Communion
Guest Preacher: Rev. DuWayne Hintz
- 03 Office Closed
- 09 Church Officer Installation/
Ordination Service
Choir Meeting
- 10 9:00am Annual Reports Due
- 11 4:30pm Worship & Music Comm. Mtg.
6:30pm Deacons Meeting
6:45pm Session Meeting
- 17 Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday
- 31 Bread of Life Community Meal

FEBRUARY

- 05 Presbytery Meeting
- 06 Communion
- 08 6:30pm Session Meeting
- 13 Annual Congregational Meeting
- 21 Presidents’ Day

**Sunday Morning Worship 9:30am
in person & via Facebook**

**Church Office hours:
Monday-Thursday 9:00am-3:00pm
Closed on Friday**