



The Steeple Chimes

The E-Newsletter of The First Presbyterian Church of Greenlawn
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Rev. Dr. Ann M. Van Cleef, Pastor

December, 2021

Pastor's Message

My Beloved Church Family,

December is here, and we're in the midst of our Advent observances. Christmas is right around the corner, and 2021 is drawing to a close. (Some people may say, "Thank goodness for that," but let's face it – for most of us, 2021 was a better year than 2020 was.)

It has certainly been a year of changes, especially here at FPCG. The pandemic has pushed us out of our comfort zones, and we find ourselves relying more and more on technology, using Zoom for most of our meetings and the simulcasting of our Sunday worship. We changed our governance from a bicameral to a unicameral model. We added a Congregational Care Committee, revived our Missions Committee, and formed a Women's Choir. We restructured our Church Fair, and held a Christmas Fair and a Christmas Tea.

Our Buildings and Grounds Committee has been doing an incredible job. The grounds look lovely, and several of our interior rooms have been refurbished. We have been focusing on community outreach, and are pleased that so many outside groups are using our building.

This month, we'll be adding four members to our rolls. And, on December 19, we are inviting the community to the lighting our new outdoor Christmas tree.

Our Little Food Pantry, located outside in front of the church, continues to be a blessing to the public, as it is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to those who are experiencing food insecurity.

When my head starts to spin because of all the changes happening around me, I find great comfort in the words of the author of Hebrews: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." (Hebrews 13:8)

It's no wonder, then, as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus our Savior, we find ourselves clinging tightly to the time-honored customs and traditions of the season.

Familiar Christmas carols bring back memories of childhood. Ornaments unwrapped and hung on the tree are greeted like old friends. The smells of traditional holiday foods transport us back to the kitchens of our parents and grandparents. The Christmas Eve candles remind us that Jesus' birth is celebrated all over the globe. The traditions of Christmas keep us grounded in a world where the only thing that doesn't change is the fact that things keep changing.



But time comes to a standstill at Christmas, doesn't it? There's the good news. Whatever else may be changing, our Christmas will not, as we have a strong foundation built upon family tradition and fortified by Scripture.

I hope that you will enjoy the Christmas customs of your family and friends this year. Try not to see the preparations as chores, but instead, look at them as bits of holy time.

Bob and I would like to wish you and your family the richest of God's blessings as we enter the season of Jesus' birth, "yesterday, today, and forever."

With love and blessings,

Pastor Ann



Zoom Worship

We will continue to "simulcast" our Sunday worship on Zoom for those who cannot be in the Sanctuary. You may log on as early as 10:00 a.m. for our 10:30 Celebration of worship.

The easiest way to do Zoom is to download the Zoom App from the App Store. Zoom will work on a computer, a laptop, an I-Pad, or a Smartphone.

What are the Meeting IDs for Sunday Worship and Christmas Eve?

December 12 through January 23, inclusive, the **Meeting ID** is: **870 8219 2387** **Passcode:** **567650**

What are the Meeting IDs for the Tuesday Fellowship Group?

Now through January 18, inclusive, the **Meeting ID** is **820 4624 2452** **Passcode:** **675634**

If you are on the church e-mail list, you will get a weekly e-mail with the Zoom link.

I don't have a computer or a Smartphone. What can I do?

You may telephone the following number:

1-646-558-8656.

You will be asked for a Meeting ID and a passcode. (Please see paragraph 3.)

You won't be able to see us, but you can still hear what's going on.



Birthday Blessings

December 7 – John Rixon
December 16 – Thomas Dean
December 30 – Corinne Burdett





Prayer Corner

For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life. ~John 3:16NIV

*This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, his one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life.
~John 3:16 Message Bible*

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

~Robert Louis Stevenson

Loving Father, help us to remember
the birth of Jesus,
that we may share in the song of the angels,
the gladness of the shepherds,
and the worship of the wise men.

Close the door of hate
and open the door of love all over the world.

Let kindness come with every gift
and good desires with every greeting.

Deliver us from evil
by the blessing which Christ brings,
and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.

May the Christmas morning make us
happy to be Thy children,
and the Christmas evening bring us to our beds
with grateful thoughts,
forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake.
Amen!

LORD, BLESS THE CARDS WE'VE WRITTEN

~Myrtle Day

Lord, bless the cards we've written;
May they bear a joyous greeting.
Bless the gifts we've wrapped and tied;
May they radiate Thy love.
Bless the wreaths that we have hung
in doorway, stair, and hall;
May they speak of life eternal,
Thy dominion over all.

Bless the lovely candle
Shining forth into the night;
May it carry far and wide
The wondrous message of Thy light.
Bless all the sweet traditions of
Thy dear, holy birth;
May they lead us in the worship of
The Savior, Lord of Earth.

INHERITANCE

~Rufus M. Jones

I am most of all thankful for my birthplace and early nurture in the warm atmosphere of a spiritually-minded home, with a manifest touch of saintliness in it; thankful indeed that from the cradle I was saturated with the Bible and immersed in an environment of religion of experience and reality. It was a peculiar grace that I was born into that great inheritance of spiritual wisdom and faith, accumulated through generations of devotion and sacrificial love. I can never be grateful enough for what was done for me by my progenitors before I came on the scene. They produced the spiritual atmosphere of my youth. I became heir of a vast invisible inheritance. There is nothing I would exchange for that.

~Submitted by Betty Chatfield



November Worship at FPC Greenlawn

November 7: We heard about the widow's mite, and celebrated The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

November 14: Laity Sunday with congregation members running the Service, and George Santos preaching.

November 21: Thanksgiving Sunday. The title of the sermon was "Thank You, God, for Hand-Me-Downs." The choir sang "You Raise Me Up."

November 28 was the First Sunday of Advent: "A Season of Hope."



Join Us for Worship in December

December 5 (already occurred, as this issue of *The Steeple Chimes* went out late) was the Second Sunday of Advent. The sermon was titled "The Crooked Roads Shall Become Straight." We celebrated The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

December 12: The Third Sunday of Advent. The sermon is "A Little Christmas?" (Think about that song from *Mame*: "We Need a Little Christmas.")

December 19: The Fourth Sunday of Advent, our Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols Service.

December 24: Christmas Eve falls on a Friday this year. Our Candlelight Service is at 7:00 p.m.

December 26 is the Sunday after Christmas. The Service is called "Carols and More Carols."

A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols Service will be held on Sunday, December 19, the Fourth Sunday of Advent, at 10:30 a.m.



This Service tells the story of the fall of humanity, the promise of the Messiah, and the birth of Jesus. It is told in nine short Bible readings from Genesis, the Prophetic Books, and the Gospels, and is interspersed with the singing of Christmas

carols, hymns, and other music.

The original format was based on an Order of Worship for Christmas Eve, 1880, in Cornwall, England. It is said that a key purpose of the Service at that time was to keep men out of the pubs on Christmas Eve!

The Service at FPC Greenlawn will be based on the one at *The King's College* in Cambridge, England, where the nine lessons are read by representatives of the congregation and of the local community. We already have several community leaders who have agreed to read.

This will be a very inspiring Service of worship. Please plan to attend, and invite a friend!

Christmas Tree Lighting

By now, you probably have noticed a new addition to our front lawn: a Blue Spruce tree that stands about 6 feet tall. Over the years, we will watch it grow into a majestic Christmas tree that will be enjoyed by all for generations to come.

Mark your calendar! On Sunday, December 19, at 5:00 p.m., we will have a special community event: we will light our new Christmas tree outside, sing some Christmas carols, and then come inside for some hot chocolate and Christmas cookies. Please plan to attend, and invite a friend.



Christmas Eve Service

We will have one Christmas Eve Service this year, at 7:00 p.m. It will be simulcast on Zoom, using the same log-on numbers that we use for our regular Sunday Services.

The Service will end with the traditional lighting of individual candles held by the congregation, while “Silent Night” is sung by those in attendance. We welcome everyone to this Service.

Christmas Poinsettias

45 poinsettias have been dedicated by members and friends of our church. They will be on the Chancel December 19 as well as Christmas Eve, and may be taken home after the 7:00 Service, or on December 26. Thank you so much!



Carols and More Carols!



On Sunday, December 26, our Service is called “Carols and More Carols.” We will sing some of the carols that we didn’t get around to singing during the Christmas season.

The sermon will center around the story behind one particular carol. It will be a very informal Service, and well worth your while to attend.

Memorial Fund Year-End Gifts

As the end of 2021 approaches, the Session would like to remind you that gifts to our Memorial Fund are welcomed.

The Memorial Fund was established by Session, whereby contributions may be made in memory of departed loved ones, given in lieu of floral tributes, or as a personal expression of love or friendship.

This fund is in addition to and separate from all Endowment Funds, which are used for bequests or gifts received in wills or trust accounts.

Contributions are deposited in a special account and are used, together with income earned, for special needs of the Church not provided for in the budget as may be determined by the Session.

Acknowledgment of each contribution is sent to the donor and to the family of the person in whose memory the gift is made. A permanent record is also made in our Book of Remembrance.

Buildings and Grounds Update

- The Buildings and Grounds Committee continues to work on finding a snow removal contractor.
- The repair of the portico lights has been completed. Additionally, the light that shines on the large cross on the west side of the church building is now in working condition.
- Budget recommendations for 2022 have been submitted to the Finance Committee.
- Repairs to the church building and the Manse have been prioritized.
- The *Deck and Patio* company will be doing our fall cleanup this year.
- Replacement of the CE Hall ceiling fans continues to be worked on.
- A Christmas tree for the front of the church has been purchased and planted. The Committee is considering several options for running electrical power from the church building to the tree.
- The handrails for the portico steps have been installed.



Laitv Sunday

Our church held a Laitv Sunday Service on Sunday, November 14. George Santos delivered an excellent sermon on his relationship with God, giving all of us much to think about.

Other participants in the Service included Debbie Eitel (Call to Worship); Arlissa Dean (Confession); Betty Chatfield (Pastoral Prayer); Althea Segale (What This Church Means to Me); Kathy Fitzgerald (Offering); and Kathie Gerlach (Scripture.)



The Service was very well-received, and we hope to make it an annual event. *(Pictured: George Santos, delivering his sermon.)*

What This Church Means to Me



Our *What This Church Means to Me* series of short talks began on October 24, with Betty Chatfield, Kathie Gerlach spoke on October 31, Barbara Charnews on November 7, and Althea Segale on November 14.

Each testimony was greeted with a round of applause. Thank you, Betty, Kathie, Barbara, and Althea, for sharing your very personal stories. Your words inspired us all! *Pictured: Barbara Charnews telling us what this church means to her.*

Congratulations New Session Members

Congratulations to new Session members Craig Satterlee (Class of 2023), Larry Foray (Class of 2024), and Susan Perrotta (Class of 2024) as well as Debbie Eitel (Class of 2024) who was re-elected for a second term.

Thank you for answering God's call to serve.

Reminders for the Holidays

- If someone calls and says "Hi, Grandma," don't address him by name. It's a scammer asking for money.
- Your Pastor will NEVER ask you for money or gift cards!
- If someone calls and asks, "Can you hear me?" Never say "yes." Hang up.
- Social Security and Medicare will never call you. They will send you a letter.
- If "Amazon" calls to ask if you have charged something to your account, just go on line and check your account yourself.

Our Session

Susan Perrotta, Recording Clerk

Class of 2021

Betty Chatfield
Debbie Eitel
Ruth Satterlee

Class of 2022

Diane Kirchoff
Gary Prentiss
George Santos

Class of 2023

Arlissa Dean
Kathleen Gerlach



To Debbie Eitel for organizing, and Gary Prentiss for cooking the food for our delicious Thanksgiving Luncheon;

To Debbie Eitel and her team for the work they did decorating the church for the Christmas holidays;

To Larry Foray for painting the Youth Group Room and basement hallway;

To Kathie Gerlach and her team: Claire Proctor, Althea Segale, and Ann Van Cleef, for decorating the wreaths that were sold at the Christmas Fair;

To Bob Arelt, Larry Foray, and Gary Prentiss for installing the outdoor banner;

To Craig Satterlee, Leslie Strait, Claire & Paul Proctor, Bob & Ann Van Cleef, and Antoinette Viteritti for purchasing the wreaths and poinsettias for the Christmas Fair;

To Larry Foray, Michael Pennino, and Gary Prentiss for setting up tables for the Christmas Fair;

To Meg Lawrence and Bob Van Cleef for assisting with Christmas Fair set-ups;

To Barbara Charnews, Betty Chatfield, Arlissa Dean, Kathy Fitzgerald, and Larry Reinhardt for assisting the day of the Fair;

To Betty Chatfield, Arlissa Dean, and Susan Perrotta for packing up items on the Sunday after the Christmas Fair;

To everyone who contributed items and / or shopped at our Christmas Fair;

To Jim Dean for taking down the Christmas Fair banner;

To the Tea Team: Leonora Colletti, Debbie Eitel, Larry Foray, Kathie Gerlach, Meg Lawrence, Jane and Ken Longstreet, Claire Proctor, Althea Segale, and Jill Wilson;

To our Resident Chef, Gary Prentiss, for providing delicious scones and finger sandwiches;

To Betty Chatfield, Linda Rixon, and George Santos for lending us their teapots.

And, a special thank you to everyone who made a commitment to support our church in 2022.



Laughter is the Best Medicine

Dear Santa, all I want is a fat bank account and a skinny body. Please don't mix it up like you did last year!

Yesterday, I bought a thesaurus. When I got home, I discovered that all the pages were blank. I have no words to describe how angry I feel!

I tried to come up with a carpentry pun that woodwork. I think I nailed it, but nobody saw it.

I just want to be rich enough to throw away leftovers after dinner ... instead of putting them in Tupperware and throwing them away two weeks later.

At a couples counseling meeting, the speaker mentioned that couples are so disconnected that 85% of husbands don't even know their wife's favorite flower. One man turned to his wife and whispered, "It's self-rising, isn't it?"

All I want for Christmas is to be off the extended car warranty call list.

When people talk about 30 years ago, I think they mean the 1970s, but they mean 1991. And now I need to go and lie down.

The older I get, the tighter companies are putting the lids on jars.

Once upon a time, a man asked a genie to make him irresistible to all women. The genie turned him into a credit card. The end.

Bringing my dog named Shark to the beach was a mistake.

A thought for the day: when you clean out a vacuum cleaner, you become a vacuum cleaner.

I may look fine, but deep down, I don't remember any of my passwords.

My stomach is FLAT. The "L" is just silent.

From the Pastor's Kitchen

I never liked beets. In fact, I would rather not eat at all than to eat a beet.

When I was a kid, I refused to eat cranberry sauce. Why? Because it was the same color as beets, and my childish mind just assumed that they tasted the same.

Now, I really enjoy cranberry sauce, especially the kind with whole cranberries.

The best cranberry sauce is the kind you make yourself, and it's very easy. Here is a recipe that I use, adapted from one I found in *Newsday* two years ago. Happily, it meets my requirements of having very few ingredients:

Whole Berry Cranberry Sauce

1-1/4 cups sugar
1 cup water
1/2 cup red wine
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 12-oz. bag fresh cranberries

Combine the sugar, water, wine, and cinnamon in a medium saucepan over high heat. Bring to a boil and add the cranberries, stirring occasionally, 10 to 11 minutes, or until the cranberries have popped. Transfer to a bowl and cool to room temperature. Chill at least 2 hours before serving. (I find the recipe to be a bit soupy, so next time I'll cut the water down to 1/2 cup and see what happens.)

The original recipe also called for 1/2 cup dried tart cherries (too expensive), 1/2 cup of slivered almonds, lightly chopped (they get soggy) and 1/2 teaspoon of grated orange zest (too lazy to do that). You can try them if you want. The recipe claims to yield 16 servings. That's fine if you're having Lilliputians as company. Actually, it's more like 4 servings.



I made several batches of this recipe in 2019, preserved them, and gave them as gifts to nice people like my chiropractor's receptionist.