

First  
Presbyterian  
Church  
MOSCOW, IDAHO

# News & Views

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Sunday School  
**9:00 am**

Sunday Worship  
**10:30 am**



The trees are decorated with frost as if advertising for the coming Christmas celebration. And I have turned my attention to Advent and the new church year. These are precursors to that special moment when we remember the Christ child's birth. In some ways, it feels particularly like a moment we need, that moment of hope reborn, the pinprick of a new life that lets shine into a world that seems painted with overtones of grays or darker tones. Certainly, the world stage with the wars in Ukraine, in Palestine, and in Somalia as well as other places around the globe brings cries of lament.

So often I hear so many prognostications on how bad things are, or soon will be. Advent, perhaps appropriately, starts with a passage from Mark in which we have a description of the world falling apart. I know we have problems and need to work together to solve our problems, yet, I sometimes wonder where the hype leaves off and the real need for concern and action is appropriate.

What I do know that, in what we now call Palestine, some two thousand years ago, in an unannounced and unnoticed (except for a few shepherds and his family) time and place, a baby was born. And this baby was, in a real way, our God at work bring healing to our world. This act of incredible grace, this incarnation, was unnoticed at the time. Not until some 30 or so years later did the folks of this era notice something new was a foot amongst them. So, I sometimes wonder what seemingly unassuming act God is prompting that will have healing influence on today's world. What I do know is that our opportunity to reflect on and remember what has come of this birth so long ago still has healing qualities.

So, as we prepare to celebrate God's love come among us in Christ, we might feel a tension between this act of compassion and the struggle with compassion for one another we have in our world today. Perhaps this tension is valuable in helping us stay awake, in watching for what God might be doing in our time and

*Continued on Page 2...*

## From the Pastor *...continued from Page 1*

place. A time and place where we are invited to prepare for the way God shows up. We too, might look for the angels singing, or the star in the sky, or even attend through devotion see that God enables us experience goodness to brought to life. I don't really expect to have a choir of angels show up or to be able to pick out an especially meaningful star, but I do think God may give us indications that God is at work among us, and God offers new life.

Our decorating, fellowship gatherings, and worship offer us the opportunities to engage this progression to the moment of celebration when we acknowledge God has come, God cares, such that grace shapes and changes our world. So, I invite you to participate in our worship, our fellowship, and ways of caring for one another throughout the season. Events in our lives may lead us to struggle with the expectations of the pre-Christmas season. We also acknowledge that possibility in our Blue Christmas service on Tuesday, December 12 at 7 p.m. If you have experienced loss, or other have other hope degrading experience(s), in this service we acknowledge and lift these to God ask for God's help to see again the surprising gift of redeeming love God offers. The next evening, Dec 13 at 6 p.m. you're invited to a supper fellowship around a Christmas themed dinner of Shepherd's Pie and Angel food cake in fellowship hall at 6 pm.

Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday this year so we will have our last Sunday in Advent morning service as we normally do at 10:30 a.m. December 24. Then we will have a Christmas Eve service of lessons and carols at 7 p.m. Our worship commemorating and celebrating the Christ child's coming so long ago engages us in remembering how our faith is born in our experience of God's love in Christ. This time of commemorating and celebrating, also encourages us to renew our hope and rejoice in this grace given to us.

Grace and peace,

Norman

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### Fellowship Coffee on Sunday Mornings

We need more volunteers for doing coffee and bringing treats on Sunday mornings after church. Store purchased treats are perfectly fine. If you do buy cookies or bake cookies for coffee fellowship, they can be left on the kitchenette counter and they will be used on Sunday mornings. An updated coffee sign up is on the Deacons' Bulletin Board. Mary Jo or Susan Billin would be glad to show you how to make coffee.



## Deacons Benevolence for December

The Board of Deacons has designated the December Benevolence for Family Promise of the Palouse. Family Promise is celebrating 10 years of providing shelter and food for local families in need. More than 30 faith communities across the Palouse have united in this effort. Being that place of refuge while families sort out the complications of life is what Family Promise is about, providing unconditional care to our families while they are most vulnerable. Over the past 10 years, Family Promise of the Palouse has sheltered 120 families, including 248 children. Through the Homeless Prevention Program, Family Promise has prevented homelessness for 63 families, including 125 children. The need in our community has increased, and Family Promise is adding more programming to serve an increasing number of families.

All donations to Family Promise of the Palouse are welcome. We hope to make the most of donations again this year by participating in the Avenues for Hope Challenge, which provides matching funds from corporate donors. Last year's matching raised an additional \$22,000 through the support of the Avenues for Hope sponsor, Home Partnership Foundation.

We hope you will contribute to Family Promise of the Palouse between December 12 and 31, the Challenge dates. To donate online go to [www.avenuesforhope.org](http://www.avenuesforhope.org). Search for Family Promise of Palouse.

For the check-writers among us, please write the check to Family Promise, and mail to PO Box 9389, Moscow, ID 83843. Make sure to date checks between Dec. 12th and 29th to qualify for matches and incentives.



## Special Services

### Tuesday, December 12th-

#### Community Blue Christmas Service

“Comfort, comfort my people”, a familiar phrase that we often hear at Christmas time. There are moments in our lives when we need comfort. There are tough times when we yearn for consolation. In the same way the suffering people who looked for the long-awaited Messiah were given a hope-filled image of God in the writings of Isaiah, we also can be comforted by the belief that no matter what happens to us, God will be with us to bring comfort and support.



Christmas can be a time when many of us feel the need for that reassurance and comfort. Perhaps we are grieving over the loss of a loved one, struggling with illness, or feeling lonely or detached for a variety of reasons. We may wonder how we will get through the holidays. Or perhaps you know someone who is experiencing sadness, isolation, or grief you may want to invite to come with you.

The Community Blue Christmas service is a time set aside especially to acknowledge these feelings and offer comfort and hope. It is co-sponsored by local churches and Short’s Chapel, and will take place Tuesday, December 12, at 7:00 p.m. in our sanctuary. The service will include music, readings, a time of remembrance of loved ones, and consolation for all who are weary. A brief reception will follow the service for those who want to gather and share conversation.

This is a community-wide event. All are welcome. Please share with those you know who may appreciate this opportunity for hope and consolation.

### Sunday, December 24th, Christmas Eve-

7:00 p.m. Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols Scripture readings interspersed with carol singing and special music by Chancel Choir and soloists.



### Sunday, December 31st, Epiphany

10:30 a.m. Worship, including a time of carol singing.

If you have a favorite carol you would like to request, contact Music Minister Sylvester Bullock at [slybullock75@aol.com](mailto:slybullock75@aol.com)



#### Finance Report

As of October, 2023

	Month	YTD
Receipts	\$ 23,542	\$268,080
Disbursements	\$23,384	\$262,998
YTD Surplus/(Deficit)		\$5,081
Cash Balance (checking/savings)		\$49,919

## Family Promise Host Week

First Presbyterian Church and our friends from Quail Run Ward are hosting Family Promise guests again on **January 7th-15th**. Our hosting duties include preparing and taking down guest bedrooms, providing and hosting evening meals and hosting our guests overnight on Sunday,

Monday, Wednesday and Saturday. If you are interested in volunteering, there will be sign up sheets in the narthex, or please contact Celeste Brown at [bioinfomom@roadrunner.com](mailto:bioinfomom@roadrunner.com).



Family Promise of the Palouse is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to empower families experiencing homelessness—or in danger of becoming homeless—to achieve sustainable independence for a more promising future. Along with providing temporary housing and meals for up to four families in local church facilities, they also work with homeless families in our community to guide them to long-term sustainable housing. Families receive education related to financial literacy, parenting and life skills. With the support of a case-manager, families are guided to employment, health care and housing.

*One factor that helps families succeed is the long term relationships they develop with Family Promise volunteers.*

### **We are in need of the following items.....**

Laundry Soap  
 Bleach  
 Dryer Sheets  
 Aluminum foil  
 Sandwich bags  
 Ziplock bags of all sizes  
 Paper Plates  
 Paper Towels  
 Toilet Paper  
 Vegetable Oil

### **And we can always use baby supplies....**

Diapers of all sizes  
 Infant and children's Tylenol  
 Teething drops  
 Wipes

# Serve God – Help Others – Grow in Faith

## *Consider Becoming a Stephen Minister*

As Christians, we have all received unique gifts for ministry, so each of us has an important role in serving the body of Christ. In 1 Peter 4:10-11, we read of the importance of service to God through our gifts.

*"And serve each other according to the gift each person has received, as good managers of God's diverse gifts. Whoever speaks should do so as those who speak God's word. Whoever serves should do so from the strength that God furnishes. Do this so that in everything God may be honored through Jesus Christ. To him be honor and power forever and always. Amen."*(CEB)

Over the past 15 years, Stephen Ministry at our church has been actively engaged in walking alongside others in their life challenges to share God's love and care. *Stephen Ministers listen. Stephen Ministers care. Stephen Ministers pray.* Those who have been recipients of these caring relationships have shared how much it means to know someone cared and looked forward to spending time together. Stephen Ministers are not trained to fix anything, but are trained to be a trustworthy, empathetic friend.

In the coming year, we will be training our next class of Stephen Ministers. We invite you to consider God's gifts to you and learn more about this ministry. [Follow this link](#) and click on the video link to hear from a wide variety of individuals who have benefitted personally from their Stephen Ministry training and ministry. Our Stephen Ministers here at First Presbyterian have expressed similar thoughts and feelings about the many benefits of training and serving as a Stephen Minister.

Your Stephen Leadership team will be available after worship services in the coming weeks, or you can contact one of us by phone or email for more information and to review an application packet.

Your Stephen Leader Team,

Celeste Brown, [bioinfomom@roadrunner.com](mailto:bioinfomom@roadrunner.com), 208.892.3356

Bruce Pitman, [bpitman@uidaho.edu](mailto:bpitman@uidaho.edu), 208.596.2721

Kathy Pitman, [kbpitman@roadrunner.com](mailto:kbpitman@roadrunner.com), 208.596.5669

Mary Read, [idahoreader@gmail.com](mailto:idahoreader@gmail.com), 208.301.0146

# FAMILY MINISTRY

Julie Hopper, Director of Family Ministry [familyministryjulie@gmail.com](mailto:familyministryjulie@gmail.com)

Merry Christmas! We've made it to the end of 2023. It's good news that Advent, the beginning of the liturgical year, gives us the message we need to close out the calendar year. We need this yearly reminder that God came into our world to meet our deepest and most heartfelt needs.

There's been a lot going on in family ministry lately. FOON had a great month in November, even with a week off for Thanksgiving. We were thankful that the gas outage did not affect a FOON day. On the first Wednesday of November, the high school had an early lunch period. We're not able to have pizza ready on time for that schedule, but we still hand out treats and drinks and the adjusted format facilitates more casual interactions with the students. On the first of December, we received the good news that the Latah County Community Foundation awarded us a \$500 grant for FOON. Thank you LCCF!

Thank you to everyone who purchased a wreath this year! They have almost all been picked up. It's always fun to open the big cases of wreaths and smell the strong evergreen scent. I also had the chance to use the elevator to bring the boxes upstairs; using the elevator is always an adventure. Thank you for supporting youth ministry at FPC.

We fit youth group into November 3 times, and we had a great time, welcoming new people, playing our traditional Thanksgiving round of Pin the Snood on the Turkey and expressing creativity in the art room. Because of the holiday season, there will be youth group only once in December, on the 13th.

December offers some great opportunities for young people to be involved in the activities of the church. Three youth group kids were at the church on Saturday the 2nd to help put up the church decorations, and by their laughter, I'd say they had a fun time. Church kids were a big part of bringing up the poinsettias for the Hanging of the Greens, and we had a couple of youth group girls handing out the Chrismons. Thank you Myrtle and Sandra! It's always fun when the tree lights go on during the service, and the tree looks beautiful now with all the decorations.

The December version of Parent Night Out will be on December 9 from 1:00-4:00, making it more like Parent Afternoon Out. This is a very bustling event where the kids make crafts, "shop" and wrap presents for their friends and family and have fun snacks. This event is also a great chance to participate if you are available. Having extra adults can streamline craft projects, and it's a fun chance to hang around with kids, enjoying their energy.

This year Christmas Eve is on a Sunday, so we will be having morning and evening services. We are planning to incorporate a nativity tableau into the end of the evening candlelight service. Any children and young people who attend are invited to join in.

Well, it's time to close out this letter, just like we are about to close out the year 2023. Let's carry this Christmas carol truth with us as we move through Advent:

**Truly he taught us to love one another.**

**His law is Love, and his gospel is Peace.**

## Remember Your Church

Christmas – the time we remember God’s gift of grace born in a child, the Christ child. We celebrate this gift to us. We also think about how we can share the joy in giving gifts to friends and family. Christmas is a giving season. So as celebrate Christmas and we wrap up 2023 and move toward a new year, remember you church in your giving. With some additional unexpected expenses in 2023 (insurance and electric bills in particular), putting you church on you giving list at the end of the year would be very helpful. Also, as we move to the New Year, if you have not pledged provide you pledge for 2024 would truly be a gift that helps us have a sense of where we stand for the next fiscal year. For those of you who have pledged, thank you so much and have a merry Christmas. And, if you’d like to give a gift to start off the year in generosity that would be thankfully and humbly accepted as well. May your Christmas and New Year be a blessed season.

### Christmas Themed Wednesday Supper Fellowship

We stopped offering Wednesday Supper Fellowship after Thanksgiving except for one Christmas themed dinner on Wednesday, December 13th, at 6:00 p.m. We will have Shepards Pie, Angel Food cake, star fruit (if it’s available), and any other themed food you would like to bring. Let Pastor Norman know if you plan to bring food. Otherwise just come and enjoy the fellowship as a way of celebrating the season. We will have plenty of food so no need to bring food, your presence is the most important part of the gathering.

### Advent and Christmas Worship

#### **December 10 – Second Sunday of Advent**

10:30 a.m. Worship, music led by Praise Team

#### **December 17 – Third Sunday of Advent**

10:30 a.m. Worship, music led by Chancel Choir

#### **December 24 – Fourth Sunday of Advent**

10:30 a.m. Worship, music led by Praise Team

#### **Christmas Eve, December 24**

7:00 p.m. Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols

Scripture readings interspersed with carol singing and special music by Chancel Choir and soloists.

#### **December 31 – First Sunday after Christmas**

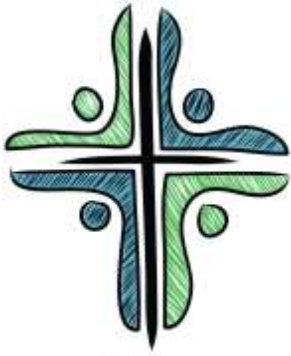
10:30 a.m. Worship, including a time of carol singing.

If you have a favorite carol you would like to request, contact Music Minister Sylvester Bullock at [slybullock75@aol.com](mailto:slybullock75@aol.com)



# December 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 10:30 a.m.— Hanging of the Greens Service	4	5 12:00— Tuesday Sisters	6 10:00 a.m.— Men’s Bible Project  5:30 p.m.— joint Session and Deacons meeting  7:00 p.m.— Choir	7 10:00 a.m.— Women’s Bible Project	8	9
10 9:00 a.m.— Sunday School  10:30 a.m.— Sunday Worship	11	12 12:00 p.m.— Tuesday Sisters  7:00 p.m.— Community Blue Christmas Service	13 10:00 a.m.— Men’s Bible Project  12:00 p.m.— FOON  6:00 p.m.— Wednesday Supper Fellowship  6:30 p.m.— Youth Group  7:00 p.m.— Choir	14 10:00 a.m.— Women’s Bible Project	15	16
17 9:00 a.m.— Sunday School  10:30 a.m.— Sunday Worship	18	19 3:30 p.m.— Prayer Shawl Gathering	20 10:00 a.m.— Men’s Bible Project  12:00 p.m.— FOON	21 10:00 a.m.— Women’s Bible Project	22	23
24 10:30 a.m.— Sunday Worship  7:00 p.m.— Christmas Eve Service	25	26	27	28	29	30
	Church Office Closed					
31 10:30 a.m.— Epiphany Sunday Worship/ gifts Sunday Service	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Church Office Closed					



First  
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## *First Presbyterian Church*

*"Growing in Christ"*

**ALL ARE WELCOME!**

**Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.**

Facebook Live: <https://www.facebook.com/moscowfirstpres>

YouTube: [First Presbyterian Church of Moscow - YouTube](#)

Office Hours:

9:00 am– 3:00 pm

and By appointment—call 208-882-4122

Pastor Norman Fowler

[fpcpastornorman@gmail.com](mailto:fpcpastornorman@gmail.com)