

The Community Connection

Inspiration & Information for People on the Journey

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aWelcomingChurch.org

December 2015

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH • LAKE CRYSTAL, MINNESOTA

“A House of Prayer for All Peoples”

Celebrating the Season of Hope, Love, Peace & Joy

Food, Fun, Friends on Saturday, December 5

- Annual Baked Potato Buffet from 4:30 'til 6:30
- Annual Bake Sale for the Salvation Army
- Silent Auction of Decorated Baskets
- See page 3 for more details!

Inspiring Worship on December 6 & 13 (Advent 2 & 3)

- 8:30am – Choir Rehearsal (Music Room)
- 9:00am – Fellowship (Coffee, tea, juice, goodies, and conversation) (Fellowship Hall)
- 9:30am – **WORSHIP** (Sanctuary)
 - **Dec 6 Theme: Peace**
 - **Dec 13 Theme: Joy**
 - 9:45am – Children dismissed for Sunday school and for their preparations and rehearsing for the Christmas program

Ringing the Bell, Monday thru Saturday, Dec 14-19

- Annual Week of “Ringing the Bell” for the Salvation Army’s Red Kettle Campaign at Cub Foods East (Madison Ave.)
- See page 3 for more details

Annual Christmas Program on December 20 (Advent 4)

- 9:00am – Coffee-Time Fellowship
- 9:30am – **CHRISTMAS PROGRAM** featuring the youth and children!

Christmas Eve Celebrations!

Thursday, December 24

- 5:30pm – Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
 - 11:00pm – Communion-by-Candlelight



STILL UP IN THE AIR

Reflections from the Pastor's Study

THE SEASON OF ADVENT (Introduction from "Seeking God's Face")

Advent (from the Latin *adventus*, meaning "coming" or "arrival") is the four-week season of preparation for the coming of Jesus at Christmas. **A good celebration requires proper preparation for us to fully enjoy it.** During December, however, we mostly confuse helpful readiness for the hustle of Christmas shopping, parties, and preparations. The Advent season, more reflective in nature, can feel out of sync with all this noise and busyness.

John the Baptist has always felt like the right person to get me ready for Christmas—he's the anti-Santa needed for our day. Trade the jolly laugh for an in-your-face intensity, the twinkle in the eye for a wildness about to interrupt your life, commanding our attention but always redirecting it towards Jesus. "Prepare the way for the Lord" is the Advent call to get ready for the coming Messiah.

But how do you prepare for a surprise? More than just remembering Christ's first arrival, Advent hopes for Christ's second coming. Advent is a season of expectant waiting, tapping into the sense we have that all is not well, the longing for the world to be made right again. It's a season for restless hearts and people weary of a broken world—people who want, with all our being, to know there's more than this.

Advent cultivates in us a discerning eye, helping us to spot the sin that clutters our lives and notice all the ways we need to be saved. By helping us to hope intensely for restoration, to feel our own need to be saved, **Advent prepares us for genuine Christmas joy and faith in the One who saves us from our sin, Jesus.**

VISION TEAM

The session recently directed me to work towards the creation of a "Vision Team." This advance work has included planning, study, conversations with other leaders in the presbytery (including Rick Carus, transitional executive presbyter; Steve Boots, and Andy Davis), and communication/updates to the session.

"Spiritual leadership is moving people on to God's agenda" (Henry and Richard Blackaby). Discernment is the process of prayerfully, patiently, proactively seeking to discover and understand God's agenda. We're looking for five persons to be a part of the Vision Team. The team will be comprised of positive, trusting, thoughtful members who are open to building consensus, open to God's Spirit and

the power of prayer, open to thinking "out of the box," open-minded, and open to digging deep.

My work on this project is continuing with additional meetings and study. As this process moves forward, I'm praying (and I want you to pray) for the persons who God will call to be a part of the Vision Team. Thank you.

FINANCIAL SANITY™ SEMINAR

The churches of the Lake Crystal Ministerial Association are offering a new and exciting way to think about money through a four-week series of seminars called "Financial Sanity." The goal: To help youth and young adults develop healthy habits that reflect their values and beliefs.

This will be an engaging and fun learning experience that will result in the development of your own financial sanity action plan. The seminar will be held at Zion Lutheran Church on Sunday evenings (Jan 10, 17, 24, and 31). Sign-up by January 3, 2016. Cost is \$10 for individuals or couples; \$20 for families with youth; scholarships available. For more information see last month's newsletter or call me (Pastor Randy) at 507.317.9814.

GRATITUDE AND JOY

"Gratitude takes nothing for granted," wrote Thomas Merton. Gratitude is the heart of real living! When we say thank you we plant seeds of joy in our hearts and in others. So let's be known for our gratitude!

Many thanks to the volunteers who helped serve 88 dinners—76 at church and 12 take-out dinners—during "Feast at First" on Thanksgiving Day. Thank you to those who donated pies, salads, or cash. Thank you to those of you who prayed for this ministry. Many thanks to Gwen and the host of volunteers who helped decorate the sanctuary for Advent/Christmas/Epiphany. We indeed have a beautiful, warm, welcoming, joyous sanctuary! What a wonderful "place to be" as we celebrate the season and celebrate the difference Jesus makes in our lives.

I am SO looking forward to our celebrations during this meaningful time. And I hope and pray you are too. Let's worship the living God together!

Glad to be on the journey with you.
Pastor Randy

RED KETTLE CAMPAIGN 2015

“Ring the Bell” for the Salvation Army’s Red Kettle Campaign is a wonderful ministry and a beautiful and very meaningful tradition for our church. It is truly one of the “heart-ministries” of our church.

Thanks in advance to Gwen Michel and Janet Schickling and others for their efforts. Please keep this ministry in your prayers: Ask God to bless the givers and the bell-ringers, to help the Salvation Army in their good work, and to bless the individuals and families in need who benefit from the mission of the Salvation Army.

- **Please sign-up on the sign-up board in the back of the sanctuary before or after worship.**
- **We are ringing the week of December 14-19 at Cub Foods East.**

OUR FAMOUS BAKED POTATO BUFFET

The Baked Potato Buffet will be held in the Fellowship Hall on **Saturday, December 5** from 4:30pm ‘til 6:30pm presented by the PWC in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce Christmas in Lake Crystal. Come, join in on the fun for a great meal of baked potatoes with all the toppings—plus salads and bars! There will be a free-will offering. Contact Sandy Karels or Rhonna Nilson, Co-chairpersons for any questions.

Note: when dropping off bars please label them for Bake Potato Buffet or Bake Sale. This could avoid some confusion☺

BAKE SALE FOR THE SALVATION ARMY

Once again the Deacons and will be holding a Holiday Bake Sale during the Baked Potato Buffet on **Saturday, December 5**. This is a great opportunity to show-off your favorite recipe by donating a batch to the Bake Sale. You can drop off your baked items at the stage in the Fellowship Hall on Friday or Saturday, before 3:00pm. If necessary, the Deacons will package your goodies; all you need to do is drop them off. All proceeds raised by the Bake Sale will go to the Salvation Army’s Red Kettle Campaign.

In addition to baked goods for sale there will also be decorated baskets on a **silent auction table**.

THANKS!

Thank you from the PWC for donations to help fill 30 shoe boxes for the Operation Christmas Child shoebox ministry.

POINSETTIAS IN THE SANCTUARY

Poinsettias may be donated anytime between now and Christmas. We will display the plants in the sanctuary *as soon as they arrive*. The plants may be taken home after worship on Christmas Eve. Please call Rhonna in the office (726-2877) for more information.

CHRISTMAS EVE LUMINARIES

Would you like to set out 153 luminaries at around 4:30pm on Christmas Eve, to light the luminaries, to check and relight (if needed) prior to the 11:00 service, and pick up the luminaries sometime after the late service? Or would you like to be part of a group doing this ministry together? Please call Randy or Rhonna (726-2877) if you’d like to spearhead this effort or if you’d be willing to assist in the effort! Thanks!

NEW MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

The new address/phone directory will be coming out in January. If you have any changes or know of any family phone or address changes please let Rhonna know.

LOCAL SERVICE CHAIRPERSONS



The Presbyterian Women have named a Local Service Chairman for each month of the year. To help serve at a funeral or to volunteer to bake cakes/bars please call the Local Service Chairperson.

December Service Chairperson:

Laurel Davis @ 726-2885

January Service Chairperson:

Barb Spencer @ 726-2155

PLEASE CONTINUE TO SAVE:

- Campbell’s Soup Labels

- Labels for Education
- Box Tops for Education

This is very much appreciated by LCWM schools.

SUNDAY MORNING VOLUNTEERS

Beginning in January 2016 the Coffee-Time Fellowship will ordinarily be a self-service event. A standing order of cookies from Collis "C" Store and someone to simply make coffee and plug-in the coffee pot and hot water on Sunday mornings will be arranged. A contribution basket will be placed near the coffee and "Self-Serve" sign will be displayed.

Anyone is welcome to volunteer to prepare a "special coffee-time" whenever they so desire, (birthday, anniversary, or just in the mood to throw a party) but this should be coordinated through the office.

Greeters/Ushers: The primary focus of greeters/ushers is the ministry of hospitality! We should simply offer worshipers a friendly greeting and a copy of the worship folder. Guests should be given whatever information or directions they might need—especially info about bathrooms, nursery, and the coffee time fellowship. One greeter/usher is sufficient to "cover" a Sunday with the understanding that she/he can ask for help from one other person. For the offering, one greeter/usher can ask for help from 2-3 others and this can be effective in continuing to encourage broad involvement of members, especially younger members. There will be a sign-up sheet for greeter/usher in the back of the sanctuary with a very simple and very limited "job description."

Soundboard and videotaping: There is a need for volunteers for these specific tasks. Training for these tasks is available. There will be a sign-up sheet located near the soundboard for these tasks.

Flowers in the sanctuary: Similar to the opportunity to host a "special coffee-time," any member is encouraged to offer to bring flowers for the sanctuary—this need not be every week but, rather, "when the Spirit so moves you." It might be in remembrance of someone special or to celebrate a special event in your life. It might be "for no particular reason at all." Please coordinate through the office.

Thank you!



FYI: IF YOU MISSED A SUNDAY

Extra copies of the weekly bulletin are available in the office. (FYI I have been sending the bulletin each week to members unable to attend Sunday worship. If you are not receiving one and would like to receive one by mail please call me.) The membership directory and other interesting reading materials are also available in the office. They are located on a bookshelf labeled "Information Handouts: Help Yourself." Feel free to pick up anything you wish.

*Rhonna, Church Administrative Assistant
Office Phone: 507-726-2877*

December Birthdays & Anniversaries

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

Adam and Mackenzie Jones	December 15, 2007
Kent and Deb Williams	December 19, 1975
Jeff and Christi Davis	December 29, 1990

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

3	Zoe Hiers
6	Colby Nilson
7	Mandy Hughes
8	Trevor Nilson
9	Ernie Freier
11	Luke Kruger
11	Jean Thomas
18	Phena Jones
20	Janet Schickling
20	Madelyn Wolf
21	Galen Nilson
22	Eileen Anderson
25	Jason Farrell
27	Jesse Gunderson
29	Steve Yahnke

We extend our prayers and Christian sympathy to the family and friends of **James "Bunk Roberts**.



CONTACT

INFORMATION

Pastor & Teacher: Rev. Randal Lubbers
Cell/Home: 507-317-9814 E-mail: lubbers85@gmail.com

Administrative Assistant: Rhonna Nilson
Church Office 726-2877 E-mail: lakecrystalpresbyterian@gmail.com
Office Hours: Monday – Friday 8:30 AM 'til noon (may vary slightly)
Fax: 507-726-2296

Custodian: Jay Richardson: 726-6803 Cell: 317-5061

NOTICE RE CONGREGATIONAL MEETING: The fall congregational meeting will be held immediately following worship (approximately 10:15) in the sanctuary on **Sunday, December 6** for the purpose of electing Deacons and Elders. The nominations from the Nominating Committee are as follows: (1) Elder nominations for three-year term: Vicki Pritchard, Scott Kruger and Dan Buss. (2) Deacon nominations for one-year term are Jay Walters and Rose Tinklenberg; for a two-year term, Lisa Brown; and for a three-year term, Barb Spencer, Jenny McLeod, and Melanie Miller. We still have a position open for another deacon. There will be opportunity at the meeting to make nominations from the floor.



MINUTES

THE SESSION OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LAKE CRYSTAL, MINNESOTA

STATED MEETING—TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2015

Gather in God's Name

The stated meeting of session was called to order by Randy Lubbers, Moderator with prayer and scripture readings from (Luke 12:29-34, 1 Kings 17 and Joel 2) the stewardship letter. Joys and concerns were shared and prayer of intercession followed by the Lord's Prayer on Tuesday, November 17 at 7:00 PM in the music/meeting room.

Elders Present: Chuck Norgaard, Mary Olson, Laurie Williams, Dave Jones, Kent Williams, Rhonna Nilson, Lonny Hughes, Laurel Davis, Tena Edmundson, Cindy Hamberg, Randy Lubbers (Moderator),

Elders Excused: None

Elders Absent: None

Others Present: None

A quorum was declared.

Administrative; Concerns, Receptions and Approvals

MSCarried to approve the agenda

Note the approval via e-mail the minutes from the stated meeting on October 20, 2015.

MSCarried to receive the financial reports as of Oct. 31, 2015

Clerk of Session/Administrative Assistant's Report:

1. Third quarter membership report includes;
7/19/2015 Baptism of Logan Roelofs
8/08/2015 Baptism of Charlotte Finlayson
8/29/2015 Death of Charles Perry Blythe
9/06/2015 Special worship service with our Methodist friends at the Methodist Church.
Communion served
Sunday, August 2 (44)
Thursday, August 6 Home communion served by Pastor Randy at Country Neighbors (14) and Crystal Seasons (9)
Sunday, September 20 (61)
2. Rhonna reminded committee chairperson to have an annual report written by first week in January.

Membership: Rhonna asked for volunteers to form an annual membership review committee. Pastor Randy and Lonny will help along with a deacon.

Pastor's Report:

1. Thank-you for our hospitality from Randy and the Classis of Minnesota Special Meeting (Reformed Church of America) held here on November 10.
2. MSCarried to have congregational meeting on December 6 following worship for election of officers
3. MSCarried to send stewardship letter as amended this week
4. Thanksgiving Eve Service is Wednesday, November 25, 7:00pm at Methodist Church with seven local churches represented thru the Ministerial Association.

5. Upcoming communion dates are; November 22, November 29, December 24 according to previous schedule and MSCarried January 3, 2016.
6. Feast at First plans are continuing. First Presbyterian Church of Redwood Falls sent us a \$400 donation as part of their 2015 Mission Program for the Thanksgiving Dinner. Rhonna will send a poster, thank-you and invite to the dinner and a thank-you including photos after the event.
7. Pastor Randy gave a report from visits with Rev. Steve Boots and Transitional Executive Presbyter Rick Carus on forming a vision team.

Prayerful Consideration of Session Matters; Team Reports & Recommendations

Building & Property Committee: 1) met first part of November and have no recommendations

Stewardship & Budget Committee: 1) Will be working on budget

Worship & Music Team: 1) The TV and DVD /BluRay player has been purchased at a cost of \$959.97 coming out of youth funds as previously approved.

Rhonna suggested we apply for a technology grant available thru the Congregational Resources and Development Committee of Minnesota Valleys Presbytery. MSCarried to apply for the grant, Rhonna will complete the grant forms to apply.

Community-Life Team: 1) Pizza after worship event was well attended, about 15 attended.

2) The team has made several upcoming event plans scheduled for 2016

Faith Formation Team: 1) no recommendations

Nominating Committee: 1) Elder nominations for 3-year term are; Vicki Pritchard, Scott Kruger and Dan Buss. Deacon nominations for 1-year term are Jay Walters and Rose Tinklenberg, 2-year term, Lisa Brown and 3-year term are Barb Spencer, Jenny McLeod and Melanie Miller. We still have a position open for another deacon if someone volunteers, or nominated from the floor at the congregation meeting.

Board of Deacons (Mission and Service): Minutes included

New Business: MSDefeated to send letters to members stating "ask the session anything" anonymously including a return envelope addressed to clerk of session, Lonny Hughes volunteering to pay for cost of postage.

Resolutions of Gratitude: MSCarried to acknowledge special thanks to Laurel Davis and Jay Richardson for helping with hosting the Classis of Minnesota Special Meeting. Also thank-you to the nominating committee (Rhonna Nilson Chairperson, Dave Jones, Ruth Ledwein, Barb Spencer, Lisa Brown and Randy Lubbers) for their task finding a full slate of volunteer for Elder and Deacon.

Adjournment & Dismissal

Next regular session meeting is scheduled for December 15 at 7:00pm. With outgoing elders bringing treats. Meeting was adjourned with Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Rhonna Nilson, Clerk of Session