

FIRST REPORT





Christmas is Coming, Join in The Joy of Giving

Giving to others is such a major part of the joy of Christmas. Your Mission and Outreach Committee will be setting up “Giving Trees” in the East Entrance beginning November 26th. We are focusing on three organizations that we, as a church, have been helping in the past years: McPhee Elementary School, Lighthouse, and Clinic with a Heart. We have contacted the organizations and asked them for their suggestions.

McPhee families need gift cards to buy groceries and gas. They generally use Russ’ and HyVee. You will be able to purchase the gift cards in December on Sunday mornings at the East Entrance.

Lighthouse is requesting some larger items which will be put on the paper ornaments on the tree, as well as journals, sketch pads and markers. They also would like gift cards from Walmart, McDonalds, Scheels, Amazon, Target and Dicks. These items will be gifts, but also incentives for students.

Clinic with a Heart is requesting pill box organizers for one week, chapsticks, deodorant, children’s books in English or Spanish, adult and children’s socks, winter hats, gloves, and scarves. They have a Street Medicine Team which is requesting adult socks, gloves, small first aid kits, hand warmers, hygiene kits and bus passes. We will also be gathering monetary donations to purchase an audiometer and an electronic scale, as well as water and snack food items in bulk for the Street Team as well as for the volunteers and patients at the Clinic. Boxes for each organization will be in the East Entrance on Sunday mornings. Items otherwise can be brought to the office.

If you have any questions or are anxious to spread more **JOY**, contact Jeri Brandt, Shereen Mills or Pam Carrier, all members of the Mission and Outreach Committee.



So what's happening with Justice in Action? Are we making any progress? Yes!

Our church is one of the founding members of Justice in Action, which was formed to help make our community a better place for all people. Last year, we (along with 20 other faith communities) decided we wanted to tackle Criminal Justice Reform and Mental Health Access. Keep reading for an update on the criminal justice reform efforts, which is about getting to the root causes of incarceration and expanding access to diversion programs. The first step is to have access to real-time accurate data about the county's jail population and Community Corrections Department. Thanks to a partnership between Justice in Action and County officials, the dashboard is now live! Anyone can look at real-time data here: <https://www.lancaster.ne.gov/196/County-CorrectionsJail>

This is just the first step. What we are ultimately advocating for is alternatives to incarceration and, specifically, greater access to the county's diversion programs.

You may also know that the county has approved over a million dollars to house inmates in other jails. We know there is a need to address criminal behavior, however, we are working toward solutions that reduce the number of repeat offenders so that we have fewer people in jail. Rev. Beth Graverholt, Lead Organizer for Justice in Action, wrote a good article about it that you can read here: <https://www.justice-in-action.org/blog/urgent-call-for-action>

Our faith calls us to work for a better world for all people. Thanks for being part of this effort to bring the Kingdom of God just a little bit closer in Lancaster County.



**“Glory to God in the Highest... and on Earth Peace:
The Christmas Story in Art”: An Advent Webinar**

Join Art Historian, Richard Blackburn for a **free webinar about "The Christmas Story in Art"** that he's leading, **Wednesday, November 29** at 8:00 p.m. ET -- 7:00 p.m. CT -- 5:00 p.m. PT -- or **Thursday, November 30**, 2:00 p.m. ET -- 1:00 p.m. CT -- 11:00 a.m. PT. Use this link to: [Sign up for the webinar. - https://us02web.zoom.us/join/zoom/register/tZMkdOirqzooGdJeYaO8iit8tsUFQgayvsQC#/registration](https://us02web.zoom.us/join/zoom/register/tZMkdOirqzooGdJeYaO8iit8tsUFQgayvsQC#/registration)

The story of God's incarnation in Christ has inspired artists throughout the history of the church. The slide-illustrated webinar will reflect on images of "Christ's Nativity," "The Annunciation to the Shepherds," and "The Adoration of the Shepherds" as represented in the great art of the past.

The emphasis will be to highlight how those artistic themes evolved, both in the Eastern Orthodox and Western churches. The presentation will illustrate how the Christmas story has been interpreted by artists from the Early Christian and Medieval eras, through the Renaissance and the Baroque period. The hope is that meditating on such images can enrich your own celebration of the coming of the Christ Child during this Advent Season.

Stewardship & Finance

2024 Pledge Campaign Totals as of 11/15/2023

Pledge Total - \$244,110.87

Per Capita Total - \$2,328.00

Its never too late to turn in your pledge! Drop it off at the church office or email finance@fpclincoln.org. On behalf of your Stewardship & Financial committee, thank you for your support of First Presbyterian Church and our many ministries!



Did you receive your ribbon bookmark from your stewardship committee at First Presbyterian Church? If you are missing a bookmark, or would like an additional bookmark, please email finance@fpclincoln.org with your request. We hope that our congregation has been able to enjoy using the ribbon bookmark. What bible verses or hymns have you marked? Do you have a favorite stewardship Bible verse, or any favorite passage or hymn?

Here are some verses that align with our stewardship theme this year –

Yellow Ribbon – Remember to have faith. (Luke 22:1-23 or Exodus 16:1-18)

Black Ribbon – Release and be free. (Matthew 19:16-22 & Deuteronomy 15:1-11)

Red Ribbon – Reimagine God's money story. (Matthew 19:16-22 & Deuteronomy 15:1-11)

Blue Ribbon – Restore God's promises. (John 21:1-14 & Genesis 33:1-17)

Green Ribbon – Favorite Prayer or Psalm

Please email finance@fpclincoln.org with your favorites so that our committee may share them with the congregation during Sunday worship. Where do you feel God in scripture or in song? Let's share our congregation's favorite verses with each other and lift up our hearts together.



Session Highlights

Highlights of the November Session Meeting

At our November Session meeting, we celebrated the hiring of three new staff people! We are excited about what Kylee (custodian), Maria (communications) and Jennifer (finance) will bring to our staff team and our church. Please give them a warm welcome when you see them! Kylee works Sunday – Thursday, 8-12. Maria will start Nov. 27 and will be working 30 hours/week, mostly from home, and Jennifer will be working 20 hours/week, and you'll find her starting Dec. 4 in the Finance office.

As you may recall, Cheryl Rennick retired in January 2023, but our plans for outsourcing part of the finance work didn't turn out as planned, so Cheryl has been quietly doing what needs to be done. Session thanked her for her dedication and voted to compensate her for her work, since essentially, she was still doing everything she was before she retired. Thank you, Cheryl!

The Online Ministry Team is looking at ways to invite our online congregation to join us for fellowship time after worship, which could involve some reconfiguration of rooms and new technology. Research on this continues.

The session will hold its annual retreat March 1-3, 2024. We typically use this time for team building, future planning, visioning, and training.

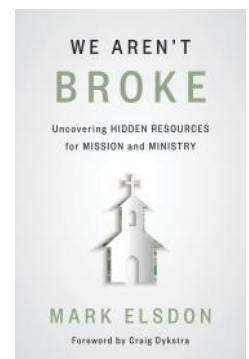
We dissolved with thanks some task forces whose work has finished: The Clergy Renewal Leave task force (Vena Alesio, Terri Sherman, Julie Van Meter, Janna Loehr), Shift (Vena Alesio, Janna Loehr, Jen Koolen, Harry Olthoff) and Spaces & Places (Dianne Frydendall-Smith, Cindy Lloyd, Jen Koolen, Lynn Hughes, Audrey Richert). Thank you all for lending your time, energy, and passion to the ongoing work of the church!

We approved the baptism of Don Marx' great-granddaughter for January 28, 2024.

We voted to have a booth at the Lincoln Wedding and Celebrations Show, January 7, 2024. Carrie Cross and Sue Bolz will staff that for us.

We approved purchasing and getting training for an AED machine (automated external defibrillator).

Session has been reading We Aren't Broke: Uncovering Hidden Resources for Mission and Ministry, by Mark Elsdon, which has challenged us to think about what is our core mission and what is the impact we want to have, both for our own members, and in the community and world. We invite all of our members to read this book, as it has a lot of food for thought about how we see ourselves active in the community and world. We'll share some of our reflections in the months to come as we continue our conversations around the session table.



Getting to Know our Members

From Hospitality Ministry Team

First, we will meet one of our regular attenders: Nora Chisamore.

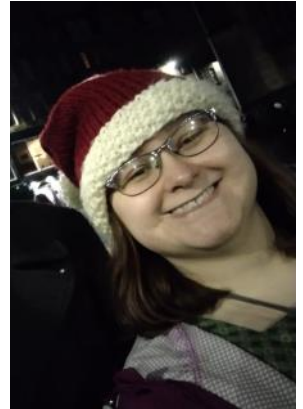
Nora is originally from Rochester, NY, and moved to Southaven, MS when she was nine. She did her undergraduate degree at Middle Tennessee State University, majoring in Apparel Design. She is currently working on a masters degree at UNL, majoring in Material Culture and Textile Studies on East Campus. She is a graduate assistant, working as a Teacher's Assistant for two professors, and also works in the historic clothing section. When she is home on breaks in Southaven she works at Joann Fabrics.

Nora's parents live in Mississippi. Her dad teaches at the University of Memphis, and her mom works at a rental agency. Her younger brother is a senior at Vassar College.

Nora started attending First Presbyterian in August of 2022. That spring she was the knitting teacher for the prayer shawl ministry.

When asked about hobbies, Nora says if it has to do with yarn, she has tried it! She has also done a good deal of traveling, having gone to Ireland in 2018 with students from her high school art class. In 2019 she went with her family to England, Scotland, and Wales, and just this past Christmas went to Edinburgh, Scotland to help her brother move back after a semester abroad.

Nora is not sure what she will do next year, but has options she can pursue.



Next, we will get to know long-time member Elizabeth (Betty) Tenhulzen.



Betty was born in Brooklyn, NY, the eldest of 5 children. She later lived in New Jersey, Boston, and New York. After high school she moved to Nebraska, the state of her parent's birth, living with her grandmother as she attended UNL. She says she lost her east coast accent and, "fell in love with the big blue Nebraska sky."

Betty worked for many years as a dental assistant, starting in the office of former church member Dr. Richard Brunmeier. She still works one day a week at a local dental practice that hosts legendary Christmas parties.

Betty has a son Michael in Albany, NY, a daughter Jeani in Ashburn, VA, and a son Richard in Jacksonville, FL, as well as several grandchildren and great grandchildren.

She joined First Presbyterian in 1963. She says she found her true calling when Dr. Ray Larson started the Stephen Ministry in 2002. This program still speaks to her and she says it has changed her life.

Betty's hobbies include reading, cooking, sewing, gardening, and travel. She has traveled to Mexico, Canada, Hong Kong, Africa, Ecuador, the Galapagos Islands, Costa Rica, Australia, Tasmania and New Zealand. Another interesting fact about Betty: she is a 14th generation descendent of Rebecca Nurse, a Salem, Mass. resident, who, in her 70s, was hanged as a witch!

Betty says she considers the First Pres congregation a part of her extended family, and recently said to someone about Nebraska that, "living here filled a void in your soul that you weren't aware was even present."

New Faces!

New Faces Around Church!

Please welcome:

Kylee Jones, our new Custodian

Maria Brown, our new Communications Specialist

Jennifer DeCamp, our new Finance Administrator!

We'll give more of a formal welcome in our next newsletter, meanwhile, if you see them around, say hi!

THANK YOU!

Thanks to Cheryl Rennick, who has made sure our financial life was organized and functioning well, even after she retired! Maybe now she can REALLY retire!

My name is Kylee Potter, and I'm 27 years old from Lincoln, Nebraska. In my free time I like to read, write and embroider. I also have 4 cats and recently got married in July. I hope to go to school soon for Medical coding as well. I'm very happy to be working here at First Presbyterian Church!



My name is Maria Brown, and I am excited to be joining First Presbyterian Church as a Communications Specialist! I am a Nebraska native with a background in Graphic Design and Theatre. On most nights, you can catch me volunteering at Lincoln Lutheran High School, where I lead the theatre and speech departments. I share my space with two feline friends, a lovable Golden Retriever, and my husband. In my spare time, I enjoy traveling, playing video games, and crafting. I am looking forward to meeting and working with many of you!

I am a Lincoln native who has had some brief interludes in other towns throughout my life. However, I keep coming back to Lincoln because I must really like it. I have three daughters ages 19, 13, and 8 years old. Yes, that means I have one in college, middle school, and in elementary school. Our house is always full of activity though it has died down a little now that the oldest has gone off to college.

I love numbers and words. I HAVE to do my Wordle and my Nerdle every day. Nerdle is the numbers version of Wordle. And I love reading. It's a good thing we now have Kindle in our lives because I ran out of bookshelves a long time ago.

I also love musicals and theatre. I have also done a few plays but am not allowed to "participate on the stage in musicals. I have no sense of rhythm and there is a possibility that I am tone deaf. But I have no trouble embarrassing myself on stage otherwise. I once chewed on a rubber fish while playing Mrs. Beaver in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*.

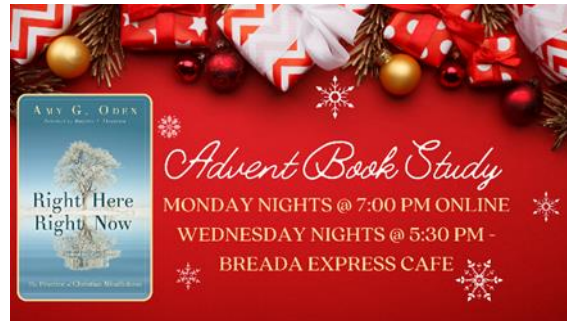


I am excited to join the First Presbyterian family and am looking forward to working with you. Please feel free to contact me anytime if you have any questions.

Christian Education

Merry Christmas! Happy Advent! All those things because as the songs says, “It’s the most wonderful time of the year!” I love the Advent/Christmas season. It was probably my Mom that got me into Christmas (she’s been listening to Christmas music for weeks) and ever since Its my favorite season as well. And it’s not just the Christmassy stuff, but the special services and occasions at church... and the delicious food and treats. And this year we have some of those special Christmas/Advent stuff going on here at the church. So be sure to mark your calendars and join in on the merriment cause it’s the most wonderful time of the year!

Kris “Bubba” Brammer



Advent Book Study

During the season of Advent, you will have the chance to learn about and explore the practice of Christian mindfulness through the book “***Right Here Right Now: The Practice of Christian Mindfulness***” by Amy G. Oden. The book is in conjunction with this year’s Advent worship series, “The Gift of Being Present.” There are three options to participate in this study; 1) Online with Pastor Sue on Monday nights at 7:00pm (starting Nov. 27th) and 2) Wednesday nights with Kris Brammer at 5:30 pm (starting Nov. 29th) at Breda Café, or 3) a self-lead, at home options with journaling and self-reflection prompts. To sign up for the online (Monday) or in-person (Wednesday) options visit the church website <https://fpclincoln.org/event/advent-book-study/> Books can be purchased through major online retailers like Amazon and Barnes and Noble and are also available in e-book formats. For questions contact Kris Brammer.



Wednesday in-person
Advent book study

Monday - Online Advent
book study

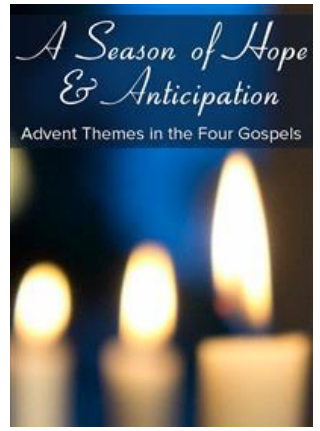


Advent Workshop to Celebrate the Christmas Season

To usher in the Advent and Christmas seasons, First Presbyterian and Eastridge Presbyterian churches are teaming up to host a special event. Mark your calendar for December 3rd from 3:00-5:00 pm and join us for an afternoon of fellowship with our fellow Presbyterian siblings in Christ. We'll have a range of Christmas/Advent themed activities, fellowship, and service. This year's workshop will be held at First Presbyterian Church in Fellowship Hall.

Hebrews Adult Sunday School Class

Beginning Sunday, Dec. 5th – 19th The Hebrews class will introduce a new topic for discussion as we explore the Advent themes in each of the four gospels. This study examines the four Gospel portrayals of Jesus' origins: Who is Jesus? Where did he come from? What do these narratives tell us about what to expect of Jesus in the remainder of each Gospel? This study will attempt to raise challenging questions about Jesus' origins and will explore what these Gospel portrayals of Jesus' beginnings say about the Son of God and his meaning for the early church and for us today.



Youth Dinners – we are once again looking for folks to sign-up to provide a meal for our youth on Sunday nights. This can be home cooked meal or a carry-out meal. The schedule of nights when dinner is needed can be found on the sign-up genius linked to the QR Code. Just scan it with your phones camera and it will take you right to it. You can also visit the youth page [www. https://fpclincoln.org/youth/](https://fpclincoln.org/youth/) and scroll to the bottom for a link.

Music Ministry



FPC Bells & Choir both took part in worship November 12th



On Monday, November 20, the First Presbyterian Choir presented a short concert for residents at Eastmont Retirement. They sang pieces from the *Sing from the Heart* concert on October 27, as well as some Thanksgiving music. They also led the residents in a sing-a-long of Thanksgiving and patriotic hymns and songs. The event took place in the new performing arts hall at Eastmont.

Christmas Village



Our Christmas Village is getting a permanent home in Room 105! If you would like to join in the fun of setting up buildings, people, snow, and a train, please contact Vena Alesio at venabeth4nu@gmail.com.

All are welcome to bring Christmas to the church as we prepare the Village for the Advent season.

Do you like to paint?

We're putting our Christmas Village on permanent display in Room 105. It would be great to have people paint a background for it on the wall: sky, mountains, trees - design your own creation! If you're interested, please contact a member of the Property Committee, or Vena Alesio at venabeth4nu@gmail.com.



Bible Studies

Are you looking for a ladies Bible Study?

First Presbyterian has three women's groups that meet monthly with the purpose to nurture women's faith through prayer and Bible study. If you would like to join one of the circles, have questions, or need more details,

Circle 1 - 1st Wednesday of the Month, 9:00 am, Rm 107

Circle 2, 3rd Thursday of the month 1:30 pm, Rm. 107

Circle 3 - Afterwork Bible Study, 4th Monday of the month. 5:30 pm, Zoom

Men's Bible Study

The men meet every Tuesday morning at 8 am for breakfast and Bible Study in room 107.

Odds & Ends



Did you know that FPC now has an online store to meet all of your hat, polo and fleece needs? Just hop on over to <https://fpclincoln.qbstores.com/> to see what is available!



Book Club meets the third Friday of the month in the Parlor next to the Sanctuary at 9 am. All are welcome!

December Book - “The Twelve Topsy-Turvy Very Messy Days of Christmas” by James Patterson

January Book - “The Mystery of Huntings End” by Mignon Eberhart



Coffee Hosts

Coffee Hosts - We need folks to help our hospitality committee make coffee and provide treats for after worship.

You can call Carrie in the office and she'll put you on the list. Or scan the QR code to the left and sign up!



Is your contact information current in the church office? If you have moved, changed phone numbers, or email addresses, please let Carrie in the office know at churchadmin@fpclincoln.org
You might be missing out on some really fun stuff!



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Lincoln, NE

Please notify the church office of any name,
address, email, and/or telephone changes.

First Presbyterian Church

Where faith is nurtured, curiosity is encouraged, diversity is welcomed, and all are loved.

Did you know?

That it is easier than ever to make your Pledge
and Per Capita payments online now?
You can even set up recurring payments!
No Login Required!

Simply go to **www.onrealm.org/fpclincoln/give**

We now have Venmo - [@FPCLincolnNE](#)

You can still give by text as well by **texting MissionPossible to 73256**

Sunday Worship Times

In-Person Worship Services

10 am - English - (Livestreamed at <https://fpclincoln.online.church>)

12 pm - Nuer

Events & Opportunities

fpclincoln.org/events

Worship Online:

Fpclincoln.online.church