

FIRST LIGHT NEWSLETTER

A Monthly Newsletter Published by the Fairbanks First Presbyterian Church, December 2024

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> Office Closed: Wednesday, Dec. 25 Thursday, Dec. 26 Wednesday, Jan. 1

Fairbanks First Presbyterian Church 547 7th Avenue Fairbanks, AK 99701 Office: 907-452-2406

Meet the Fortune Family!

Meet Merle and Lillian Fortune and their kids Sarah and Merle III "Sonny". Merle is from Dillingham and Lillian is from Utqiaqvik. They first came to Fairbanks to visit grandparents in the summers (Lillian) and to attend UAF (Merle) in the late 1990s / early 2000s. The family made Fairbanks their permanent home 12 years ago. Two things they love about life in Fairbanks are Pioneer Park and snow. Merle is an IT Technician and Lillian is a stay home mom. In their free time, they enjoy playing music and video games. Instruments played include flute, violin, trombone and piano. Sarah's hidden talent is the ability to

use a sewing machine. They have been members of First Pres for 7 years (not counting Lillian's membership as a youth in 1999). They enjoy serving our FPC family, helping with IT and facility (Merle), former deacon (Lillian) and in the youth groups (Sonny and Sarah). One thing they really value about our FPC family is how welcoming the people are. Be sure to reach out and say hi when you see them!



Getting to Know You—Part of the role of the Deacons is to help new members get connected, and to encourage all members to get to know each other better. In order to do that, your Deacons have decided to feature different households in our church family by sharing a little bit of information about them, so we can all learn a little more about each other. This month we are featuring The Fortune family. If you and your family are interested in being featured now, or on a particular month, please let one of our Deacons know. We are looking forward to getting to know you all a little bit better!

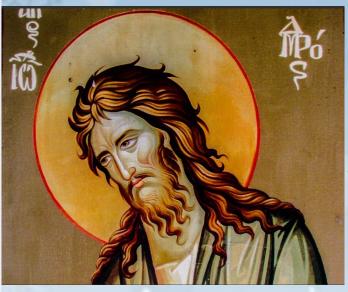
Our VISION is to see the world transformed to love, worship and serve Christ.

We do this through our *MISSION*, which is to welcome all people, equip them for a deep and living faith in Jesus Christ, and send them into the world to share God's love.

~~ From the Pastor ~~

How to Do Advent

I know it feels like we are almost halfway through December already, but it's never too late to pick up a daily practice of faith! Advent is a beautiful and important season in the church, but it has to compete with all of the end-ofyear, end-of-semester, and commercial shopping busy-ness that has come to dominate the first few weeks of December. It is understandable if you've neglected daily Advent devotions in the midst of your hectic life, we have all been there.



My favorite aspect of Advent is its defiance. In a world that demands we stay busy, Advent invites us to be still. In a world that loves darkness, Advent lights a candle, inviting us to contemplate the light shining in the darkness. In a world that wants us to buy our way to happiness, Advent interrupts everything with unexpected joy!

It's no wonder then, that the best representative for Advent is John the Baptist. You couldn't find a more defiant figure in all of Holy Scripture! When the crowds came to him, he told them to repent and to get ready for an even greater prophet than himself. When the religious leaders came to him (many of whom were professional colleagues of his father and his own kin), he called them a **brood of vipers** and implied that the only reason they came was to escape God's wrathful judgment.

One of the last stories we hear about John is when he is already imprisoned and he sends *his* disciples to ask Jesus if He (Jesus) is really the Messiah, or if they should keep waiting and watching for the Holy One of God to arrive. Most people assume that this is John's last great moment of doubt as he lingers in a cell awaiting his death at the hands of the tyrant, Herod. But what if John is being defiant one last time? What if John has already faced down his final doubts and temptations and, looking upon these loving friends who continue to visit him daily in his cell and call themselves his disciples, John insists that they instead go and meet Jesus themselves. When these followers of John finally do meet Jesus, they see that "...the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them." [Matthew 11:5]

Like many of the most captivating stories in Scripture, we don't know what happens next. Presumably, these followers of John went back to their leader and reported what they had seen for themselves, just as Jesus encouraged them to do. But, what happened next? Having been nudged by their own teacher and prophet, did these people join up with Jesus' crew and take part in healing many and giving hope and good news to all?

The Gospel narrative does not say. Instead, the Word of God here challenges us: to look and see what Jesus is up to in the world and in our hearts. We are invited to decide if we want to be a part of God's Coming Kingdom and (like John) point others to Jesus as well, or to let go and be swept back up into the storms of this world and the whims of our human desires.

May our time in prayer and worship this Advent season give us firm footing above the tumult of this season's chaos. May Jesus Christ set you on the firm foundation of faith: defying the world's pull on you. From this firm foothold, may you reach out and lift many others up as well.

O COME TO THE ACTAR

Genesis 35:3 FPC Young Adult Ministry

NOTES FROM NICOLE

First Pres Families,

If I could teach you anything or impart anything to you it would be for you to know how much God loves you. He's so much bigger, greater, and better than you can possibly imagine. A loving God who always wants you to return to His arms regardless of your behavior. Not to prove He is right but to show how big His love is.

Because of that love I want to remind you God doesn't have to be compartmentalized. There isn't a Sunday God, a small-group God, or devotion God but a God who wants to be part of every facet of our lives – including our hobbies.

At the end of the month you are invited to meet us at Polar Ice for Worship on the Ice. A time where we, as believers, get to invite God to meet us on the ice and see this part of our worship extend from the sanctuary to the ice. Becuase just like there is no "Junior Holy Spirit" there isn't a box for where God can be honored. I would love to see you and your friends on the ice doing something we get to do by choice: worship. For He is Worthy.

I want to close out the December newsletter by telling you thank you. The first year of having a new ministry director is often uncomfortable and this was no doubt the case in our situation. Thank you for enduring the year with me and showing up even when you didn't want to. In spite of our year of challenges God has done some cool things and it's left me hopeful for 2025.

"O Come to the Altar" will continue to the be theme for 2025 until August (unless we move fast then we might grow into Covenant early summer). We'll see this out by continuing the Bible study of the gospels and worship nights. If you haven't attended one of our worship nights or need a reason to come back into the fold please know there is always a place for you here even if the beginning was rocky. Worship nights are getting better and stronger. We'll meet for worship in the Studio on the 15th then on the Ice at Polar Ice on December 28th.

"Then come, let us go up to Bethel, where I will build an altar to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and who has been with me wherever I have gone." Genesis 35:3

For the good and God, -Nicole

DECEMBER EVENTS

Worship Nights: December 1st & 15th @ 6:00 p.m.



Dirty Santa/White Elephant Cift Exchange: Saturday, December 21st @ 6:00 p.m. in the Studio. Bring a \$10 or less gift + your favorite Christmas Cookies and Dad Jokes.

Worship on the Ice: Saturday, December 28th m@ Polar Ice from 4:00 - 5:45 \$8.00 p/person. This is open to the entire church.



Dear First Pres Folks, I blinked this week and all the FPC Kids were 3 inches taller...

Not only that but there are more kids each Sunday! I am so excited to report that our Fellowship is growing in every way. As we grow, God has provided, especially in the area of volunteers.

In the last 30 days or so:

Sunday school helpers were Emma, Charles, Marta, Amber, Brian, Ashley. Rehearsal/wiggle room volunteers were Christina, Ashley, Steve, Nicole, Emily, Katie, Maggie, Heidi and Molly. Tom and Anahak worked on our Christmas cut out. Molly volunteered sewing, shopping and planning. Ms. Nancy and Carson held music rehearsals. The Smith family, The Romaneski family and the Sunderlands brought food for our Roots kids. Ms. Emily held dance rehearsals, Pastor David directed our Middle school acolytes (Sunday candle lighters) in addition to teaching with me and Ms. Noreen kept us on track with our admin. We are a program run on God's grace and His grace shows so clearly in the service and generosity of his people. My heartfelt thanks to all these partners in caring for the hearts and minds and wiggly bodies of God's most precious kids. Please continue to pray for wisdom and discernment as we lead them

CHILDREN'S ministry



Holly Smith, age 9, helps out on Thanksgiving food box day.



Middle schoolers in Climb chose this design, cut it out and painted it to have outside during the Advent/Christmas season.

DECEMBER

BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Donna Brewer
- 1 Laura Strong
- 1 Gretchen Wietgrefe
- 1 Holden Kohl
- 5 Keith Nore
- 5 Becky Fuller
- 9 Devin Perkins
- 10 Constance Matthews
- 10 Linda Mullen
- 11 Brian Sunderland
- 12 Michelle VanHatten
- 12 Trevor Bunch
- 12 David Denton
- 12 Elizabeth Jones
- 13 Bobby Perkins
- 14 Brian Rozell
- 15 Janie Feist

Happy Birthday



17	Caleb Sunderland
17	Christopher Cogley
17	River Gates
18	John Fink
19	Thelma Pierce
20	Lindsey Dreydoppel
20	Cade Albert
21	Joanne Klaver
22	John Anderson
23	Teddy Jerald Riggs Jr.
24	Chris Kilgore
25	Joyce Tapper
27	Gayle Meurs
29	Shirley Albert
30	Brenna McConnell-Boo
31	Daniel Armstrong

31 Kristina Anderson

her



ANNIVERSARIES

Shannon and Ted Riggs Brian & Stephanie Rozell Dave & Diane Henry



4. Sat	/ Shiva. Nilima, Nishi & Esha Hullavarad	14 Lonny & Michele Marney	21 Heather, Jason & Coby McFar- land	28 Gayle Meurs	Healing Prayers for Pat & Sig Fink Joy-el Culligan Joyce Tapper George Shoogukuwrk Deanna Morris Prayers for Recovery from House Fire Ben & Lynn Hull Family	
202	v Scott, Katrina & Natalie Hummel	13 Patsy Marenko	20 David & Brema McComell- Booher	27 James, Carina, Diego, Essie & Lucy Menaker	Healing Prayers for & Sig Fink Joy-el Culligan Joyce Tap Jeorge Shoogukuwrk Deanna Morris Prayers for Recovery from House Fire Ben & Lynn Hull Family	
Thurs	Jason, Karina, Jonas, Ivory & Eva Huffaker	12 Jeanne Maddux	19 Rick, Heidi, Twila, Kiana & Avery May	26 Judy McNinch	Pat & Sig F George Praye	
Ved V	+ Mikaila Holt The Well (every Wed)	11 Karla MacKinney	18 Nicole, Theo- dore & Con- stance Matthews	25 Davist Bound		
embe	s Thomas, Sandra, Avriel, Quivaq & Anarrakaq Hoak	10 Isaac, Leah, Aaro, Adalie & Ezra Mackey	17 Donald Marsh	24 Bill & Sandy McKee Candlelight Service	31 Robin & Connie Miller	
Dec	ء David & Diane Henry	9 Walter Lord	16 Scott Marney & Rackell Caxton	23 Leslie & Debra McFarlane		
a second	ı Life Groups	8 Children & Youth Walter Lord Ministries	15 FPC	22 Men's Ministry	29 30 Women's Minstry Diane Miller	
Ist Pres Staff David McConnell- Booher Nicole Matthews Carina Menaker Noreen Har- wood Peggy Nicho- las Paul Bonnell Debby Foster Daniel Griggs Kathy Halfhill Debby Foster Beaudrault Debby Foster Beaudrault Beaudrault Beaudrault Beaudrault Beaudrault Beaudrault Beaudrault Beaudrault Beaudrault Debby Foster Beaudrault Beaudrau						

JOIN US FOR ADVENT @ FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

Sunday Dec. 1st, Hope: Keep Watch

10:00am Sunday Service

Sunday Dec. 8th, Peace: Light the Way

10:00am Sunday Service

Sunday Dec. 15th, Joy: Take Heart in God

10:00am Childrens' Christmas Program

Sunday Dec. 22nd, Love: Magnify God's Goodness

10:00am Sunday Service

Tuesday Dec. 24th, God With Us

7:30pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Sunday Dec. 29th

10:00am Sunday Service 7:30pm Service of Lament and Hope for the New Year

Sunday Jan. 5th, Wisdom Is Found

10:00am Epiphany Sunday Service



First Presbyterian Church 547 7th Ave. (907) 452-2405 Watch Live @ https://www.facebook.com/fpcfairbanks

WORSHIP SKATE

Worship Open Skate!

Join us for a very special open skate, featuring your favorite worship music!

Saturday, December 28th 4:00 PM-5:45 PM

Admission: \$8.00 Skate Rentals: \$5.00

This is an all ages / all skill level event. Skate aids are available for those just learning to skate. \heartsuit

Happening at Polar Ice! 9 1087 Dennis Road

Event brought to you by First Presbyterian Church



Dress Rehearsal for the Christmas Pageant Saturday, December 14th 9 am to noon



Staff Appreciation Christmas Gift

What a dedicated staff we have at FPC! That's why we encourage everyone to help express our love & appreciation to them this Christmas. One way to do this, is by contributing toward a Christmas monetary gift for all six of our wonderful staff members. (*Pastor*: **David McConnell-Booher**, *Youth/Young Adult Director*: **Nicole Matthews**, *Children's Ministry Director*: **Carina Menaker**, *Office Manager*: **Noreen Harwood**, *Sound Projection Technician*: **Paul Bonnell** and *Nursery Coordinator*: **Peggy Nicholas**).

If you plan to give toward the *Staff Christmas Gift*, please place your contribution in the church offering plate one of these Sundays: Dec. 1, Dec. 8, or Dec. 15. (Or drop it off at the church office <u>before Friday, Dec 13</u>.) Please be sure to mark your checks or envelopes with "*FPC Staff Christmas Gift*". Of course, other gifts or cards, can be given to our staff at Christmas, too!

Thanks for your loving support of our awesome FPC staff! How blessed we are to have them!

<u>FPC Personnel Team</u>: Brian Rozell, Bill Satterberg, Terry Reichardt & Donna Brewer





First Presbyterian's Clothing Closet Needs You!

CLOTHING DONATIONS BENEFITING THOSE IN NEED

Winter

COATS | SWEATERS | HOODIES | GLOVES | SNOW PANTS | BOOTS | AND MORE!

MENS CLOTHES NEEDED MOST OF ALL!

Drop off donations to Bethany Biryukova (907) 723-1610 Or Miss Noreen at the front desk!