

FIRST LIGHT NEWSLETTER

A Monthly Newsletter Published by the Fairbanks First Presbyterian Church, December 2025

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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 ~~



*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,
so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. [Romans 15:13]*

We begin with hope. That's a good place to start. There is not enough hope in this world. Nations act the way nations always have across history. Rulers and princes and celebrities always promise far more than they can deliver. The old idols of money, sex, and entertainment stir the passions for moments of distraction, but always leave us more empty and disillusioned than when we started.

So, we hope: not in the foolish things of this world, not even in the holy gifts of a Divine Maker. Let us instead hope in the Creator, Himself. Let us take God at His word when He declares:

*"Comfort, comfort my people... cry to her that her hardship has ended, that her iniquity is pardoned."
[Isaiah 40:1-2]*

Peace, Joy, Love, and even the Eternal God Himself come to us. This is what Advent and Christmas are all about. But let us not be too hasty to rush to the end and unwrap all our presents just yet. Let us start here, as the days get shorter and the world seems dimmer.

Let us name what troubles us. Where the world has failed us. Where we have failed. Let us resist the urge to turn on all the lights and set flame to every candle in the house! Let us sit in the dark long enough to acknowledge our desperate need for God's light, for Hope in our present darkness.

The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. [John 1:5]

With that little light of Hope we can begin to set things in order. We can cry out to a God who rushes to be with us. We can share and reflect the light of God's love to those who sit in the dark next to us.

We begin with Hope.

~~Pastor David



Christmas Program:
During 10:00 church
service 12/14

Dress Rehearsal:
9 am
Saturday 12/13

***All kids k-8th will want to learn these 2 songs
for the Christmas program:***

1. Nativity song.

A la nanita nana by Baby Listen - Spanish lullaby with
English

YouTube <https://share.google/JI6J5FDkzcfFMbNfM>

2. Shepherd Boy by Phil Wickham

<https://youtu.be/oymYCeNRfPE?si=iYtW0eTqi0CCuNXa>



Covenant

Notes from Nicole

First Pres Families,

What a gift this season is to behold our Savior's birth. Present times are much like the days of old because our souls are, in fact, weary and we need to take a minute to marvel at the splendor of our King who came as a child. The miracle of humanity came as a baby in a manger.

I hope you will make plans or have made plans to attend Songs of the Season. Bring a buddy and come sing with us! While this is a fundraiser I also desire for our church to join boldly in worship to proclaim the miracle of salvation. Songs of the Season is, Sunday, November 30th at 6:00 p.m.

The 2025 NextGen Christmas party - an EPIC ALL DAY CHRISTMAS PAJAMA DAY IS Saturday, December 20th. NextGen can arrive at 1:00 and we'll have finger foods, movies, games, White Elephant gift exchange, Studio projects, then walking downtown to see Solstice Fireworks. The night concludes with Solstice Fireworks. Please wear appropriate gear for fireworks.

College and Career's winter retreat is January 31st - January 2nd. I'll have more details later but College & Career go ahead and put it on your calendar.

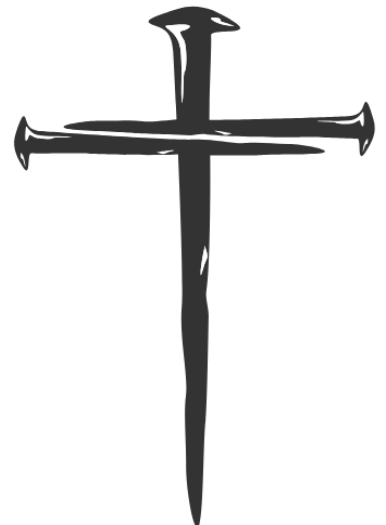
As we wrap up the year I want to thank you for holding space for my family and I for the past two years. Alaska has been the most challenging experience of my life yet it's expanded my capacity for God in way you can only explain when you live here, in the frozen north. The majesty of God is reflected in this land in a way that is sacred, reverent, and holy. The dark days have satisfied my soul to every fiber of its being.

While we sit in our dark days may we remember the beauty of salvation came in the form of a baby in a manger.

For the Good and God,
-Nicole

December calendar

- **November 30th - Songs of the Season**
- **December 20th - Epic ALL DAY CHRISTMAS PAJAMA DAY (no Sunday programming)**
- **December 28th - Sunday Serve Day + Hope and Lament Service**
- **January 4th - No Sunday Programming**



FPC BLESSING TREES



BLESS A MEMBER OF
THE FPC COMMUNITY
BY CHOOSING AN
ANGEL ORNAMENT.
RETURN THE ANGEL
WITH YOUR CHOSEN
ITEM(S) ON OR
BEFORE DEC. 7TH.

SEE A DEACON WITH
RECIPIENT SUGGESTIONS OR
QUESTIONS.



Sunday School Tasty Food Drive

Children are invited to bring non-perishable foods to Sunday School. These donations should consist of foods kids like to eat. Donations will be distributed through the Food Bank. This effort will be ongoing through Christmas.

FPC Staff Christmas Gift

What a wonderful staff we have at First Presbyterian Church!

We hope you will join us in expressing our love & appreciation to them this Christmas, by contributing toward a Christmas monetary gift for all six of our staff members.

Pastor: David McConnell-Booher

Director of NextGen Ministry: Nicole Matthews

Children's Ministry Director: Carina Menaker

Office Manager: Noreen Harwood

Sound Projection Technician: Paul Bonnell

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: *Nov. 30, Dec. 7, or Dec. 14.* (Or drop it off at the church office by Tues. Dec. 16).

Please be sure to mark your checks or envelopes with: **"FPC Staff Christmas Gift"**.

Of course, feel free to give other gifts or cards to our staff at Christmas, too!

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



-FPC Personnel Team: Brian Rozell, Bill Satterberg, Terry Reichardt & Donna Brewer



Communion Table Flowers:

Beginning in 2026 you'll see a slight change with our communion table flowers. In years past our flowers had been provided by College Floral at low cost and most recently at no cost. As College Floral closed, we looked for a new floral provider and found the cost to be too much for our budget (usually \$75-100 per Sunday). After careful consideration, we will now have lovely silk bouquets, generously made by a member of our congregation. If you would ever like to purchase flowers for the communion table or bring a bouquet from your garden in honor or in memory of someone or something, you are MORE than welcome to do so! Simply let Noreen know by the Wednesday prior to the service and she will print what you'd like shared in the bulletin. After church the Deacons will take the flowers to bless another person. *If you have questions please ask any of the members on the Worship Committee: Pastor David, Sarah Albert, Jerry Cleworth, Nancy Dreydoppel, Ashley Dykstra or Keith Nore.*



Birthdays

1 Donna Brewer
1 Laura Strong
1 Gretchen Wietgreffe
1 Holden Kohl
4 Bennett Gilbert
5 Keith Nore
5 Becky Fuller
9 Devin Perkins
10 Constance Matthews
10 Linda Mullen
11 Brian Sunderland
11 Brooks Gilbert
12 Michelle VanHatten
12 Trevor Bunch
12 David Denton
12 Elizabeth Jones
13 Bobby Perkins
14 Brian Rozell
15 Janie Feist
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 JoAnn Mills
24 Chris Kilgore
25 Joyce Tapper
27 Gayle Meurs
29 Shirley Albert
30 Brenna McConnell-Booher
31 Daniel Armstrong
31 Kristina Anderson

December

Anniversaries

14 Shannon and Ted Riggs
16 Brian & Stephanie Rozell
31 Dave & Diane Henry

What follows is a short summary of the discussions and actions of the Session, at the November 18, 2025 Stated Session Meeting, which began at 6:11 pm in the Church Conference Room. The minutes of the meeting will contain a more complete record.

- The Meeting was opened with a Devotion and Prayer.
- The meeting began with an update from Maggie Demers and Amber Reichardt on the upcoming activities during the visit from Father Greg of Home Boy Industries.
- Elders spent time in prayer. After making prayer requests known, Elders prayed for those needs.
- A financial summary was received from Church Treasurer Mikki Holt and Ruling Elder (RE) Paul Reichardt, chair of the Stewardship and Finance Team. Due to significant facility repair and maintenance expenses; and payment of the final installment of the Mission and Outreach benevolences, by the end of September, the projected deficit has increased to \$63,000. Historically income experiences a significant year-end bump, through pledge and loose offering giving. As long as this increase to income during the final month of the year continues, the deficit should be significantly decreased. However, the committee remains cautious and has recommended that, until further notice, discretionary general fund spending be avoided.
- The vital statistics from October 22 nd to November 18th and the minutes of the October 21st Stated Session Meeting were reviewed and approved.
- Over the past month, there was one infant baptism. Church membership remains at 151 as of November 18, 2025, with no gains or loses. There is a new members class in progress. The average weekly church attendance increased over the last month to 165 per service. Average weekly attendance for 2025 Year-to-date is 150 per service.
- Correspondence was received from Dave Strunk, the current moderator of our denomination. The correspondence provided an update on the draft of a report from a General Assembly (GA) ad-interim committee that was presented this past June at GA.
- The Consent Calendar was approved. This consisted of approval of minutes from the Deacons Meeting from September 23, 2025. The Consent Calendar or Omnibus Motion, which often consists of several motions, is a time-saving process in which non-controversial motions can be passed with one vote.
- The upcoming Winter Presbytery Meeting was discussed, with several Session members expressing interest in attending. The meeting will be held January 30th to 31st in Gig Harbor Washington, at Chapel Hill Presbyterian Church.
- RE Charles Beaudreault and Clerk David Dreydoppel volunteered to assist with communion on December 7, 2025.
- Discussions on the 2026 Budget continued. The Session is committed to presenting a balanced 2026 Budget. As of November 19th there have been 26 pledges received, for a total of \$317,444, as compared to 2025 totals when 53 pledges were received for a total of \$467,014. The draft 2026 Budget was reviewed line by line, with a number of line items being decreased or eliminated where possible.

- It was passed to change any mention in the budget of “Youth Ministry” to “Next Gen Ministry” and to change the job title of the Director of Youth Ministry to the Director of Next Gen Ministry.
- It was passed to change line items labeled “Adult Christian Ed” to “Adult Christian Formation”, as the ministry now includes more than Sunday education classes.
- It was passed that a task be assigned to the Personnel Ministry team to create or revise the onboarding procedures for newly hired employees, and to have the procedures in place by July 2026.
- The head of staff, Pastor David, will be reviewing the current policies with current staff members.
- The Facilities Team is reviewing the current internet provider, to determine if there may be possible cost savings and possible increase in internet capabilities.
- Staff has been investigating possibly moving to a new on-line service, which would replace the current online giving, pledge and offering tracking, and child check-in service. It appears the new service would replace the three current services and have increased capabilities in all three areas. The new service is being offered at an introductory price. After further research, an email vote will be conducted by Session prior to the end of the month.
- Written reports were received from Ministry Teams.
- The meeting was adjourned by the Moderator and he led the closing prayer.
- The next Stated Session Meeting will be held on December 16, 2025 at 6:00 pm, in the Church Conference Room.

November Snapshot of 1st Pres Finances

As of the end of October:

2025 Gen Fund Income: \$ 441,120.94

2025 Expenditures: \$ 527,353.57

2025 Deficit: \$ 86,232.67

As of November 23rd:

2026 Pledges: 34 pledges totaling \$369,984

(2025 Pledges: 53 pledges totaling \$467,014)

1st Pres Staff
David McConnell-Booher
Nicole Matthews
Carina Menaker
Noreen Harwood
Peggy Nicholas
Paul Bonnell

Deacons
Marta Beaudreault
Aaron Evans
Bethany Evans
Debby Foster
Daniel Griggs
Emily Kohl
Kathy Libby
Shannon Riggs
Christy Repasky
Sarah Rozell
Joanna Weber

Elders
Sarah Albert
Charles Beaudreault
David Dreydoppel
David Henry
David McConnell-Booher
Keith Nore
Paul Reichardt
Brian Rozell
Emma Snell
Brian Sunderland

December 2025

	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Pat & Sig Fink	Merle II, Lillian, Merle, Jr., & Sarah Fortune	Martin, Debra, Austin & Logan Foster	Becky Fuller	Roma Lee Fuson	Ruth Garbett & Stacy Lynn Garbett
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Our Pastor	Joel Gibson	Scott, Sena, Bennett, Brooks & Beau Gilbert	Carol Gray	Charles Gray	Jeffrey, Molly, Eric, Douglas & Lucy Green	Daniel Griggs, Katie Lubowicki, Sam, William & Eileen
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Music Ministry	Diane Hamlet	Janette Hanneman	Krista, Nate, Elias & Nya Heeringa	Katie Harris	Noreen Harwood	Pam Hennessey
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Children's Christmas Program	David & Diane Henry	Thomas, Sandra, Avriel, Anarrakaq & Quivaq Hoak	Mikaila Holt		Shiva, Nilima, Nishi & Esha Hullavarad	Ben, Lynn, Ellie, Nathanael, Silas, Henry & Isaiah Hull

Healing Prayers for
Pat Fink Joy-el Culligan Sarah Curtis
George Shoogukuwrk Joan Riggs
Joyce Tapper Deanna Morris Mike Bartels