FIRST LIGHT
NEWSLETTER

A Monthly Newsletter Published by the Fairbanks First Presbyterian Church, Dec. 2026

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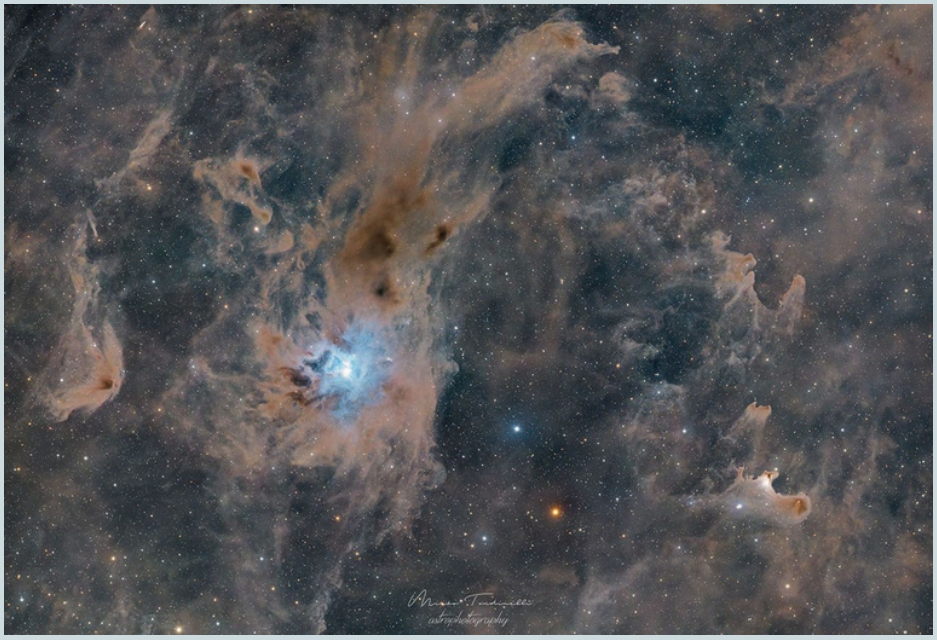
Our VISION is to see the world transformed to love, worship and serve Christ. We do this through our MISSION, which is to welcome all people, equip them for a deep and living faith in Jesus Christ, and send them into the world to share God's love.

~~From the Pastor~~

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

~John 1:5



It's that time of year when we all truly begin to notice the darkness. No matter our daily schedules, we cannot help but recognize that the sun is rising late in the morning and setting before even the earliest of supper times.

In this season of growing darkness, we are drawn all the more to the light. Wood stoves are kindled, candles are lit, and happy lamps glow in living rooms and workspaces.

What does it mean for us Christians that "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it?"

Full disclosure: I had just written the previous line when Noreen knocked on my door and told me to pick up the office phone. Sydney was on the line and wanted to share something. Sydney came to our church basement when we served as the overnight youth shelter location in the early days of The Door's operation, some fourteen years ago. She had been living in a group home, then a tent, and then it hit -40 Fahrenheit on a Saturday evening some fourteen years ago. Sydney came upstairs to the worship service the next morning and, in her own words, "Sarcastically prayed out loud for a plane ride home to Anchorage."

A couple in our church approached her after the service and helped arrange for some of her immediate needs (like acquiring an AK ID and a plane ticket). She confessed that she had been less than sincere in her prayer request and the couple responded "We know." They helped her all the same, prayed with her, encouraged her, and got her safely on her way back to Anchorage. Sydney was calling to say that she is now 5 years sober, living in Wasilla, and doing her best to walk in faith with Jesus every day. She wanted to call, give glory to God, and also say "thank you" to us for hosting The Door, for praying for her, and for stepping up to be the answer to her half-hearted prayer. She didn't expect anything but cynicism in return.
Instead, she got her life back.
"I would have died that week if you all hadn't been there for me," she confidently repeated to me over the phone. "It's been on my mind a lot lately, and I just wanted to make sure you all knew that."

Sometimes we get to carry God's light to someone who feels the despair of night encroaching all around them. Sometimes we ask in prayer through clenched teeth, with whatever little shred of faith we have, and God shows up in brilliant ways in the midst of our own gloom.

Usually, it's a bit of both: The Light of Christ shines brightest when we both receive with thanksgiving and share with gratitude.

How is the Light shining on you this season?
How will you carry that light?

~ Pastor David

CHILDREN'S ministry

HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS



DECEMBER

12	CHRISTMAS PROGRAM REHEARSAL	
13	CHRISTMAS PROGRAM	CLIMB CHRISTMAS PARTY
20	SUNDAY SCHOOL POPCORN PARTY	NO CLIMB
27	NO SUNDAY SCHOOL	NO CLIMB

JANUARY

3	NO SUNDAY SCHOOL	NO CLIMB
10	SUNDAY SCHOOL AND CLIMB RESUME	

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO GAVE GIFTS AND CARDS TO CELEBRATE MY FIFTH YEAR AS THE CHILDREN'S MINISTRY DIRECTOR AT FIRST PRES!

I AM SO GRATEFUL FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF ME AND OUR KIDS AT FIRST PRES.

MAY GOD GROW OUR KIDS INTO MATURE AND JOYFUL KINGDOM ADULTS!

Laura

December

Birthdays

1 Donna Brewer
1 Laura Strong
1 Gretchen Wietgrefe
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
16 Tye Adams
17 Caleb Sunderland
17 Christopher Cogley
17 River Gates
17 Karen Fritche
18 John Fink
19 Thelma Pierce
20 Lindsey Dreydoppel
20 Cade Albert
21 Joanne Klaver
22 John Anderson
22 Steve Dykstra
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

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 17, 2026 Stated Session Meeting, which began at 6:06 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.

- Elders spent time in prayer. After making prayer requests known, Elders prayed for those needs.

- The vital statistics from October 21st to November 17th and the minutes of the October 20th Stated Session Meeting were reviewed and approved. There were no email votes over the past month.

- Church membership dropped by one, to 168, with the death of a member, as of November 17th. The average weekly church attendance over the last month was 141 per service. Average weekly attendance for 2026 year-to-date is 135.

- No Correspondence was received over the past month.

- Consent Calendar items included approval of the minutes of the Deacons Meetings from September 22, 2026

- Financial information was received from the Church Treasurer and the Finance & Stewardship Committee. As of the end of October 2026, Year to Date receipts have been $569,040.00 and Year to Date expenses paid are $493,120.00, resulting in an approximately $68,679.00 surplus. Payment for Mission giving, which had been on hold, have been paid.

- Session reviewed the 2027 Budget, focusing on the projection of anticipated pledges, Interest income, Pastoral compensation, and Staff benefits. Years ago Session had committed to present a balanced budget by 2026, ending many years of deficit budgets. Session will be prayerfully considering this question, and it will be brought up at the December meeting.

- Ruling Elder Brian Rozell presented the revised draft of the Job description for the proposed **"Director of Neighborhood Ministry"** position. Session reviewed the updated draft, made several revisions to the document and it was **passed** to approve the final document. Pastor David will be presenting the background and purpose for the position.

- Session discussed the Spring Presbytery meeting, scheduled for May of 2027. The Prep Team has been doing a facility review, focusing on allocating meeting space, facility cleanup, and disposition of abandoned items.

- It was decided that the newly created committee dealing with church safety and security would be officially listed as the “Safety Committee” and will be listed on the agenda as such.

- Pastor David reported that on several occasions facility door had been found unsecured and lights left on. This information has been shared with church leadership and was requested of all involved to increase efforts to maintain secured doors and energy savings.

- Since the Reichardt’s will be out of town, volunteers were requested to provide devotions for The Well on November 18th and November 25th. Stephanie Rozell volunteered for the 18th and Marta Beaudreault volunteered for the 25th.

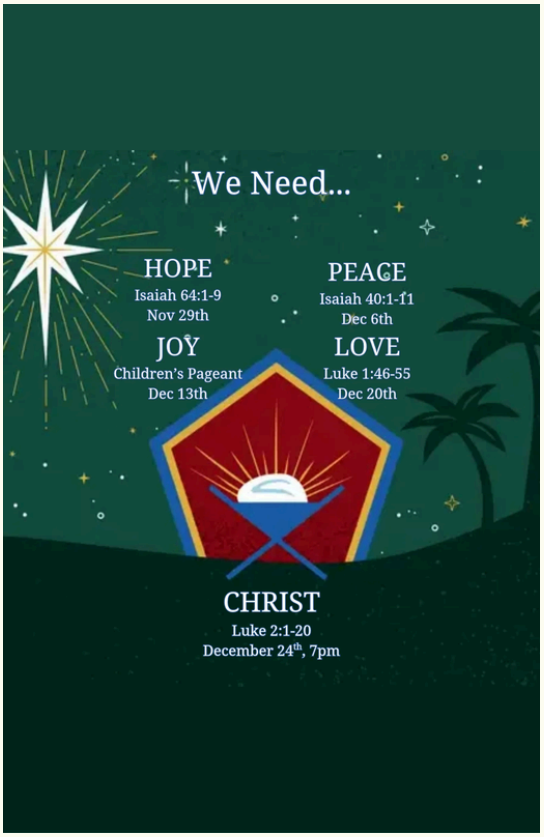
- Brian Rozell and Maggie Demers volunteered to assist with communion on December 6th.

- Stephanie Rozell volunteered to bring snacks to the December Session meeting.

- The meeting was adjourned by the Moderator at 9:00 pm.

- The next Stated Session Meeting will be held on December 15, 2026 at 6:00 pm, in the Church Conference Room.





how to: Church

a brief class on the essentials of our faith

Sign-Ups

Sundays at 9am, Starting November 15th

Are you considering joining the church as a member? Discerning a call to serve as a Deacon or Elder? Want to learn more about what we believe and how we live out our call to follow Jesus Christ in a presbyterian context? This class is a chance to learn and grow together as the church!

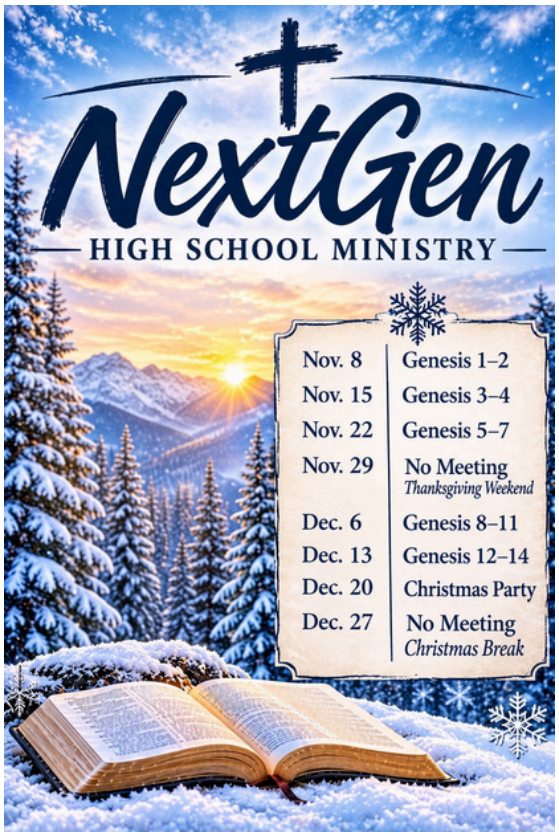
Staff Appreciation Christmas Gift

Christmas provides a perfect opportunity for us to express our love & appreciation to our wonderful FPC staff, who faithfully serve us all year long. The personnel team invites you to contribute toward a Christmas monetary gift for all five of our awesome staff members. (Pastor: *David McConnell-Booher*, Children's Ministry Director: *Carina Menaker*, Office Manager: *Noreen Harwood*, Sound Projection Technician: *Paul Bonnell* & Nursery Coordinator: *Peggy Nicholas*).

If you plan to support the Staff Christmas Gift, please place your contribution *in the church offering plate* on one of these Sundays: *Nov. 29, Dec. 6, Dec. 13 or Dec. 20*. Or you may *drop it off at the church office before Friday Dec. 18*. Be sure to mark your checks or envelopes (containing cash) with "*FPC Staff Christmas Gift*". You can also give *online* by selecting "*Staff Appreciation*". We hope to present the gifts to the staff the week of Christmas. Of course, cards, notes or other gifts are welcome, also.

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

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



DECEMBER announcements

It's Blessing Tree Time!!!

The 'Angel' Tree(s) are in the Narthex!

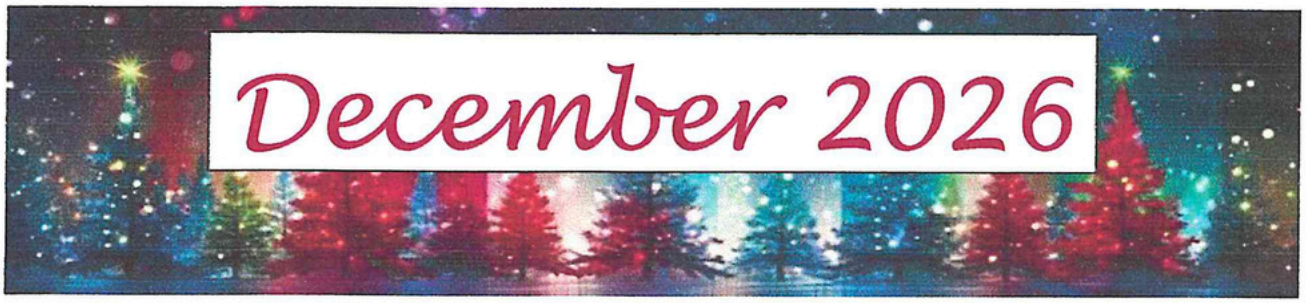
Members of the congregation are encouraged to take an angel, purchase or make the item listed, & bring back the angel & item by Sunday, December 13th.

(Please wait to bring all baked goods until Dec. 13th.)

This is a wonderful way for our church to bless those in need, new members, young adults & others in our community!

Kids Christmas Program

Sunday, December 13
During 10:00 Church service



Prayer Calendar for FPC

1 Tuesday Bill & Donna Brewer

2 Wednesday Vincent Eldridge

3 Thursday Sig Ericklook

4 Friday Aaron, Bethany & Malana Evans

5 Saturday David & Kathleen Fagre

6 Sunday Dale & Janie Feist

7 Monday Pat Fink

8 Tuesday Merle II, Lillian, Merle, Jr. & Sarah Fortune

9 Wednesday Martin, Debra, Austin & Logan Foster

10 Thursday Becky Fuller

11 Friday Roma Lee Fuson

12 Saturday Ruth & Stacy Garbett

13 Sunday Our Pastor

14 Monday Scott, Sena, Bennett, Brooks & Beau Gilbert

15 Tuesday Carol Gray

16 Wednesday Charles Gray

17 Thursday Jeffrey, Molly, Eric, Douglas & Lucy Green

18 Friday Rosie Gustafson

19 Saturday Diane Hamlet

20 Sunday Music Ministry

21 Monday Krista, Nate, Elias & Nya Heeringa

22 Tuesday Noreen Harwood

23 Wednesday Austin & Lindsey Heley

24 Thursday Pam Hennessey

25 Friday Celebrate Jesus' Birth

26 Saturday David & Diane Henry

27 Sunday FPC

28 Monday Thomas, Sandra, Avriel Anarrakaq, & Qulvaq Hoak

29 Tuesday Mikaila Holt

30 Wednesday Jason, Karina, Jonas, Ivory & Eva Huffaker

31 Thursday Marsha Forster

Please pray for 1st Pres Staff, Elders & Deacons

Healing Prayers for

Pat Fink Joy-el Culligan Sarah Curtis

George Shoogukuwrk Kiana May

Joyce Tapper Deanna Morris Mike Bartels