

FIRST LIGHT MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



THANKS GIVING

November 2023

Pursuing Happiness Through Obedience to Christ

After last Sunday and Stephanie Rozell's excellent sermon, we are officially halfway through our Sunday series on The Beatitudes. These nine "Blessed Are..." statements are encouraging, beautiful, and challenging all at the same time. As a preacher, one of the big challenges is discerning how best to articulate the true and complete meaning of the word 'blessed'. Many English Bible translations choose to translate the word as 'happy', and happiness is a common component of the idea of blessing, but there's more to it. A few Sundays ago, I quoted from Frederick Buechner as he described the Biblical meaning of 'blessed' to mean almost lucky, as if there was some intangible, "can't quite put my finger on it" aspect of a blessing, and in modern society we really don't have a good way of communicating that idea without bringing words like 'luck' or 'magic' into the equation. But those words have so many negative connotations, that we are just as likely to alienate some church-going people by using them to describe a blessing; much in the same way we might alienate a non-Christian by overusing church-y words like blessing or repentance or grace without unpacking those terms for people who are unfamiliar with them.

So for the rest of this article, let's stick with 'happy'. One of the major lessons from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, and indeed the entire way of following Jesus that we call Christianity, is that we are not called to pursue happiness (or blessing) for itself, but rather, we are to pursue a life of joyful obedience to Jesus

as Lord as a response to God's love and grace poured out to us through Jesus life, death, and resurrection. When we put following Jesus and serving God's Kingdom first, Jesus assures us that "all these things will be added to you." (Matthew 6:33). When we love God and love other people around us in God's name, we find that our needs are being met, we have a peace beyond understanding, and our happiness comes bubbling up from a hidden fountain that we could have dedicated our entire life to searching for, but never found.

We all want to be happy. We all want to be blessed. The wisdom of this human world is always nudging, shouting, and shoving at us to chase our bliss, to buy the thing, to take that luxury vacation. We will finally be happy if we can just get that next *thing*.



But the wisdom of Christ is whispering, pleading, and quietly teaching us that happiness comes not when we chase after it, but rather when we seek to follow Jesus. And Jesus always leads us to the foot of the cross, to the front door of our neighbor, and to the face of our enemy; a face that bears the same image of God that we carry in our very souls.

Pastor David ~~

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SUNDAY, November 5



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**Communion Sunday
Stewardship Sunday**

MONDAY, November 13-20



Shoeboxes are due

UPCOMING: The Month of December

Advent, Angel Gifts, Children Christmas Program, Christmas Eve Service

WEDNESDAY November 22

**Thanksgiving Food Boxes
Distribution**

*NOTE: The Front Office will
be closed on..*

*Wednesday, November 22
Thursday, November 23
Friday, November 24*

WEDNESDAY November 22

Deck the Halls!

Mark your calendars for Wednesday, November 22nd at 3:00pm to help decorate the church for the Advent and Christmas season! The entire process takes a few hours, so come anytime that afternoon/early evening, even if just for a short time.

All help is appreciated!

THURSDAY, November 23

Happy Thanksgiving!



WHAT ARE ANGEL GIFTS? WHAT IS THE BLESSING TREE?



Blessings to all of you from your faithful “Sneakin’ Deacons!” We bless people with ANGEL Gifts ALL YEAR LONG.

It is time to think about our First Presbyterian Church Blessing Tree. What is the Blessing Tree? What are Angel Gifts? Who decides who will receive blessings from our congregation in the form of angel gifts? What type of gifts are requested or needed from our church family?

During the season of Advent, the Blessing Tree is a way that our church family members give back and “pay it forward” to those who are struggling in different ways. Your deacons are the ones who organize this project, identify possible recipients each year, and the deacons will make the deliveries to the recipients on or around the 18th of December.

Many families and individuals struggle with paying their electric bill, fuel bill, medical bills, food bill, and providing the basic needs for their families. Our church family tries to assist those in need by making a monetary donation or product donation to contribute to those angel recipients. Each year we have a need for cash donations to support these difficult bills. We also request home baked goods to share with our families and individuals.

We need your help in identifying members of our congregation that may be in need this year. Your suggestion of families or individuals can be made anonymously to the church office by

phone call to Marta; by placing the request in the offering plate at the Sunday service; and by contacting one of the deacons, elders, or staff members in person or by phone or email. We would like to have this list of recipients created by the second week of November so we can better prepare our paper “Angels” that will go on the Blessing Trees.

The Blessing Trees will be erected in the Narthex, hopefully the week of November 19th, just outside of the sanctuary, and filled with tiny paper angels that have specific requests of needs printed on them. As congregation members feel moved, they will select “paper angel requests” and then donate the requested needs on each paper angel and bring it to church not later than December 17th. Donations may be dropped off at the church office or given to any deacon, elder, or pastor during the Sunday service.

Angel gifts need to be at First Presbyterian Church not later than December 17th or 18th so that the deacons can prepare each delivery.

Thank you to all congregation members and our church family for continuing to support this important outreach mission of First Presbyterian Church.

Melissa Prince, Moderator
First Presbyterian Church Deacons





CHILDREN'S ministry



Dear First Pres Folks,

This month, I had the pleasure of attending the wedding of two dear young people in Seattle. While the young people were lovely and the food was delicious, those weren't the best parts. I felt the most joy . . . at the speeches! Here's some of what those closest to the couple said:

"He will never give up on a person, even when they make mistakes."

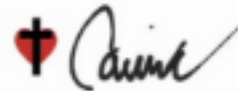
"She welcomed my shy friend with open arms and made them feel comfortable right away."

"They helped me through a hard time, even when they were struggling with their own problems."

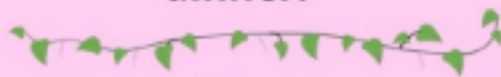
A beautiful and expensive wedding was not nearly as beautiful as the love these young people gave to those around them. Praise God for what he has certainly built in these two!

I am so grateful that my work at FPC is to seek out what God is doing in our kids and to support that because He has so much to show us this side of heaven. I pray that every child at FPC finds salvation AND every child's character will "shine bright in a weary world".

making earth just a bit more like the garden He intended.



Roots Club (for Kids 3rd-5th) meets Sundays 4-6 and provides dinner.



Climb Club (for Kids 6th-8th) meets Wednesdays 3-5





SESSION

What follows is a short summary of the decisions and actions of the Session, at the October 17, 2023 Stated Session Meeting, which began at 6:00 pm in the Church Conference Room. The minutes of the meeting will contain a more complete record.

- Moderator McConnell-Booher opened the meeting with prayer and then presented a devotion based on John 21:15-19.
- Those in attendance recited the Vision and Mission Statements.
- The agenda was approved as amended.
- Elders spent time in prayer. After making prayer requests known, Elders prayed for those needs.
- A written financial report was received from the church treasurer, Mikki Holt, who was in attendance to answer questions.
- Minutes from the last Stated Session meeting and vital statistics from the last month were reviewed and approved as presented.
- Correspondence was received from Redeemer Presbyterian Church (PCA) of San Antonio, TX in reference to the membership transfer to FPC for Sam and Natalie Cuidon.
- It was moved, seconded and passed to approve Consent Calendar item, which included approval of the minutes of the Deacon's August 22, 2023 meeting, and approval of the Transfer of Membership for Sam and Natalie Cuidon.
- A report was received from RE Keith Nore on the events of the 18th Meeting of the Presbytery of the Pacific Northwest, held from October 5, 2023 to October 7, 2023 in Jacksonville, OR.
- Session discussed the need and planning for a new members class. A sub-committee made up of Pastor David, Clerk David Dreydoppel and RE's Keith Nore and Brian Sunderland will be meeting to plan the process. It is the plan to begin with an informational class on the Reformed Tradition and the EPC prior to offering a new members class.
- The need for a review of the Membership Rolls and a process to accomplish the review were discussed.
- It was moved, seconded and passed to correct the church's official, corporate title in a motion in the August 2023 Session minutes dealing with the change of the church's Key Executive.
- The second reading of the 2024 Budget was conducted.
- Matters surrounding the Youth and Children's Ministry Directors positions were discussed.

(continued on next page)

- It was moved, seconded and passed to extend the meeting until 9:30.
- Written and verbal Ministry Team Reports were received.
- The meeting was adjourned with prayer, by the Moderator at 9:33 pm.

The next Stated Session Meeting will be held on November 21, 2023 at 6:00 pm, in the Church Conference Room.



- 1 Sophie Strong
- 1 Caxton Marney
- 3 William Mullen
- 5 Brian Albert
- 5 Jack Morris
- 5 Sue Ault
- 7 Dave Dreydoppel
- 9 Joanna Jagow
- 13 Jason Huffaker
- 13 Johanna Coester
- 15 Ridge Demers
- 20 Katrina Hummel
- 21 Deanna Morris
- 21 Pam Hennessey
- 22 Vincent Eldridge
- 22 Dawn Curtis
- 23 Bonnie Johnson
- 23 Don Marsh
- 24 Owen Bunch
- 24 Daniel Griggs
- 24 Henry Repasky
- 28 Kathi Stevens

Blessings From Our Benevolent Recipients



Thank you for your generous donations! These funds will be used in providing help, hope and change to those in need our community. We can only do what we do when the family of God partner together. Hallelujah! **Helping Alaska**

Your continued support for the kids and mission here at The Door is appreciated. Having just learned that it all started there, it is a testament of faithful commitment to the community. Pray you see the impact, but more so for God’s blessing on your church family.



FYA & Door Leadership



Thank you for your faithful prayers and your generous support. God is at work in our lives and in the lives around us. We are so thankful He is faithful in all things.

Mike and Tammy

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.