

FIRST THINGS FIRST

NEWS FOR THE CHURCH FAMILY AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STERLING, COLORADO

DECEMBER 2023



In the midst of shopping sprees, let's ponder the Gift of Gifts.

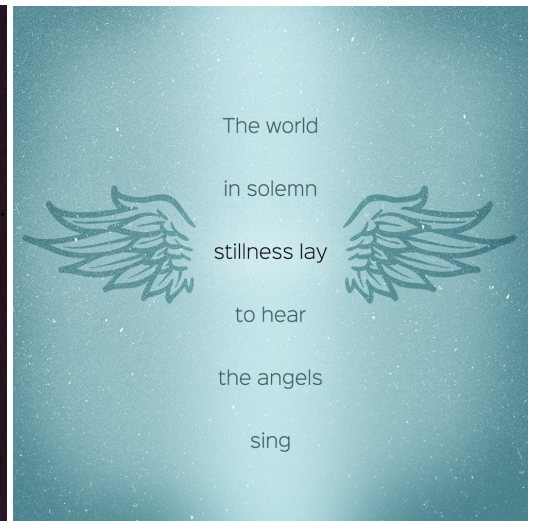
Through the tinsel, let's look for the gold of the Christmas Star.

In the excitement and confusion, in the merry chaos,

let's listen for the brush of angels' wings.[†]

[†] from *Kneeling in Bethlehem*, Ann Weems

A MESSAGE FROM MICHELLE. . .



The Season of Advent

The seasons of the church year invite us to take time to remember and reflect on the life of Christ and the larger biblical narrative. The church year begins with Advent, as we anticipate the birth of Christ (and as we look toward the return of Christ).

This Advent as we remember the story of our Lord's birth, we'll be giving particular attention to the angels. Zechariah, Mary, Joseph, and the Shepherds were all visited by an angel (or, angels).

Angels are messengers — they bring messages from God, and they share those messages with people. So, this Advent, as we look at the messages the angels had for those who played a role in Jesus' birth, we'll also consider whether God is still sharing messages with people, even today. Maybe there are truly angels among us who are sharing messages of hope, peace, joy, and love.

In scripture we read, **“some have entertained angels without knowing it”** (Hebrews 13:2).

But, what if we opened our eyes and our hearts...? What if we learned to recognize when God is speaking to us...? What if we could entertain angels *and know it*...?

This Advent, we'll be looking and listening for messages from God that still reach us today.

May God give us ears to hear and hearts open to receive what God is saying to us...

Rev. Michelle

You're Invited. . .

Join us for supper and a service of remembrance and hope. During this service, we take time to remember loved ones who are no longer with us. Originally designed for those who are grieving during the holidays, the Blue Christmas service offers space for anyone who might be feeling “blue,” for any reason. Whether it’s the decreasing hours of daylight, or missing loved ones, or just feeling stressed... many people find that the holiday season can increase sadness.

The Blue Christmas service is a time to acknowledge the darkness, while leaning toward the light. It is a quiet and hopeful service, and it’s for anyone who could use a little calm in the midst of the chaos of the season, or for anyone who could use some company in the midst of a lonely season, or for anyone who could use a little light and hope.

Come alone, or come with a friend... but join us — all are welcome.



Blue Christmas

a service of Remembrance & Hope



Wednesday, December 6 ~ 5:15 supper ~ 6:00 service

First Friday @ First Presbyterian

*Nita Gillham
& Friends*

~
“The Keys of Christmas”

Dec 1 ~ 12:05pm



Inez A. McCaffree (Jimmie) aged 108 passed away on November 15, 2023 in Greeley, Colorado. Jimmie was born, one of four children, to Robert and Ida (Carter) Jameson on May 26, 1915, in Elsie, Nebraska. She attended West Nebraska Methodist Hospital School of Nursing and became a licensed, registered nurse in 1936. She married Robert (Bob) H. McCaffree in the same year. They started their family and lived in Scottsbluff for 20 years before moving to Sterling Colo.

Jimmie lived a life of service to her family, community, and church. She worked as a private duty nurse, and in hospitals before becoming a public health nurse for Logan County. This included being a school nurse for the outlying rural schools. She was very active in her church and was a volunteer for Cooperative Ministries in Sterling for over 20 years.

Her favorite activity was spending family and leisure time at their cabin in Eldora, Colorado.

She was preceded in death by her parents and siblings, her husband, daughter, Phyllis Zemanek and two sons-in-law. She is survived by her daughters Jane Helmberger of Greeley, CO and Marian Amaranto (Ernie) of Mead, CO, Ammini (A.M.) Jacobs of Fredericksburg, VA, 13 grandchildren and numerous great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren.

A family graveside service will be held on December 1, 2023 at Fairview Cemetery in Scottsbluff, Nebraska.

Any donations may be sent to: the Jimmie McCaffree Nursing Scholarship at NJC Foundation or to the Eldora Land Preservation Fund. Both organizations have websites, or checks payable to the specific organization can be mailed to Tennant Funeral Home, PO Box 1547, Sterling, CO 80751.



Place orders by December 5

Honor & Remember Loved Ones with Poinsettias

\$25 each

—
Poinsettias will be in the sanctuary Dec 10-24, and available to pick up following Christmas Eve.

Check out our *Hats & Scarves Christmas Tree* in the church sanctuary.

This Holiday Season “Buy One Gift One”

When you buy an item, we will donate a comparable item to the Family Resource Center.

Knitted hats, scarves and cowls will be on sale at the church.



Handmade For The Holidays

\$15/ hat

\$15/ scarf

\$20/ hat & scarf

Proceeds Used To Support Our Missions

OUR CHURCH FAMILY SHARES PRECIOUS CHRISTMAS & CHURCH MEMORIES...

Sue Weingardt remembers going to her grandmother's house every year and making homemade taffy. They would rub butter on their hands before they pulled the taffy. All her aunts and uncles and cousins were there to share in the fun.

Tammie Malone's favorite memories are of Christmas Eve candlelight services which are always a reminder of the real meaning of Christmas.

Linda Borner's memories include the many wonderful times as a choir member with such a talented director as Darla.

Lena Witherspoon's favorite Christmas memory was when her family took a family ski trip.

Bev Fritzler's precious memory of our church is that Rev Michelle came to visit she and Leon when he was very ill. She was there for Bev after Leon passed away. Also, when she moved into her new home, a deacon of the Church came to help her hang her heavier pictures.

Hadley Jackson, Age 4, is worried that Santa won't be able to find her. He is gone and she can't find him. It might be icy and he won't be able to come. She is going to have a party and she doesn't know how to put up the star on the Christmas tree.

Tanna Prince loved the dog she received for Christmas when she was 7 or 8 years old. She was also thrilled one year when she found the impression of Santa's sled in the snow! All her growing up memories of Christmas were special with all the family times and experiencing the Love of Family.

Mike Tyson said that years ago, when he was in the Navy, he got engaged and was supposed to get married when they had leave during New Year's. Well, the schedule changed so much they would not have time off. So they got married 2 days before Christmas and had a very short honeymoon!

Bev Cumming remembers that her family always attended Candlelight Services late in the evening. She would lie down on the couch and take a nap while she waited for her parents to get ready for church so she would not fall asleep during Christmas Eve Services.

Pat Borner's eyes lit up when she told her favorite Christmas memory. She was one of 10 children and they received only one gift for all the kids each year. One year her older sister had her own job, so she bought Pat and her younger sister each a doll of their very own.

Michelle Witherspoon remembers the first Cookies & Carols service at FPC. Children wore their Christmas pajamas to the casual Christmas morning service; of course cookies were decorated and carols were sung... It was a delight!

Pam Werner was tearful as she recalled her precious memory. During Christmas Eve services Charles Johnson and Fran Moore were performing O Holy Night, her favorite Christmas song. She had just found out that she was going to have a child. She cried tears of joy and it was a "joyful moment" in her life.

Dean Boeff was raised as a Jehovah's Witness and never celebrated Christmas. When he met his wife Brenda, her family wanted him to have a Christmas. So they put together a "redneck" party with camouflage shirts and hats. They took family pictures even though they weren't married yet but already a part of the clan.

Rena Morrison's memories are of the ladies from Circle making the Christmas tree ornaments and then over the years decorating the tree together along with little Katie Neblett who would come to help. There were so many talented circle women who worked together over the years.

Lindsey Green Jackson's favorite memory is that every single year her Grandma Green would either take the bus or fly to spend Christmas with her family. She would spend all her time making dinner rolls and cookies cookies cookies!

Linda Meisner laughs when she remembers that as a child she opened all the presents under the tree one day before Christmas when her parents were gone. Then she rewrapped them. It was a terrible Christmas because she knew what was under the tree for her.

Alex Hicks' favorite memory is that he woke up and went into the living room, waiting to open gifts. He had recently gotten a Nintendo and in his Christmas box were lots of games for it. "I was so happy!" he says.

Emily Werner has wonderful memories of being in the Christmas pageant as a child. One year the children did the Hallelujah song with flash cards in the space where the choir sits. The children began to laugh so hard! She cherishes Christmas Eve services as a time of reconnecting with the church family and singing Silent Night together.

Carrie Lovenburg remembered a Christmas 3 or 4 years ago. The family was opening gifts when the electricity went out. It was so dark that they got flashlights and finished opening their gifts. The family watched the sun rise together.

Cheryl Kaan's unique Christmas memory happened during the Christmas blizzard of 1982. They were in Brighton and the weather was so bad that no one could travel. They spent Christmas with 8 strangers in their home.

Karen Torres remembers the Christmas Pageants which included all the children and teens in the church. It was lots of work but family members would attend on Pageant night to see the children perform. The children felt loved by the larger church family.

Jomari Lechtman was raised in a Jewish family. One year Christmas and Hanukkah were celebrated on the same days. Her Christian friends were so jealous that she received one gift for 8 days instead of just one gift on Christmas Day.

Jenevieve Manuello's memory is that her dad's mother, her grandmother and her grandmother's sister, her aunt, attended the soddy school, which then became our church's first location for services on Sunday. The dwelling is depicted in our church's history as our first church building.

Kim Weingardt remembers when her kids were young and the family drove around town looking at all the lights and Christmas displays. Well, when they got home, Santa had been to their house! The surprised looks on the kids' faces were priceless. This became a family tradition in their home.

Joan Whitney's favorite memories include her wonderful friends, including Pat Borner, Rena Morrison, and Linda Meisner, and others and how supportive they are. She also loves Ann Blackburn's leadership for the bible studies group.

Wonderful memories!


A MOMENT FOR MISSION....

One of the missions our church supports is the Cooperating Ministry of Logan County (CMLC). Dean Boeff recently reported about the work of the Cooperating Ministry. Over 3,000 individuals have utilized the food pantry program so far this year.

Over \$143,000 in food donations have been provided to CMLC through the Feeding American Program. In addition, over \$60,000 of food has been purchased for the food pantry to benefit Logan County families in need, year to date. Dean stated that this extraordinary effort would not have been possible without the charitable donations of our benevolent church.

Over 1,300 other households have accessed the many other programs offered by CMLC this year. With the help of Energy Outreach Colorado, over \$109,000 was used to keep lights on and folks warm in their homes through the months of October 2022 through September 2023.

The Cooperating Ministry of Logan County thanks all of us here at the Presbyterian Church for our generous giving and warm hearts.

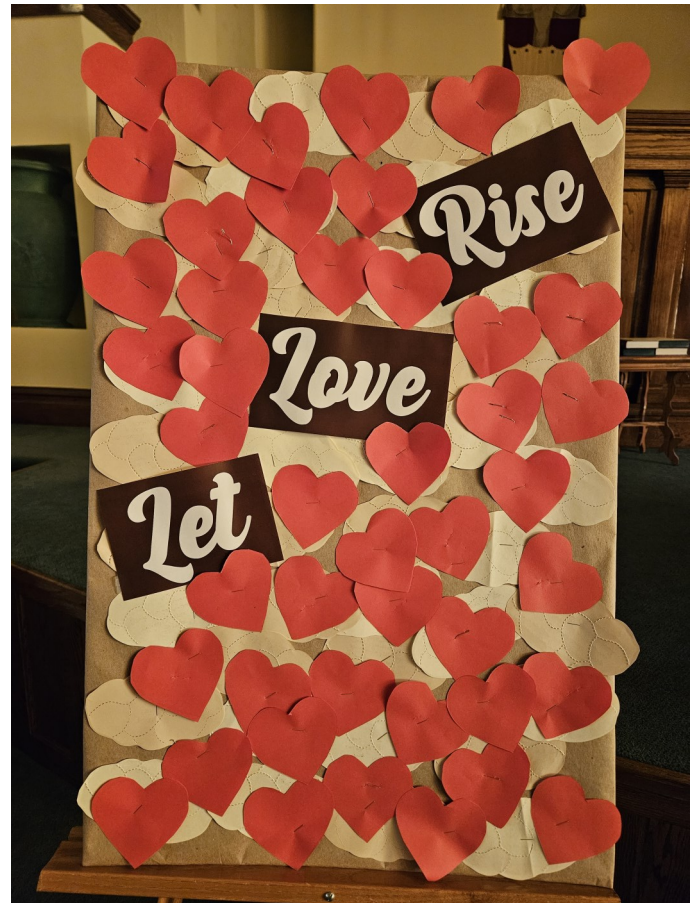


Stewardship Update

Estimates of Giving for 2024
49 EOGs — \$207,927.00

2024 Goal: \$225,000

Estimate of Giving cards are available at church if you would like to turn one in for 2024.



Profit & Loss Summary	Jan-Oct 2023
Total Income	\$207,357.93
Total Expense	\$281,170.77
Net Ordinary Income (Loss)	(\$73,812.84)
Budgeted Transfers	\$30,641.16
Other Transfers	\$20,000.00
Net Ordinary Income (Loss) with Transfers	(\$23,171.68)

Your generosity makes mission & ministry possible... ***Thank you!***

Food Pantry

You may bring your donations to the church
and put them under
the table outside the church office,
or in the box in the elevator vestibule.

Cooperating Ministry: December

Canned Sloppy Joe

NJC Food Pantry:

Nuts, Dried Fruit, Trail Mix; Jerky;
Tuna or Salmon (cans/packets);
Protein Bars; Peanut Butter; Nut Butter;
Crackers; Granola; Fruit/Nut Bars;
Instant Oatmeal; Popcorn; Microwavable meals.

THANK YOU!

December BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Jaxon Guinn
- 2 Elsie Fetzer
- 3 Julia Mari
- 6 Debbie Harris
- 9 Nick Vollmer
- 13 Robert Smith
- 13 Clifford Benson
- 13 Kinsley Harms
- 14 Joan Whitney
- 15 Audrey Reeves
- 15 Ava Reeves
- 15 Kreg Vollmer
- 17 Dean Boeff
- 18 Ashley Glasserr
- 18 Amanda Kruger
- 18 Michelle White
- 18 David Chrisp
- 19 Danny DeSouza
- 21 Ana Nuila
- 21 Myra Westfall
- 26 Pam Werner
- 27 Kaiden Clary
- 30 Taylor Cranwell

Happy Birthday...

May your day be blessed!



CHRISTMAS JOY
SPECIAL OFFERINGS

LEADERSHIP: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE
DECEMBER 3 - DECEMBER 24

**What child
is this?**

THE PERFECT GIFT.



The Christmas Joy offering is a denominational
offering that funds leadership development and
support for Presbyterian church workers in need.

Christmas Joy Offering envelopes are available at church, or just write "Christmas Joy" in the check memo.



Epiphany & New Year's Eve

Sunday, December 31st ~ 10:30am

Before you ring in the New Year, take time to intentionally reflect on the year that's ending.

At this service, we'll **give thanks** for the blessings we enjoyed in 2023; we'll acknowledge our disappointments and **surrender** them to God, and we'll think about how we want to **begin the new year**.

We'll also celebrate **Epiphany**, so if you enjoy receiving a star word, this is the service we'll be sharing star words.

The magi followed the star to the Christ child...

May God guide us all toward the light of Christ's love in the coming year.



Giving

cash ~ check ~ online
tinyurl.com/FPCSterlingGive

Or: tinyurl.com/FPCPayPal

Please bring any donations you'd like counted in 2023 to the church office by 4pm on December 28.

Jesus is the perfect gift destined to lead us and bring joy, peace, and salvation to his people.



Thank You
FOR YOUR
GENEROSITY.

IF WE ALL DO A LITTLE, IT ADDS UP TO A LOT!

CONGRATULATIONS...



Carrie Mann was recently awarded the Marion Quin Dix Leadership Award by the Colorado Art Education Association (CAEA). It is one of the highest awards that can be earned by art educators in the state and nation. The Marion Quin Dix Leadership Award was established in 1983 to recognize outstanding art educators in the nation and it continues today to be a very prestigious award. CAEA awards "honor those who create a lasting impression on the future through visual arts education." She was nominated by her fellow colleagues in the state. Carrie is the daughter of Nancy Mann and the late Dave Mann.

Carrie taught art to kindergartners through seniors at Buffalo School District in Merino for 21 years. She was honored as the 2016 Colorado High School Art Educator of the Year.

Also, Carrie was the drama coach at the school and produced many wonderful plays over the years. Her father, Dave, was a member of the Sterling Prairie Players for many years, so the Mann Family's theatrical careers spanned over 5 decades.

In August 2023 the Merino school dedicated the theater to be named the "Carrie Mann Theater." Congratulations, Carrie. Your dedication and passion as an art and drama educator have touched the lives of literally hundreds of young people. We are grateful.



PRAY FOR OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Military Personnel

Luke Brigham (Randy & Terry's son)
Thomas Gage Snyder (Kim Schlup's son)
Cameron Venn (Doris Ramsel's grandson)

For those with special needs or concerns....

Carl Anderson
Florence Annan
Grace Ann (Connie Clark's relative)
David Balabanis Family
Tye Bennett (Neblett's grandson)
Brenda Boeff
Gabe Chapin
Cooperating Ministry
Jeanne Crouch & Family
Cierra Davis (friend of Becky Cranwell)
Andrew DeSouza (Michelle Hawkins' son)
Gary Espinosa (Arden Fennell's family)
Edith Evans
Family Resource Center
Norman Foos
Koehn Gertner (Mike's grandson)
Meredith Goodwin (friend of Propsts)
David Hashman, SCF Inmate
Highlands Camp
Sonja Holden (friend of Arden Fennell)
Hollis Jackson
Chris Jutz
Josh Jutz & Kaylee
Dennis Kaan
Janae (Klindt) Kerr
Kiel/Alva Family (friends of Weingardts)
Shane Kloberdanz
Robert Koehler (friend of Laura Guenzi)
Debby Korrey (Delinda's & Darla's sister)
Ann Leh and Family
Delinda Korrey McDowell
Ken McDowell and Hannah
Aline Marquez (friend of Becky Cranwell)
Rev. Betsey & Eric Moe, & the people of
Guatemala
Rose Neblett

Jeni Porter (In-law of Blackburns)
Frances Rhodes (Dave's mother)
Jerry Rich (Gary's brother)
Agnes Rundus
Betty Scharf
John Seffens (friend of Mike Tyson)
Steven Shinn (friend of Jim Leh)
Darrell Smith
AJ, Sara, & Baby Leo Sonnenberg (friends of
Weingardts)
Becky Stieb, Justin & Torin (friends of Michelle
Hawkins)
Charlie & Roseanne Thompson (friends of Nebletts)
Mike Tyson
Amy & Byron Uhrich (Jill Vollmer's parents)
Under the Umbrella
Robert Vance (Michelle White's dad)
Norma Wagner (Jana Lock's mom)
Declan Nash Warner (Jason Rose's grandson)
Derek Weingardt (nephew of Rhodes and
Weingardts)
Violet Weingardt (Rick and Kim Weingardt's mom)
Masi Wells (friend of Taylor Cranwell)
Jeff Weskamp
Jim & Jean Williamson

Do you have an update on anyone listed
on our church prayer list?
We'd love to hear the good news of recovery,
healing and answered prayer.

If you have a joy to report, let us know!

SERVING IN CHURCH — DECEMBER

USHERS

December 3 Sue Weingardt, Alie Sheldon
December 10 Dean Boeff, Michelle Hawkins
December 17 Kim Weingardt
December 24 Audrey Reeves, Traci Reeves
December 31 Ken McDowell, Delinda Korrey
McDowell

FIRST RESPONSE/BULLETIN DELIVERY

December Delinda Korrey/Alie Sheldon

FELLOWSHIP COFFEE

December 3 Women's Book Study
December 10 Deacons
December 17 Fellowship
December 24 n/a
December 31 Christian Education

COUNT OFFERING

December 3 Connie Ham
December 10 Linda Meisner
December 17 Bev Cumming
December 24 Bob Smith
December 31 Connie Ham

LITURGISTS

December 3 Jill Vollmer
December 10 Sue Weingardt
December 17 Ann Blackburn
December 24 Dean Boeff
December 31 Bev Cumming

AV TECHS

December 3 Justin Cranwell (sound)
Jacob Paiz (slides)
December 10 Dean Boeff (sound)
Myra Westfall (slides)
December 17 Tanna Prince
& Rex Witherspoon (sound)
Callie Jackson (slides)
December 24 Jeff Christenson (sound)
Jacob Paiz (slides)
December 31 *downstairs service*

PREPARING/SERVING COMMUNION

December 3
Preparing: Tanna Prince, Rose Neblett
Serving: Bob Smith, Becky Cranwell, Tanna Prince

December 6 (Blue Christmas)
Preparing: Jomari Lechtman
Serving: Tanna Prince

December 24 (4:30pm)
Preparing: Jomari Lechtman
Serving: Bob Smith, Becky Cranwell, Liz Chaney,
Taylor Cranwell, Connie Ham, Linda Meisner, Rick
Weingardt, Sue Weingardt



Remember to let the church office know if you trade serving dates with someone (522-2708).

Serving schedules subject to change. Check the website for most up-to-date schedules.
www.firstpressterling.org/servingschedules

December 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
					12:05pm First Friday Concert	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
9:00 New Member Breakfast 10:30 Worship/ Communion 11:30 Fellowship Coffee		5:30pm Session	5:15 Blue Christmas Supper & Service with Communion	5:30 Bells 6:30 Choir		
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
10:30 Worship 11:30 Fellowship Coffee				5:30 Bells 6:30 Choir	Newsletter Deadline	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
10:30 Worship 11:30 Fellowship Lunch				1:30 Women's Bible Study 5:30 Bells 6:30 Choir		
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
one service @ 4:30pm	Church Office Closed	Church Office Closed	Church Office Closed			
31						
10:30 Worship 11:30 Fellowship Coffee						



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

130 S. 4TH STREET ~ STERLING, CO 80751

WORSHIP

Sunday, 10:30 a.m.

onsite ~ online ~ radio

www.facebook.com/fpc.sterling

RADIO MINISTRY

Sunday, 10:30 a.m. On KSTC (AM 1230)

CHURCH PHONE 970.522.2708

Fax 970.522.1365

WEBSITE www.firstpressterling.org

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(or by appointment)

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