



FIRST  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH  
BOZEMAN



# PresbEnews

*Good News Edition - December 2020*

A mid-week newsletter of First Presbyterian Church - Jody McDevitt & Dan Krebill, co-pastors  
Willson at Babcock, PO Box 1150, Bozeman, MT 59771

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*Co-Pastors' Corner...* December is here, the month in which we look forward to the

Christmas holidays. Most years, we do our best to remember the "reason for the season" amid commercialization, excess spending, and overindulgent partying. Most years, we are like the kids in "A Charlie Brown Christmas," often distracted from the purpose of the holiday. But this year the world is begging for "God with us." This year we know we all need to hear the message of the child born in a manger, a Savior for the world.

We will be telling that story with its message of hope, peace, joy, and love throughout the month of December in our Advent services each Sunday. In a usual December, this newsletter would announce the dates and times of all the special festivities—our Advent event and tree lighting, Christmas at Rockhaven, Handel's *Messiah* concert, Christmas Eve services, the Blessing of the Animals, and more. This year there are fewer events, but our church's leaders and staff are committed to making this a memorable and meaningful Christmas.

The *Messiah* will happen in a reinvented way. Thanks to Kathy Braun's initiative, recordings of previous years have been professionally remastered into a single recording. This will be paired with interviews of local musicians involved in its production, and the end result will be a podcast produced by Montana PBS and released on Sunday, December 20 for the whole community to hear. WOW! If you are not familiar with podcasts, this is an audio-only format which has become quite popular in recent years. Details are still being worked out, and will be published in the PresbEnews closer to the event.

Christmas Eve will happen, with children and youth at the center—in a reinvented way. It's so important for our kids to hear and tell the Christmas story, to keep this special time of year special. Our plan is developing, involving our youth and families. We will have a hybrid intergenerational service with lots of music and, of course, the Christmas story. Details are still being worked out, and will be published in the PresbEnews closer to the event.

Finally, the service on the Sunday after Christmas has become a beloved tradition, our Blessing of the Animals Sunday. To give the hard-working worship team a Sunday off, Dan Holland and Scott Thrasher have accepted the challenge of reinventing this service as an online event. They are already collecting photos of animals and their people—see the instructions on page 7. This is sure to be a creative and fun service, reminding us of the blessing which God's creatures are in our lives. How to connect? Details are still being worked out, and will be published in PresbEnews closer to the event.

This year will be different. But this year, we are certain the message of God's love will come through.

## *Enhancing Our Conversation With God*

*Lord, here we are in the midst of Advent, the time we celebrate Your birth. Help us remember that when we get distressed about the social issues of our day. Amen.*

### Session Notes November 19

Session met Thursday, Nov 19th via Zoom. The clerk's report and the minutes of the previous session meeting was approved.

The PRT Pandemic Response Team continues to meet twice a week and diligently analyzes the metrics and as of now, with the continuing surge of COVID, it is not safe to open for in-church services. PRT submitted a detailed report and session unanimously approved of their decisions and voted to support and affirm the priorities of public health, safeguarding our church staff and protecting the vulnerable as well as respecting those who work in the health care system. Online worship will be continued through 2021, concurrent with in-person services when the in-person services resume.

The stewardship campaign as of the meeting was about 56% of the way to the goal of \$355,000.

Reports from each committee were submitted and they all continue to meet and work on their goals.

Respectfully submitted, Donna Beck, Clerk of Session

**OMBUD:** *The person who will listen to your suggestions, concerns, complaints and complaints. This quarter our OMBUD from the session is Kris Hall she will be happy to answer your questions and listen to what you have to say. You can contact her by phone (586-6996) or email [kris@hallcontrols.com](mailto:kris@hallcontrols.com) She will follow-up with Session.*

## 2 Corinthians 9:7

**"Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."**

Thank you for giving your time, talents, and financial contributions.

Without your generous support we could not do all the great things we do to Glorify God.

Below is a table showing our financial status as of the end of October 2020

October General Operating Income	\$52,323	Year to Date Income	\$356,715
October General Operating Expense	\$55,147	Year to Date Expense	\$381,582
October General Operating Balance	-\$2,824	Year to Date Balance	-\$24,867
October Rockhaven Income	\$33,674	Year to Date Income	\$81,890
October Rockhaven Expense	\$8,370	Year to Date Expense	\$116,940
October Rockhaven Balance	\$25,304	Year to Date Balance	-\$35,050

## Pandemic Report by John Patterson

Although we realize this last Thursday wasn't exactly a typical Thanksgiving Day, we hope you could still enjoy the day giving thanks for how much we all truly have to be thankful for. As part of helping celebrate Thanksgiving, 28 meals were prepared by 5 cooks and 1 helper and delivered to members of our church family by 8 teams of Thanksgiving 'elves'. Our thanks to everyone who took part in that! Also, Thursday afternoon 21 folks came together at one time or another during the Thanksgiving Zoom event.

These were examples of how our church members can stay connected. Others include being part of the church telephone web, staying on Zoom to chat during the "coffee time," participating in activities like the adult Sunday Study, the Congregational Gathering on Tuesday evenings, the Interfaith Forum today and the Men's Bible Study on Thursday mornings. Whether you feel connected or, instead, isolated and lonely, reaching out to others can bring us the holiday joy we're all looking for. A simple phone call, email or card can mean a lot.

Be sure to read either your electronic or print church newsletters to stay informed and stay connected. If you have any questions, contact Linda Best (586-9194). Speaking of staying connected, consider giving her a call to say "Hi" whether you have questions or not!

Although the PRT continues to weekly track the health department data, it's readily apparent to everyone from our local news coverage that Covid-19 continues at levels which preclude our congregation from meeting for in-person worship services. Think back to the early days of the Pandemic when none of us personally knew anyone affected by Covid-19. Compare that to now, when we all know folks who have had or currently have Covid-19, including recently several more church members. We all pray that the vaccines will soon be available and as effective as the studies suggest. Meanwhile, we're all still in this for the long-term this winter. Let's each do our part to protect ourselves and others by **wearing our masks, washing our hands and keeping our distance. Stay healthy and stay connected!**

## Zoom Instructions for Pandemic Team

The Pandemic Response Team meets on Mondays and Wednesdays at 4 pm, and all meetings are open to congregation members. If you wish to join, here is the Zoom invitation.

### Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/994593614?pwd=amRWVytZNOV3ajNLaGIGSmJyakNYdz09>

Meeting ID: 994 593 614

Passcode: 255160

One tap mobile

+13462487799,,994593614#,,,,,0#,,255160# US (Houston)

+16699009128,,994593614#,,,,,0#,,255160# US (San Jose)

Dial from your phone

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)

Meeting ID: 994 593 614

Passcode: 255160

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kCHq0sY58>

## Deacons Work Goes On

Despite the challenges of the Pandemic, the work of the Deacons goes on, including two of our usual projects this fall – Warm Clothing and Thanksgiving Baskets, which are focused on helping community members in need.

The Warm Clothing Project was headed up by Craig and Linda Miller with help from Joann and Roger Robbins. This year, 47 children from Monforton and Gallatin Gateway School each received two items, depending on what they requested. The children are identified by the counselors at the school as those in need of some assistance. The Bozeman School District Family Services Coordinator was also contacted; however, with the challenges of Covid, Bozeman Schools were not able to participate this year. Coats, snow pants and boots were purchased from Kohls, Target and Walmart. The children also received warm scarves or hats knitted by our very own Sally Broughton. Thank you Sally!

The Thanksgiving Baskets became gift cards this year, similar to what we did at Easter. Scott and Mary Thompson head up this project, and they filled 65 requests from Thrive, Monforton School, Gallatin Gateway School, and LOVE, Inc. Scott and Mary crossed checked the requests to make sure there were no duplicates. Each card has a value of \$60, which is about what the Deacons spent on groceries per food basket. The cards are from Town and Country Foods, and can be used at any one of their stores. These Town and Country cards do not allow purchase of alcohol or tobacco.

These projects and the work of the Deacons are supported by all of you - the congregation at First Presbyterian Church. We would not be able to accomplish efforts like these without your help.

Thank you!

John Sacklin, Moderator

## Stewardship During the Pandemic

It's that time of year again- time to talk about stewardship! I learned from my pastor in Boston that the word "steward" originated from 2 words- "sty ward". A sty ward was the person in charge of protecting the pigs, which were valuable possessions. It was an important position. You had to be very trustworthy to be a sty ward. This was somebody's livelihood you were taking care of.

These days, most of us are not taking care of pigs, but God has entrusted us with many other valuable things that we need to use wisely. He has given us money and asks that we give 10% back to the church. He has given us time and talents and asks that we use them to take care of each other (with the understanding that we will in turn let others use their time and talents to care for us when we need it). It's 2020, and it feels like we need faithful sty wards more than ever. Please prayerfully consider how God has blessed you and what He may be calling you to give in return this year. Thank you, and God bless.

Ruling Elder Holly Aloise



Church families recently received Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas home activities. Thank you to Logan Cunningham (grade 2) for sharing his Thanksgiving artwork!

### Thanksgiving Dinners Bless All



From the cooks to the grateful recipients, this year's COVID-safe Thanksgiving dinners were a blessing! Sally Broughton, Suzanne Bratsky, Susan Gibb, Ric Tieman, and Mimi Roser prepared complete dinners for 28 people. They were assisted by 8 drivers who delivered the home-cooked frozen meals on Wednesday. On Thursday, many joined the Thanksgiving Zoom call to share greetings and friendship.

Pictured are the dinner and a box filled with the trimmings for one person's meal. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

## Sunday School for Children

### Preschool through Early Elementary

Families, read your Spark Bibles at home and use your stickers to mark your progress on the calendar. Watch the story whenever it's convenient, and follow the instructions to hear, see, and act in response!

This week's story: Elisha Feeds 100, told by Holly Aloise: <https://youtu.be/KZPRIYexg-M>

### Older Elementary

Meet Jaki Harada! Jaki is Sunday school coordinator at First Presbyterian Church in Billings, and a student at MSU-Billings. She teaches an online Sunday school lesson for the children of FPC-Billings, and gladly shares the link with us on Saturdays for use on Sundays. Families, look for the email with the link each Saturday. Thank you, Jaki, and thank you to the connectional church of Yellowstone Presbytery!

## Adult Sunday school studies "The Book of Joy"

Our Sunday morning adult class is learning about **JOY** from two of the world's experts on the subject, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and his good friend, His Holiness the Dalai Lama. In April 2015, these two Nobel Peace Prize winners spent a week together in celebration of His Holiness' 80th birthday. They looked back on their lives to answer one timeless question: *How do we find joy in the face of life's inevitable suffering?*

All are welcome to join this Zoom study on Sunday mornings from 11 am – 12 noon. Jody McDevitt leads the study. Reading the book is not necessary, but it is valuable. The book is available in several different formats.

1. Join from your computer:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81926086294?pwd=WmhWcUYrbHgwWTFaL0N0SIB4L0xhdz09>

Meeting ID: 819 2608 6294 Passcode: 862914

2. One tap mobile

+16699009128,,81926086294#,,,,,0#,,862914#

**OR** +12532158782,,81926086294#,,,,,0#,,862914#

3. Dial from your telephone

669 900 9128 **OR** 253 215 8782 **OR** 346 248 7799 **OR** 312 626 6799

Meeting ID: 819 2608 6294 Passcode: 862914

### Attention Animal Lovers

The annual Blessing of the Animals service will be upon us the Sunday after Christmas (December 27<sup>th</sup>) and we would like your help in making it happen. We are inviting any and all of you to submit digital photos or very brief video clips of your animals (and you if you choose.) Please email or text them to Scott Thrasher at [scott@rockhavencamp.org](mailto:scott@rockhavencamp.org) or text them to 600-1891.

### Birthdays this Month

- 12/2 Joy Ames  
    Lauren Robison
- 12/3 Jim Mitchell  
    Andrew Kroeze
- 12/4 Tom Hinman
- 12/5 Dan Holland  
    Delia Turner
- 12/7 Jan Peace
- 12/8 Lenka Swenson
- 12/10 Bruce Pontius-Backman  
    Kris Hall
- 12/11 Marcia Jarrett  
    Jillian May  
    Blake Babcock
- 12/13 Logan Kleinhans
- 12/15 Mary Hektner
- 12/16 Larry Growney
- 12/19 Ashley Hickert
- 12/20 Lynda Kroeze
- 12/23 Alan Bond  
    Rhoda McCormick  
    Ed Sedivy  
    Mike Roser  
    Debbie Ernst  
    Heather Overton
- 12/25 Doug Babcock
- 12/26 Gil Moore  
    Terry Schaplow  
    Mary Demro
- 12/29 Joanna Ellison  
    Kelly Meredith
- 12/30 Jim Hall
- 12/31 Sammylu Parsons

### Gallatin Valley Food Bank



Right now The Gallatin Valley Food Bank is asking for monetary donations, food donations require volunteer labor and we are limiting the number of daily volunteers due to COVID-19.

Thank you for understanding.

Please go to [gallatinvalleyfoodbank.org](http://gallatinvalleyfoodbank.org)

Linda Best, the office administrator and editor of the PresbEnews will be taking time off next week so there will not be a PresbEnews. If anyone has an announcement for next week's PresbEnews please send it to Jody at [jody@fpcbozeman.org](mailto:jody@fpcbozeman.org)

### Financial giving during this time

Since we will not be meeting in person for worship in the coming weeks, please continue to support the church through your financial gifts, pledges and offerings. You can mail checks to the church at P.O. Box 1150, Bozeman, MT 59771. Or consider making your contributions through our church's online giving platform. Simply go to [www.easytithes.com/fpcbozeman](http://www.easytithes.com/fpcbozeman) and choose the "Give Now" option to make a one-time gift, or chose the "Sign In" option if you'd like to be a regular user.

The drop down "Fund" menu allows you to direct your gift to a specific fund. The first option, "General Church Budget," is the one to which Sunday offerings go. You can give by credit card, debit card, or by electronic funds transfer from your bank account. You also have the option to make recurring gifts on a schedule you choose. Smartphone users may scan this QR code to access the online giving portal.



Thank you for your ongoing support of our church.

## Interfaith Forum December 2 at noon

### Norman Huynh and Jon Harney speak at Interfaith Forum on Religion and Public Art

Bozeman Symphony's Music Director Norman Huynh and Symphonic Choir Director Jon Harney will be guests in the monthly Interfaith Forum on **Wednesday, December 2 at noon**. In this virtual forum, Huynh and Harney will join longtime panelists Father Leo Proxell of Holy Rosary Catholic Church, Rabbi Ed Stafman, rabbi emeritus of Congregation Beth Shalom, the Rev. Jody McDevitt of First Presbyterian Church, and Shadmani Amin of the Islamic Center of Bozeman, to address questions rising from the roots of art and music in particular religious traditions. Is there a line to be drawn in public presentations, given the diversity of our population today? And are there artists or musicians whose beliefs obscure the value of their work?

Following presentations by each of the panelists, there will be time for questions from the audience and further discussion by the panelists.

The Interfaith Forum is in its twelfth year of monthly meetings, providing the Gallatin Valley with insights into diverse topics of religious, social, and spiritual interest. The public is invited to attend. The event will be held on Zoom and also livestreamed at [www.facebook.com/fpcozeman](http://www.facebook.com/fpcozeman).

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82717202109?pwd=YmE3LzdEQWJUam95RHhpTmQwNzBBdz09>

One tap mobile +12532158782,,82717202109#,,,,,0#,,518801#

Dial from your phone: 253 215 8782 **OR** 346 248 7799

Meeting ID: 827 1720 2109 Passcode: 518801

#### Jan 6 *Religion and Public Monuments*

*Are there religious monuments which deserve critique and/or dismantling?*

Feb 3, Mar 3, Apr 7, and May 5 *TBA*

*In order to remain timely in these uncertain times, topics will be announced later.*



## Congregation Beth Shalom Hosts Interfaith Hanukkah on Zoom

Eight days of lighting candles, eating traditional foods, and telling the story of a miracle which saved the Hebrew people and their faith—that's the Hanukkah tradition. This year, Congregation Beth Shalom will adapt the Jewish traditions to an online format, devoting one of the eight evenings to an interfaith observance. Jody McDevitt is one of several community faith leaders who will join Rabbi Mark Kula in leading the service, and our congregation is invited to join in on **Tuesday evening, December 15, at 7 pm**.

Hanukkah, or the Festival of Lights, commemorates the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem in the second century BCE. When Jewish practice was outlawed by the Syrian king Antiochus IV Euphrates and the Temple was defiled by the sacrifice of pigs and an altar dedicated to Zeus, a small army of Jews known as the Maccabees rebelled. They regained control of the Temple. There was only enough sacred oil to keep the Temple's menorah lit for one day. But miraculously, the oil burned for eight days.

Although Hanukkah is a minor holiday in Judaism, it has become an important holiday for American Jews, largely because of its proximity to Christmas. It provides a way for Jews to celebrate their distinctive heritage in the midst of commercialized Christmas. This year Hanukkah begins on December 10 and concludes on December 18. Watch for Zoom links closer to the event, and plan to join in.



## Holland-days...

(by Dan Holland)

This past Sunday marked the first week of the Advent season. During the worship service Lenka and Hans Swenson lit the candle of hope and read a poem by Howard Thurman entitled *I Will Light Candles This Christmas*. Thurman was an African-American pastor, theologian, and civil rights activist, whose bona fides include mentoring Martin Luther King Jr. in 1955 at Boston University where King received his PhD and Thurman served as Dean of the chapel.

Thurman's poem is the centerpiece of the PCUSA's Advent devotional this year and it provides great food for thought as we consider each of the four candles surrounding the Christ candle which forms the center of the Advent wreath. It is worth noting that Thurman was born in 1899, so he was a young man attending Morehouse College when the last great pandemic made its mark on this world.

### Hope

*Candles of hope where despair keeps watch*

I heard a term this week  
for the first time — last responders.  
It refers to coroners, morticians,  
undertakers and any of those folks  
whose job it is to process the recently  
deceased. They've been busy of late.

Last week ten thousand three hundred  
and ninety-six Americans lost their fight  
with COVID-19 and were handled  
by last responders. There are ten thousand  
and eighty minutes in a week. I'll let  
you do the math.

When we hear these grim statistics how are  
we to maintain any semblance of hope?  
When we see pictures of refrigerated trucks  
serving as temporary morgues in El Paso,  
when we read sixteen obituaries in the  
Great Falls paper in one day, how can we  
keep the light from flickering?

O sister, O brother,  
that is the beauty of Christ's light,  
it does not flicker,  
it does not fade.  
Christ's light is meant to be shone  
in the darkest corners of despair.  
Let us light candles.



Rockhaven Chapel

# First Presbyterian Church

## December 2020



First Presbyterian Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1  7 pm Congregational Get Together	2 12:15 pm Worship Team  4 pm Pandemic Response Team  7 pm Choir	3 7am Men's Bible Study  6:30 pm Deacons	4 9:30 am Worship Tech Rehearsal	5
6 9:30 am Worship 11 am Adult Sunday School	7  4 pm Pandemic Response Team	8  7 pm Rockhaven Operational Board  7 pm Congregational Get Together	9 12:15 pm Worship Team  4 pm Pandemic Response Team  7 pm Choir	10 7am Men's Bible Study	11 9:30 am Worship Tech Rehearsal	12
13 9:30 am Worship 11 am Adult Sunday School	14  4 pm Pandemic Response Team	15  7 pm Congregational Get Together	16 12:15 pm Worship Team  4 pm Pandemic Response Team  7 pm Choir	17 7am Men's Bible Study	18  9:30 am Worship Tech Rehearsal	19
20 9:30 am Worship 11 am Adult Sunday School  Messiah Podcast	21  4pm Pandemic Response Team	22  7 pm Congregational Get Together	23 12:15 pm Worship Team  4 pm Pandemic Response Team	24  Christmas Eve Service		
27 9:30 am Blessing of the Animals	28  4pm Pandemic Response Team	29	30	31		

In these changing times the events on the calendar have changed too. Until further notice all the services, group meetings and events will be by Zoom until we find it safe to come back together. Please contact the leaders of the group meetings for instructions on how to get on Zoom for the meetings. We will update this calendar each week in the PresbEnews and on the church website as more meetings and events are scheduled. Stay Healthy.