

SPIRIT SIGHTINGS

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF PALATINE

DECEMBER 2023

FROM THE PASTOR...

"Advent creates people, new people. We too are being formed by the expectant waiting, allowing Christ to be born anew in us." Dietrich Bonhoeffer

As we find ourselves immersed in the ever-changing currents of our world, the Advent season offers us a profound opportunity to anchor ourselves in the enduring values of hope, peace, joy, and love. In the midst of chaos and uncertainty, let us embark on this sacred journey together, seeking the light that can guide us through the unsettling waves of life.

Hope: Light in the Darkness

In times of turmoil, hope becomes our beacon. It is the unwavering belief that, despite the challenges surrounding us, there is a brighter tomorrow. This Advent, let us cultivate hope within our hearts. Let our collective hope be a source of comfort and assurance for those feeling the weight of our world.

Peace: Discovering Calm Amidst Chaos

The world may seem chaotic, but in the stillness of our hearts, we can find peace. The Advent season calls us to pause, breathe, and seek the calming of our hearts that transcends worldly troubles.

Joy: A Light in Every Occurrence

Joy, often seen as a fleeting emotion, becomes a steady flame during Advent. It is not dependent on circumstances but springs from a deeper source. In the midst of uncertainty, let us find joy in the small moments, the shared laughter, and the connections that bring warmth to our souls. Together, let us illuminate our paths with the joy that comes from knowing we are united in faith.

Love: The Anchor in Turbulent Waters

As the foundation of our Advent journey, love becomes the anchor that holds us steady. In an unsettling world, love is the unchanging force that binds us together. Let our love for one another be a testament to the enduring strength we find in our shared faith. This Advent, let us actively express love in our actions, words, and prayers.

May your Advent season be blessed with the comforting embrace of hope, a deep sense of peace, the contagious joy found in shared moments, and the boundless love that unites us all.

~ In Christ, RJ



STEWARDSHIP

This is an exciting time for the Stewardship Team. We are finalizing the 2024 budget for presentation to Session. One key piece of information that was needed was the result of our pledge drive.

November 26th was Dedication Sunday. During the worship service we dedicated our gifts of time and talent as well as the financial pledges that have been received, and the Season Team signup sheets for 2024. Deacons and Elders were installed that day. Dedication Sunday is a day of celebration as we remember that each and every one of us is called by God to be stewards. As stewards we give from all aspects of our lives, and are living examples of Christ's gospel, proclaiming faith through all that we do and give. Peter wrote that "Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received." (1 Peter 4:10 NRSV)

The pledges that were dedicated that day totaled **\$137,774**. (This is \$11,256 less than the initial pledge last year). The income that we expect from all sources in 2024 is **\$267,921**. Our expenses for 2024 are expected to be: **\$331,756**. This leaves a deficit of **\$63,835**. You are encouraged to prayerfully consider your 2024 pledge. If you have pledged, thank you. Please let us know if you are able to pledge more. If you haven't pledged, please consider doing so now. It is through our offerings that we keep our ministries and mission alive. As Pastor RJ mentioned in the pledge letter, "As we look ahead to 2024, there's an exciting path before us."

Your Stewardship Team: Tom Kenter, Allan Garraway, Linda Baumgart, Pastor RJ Kang, and Bruce Churchill



THANKFUL

GRATEFUL

BLESSED

FOOD PANTRY REPORT

The Food Pantry has had some exciting news and events recently! As of the next pick-up date (November 30) we have 2 new families from Virginia Lake Elementary who will be added to our client list. And the Winston Elementary social worker (new this year) is very excited to learn of the pantry and feels confident she will be referring families to us who are really struggling.

We have also been blessed by a “Pack the Pantry” drive held by the Hunyadi Matyas Hungarian Scout Troop and Csik Hago School. Using our shopping list, they contributed approximately 175 items to the pantry with more to come in early December. We truly are grateful for their support!

The pantry ministry is always in need of volunteers – shopping, bagging orders, staffing on pick-up days. Let us know if you are able to help!

~Barbara Churchill, Mary Kenter, Anita Kern, Wayne Mroz



altruism support INSPIRE LOVE thank you
volunteer give back charity
compassion
service SHARE NOW community



HARVEST 2: THE BOUNTY OF GOD'S FAITHFULNESS - OCTOBER 15 - DECEMBER 2

Team Members- Anita Kern, Judy Lundeen, Jennifer & Allan Garraway

The Harvest 2 season's focus this year was "The Bounty of God's Faithfulness" and through scripture, liturgy, RJ's sermons, and devotions that explored the meaning of the lyrics in the hymn "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" we hope you were able to gain a deeper appreciation of and gratitude for God's endless faithfulness.

We shared the bounty we have received by filling 6 baskets with non-perishables to share with community members for a traditional Thanksgiving dinner and we continued the collection of donations to the PC(USA) Peace and Global Witness offering.

The season ended on Commitment Sunday, November 26. It was a day of great celebration as we dedicated our financial support for 2024, welcomed new members, honored our gifts through serving on season teams, shared the Lord's Supper, and had cake!

2023 Harvest 2 ~ Allan & Jennifer Garraway, Anita Kern, Judy Lundeen



ADVENT: BRING ALL HEARTS TOGETHER - DECEMBER 3 - DECEMBER 31

Team Members- Robin Dillon, Barbara Singelmann, Divine Barr, Zuzu & Katrina Keiffer

Please join us at PCOP this Advent Season as we "Bring All Hearts Together!" We will kick off the Advent Season on December 3rd with a special prayerful worship service and the "hanging of the greens." Please join us after worship for pizza and decorating the Christmas trees in the Sanctuary. You are invited to bring a salad or dessert to share. We can look forward to a special musical worship service on December 31st and a Bible Study session with Pastor RJ after worship on December 17th. Please join us for a peaceful evening on Thursday December 21st at 7:00pm for the Longest Night service. Our Christmas Eve service will begin at 4:30pm on December 24th. The Advent Season wraps up on Sunday December 31st, so please join us as we enjoy beautiful music to close out 2023 and look forward to 2024. We hope you will find meaning in "United in Hope", our Advent devotional. This devotional serves as a bridge that connects us to one another and reminds us that, in the Advent season and always, our differences are not obstacles but God's gifts that enrich the tapestry of our shared experiences. This season you are invited to give to the Christmas Joy Offering. This offering addresses the support needed by our leaders, including supporting leadership development for communities of color, and providing support for Presbyterian church leaders. Our local Mission is the "Asylum Fund" through the Faith Community Initiative at Lincoln Park Presbyterian Church. The Asylum Fund supports people who are experiencing a housing crisis, particularly immigrants. Please stay tuned about ways you can support the Asylum Fund through monetary donations.





FROM THE DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

The Advent team chose the theme “Bring All Hearts Together.” The hymn texts below inspire me to consider the great gift and responsibility we receive upon opening our hearts to Christ and the Spirit. How can we reflect God’s love and grace? I am drawn to power in gentleness: “unasked, unforced, unearned” ... with “a baby weak and poor” to lead the way, our guiding light. What speaks to your heart? ~ Ingrid

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, verse 7

O Come, Desire of Nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;
Bid envy, strife, and discord cease; Fill the whole world with heaven’s peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates, verse 2

Fling wide the portals of your heart; make it a temple,
set apart from earthly use for heaven’s employ, adorned with prayer and love and joy.

Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn, verse 1

Awake! Awake, and Greet the new morn, for angels herald its dawning.
Sing out your joy, for soon he is born, behold! The Child of our longing.
Come as a baby weak and poor, to bring all hearts together,
he opens wide the heavenly door and lives now inside us forever.

Where Shepherds Lately Knelt, verse 4

Can I, will I forget how Love was born and burned
Its way into my heart: unasked, unforced, unearned:
To die, to live, and not alone for me.

What Star is This, with Beams So Bright, verse 4

O Jesus, while the star of grace impels us on to seek your face,
Let not our slothful hearts refuse the guidance of your light to use.

Director of Music, Ingrid Mikolajczyk

PC (USA) 101

What is the history and use of the Advent wreath?

The Advent wreath visually marks the time leading up to Christmas and symbolizes the increasing light as Christ draws near to us. The use of such wreaths began as a family devotional practice in German homes in the 1600s. Widespread liturgical use only dates back to the middle of the 20th century.

Each of the four purple or blue candles around the periphery of the wreath marks one of the Sundays in Advent; the white Christ candle in the center is lit on Christmas Eve. Some Advent wreaths include a pink candle. This custom can be traced to a medieval practice that set aside the third Sunday in Lent (and later, Advent) as an occasion of joy and a respite from the rigors of the penitential season. If an Advent wreath has a pink candle, it may be lit on the third Sunday of Advent.

Over the years, particular interpretations added to individual candles, such as shepherds, angels, wise men and Mary; or hope, faith, love and joy. Advent candles can be either purple or blue to represent royalty.

Far more important than any direct correlation of candle to a special meaning, however, is our growing celebration of Jesus’ birth and the anticipation of Christ’s coming again.

presbyterianmission.org/ministries/worship/faq/faq-signsymbols

DECEMBER

12/3	Advent Begins Worship	10am	12/19	Stewardship	7pm
12/6	Alpha Ministry	7pm	12/20	Grace Circle Alpha Ministry	10am 7pm
12/7	Pantry Pick-up	2:30	12/21	Pantry Pick-up Longest Night Service	2:30 7pm
12/9	COOKIE WALK	9:30AM	12/23	Rebecca Circle	10am
12/10	Worship Lent Season Planning	10am 11:30am	12/24	Christmas Eve Worship Communion	4:30pm
12/12	Personnel	7pm	12/25	Christmas Day	
12/13	PW Board	10am	12/31	New Year's Eve Worship	10am
12/17	Worship Adult Christian Ed. Joint Deacon/Session	10am 11:30am 12:30pm			

OUR OFFICE HOURS ARE MONDAY - THURSDAY, 10:00AM - 2:00PM

**PASTOR KANG'S IN-OFFICE HOURS - TUESDAYS, WEDNESDAYS AND THURSDAYS
BETWEEN 10:00AM & 12:00PM**

OUTSIDE REGULAR HOURS, PLEASE ARRANGE A MEETING WITH THE PASTOR.

**If you have yet to sign up to serve on one or two 2024 Season Teams,
please do so!**

**You may sign up in person across from the office or call,
or email the church office.**

Come join the festivities!

Christmas Cookie Walk

Presbyterian Church of
Palatine 800 E Palatine
Rd, Palatine

Saturday, December 9th
9:30 am – until sold out

Choose from a large variety of delicious
homemade cookies.

We provide the boxes for you to fill. Each
one pound box is \$15. Proceeds support
local and global mission organizations.

Santa is coming too!
9:30 – 11:30

Bring your little ones and your cameras!

And there's more – a table of Christmas Treasures!

Shop the gently used holiday items

UPCOMING EVENT
ADVENT SEASON

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3rd
FOLLOWING WORSHIP

The “HANGING OF THE GREENS”

**Everyone is invited to decorate
the trees in the sanctuary and
stay for lunch.**

**Pizza will be provided for lunch.
Please bring a salad or dessert
to share.**