



**First  
Presbyterian**

CHURCH OF PORTLAND

**Spire**

DECEMBER 2020

***Celebrate the Joy of Christ's Coming!  
Join in virtual Christmas Eve Services!***

***Thursday, December 24th***

***Special Virtual Children's Service***

***Rev. Spencer Parks & Rev. Carmen Goetschius***

[www.firstpresportland.org/2020/fpc-advent-christmas/](http://www.firstpresportland.org/2020/fpc-advent-christmas/)

***Live Streamed Candlelight Service 8 pm***

***Rev. Audrey Schindler***

<https://vimeo.com/event/483800>

***rebroadcast available after 9:30 pm on Christmas Eve***

<https://www.firstpresportland.org/church-life/worship-services/service-live-stream/>



## **Blue Christmas Service**

**7:30 pm on December 16th**

**(streamed from the Sanctuary)**

While many look forward to the Christmas seasons with joy and excitement, others come with grief, sorrow, and some with a mix of both. As people of God, it is important to have holy spaces to collectively mourn and find comfort in the midst of



our sorrow and pain. Our Blue Christmas Service will be streamed live from the Sanctuary, at **7:30 pm on Wednesday December 16th at this link:**

<https://vimeo.com/event/483803>

## **2021 Stewardship Campaign**

**“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.”** Second Timothy 4:7

The past year has brought unprecedented changes and challenges that have impacted every aspect of our lives, including our church home. As we look to the next year and how we will continue the important work of First Presbyterian Church, our personal stewardship becomes even more critical. As part of our Stewardship Campaign this year we are asked to “Live Our Faith.” — *continued on pg. 3*

## **Lessons and Carols for Advent**

—Greg Homza, Director of Music Ministries

This year, we will be offering a virtual service of Lessons and Carols for Advent! The readings and music will be different from Lessons and Carols on Christmas Eve, as this Advent-themed service is intended to help you prepare for the celebration of Christmas. Congregational hymns and choir anthems from past years will be combined with newly-recorded readings from FPC members and clergy. We plan to post the service to the church website in early December, though this is somewhat dependent upon public health considerations. Please see upcoming bulletin announcements and weekly e-blasts for updates. I wish you and yours a blessed Advent, Christmas, and 2021!



## **Advent Devotions - Inside!**

The clergy and music staff have prepared a series of five devotions to accompany you on your Advent journey. Each devotion features a scripture passage, a reflection, a prayer, and a musical pairing. These devotions are available inside as well as on the church website: <https://www.firstpresportland.org/2020/fpc-advent-christmas/>

## **First Presbyterian Church**

Sunday Worship at 10:30 am | [www.firstpresportland.org](http://www.firstpresportland.org)  
1200 SW Alder St. Portland, Oregon 97205 (503) 228-7331

## Pastor's Pen



As we look ahead to Christmas in this season of the pandemic, there is much that seems so different this year. We're reluctant to settle for yet another phone call or Facetime or Zoom meeting with family, longing for the real connection and hugs and shared festive foods that are usually so much a part of this season. We're mulling over whether an outdoor gathering, with people distanced, somehow bundled up against the cold may be possible.

We're remembering years past of gathering at church for the lively children's service, and the glorious music of the evening Christmas Eve services, amid the quiet candlelight that glows against the carved wood of the sanctuary, illuminating the faces of loved ones sitting next to us.



Rev. Audrey Schindler

With the church and Presbytery following public health guidance as the pandemic continues, we're having to be creative in how our services will look this Christmas. **The children's service will be done by video streaming**, including readings and stories from a variety of church families. **And on Christmas Eve, we will have a live-streamed service at 8pm**, with candles and beautiful music, which will then be available on the church website for you to view at any time later that evening or on Christmas Day.

The gap between what is possible and what we deeply wish for is great this year. The message of Christmas is one of the light of Christ shining in the darkness, that the darkness has not overcome it. Never have we needed this more. As we are saddened that we will gather in heart and spirit but not yet in person, some verses from the book of Romans come to mind:

*Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings,  
knowing that suffering produces endurance,  
and endurance produces character,  
and character produces hope,  
and hope does not disappoint us,  
because God's love has been poured into our hearts...*

~ Romans 5:3-5

So this Advent, we look for the light that is coming into the world. We celebrate again that when all seemed lost, God chose to come into the world as a little child, who would one day bear our griefs and carry our sorrows.

With news of a coming vaccine, we look forward with eager longing to the day when we can gather back again. And meanwhile, we turn again to the Christ who comes at Christmas, who keeps faith with us yesterday, today, and forever, through all the seasons of life.

May God bless and keep you this Christmas and always,

— Audrey

## 2021 Stewardship Campaign

— continued on front page.

Many thanks to those who have already joined in pledging! We have set a goal of \$740,000 for 2021 and, due to the significant decline in revenue from our parking garage, we will need to rely even more fully on the contributions of our members. For those who are able, please prayerfully consider making a pledge, or increasing your pledge. You can mail in your pledge card to First Presbyterian Church, 1200 SW Alder Street, Portland, OR 97205, or (new this year!) submit your pledge online via this link: <https://firstpresportland.ccbchurch.com/goto/forms/39/responses/new> Questions? Please contact Marc Lavender, Church Business Administrator at [cbal@firstpresportland.org](mailto:cbal@firstpresportland.org) or (503) 228-7331 ext. 110.

**Thank you for your faithfulness to First Pres!**

**Stewardship Chairpersons: Cam & Midge Birnie**

## Emergency Food Closet for Alder House

FPC is temporarily hosting the Emergency Food Closet for Alder House at Julia West. To do this, we need your help! We need volunteers to help assist residents as they fill out request forms and to help fill the orders. We are also collecting paper shopping bags to place orders into and new personal hygiene supplies. To volunteer or drop off a donation, please contact Brenna at [bdykman@firstpresportland.org](mailto:bdykman@firstpresportland.org)

## Downtown Youth Collective Christmas Party

Sunday, December 13th from 7 -8 pm, youth grades 6th-12th are invited to join our Downtown Collective Christmas party! It is sure to be an hour of fun and festivities! Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84159745584> If you have questions, please e-mail Brenna at [bdykman@firstpresportld.org](mailto:bdykman@firstpresportld.org)

## Youth Christmas Coffee Hour

All youth are invited to join Pastor Brenna from 11:30-12:00 noon on December 6th for your very own Zoom coffee hour. Stop by virtually with a warm drink to say hi as we get ready to welcome in the Christmas season. Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83734055271>

## All Church Family Advent Coffee Hour on Zoom

Come one, come all to celebrate the advent season virtually with your church family! This special family advent coffee hour on Zoom is an opportunity to enjoy community and activities for our youngest to oldest members. **December 13th after church**, grab your coffee or cocoa and join us for crafts, carols, and more as we reflect on the Hymn “O, come, All Ye Faithful.” **Zoom Link:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88436962691>

## Kid's Corner

The Coronavirus has presented an array of challenges, but ministry continues! The kids of FPC (5th grade and younger) gathered for “Cocoa Hour” last month and will be gathering again on **Sunday, January 3rd at 11:30 a.m. via zoom**. This 20 minute gathering helps kids share a fun time of fellowship and hear their Pastors and Sunday school teachers say: you are loved by God and you are an important part of God's family! Please plan on viewing the “**Family Christmas Eve Service**” that will be posted on the church website on the morning of December 24th.



Kid's Cocoa Hour on Zoom

The children of FPC have contributed all kinds of wonderful, hilarious material that will be a part of this pre-recorded service you can watch and re-watch til your heart's content! May this service fill you with the peace and joy of Christ as we remember together the very first Christmas. — Pastor Carmen

## Calvin Library Advent Resources

If you are finding it difficult to anticipate Advent and Christmas this year with much joy and festivity, you may be interested in a new Advent devotional book recently released by Westminster/John Knox press: *A Weary World—Reflections for a Blue Christmas* by Kathy Escobar. The book's weekly topics (with a reading for each day of Advent) include: Honoring Reality, Practicing Honesty, Embracing Paradox and Borrowing Hope. In the FPC Library card catalog there is a **Topic Wall tab** that will take you directly to lists of Advent & Christmas resources: <https://fpcp.scoolaid.net/bin/search/topicWall#?cid=2>

# ADVENT DEVOTIONAL 2020

Hope Peace Joy Love Life

In the season of Advent we recall God's nearness in Jesus Christ  
and we celebrate the promise that one day  
Christ will come again to make all things new.

We hope this weekly devotional, filled with scripture and sacred music of the season,  
will inspire you to read, reflect, and pray with hope as we proclaim together:

God is with us!

## First Week of Advent - Hope

Sunday, November 29, 2020 | Rev. Carmen Goetschius

Click the link below for the corresponding music video:

<https://vimeo.com/478766558/f0966e0836>

***May the God of hope fill you with all joy and  
peace in believing, that you may abound in hope  
by the power of the Holy Spirit.***

***- Romans 15:13***

What does it mean to "abound in hope"? There is a famous story about a man who walks on the beach and observes thousands of starfish freshly washed up and knows that the starfish will die if they do not return to the ocean. The task is daunting, which is why he is surprised to see a little boy ahead of him picking up starfish and returning them to the surf. He stops to talk to the child and says, "There are just too many of them. You can't save them all. Why do you bother? What does it matter?" Without hesitating, the boy picks up another starfish and replies to the man as he throws it into the water, "It matters to this one."

This is a story of dogged hope and it's the kind of hope God instills within us all. In this world we will face trials of all kinds, yet by the power of the Holy Spirit we can hold fast to hope and do our best to make a difference one act of love at a time.

As the season of Advent begins, here are some questions to ponder –

What inspires hope within you right now?  
How might you nurture a heart of trust and hope  
and share that hope with the world?

*Let us pray:*

*God, your word and your promises  
are worthy of our trust.*

*Help us when our knees tremble and our faith falters.*

*Teach us to endure and help us to live in hope  
by the power of the Holy Spirit we pray.*

*Amen.*

## E'en So, Lord Jesus, Quickly Come performed by the FPC Chancel Choir

In 1953, Paul and Ruth Manz were in the hospital with their 3-year-old son, John. Convinced by doctors that he would not survive, they prayed, "Lord Jesus, quickly come." As an expression of hope and grief, Ruth wrote a text based on Revelation 22, which Paul set to music. It has become one of the most beloved anthems of the Advent season. (By the way, John survived, and became a Lutheran pastor.)

## Second Week of Advent - Peace

Sunday, December 6, 2020 | Rev. Dr. Audrey Schindler

<https://vimeo.com/478767129/88c7fb3b2f>

***The wolf shall live with the lamb,  
the leopard shall lie down with the kid...  
and a little child shall lead them.***

**- Isaiah 11:6**

In these darkest days of winter, in the season of the virus, we take heart in the hope of Advent, that a day is coming when God's reign will come among us, in the coming of the Christ child.

In this passage, the prophet Isaiah tells of a vision of a new world, when all the adversaries will come to live in peace, when the predators and prey will be reconciled and not hurt or destroy anymore. It is a vision sorely longed for in our day, when the world itself seems weary and worried. Into dark days, the peaceful kingdom begins to dawn, and a little child shall lead them.

With a heart of faith, we see in Christ, God choosing to come among us as a little child, with the wonder and vulnerability that we see in the eyes of children. Such a one as this can lead us beyond the strife of the present day into a realm where God's peace will at last prevail.

A question to ponder –

If you look around you in this time, where might you catch a glimpse of the coming peaceable kingdom, where old foes are edging toward reconciliation, and children show us what it is to live and laugh and love?

*Let us pray:*

*Child of Wonder and Hope, dawn on our darkness,  
we pray. May your peace settle like new-fallen snow  
on the wounded places of our world and lives.  
Lift up our hearts with a vision of that day that shall  
surely come, when all the world shall live in peace,  
and you shall reign forever.  
In your holy name we pray. Amen.*

## We Wait the Peaceful Kingdom performed by Greg Homza and Leah Papay

This text by Methodist pastor Kathleen R. Moore paraphrases Isaiah 11:6-9 in the first stanza, and the remaining stanzas explore how this longed-for condition can be recognized and put into practice. The third stanza affirms that *shalom*, the peace that represents God's will for creation, "begins with justice done." The final line of the hymn suggests that justice begins in worship ("through word and table"). When we can all safely gather again for worship, it will be a glorious day.

## Third Week of Advent - Joy

Sunday, December 13, 2020 | Rev. Brenna Dykman

<https://vimeo.com/478767973/6d86fc78da>

***Then the angels said to them,  
"Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good  
tidings of great joy which will be to all people.  
For there is born to you this day in the city of  
David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."***

**- Luke 2:10-11**

*O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!* This is an invitation! It is a call to the people of God, the faithful of every generation, to come to the place that would turn the world upside down. In a dark and dingy dwelling came love incarnate

in the softness of a newborn baby. This baby who grew up to be our savior who reconciling the world to God, not as a triumphant soldier but in the triumphant act of self-giving.

There are many ways to source joy in this season; the gathering of family and friends, a glass full of Christmas cheer, or gifts of love given to strangers and love ones. With these many ways, we must not forget the first gift which is the true source of joy, Emanuel, God with us. As we journey through this unusual advent, we know that things will be different and there will be disappointment. *cont.*

### Third Week of Advent - Joy cont.

Do not be afraid, this season offers us a unique opportunity to reflect on the true source of joy.

*O come, let us adore him; o come, let us adore him;  
o come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord.*

A question to ponder –

In what ways can we share our joy this Advent season?

*Let us pray:*

*Holy one, as we prepare for the coming of your son,  
fill our hearts with the joy of Christ.*

*Help us to live in ways  
that bring this joy triumphantly into this world.*

*Amen.*

### Prelude on Adeste Fideles performed by Greg Homza

This simple setting by prolific composer Charles Callahan reflects the “quiet joy” of Christmas. It’s hard to know what Christmas will feel like this year, but the scaled-down celebrations that are likely for many of us will give an opportunity to experience this same quiet joy, when one can relax a bit and ponder the awe and mystery of the real meaning of Christmas.

### Fourth Week of Advent - Love

Sunday, December 20, 2020 | Rev. Spencer Parks

<https://vimeo.com/478768632/126a519254>

***Beloved, let us love one another,  
because love is from God; everyone who loves is  
born of God and knows God. Whoever does not  
love does not know God, for God is love.  
God’s love was revealed among us in this way:  
God sent his only Son into the world  
so that we might live through him.***

*- 1 John 4:7-9*

That we love one another was the last commandment Jesus gave to his disciples. It is a theme that is echoed throughout the New Testament. One biblical scholar wrote: This “command is simple enough for a toddler to memorize and appreciate, and it is profound enough that the most mature believers are repeatedly embarrassed at how poorly they comprehend it and put it into practice.”

Love is the hallmark of Christians. It is how we have been identified throughout the ages. Tertullian, a second century apologist, imagined pagans looking at Christians and saying, “Look... how they love one another (for they themselves [pagans] hate one another); and how they are ready to die for each other (for they themselves are readier to kill each other).” And yet we live in a world that seems to be the very definition of hostile and fractious.

We have not been called to agree with each other, but we have been called to love. The kind of love that God has shown us in the gift of the

Christ child. That kind of love calls for respect, compassion, and requires understanding and at times even forgiveness. It demands an open and willing heart that can embrace others no matter who they are.

As we move closer to Christmas day ask yourselves: How will I actively show the love of God to others, and use God’s love to heal the brokenness around us?

*Let us pray:*

*God of love, in Christ we see love perfected.  
Grant that we may love others as we love you.*

*Amen.*

### People, Look East performed by Paul Butler, Chelsea Janzen, Greg McMahan, and Madeline Ross

This wonderful text was written in 1928 by a noted English author of children’s stories (who also wrote the text, “Morning Has Broken”). Each stanza begins with an address to an ascending order – people, earth, birds, stars, and angels. The five titles given to the personified Love in the refrain – guest, rose, bird, star, and Lord are full of imagery. Most are fairly familiar, but...birds? In Christian iconography, several birds have been used as symbols of Christ – the eagle, the pelican (which was believed to feed its young with its own blood, much as Christ shed his blood for us), the peacock, and the phoenix (both regarded as emblems of Christ’s resurrection).



## Christmas Day - Life

Friday, December 25, 2020 | Rev. Zane Buxton

<https://vimeo.com/478769542/cf4e840c17>

***They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of evening breeze...***

- Genesis 3:8a

***And the Word became flesh and lived among us...***

- John 1:14a

***Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb, through the middle of the street of the city.***

- Revelation 22:1-2

According to the ancient story of Creation, as told in Genesis, the Lord God liked to walk in the Garden in the cool time of the evening, talking with the woman and the man. The Creator loved these children who bore the very image of God, even though disappointed with their decisions to listen to lies about life. So the Lord God chose to continue to walk in creation with us.

And, then – radically, the Lord God chose to walk in creation in a new way, as one of us. The Word became flesh and lived within the limitations of human life, even death. But he knew and trusted the Father. And God showed that life can come again, to human beings.

In the end, in the vision of John the Seer, humans come to know what is beyond life and death; and it is life. God still has a Garden, one bordering a river that flows through the city of God, the city of the risen Lamb.

## Advent Blessing

*May Christ who comes to show the depths of God's love for us, and for all the world, grant you the gift of hope, as we await the light that dawns at Christmas!*

Recently, watching a movie that offered an aerial picture of Central Park in New York, I was struck by how much of the city has been preserved as a park. Perhaps there is something in us that remembers the Garden and looks forward to the Garden renewed. And we can picture ourselves there, with our Creator.

This is my Christmas tale of Life. Amen.

*Let us pray:*

*Holy God, pour out your Spirit upon us, that we might be a people of grace and truth, bearing good news of life in every season. Then bring us at the last with all your saints to that City for which you have created us. Amen.*

## Christ Hath a Garden performed by FPC Chancel Choir

I was originally planning to have “Joy to the World” accompany this Christmas Day devotion. Joy, love, truth, grace, glories, wonders... ah, Christmas! But after reading Pastor Zane’s gentle reflection, I remembered another Isaac Watts text, “Christ Hath a Garden.” One of his most beautiful and mystical texts, in it, Watts compares the Church to a fruitful garden. *Christ hath a garden walled around, a Paradise of fruitful ground, chosen by love and fenced by grace from out the world’s wide wilderness...that he may come, and linger yet among the trees that he hath set; that he may evermore be seen to walk amid the springing green.* Emmanuel, God-with-us, has come. Christ the Savior is born. Alleluia!

## FPC Giving Tree

This year, like so many other things, FPC's Giving Tree will be online.

Please click on the link below, scroll through the gifts, pick one or two and sign-up with your name, email and cell phone. We are supporting several programs including: **New Avenues for Youth, Friendly House Senior Citizens, With Love Foster Care Support, EMO Men's Day Center, Life Change Center for Women & Children**



**and Alder House Residents.** These organizations are thrilled for our support as they have so many more needs this year. Please try to support local businesses and you may also shop online and have your gift shipped to FPC attn: Brenna 1200 SW Alder St. Portland, OR 97205. **FPC's Giving Tree online link:** <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0D4BA4AD28A6FF2-giving> Please be sure to label your gift with the name of the Organization as well as recipient name. **"With Love" gifts are due Tuesday, December 1 and all other gifts are due December 8.**

To ensure social distancing, please drop off your donations M-F from 10-12 am in the marked boxes located in the parking garage hallway headed towards Geneva Hall. Questions or assistance with donations, please contact Laurina Shively, [shivelyLLL@comcast.net](mailto:shivelyLLL@comcast.net)

## Karen's Coats

Open Circle is collecting new and like-new clean outer clothing. This includes coats, heavier jackets, rain gear, warm hats, scarves, mittens/gloves, boots - for youth, women and men. To ensure social distancing, please drop off your donations M-F from 10-12 am in the marked boxes located in the parking garage hallway headed towards Geneva Hall. Questions or assistance with donations, please contact Cindy Finch [cindyloufinch@yahoo.com](mailto:cindyloufinch@yahoo.com) This annual tradition is called Karen's Coats in memory of Karen and Harry Keefer who spearheaded this effort for so many years.

## WOW! The Impact of NEFP

Recently, **NBC News reported live from NEFP** for the rest of the country to see. You can watch the clip and their Program Manager, A'Jay's, interview here: <https://twitter.com/NBCNewsNow/status/1329573362432139264> Since mid-February and the start of Covid, NEFP has fed over 300,000 people and delivered over 7 million pounds of food! FPC volunteers have been part of that success. Sign up to volunteer! Food distribution days are Thursday and Saturday and volunteers are welcome! **They currently have masked & socially distanced volunteer shifts 8:30 am-3:30 pm Tuesday-Friday, and Tuesday & Thursday evenings from 5 pm-8 pm. Tuesday & Thursday evenings are primarily box building and donation sorting shifts. Thursday & Saturday DAYS are primarily food distribution: 8 am-11 am set up shifts, 11 am-4 pm distribution assistant (giving out food) Tuesday, Wednesday, & Fridays are primarily sorting donations, putting away orders, and building boxes.** **To sign-up for a volunteer shift visit this link:** <https://bit.ly/volunteerNEFP> Questions? Contact Bill Resley [kayak500@gmail.com](mailto:kayak500@gmail.com)

## Tuesday Women's Book Club

The Tuesday Women's Book Club will meet on Zoom, Tuesday, December 1st at 11 am. The book "The Vanishing Half" by Bret Bennett will be led by Nancy Callison. The novel takes place between 1940-1990 in the South. As light-skinned Blacks, the twin sisters were favored. When they left home at age 16 for New Orleans, there is where their paths separated. Contact Marilyn Weber, [schazimlw@gmail.com](mailto:schazimlw@gmail.com) for a Zoom invitation.

## Tuesday Night Virtual Scripture Study

Join in Virtual Scripture Study on Tuesday nights at 7pm. We'll begun a study of the gospel of Mark, Looking forward to seeing you via Zoom!

**Zoom Link:**

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/73059586516?pwd=REVXbEN0OWp4LzFXK2daMW1UGR4dz09>  
Meeting ID: 730 5958 6516 Passcode: 0E6C10  
Questions? Please contact Shelby at [infodesk@firstpresportland.org](mailto:infodesk@firstpresportland.org)

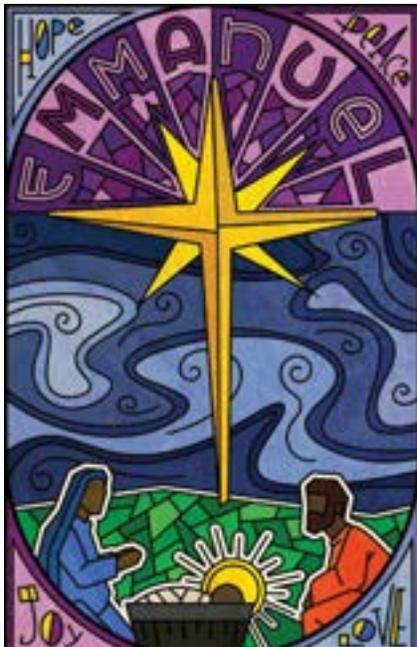
## Fair Trade Inventory Available!

FPC's Fair Trade Leadership Team is working with Rev. Brenna to develop a plan to sell our Fair Trade inventory to members for order and schedule pickups for the holidays. Watch FPC bulletins and eBlasts for details.



**First  
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CHURCH OF PORTLAND

## **Christmas Joy Offering - Support our Leaders: Past, Present, & Future**



Every year at Christmastime, our congregation participates in the Christmas Joy Offering of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Our gifts to Christmas Joy change lives. This year, the offering will take place on **Sunday, December 20th**. The offering assists church workers and their families with critical financial needs through the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions. It also supports young people at Presbyterian schools for students of color, important future leaders in our Church and the world. Please send your check with Christmas Joy designated in the memo to the church at 1200 SW Alder St. Portland, OR 97205 or give through the church website at this link: <https://firstpresportland.cbcchurch.com/goto/giving> Please designate your gift Christmas Joy or mail your gift to the church office 1200 SW Alder St. Portland, OR 97205 and include Christmas Joy on the memo line.