



**First
Presbyterian**
CHURCH OF PORTLAND

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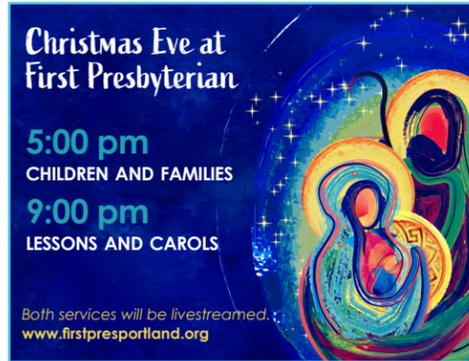
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SPIRE

DECEMBER 2022



New Artist Showcase - Larry Gross

Visualizing Ideas

December 4, 2022-January 29, 2023

Larry Gross



What is meant by ‘Visualizing Ideas?’ As an artist, I work with a specific topic like “trees” or with design elements such as lines and colors. I start with an idea, and it evolves into something else. I am intrigued by the way ideas from different sources interface when they are brought together in the same picture plane.

I taught art at Concordia University, Portland for 30 years. In making stained glass, I tend to think visually in line as though I am “building” the leaded structure for a stained-glass window.

I have always been interested in creation as poetically described in Genesis. I don’t think it takes a religious person to recognize that the universe is infused with holiness. Many ideas explored in this exhibit were inspired by photos of the universe taken by the Hubble and

Webb telescopes. Most recently, I have been exploring the medium of wood relief to reinterpret my drawings or paintings in sculptural form. Finding a 3-dimensional way to express the vastness and mystery of the universe is an exciting process.

Stewardship 2023

“...love one another and have a compassionate heart.” 1 Peter 3:8



As November becomes December, we enter the first season of the Christian Calendar—Advent. During this time, we prepare ourselves for God’s greatest gift, the birth of Jesus. Our thoughts also turn to the gifts we hope to make to family, friends, and those in need. It is a time of year in which we often seek to spread joy and express God’s love through giving.

Our expression of God’s love is also made through our church. Through the church, we nurture our children and youth. Through it, we care for and comfort those among us and around us who are ill, grieving, weary, or hungry. Through our church, we worship in word and music God and The Christ.

As we contemplate the gifts we have received and the gifts we hope to make this season, it is fitting to consider our gifts to the work of our Church. Our pledges are very important. If you haven’t had a chance yet to make your pledge for the coming year, you can do so by mailing your pledge card to the church office, electronically by clicking the gold tab labeled 2023 Stewardship Pledges on the church website, or by using this link:

<https://bit.ly/FirstPresStewardship>

Thank you for your help in sustaining the church’s life and outreach through this season!

Milestones for Somali Refugees

In January of 2017, FPC welcomed a Somali refugee family of eight and started serving as their "cultural navigators." In September, their eldest son, Abuker Shire, passed the citizenship test and interview (after having the required five years as a legal resident)! This exciting event was celebrated by Louise and Terry Nagel, Amy Meabe, Lori Webb, and Beth Markwell. Now we are hopeful he can begin the process of helping his wife and son immigrate to the U.S. His son was just a few months old the last time he saw him, and now he's in school! Abuker works full time as a driver for one of Intel's sub-contractors, in addition to driving for Uber part-time. We are delighted and so very proud of this achievement!



Pastor's Pen

As we prepare our hearts for Christmas, we hear again the words of hope from Isaiah, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light."

I hope you can join us in person or by streaming for a **Children's Christmas service on Christmas Eve at 5:00 pm**, or for **Candlelight service at 9:00 pm that evening**.

May the light and hope of Christ's coming at Christmas will shine brightly for you this year!

Blessings for Christmas,



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MUSIC STAFF

Greg Homza is our full-time Director of Music Ministries, planning music for worship, working with the Chancel Choir, and playing the organ and piano (and sometimes cello) for Sunday services, memorial services, and other special events. He is assisted by four staff singers/section leaders (Leah Papay, Grace Dawald, Alex Trull, and Paul Butler), volunteer Emily Jo Jensen, who leads the Handbell Choir, and a team of FPC members and friends who help with production and hospitality for Celebration Works concerts. He also collaborates with Pastor Carmen, the youth interns, and adult volunteers to coordinate Arts & Music Sundays for the Christian Education program. Greg and his wife, Leah, came to First Presbyterian in December, 2012. (Ten years ago!)



Coping During Holidays Can Be Difficult

As the holidays approach and the days get shorter, sadness, grief and loneliness can affect our daily lives with deeper power. Stephen Ministers in our congregation stand ready to help you cope by offering a dependable listening ear. We are lay volunteers who are trained to provide confidential, empathetic, one-to-one, supervised, Christ-centered care to individuals who are experiencing grief and loss. To find out more about how a Stephen Minister can support you as you negotiate tough times, please contact Pastor Brenna or Pastor Audrey at the church.



"Adventing" After Worship in December

Be part of our joyous anticipation of the arrival of Christ's light in the world!

FPC members, friends, and guests are all encouraged to join us after the December worship services in the chapel and chapel narthex for special celebrations and refreshments. Please come to the chapel to admire the Christmas tree and enjoy treats and low-key activities with others. There will be music, prizes, and areas to create festive family photos as well. Celebrate the meaning of Christmas—God's gift to us in the form of his son—as you engage in Christian fellowship on December 4, 11, and 18. What a delightful way to enjoy our church's mission to "love God and love others!"

A Self-Study Advent Series

Christmas in the Four Gospel Homes, by Cynthia Campbell

How might a house look for Christmas based on what each Gospel says about it? In this book, beautiful illustrations from architect Kevin Burns reimagines each of the four Gospels as a "house," which the church visits at Christmas. For each week of Advent, Cynthia M. Campbell reflects on the distinctive perspective of the birth of Jesus or the incarnation offered by each Gospel. *Christmas in the Four Gospel Homes* creatively reimagines the season and inspires new and exciting reflection for Advent.

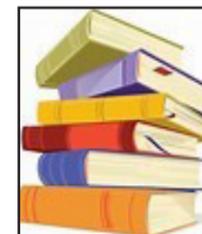
Each week we will present prayers and questions for reflection on each of these homes. To be found in the Sunday bulletin as well as a handout during coffee hour.

You can purchase yourself a copy here:

<http://bit.ly/3tAWSz0> (\$9.75 plus postage)

<http://bit.ly/3ECsGtG> (e-book is \$7.90)

Women's Book Club



The Women's Book Club will meet on Tuesday, December 6 at noon in the Whitman Room and on Zoom. The Zoom code will come later. The book, *The Girl with the Seven Names* by Hyonseo Lee, will be presented by Cindy Finch. This memoir is written by a woman who defected from North Korea to China, then to South Korea and deals with human rights, oppression. It is a riveting story of courage, cleverness and commitment to freedom.