

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Organist: **Margaret McNutt-Reichelt**

Clerk of Session: **Raymond Reichelt**

We acknowledge that we are in Treaty 1 territory, and that the land is the traditional lands of the Anishinabe and Dakota Nations, and the homeland of the Métis Nation

ANNOUNCEMENTS SHEET

THE 2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT 5 December 2021

Welcome! We extend a warm welcome to our guests, and invite you to sign the guest book at the back of the sanctuary. Unfortunately, however, we are not yet able to resume our after-service fellowship time in the Church Hall.

Hanging of the Greens - Today's service is our annual "Hanging of the Greens" service, which we had to cancel last year, since we were not able to have services in person at the time. This service explores the significance of many of our Christmas and pre-Christmas traditions. However, today's service is an abbreviated version of what we've done in the past, since we've reduced the number of hymns, due to the pandemic. We are also keeping the amount of movement in the service to a minimum; so we will remain seated, and will not get up to decorate the Christmas tree, etc. We are reducing the number of readers to a minimum for the same reason; so the reading parts will be read by **Lalaine and Ruth Buan**, and John, only.

Online Services - Since the format of the Hanging of the Greens service doesn't lend itself to being recorded (with our very limited equipment), today's service will not be recorded and uploaded to YouTube. If you'd like a copy of the script to read at home, please let John know, and he'll send it to you.

Scripture Readings - The readings for next Sunday's service will be

- Malachi 3.1-4 - "I will send my messenger"
- Luke 1.68-79 - "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel!"
- Philippians 1.3-11 - "Blameless until the day of Christ"
- Luke 3.1-20 - The ministry of John the Baptist

The Greeter this month is **Charlie Clifford**.

This Week in First Church:

- Thursday, 6:30 p.m. - Finance & Maintenance Committee meeting (rescheduled)

Coming Up:

- Sunday, 12 December - Communion Sunday
- Friday, 24 December, 7:00 p.m. - Christmas Eve service

Newsletter - The December issue of our congregational Newsletter has been sent out by e-mail, and hard copies are being mailed to everyone for whom we don't have an e-mail address. Many thanks to all who contributed news items or photos; also to Lisa Sneesby for putting the Newsletter together, and to Mardine Garnham for printing and mailing the hard copies.

Comfort Dolls - Debbi Miles will be mailing our next shipment of Comfort Dolls and Baby Caps before the end of the month. If you have any to contribute, please get them to Debbi soon, or give her a call (871-1231). Many thanks to everyone who supports this project, and to Debbi for looking after the shipping.

WICM - Winnipeg Inner City Missions, a Presbyterian Church mission in the "north end" of Winnipeg, is appealing for donations for its annual **Christmas Hamper** program. Although WICM is also accepting donations of homemade baking and basic new household items, donations of money are probably the most convenient way for us in Portage la Prairie to contribute. Cheques payable to Winnipeg Inner City Missions can be mailed to WICM at 415 Logan Av., Winnipeg, Man. R3A 0A4. Donations can also be made online, through WICM's website at www.wicm.ca. You can check the website as well for information on WICM's programs.

Year-end Report - FOCUS, the local ecumenical group that produces a crop in support of the **Canadian Foodgrains Bank** every year, reports that it had a successful growing project this year, in spite of the weather having been the driest in recent years. Their project raised \$194,537. Combined with a 4:1 matching grant from the federal government, the total amount raised will be \$972,685. FOCUS thanks everyone who supported this year's project. The name "FOCUS" is an acronym for "Feed Other Countries; Undo Starvation".

Vacuuming the Sanctuary - If you would like to take a turn vacuuming the sanctuary from time to time, please sign up on the sheet that's on the music stand at the back. Since we keep the sanctuary cool during the week, the easiest time to do the vacuuming is on Sundays, either before or after the service. Since we can't afford to pay a janitor, we depend on volunteers to keep the sanctuary clean.

Proverb of the Week -

*The words of the reckless pierce like swords,
but the tongue of the wise brings healing.* (Proverbs 12.18)

Prayer Calendars - Copies of the Prayer Calendar for December are ready to be picked up at the back of the sanctuary. Don't forget your copy!

Bible Study - in January will be based on "The Difficult Words of Jesus", by Amy-Jill Levine. In this book the author shows "... how these difficult teachings would have sounded to the people who first heard them, how they have been understood over time and how we might interpret them in the context of the Gospel of love and reconciliation...". This six-week study will be by Zoom and will begin on Tuesday, January 11th, 2022 (yes, 2022!). If you are interested please contact Margaret Dunn.

Mission Moment

Supporting Vulnerable Children

Antony Misoya, a 15-year-old orphan from Mitumbira village in Malawi, is HIV positive. He attends a program managed by the Mulanje Mission Hospital where he receives care and support with his antiretroviral medication regimen. Staff began to notice Antony's visits to the program had become less frequent. When asked, Antony told them, "I go around looking for work to support my two brothers and sister; sometimes I miss my treatment because I am working." Program staff visited Antony and his guardian and discovered that it had become difficult for her to provide for all four children, so the team provided them with support that made it possible for Antony to attend the clinic regularly and focus on his studies. This project that provides care and support to orphans and vulnerable children in Malawi is supported by *Presbyterian World Service & Development*.

Attendance Limit - The latest public health orders (effective 13 November) limit attendance at our services to 25 people, period. Our highest attendance so far this fall has been 22 (including the pianist and the minister), but our average attendances have been lower than that, so we're all right for now.

Protocols - In order to protect each other from transmission of the COVID-19 virus, please follow these protocols in our Sunday services, until further notice:

- Wear a mask. Those participating in leading the service may remove their masks when they are speaking, so that they may be more easily understood.
- Maintain physical distance (2 meters) from others (except members of your own household).
- Use hand sanitizer when entering the sanctuary.
- An offering plate has been set out at the back of the sanctuary.
- Remain seated throughout the service, including for the hymns.
- Bring your own cushion and/or Bible each week, if desired.
- Prefer that washrooms not be used.
- There will be no coffee/fellowship hour.
- Refrain from shaking hands, etc.
- The names of attenders will be recorded each Sunday, so that we have a record of who attended on which Sunday, in case contact tracing should need to be done later.