

# FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

17 Royal Rd. S., Portage la Prairie, MB. R1N 1T8

Office Phone: 204-857-4351 email [firstpc@mymts.net](mailto:firstpc@mymts.net)

[www.firstpcportage.com](http://www.firstpcportage.com)

Interim Moderator: **Laura Hargrove**

[hargrove@mymts.net](mailto:hargrove@mymts.net) 204-727-5874 (church) or 204-573-4360 (cell)

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 FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

**24 December 2023**

**Welcome!** We extend a warm welcome to our guests, and invite you to sign the guest book at the back of the sanctuary. Everyone is invited to remain for coffee and fellowship, downstairs in the Church Hall, following the service. We thank **Margaret Dunn** for hosting today.

The Greeters this morning are **Lalaine and Ruth Buan**.

#### **This Week at First Church:**

- Saturday, 9:00 a.m. - Men's Breakfast

#### **Coming Up:**

- 31st December (New Year's Eve) - 10:30 a.m. service

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

**Today** - Copies of the January-February issue of the devotional guide *Today* are now available, and have been set out on the table behind the back pew. Feel free to take one home with you, to use in your daily devotional reading.

**No Announcements Sheet Next Sunday** - We will not be producing an Announcements Sheet for next Sunday, the 31st.

### **Charitable Donations received in 2023**

In order for your donation to be included in the 2023 charitable receipt your cheque must be dated no later than December 31, 2023 and must be deposited no later than January 3, 2024. Your support throughout 2023 is very much appreciated.

*Mardine Garnham, Treasurer*

**The Christian Year** - The **Christmas Season**, the second season of the Christian Year (and also the shortest) begins on Christmas Day, and lasts for just twelve days, ending on the 5th of January. Christmas celebrates God's coming into the world in human form in the person of Jesus. As John 1.14 puts it, *The Word [Jesus] became flesh, and made his dwelling among us*. And, as Luke 2.1-21 tells us, Jesus came into the world in the same way that all humans do — as a baby.

There was no formal celebration of Jesus' birth in the earliest centuries of church history, and it was not until the 300s that Christians created a festival for this purpose. Since no one knew the actual date of Jesus' birth, the church "Christianized" an already-existing Roman festival celebrating the "re-birth" of the sun after the winter solstice, and made it instead a celebration of the birth of Jesus.

**Christmas** is the first of the four major festival days of the Christian Year. It is closely followed by the second, **Epiphany**, on the 6th of January, which commemorates the visit of the Magi (Wise Men) in Jesus' early childhood (Matthew 2.1-12). The other two major festivals are Easter and Pentecost. The symbolic color for both Christmas and Epiphany is **white**, signifying joy and celebration. (*from Announcements Sheet, 19 December, 2021*)

**No Bible Study this Week** - Bible Study will resume on January 16.

### **MISSION MOMENT**

Through *Presbyterians Sharing* we shine Christ's light in Canada and around the world. We are there when a prisoner in Malawi discovers Christ's love through Bible study, and when an Indigenous woman in Taiwan reads the Bible in her own language for the first time. We are there when a congregation adapts to meet community needs in new ways and when a theological student in Canada, Malawi, Nigeria, Ghana or Beirut graduates, ready to serve God. We are there when a child receives a healthy snack and after-school support from an inner-city ministry, and when a refugee claimant needs a friend. We are also there for one another as we pray, serve and share the gifts God has given us. When we put our gifts in God's hands, God does remarkable things!