

PASTOR'S CORNER

Merry Christmas,

(I am writing this message on the 2nd day of Christmas)

It has been one year now that I have had the privilege of being your full time pastor at First Presbyterian.

I want to acknowledge the efforts of the Session, the Deacons, John and Barb, Meladee, Beverly, Phil, and each of you-all as we work together to worship God.

By some measures of accounting, some would say we are just treading water; staying afloat but not going anywhere.

I disagree with that assessment.

While we haven't added many new members, (1... Anneliese... Welcome!), we strive to fulfill Jesus' commandant "to love one another".

In this new year, we will work even harder to become a "Matthew 25" church.

We will continue our outreach to those in Gibson City area that need the "body of Christ" in whatever way we are able.

Frank Fisher often said, and I agree, that the Holy Spirit's presence is strong here.

May each of us strive to do God's will here on earth as it is done in heaven.

Happy New Year!

Peace in Christ,

Pastor Ray Lantz

PRESBYTIDINGS

January 2020

Pastor Ray Lantz

Worship: 10:30 a.m. Cookies and Coffee: 11:30ish

This Newsletter is a publication of First Presbyterian Church of Gibson City IL.

Website: www.firstpresbygc.org

Dear FPCGC

Dakar Academy is enriched by being a place of great diversity. Though we are one community united in pursuit of education, we come from many different countries, backgrounds, religions, and cultures. Instead of being a point of possible contention, however, we should celebrate our diversity because it strengthens our community and provides us with opportunities for growth.

One of those opportunities is the idea of Viewpoint Diversity. When we are in groups that are too homogeneous, there is a danger of developing group think and intellectual laziness, but it is good to have multiple spiritual and cultural voices influencing our thoughts and ideas. Instead of being afraid of this, we should embrace the diversity, expanding and analyzing our own thoughts. If we only confirm our own biases without ever being pushed to justify or prove our thinking, the impact can be numbing. Social Media is exacerbating this trend. We begin to look at our own opinions as guarantees, making us arrogant and errant. We become self-righteously complacent and our thinking lacks rigor, fair mindedness, and intellectual carefulness. We use Scripture for proof

texting our own theologies instead and become echo chambers of flawed thinking.

Thinking happens in context, and great thinking can only happen when that context is diverse enough to challenge our beliefs and ideas. We need not fear divergent thinking because it will only sharpen our faith and help us to think, speak, and act more clearly and logically. Our thinking about the important issues of life actually increases when our viewpoints are challenged.

We should be modest about our own thinking, never taking ourselves so seriously that we are unable to listen and reason with someone who disagrees with us. While we want to be certain of our faith, we also want to have it tried and tested by divergent thinking. There is nothing to fear in open honest discussions because we have Scripture as our guide and standard. Using logic, science and rigorous thinking will only affirm the truth, not refute it.

Theologian G.K. Chesterton has said, "A man was meant to be doubtful about himself, but undoubting about the truth; this has been exactly reversed. Nowadays the part of a man that a man does assert is exactly the part he ought not to assert-himself. The



part he doubts is exactly the part he ought not to doubt-the Divine Reason."



Avalyn eating Senegalese style with friends

As Christians we know the truth is not a battering ram to subdue our foe but a tool to love them. In fact, the truth of God's love and grace should equip us to have the necessary patience, love and self-control to hear differing viewpoints and respond with charity.

I think an important way to mature our faith is to take advantage of the rich viewpoint diversity that exists now in almost every community. Rather than letting that

Continued on back page

2020

that polarize us and further our anger and bitterness toward the other it can actually deepen and mature us.

Engage in deep conversations about faith and life. Practice good listening, sound thinking, and critical analysis. Only if you allow in a community with a

broad range of thoughts and ideas, can we all be challenged to grow.

Rob, Shelia, Avery (college), Avalyn (senior in high school), and Hayden Warfield

2020



Hayden in red shirt with some friends

January 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 <i>Church office will be closed</i>	2 <i>Chamber Luncheon</i>	3	4 <i>Recycle</i> <i>9 am Bible reading at Holly Brook</i>
5 10:30 a.m. <i>Worship</i> <i>Jordan family Christmas</i> <i>John 1:(1-9) 10-18</i>	6	7	8 <i>9:45 Pastor Ray reading to HS students</i>	9	10	11 <i>9 am Bible reading at Holly Brook</i>
12 10:30 a.m. <i>Worship</i> <i>Matthew 3:13-17</i>	13	14	15 <i>9:45 Pastor Ray reading to HS students</i>	16	17	18 <i>Recycle</i> <i>9 am Bible reading at Holly Brook</i>
19 10:30 a.m. <i>Worship</i> <i>John 1:29-42</i>	20	21	22 <i>9:45 Pastor Ray reading to HS students</i>	23 <i>5:30 Session</i>	24	25 <i>9 am Bible reading at Holly Brook</i>
26 10:30 a.m. <i>Worship</i> <i>Annual Meeting</i> <i>Matthew 4:12-23</i>	27	28	29 <i>9:45 Pastor Ray reading to HS students</i>	30	31	



Pastor Ray will be preaching on the scripture listed in bold on each Sunday.

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCH...

Installation and Ordination of Officers for 2020

Rick Kerchenfaut was ordained as an Elder for 2020 and Trudy Lantz was installed as an Elder for 2020 during service on December 1, 2019. Ted Swanson was ordained as a Deacon for 2020 on December 1 also and Vonna Heustis was installed as a Deacon for 2020 during service on December 15.

members and accomplishments. The newsletter and events will also be posted each month and we will constantly be updating our content with helpful information and the status of current missions and projects. Thank you to all those who donated their time and energy to make this site what it is and thank you to Geoff Burrows of Truth Advertising for his expertise and assistance in making this a reality.

The Annual Meeting for our church will be held on Sunday, January 26th in the fellowship hall following worship. A meal will be provided for all who attend.

Church Entry Door: A new video and audio door bell system has been installed at the East door. You will need to ring the bell on the wall (stand in front of the camera so that Meladee can see you). Meladee will speak to you through the audio system and push the button so that you may enter the door.

Launching of new Church Website

We are excited to announce the launch of our newly designed website. Please visit us at

firstpresbygibson.org



After months of hard work, our new website was officially launched on December 12, 2019. We hope you find the website more informative, user friendly and easy to navigate. It is important for us to provide information about our church that is easily accessible for our current members and prospective members. One new feature is the recording of our Church Service that can be listened to by anyone at any time. Do not hesitate to browse through all the sections including the photo gallery of pictures celebrating our

Session has approved a 3-month trial period of providing free **Transformation Services** to our Sunday services on the First and Third Sunday of each month. We have contacted the Illinois Central Bus Services to pick up at Villas of Hollybrook, School House Apartments and Gibson Garden. This service has started and **is available for home pick up also.** Just call the church office at 784-5422 to sign up for the 1st or 3rd Sunday. This was one of the requests that came from our survey.



BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES		
January	February	
01: John & Edith Kaufman (69th)	03: Addison Kerchenfaut	K. P. Duty
02: David Stoltz	11: Karen Mott	<i>Jan: Barb Kirkpatrick</i>
06: Rick & Aizza Kerchenfaut ((18th)	15: Charles & Cheryl Schultz	<i>Feb: Danny & Vonna Heustis</i>
13: Danny & Vonna Heustis (21st)	16: Jean Williams	Communion Set-Up
15: Ramie Lantz	19: Anneliese Kerchenfaut	<i>Jan 12: Carla Ashmore</i>
23: Edith Kaufman	23: Ruthie Lantz Dripps	<i>Feb 2: Barb Kirkpatrick</i>
		Second Sunday Offering
		<i>Jan: McCormick Tutoring—Sarah Meyer</i>
		<i>Feb: Food Pantry (?) Ushers</i>
		Flower Vases to CM
		<i>Jan: Carla Ashmore</i>
		<i>Feb: Barb Kirkpatrick</i>
		Communion Servers
		<i>Jan: Rick & Aizza Kerchenfaut</i>
		<i>Feb: Danny & Vonna Heustis</i>
		<i>Jan 12: Danny Heustis and Dale Ashmore</i>
		<i>Feb 2: Rick Kerchenfaut</i>

