

PASTOR'S CORNER

Why do we do Advent? The earliest dating of Advent is impossible to determine. Christmas came to be associated with the birth of Christ as a result of it falling during the December Solstice, the darkest day of the year in the northern hemisphere. The coming of the Light of the World made a lot of sense in so much darkness. Once December 25 became Christmas, it was the center of gravity for the later half of the year—a perfect balance to Easter in the first half. In this way, Advent took on significance the same way Lent did: both were preparation for the more significant season on the horizon.

By the fourth century, the first written evidence of Advent is found in modern Spain and Europe. Probably the earliest official mention of Advent practices comes as the Council of Sargossa (AD 380) met to answer a gnostic-inspired

movement called Priscillianism. The heresy essentially held to a harsh form of dualism—light vs. dark, body vs. soul—so perhaps the celebration of the incarnation made theological sense as a counterbalance to this heresy. The council was not committed to any specific dating of Advent, though, and only suggested people attend church daily between December 17 and 29. By the fifth and sixth centuries, more firm dating of the Advent season can be found in historical records—as well as Advent sermon series.

The Latin word ‘adventus’ was the translation of the Greek ‘parousia’—a word used for both the coming of Christ in human flesh and his Second Coming. Advent, then, always tended to focus on both. For the first two weeks of Advent, the church would reflect on the Second Coming.

Disciples would chasten their hearts, confess sins, and spend time hoping for the quick coming of the Lord. The last two weeks of Advent would then transition to focus on the first parousia, Christ in the manger. This double meaning in Advent history signals an important reality in the liturgical calendar: Advent and Christmas are never held as a full re-enactment of the life of Christ but point to our place between the Resurrection and Second Coming. Advent and Christmas are not merely about the coming of Jesus, but about everything since the birth of Jesus. We are not a people who merely look to the one moment God broke into history. We await his coming again in glory, when the King’s reign shall be on earth as it is in heaven.

Hope, peace, joy and love to you all!!
Pastor Ray

PRESBYTIDINGS

December 2020

Pastor Ray Lantz

Worship: 10:30 a.m.

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

Website: www.firstpresbygibson.org

Meladee Ferguson: Administrative Assistant

Mary Clow: Worship Coordinator

What is Ecclesial Health?

Ecclesial health is about:

- 1) Why we gather as a church community
- 2) How we practice being church together.

It is about whether our mission, vision, and values match up with the ways we live together. It requires continual attentiveness, awareness, and assessment in asking “are we who we say we are?” And more importantly, “are we who God is calling us to be?” Prayer and discernment are at the heart of ecclesial health!

There are several factors to ecclesial health: prayerful discernment, decision-making process, health of pastors, stewardship of budget and resources, clarity in mission and ministries. Ecclesial health is about the people of God having a clear purpose; all people are stakeholders invested in being a part of

this community of faith. There are shared core values, a clear mission, and commitment and loyalty to the life we gather in as church. Yet, they also know that this is a living faith. So, they dare to dream and understand that change is inevitable. With ecclesial health, there is joy and gratitude in coming together; people, not programs or properties, are valued. People gather and are sent to be Christ’s Church.

What are the objectives of striving for ecclesial health?

- A communal life centered on prayer and discernment of God’s will
- Clarity in Vision, Mission, Core Values; budget reflects these core principles
- Continual attentiveness, awareness, and assessment to mission and

“The season for kindling the fire of hospitality in the hall, the genial fire of charity in the heart.”

- Washington Irving

www.culturestreet.com

- practices of being church
- Pastor and staff are regularly evaluated using best practices
- Pastor and staff, all servant leaders, are nurtured and supported in health; with clear expectations
- Stewardship and tithing are taught year-round; accountable giving in gratitude
- Transparent in spending; continual discernment of budget sustainability
- All are stakeholders, committed to fiscal responsibilities, active participation, and necessary voices in envisioning, dreaming, and decision-making.



Pastor’s Office Hours:

Monday: Out all day

Tuesday: 9am to Noon

1pm to 3pm

Wednesday: 9am to Noon

1pm to 3pm

Thursday: 10am to Noon

pm by appointment

Friday: By appointment

Weekly Scheduled Appointments:

Tuesday: Noon-1pm—Lions Club (when in session)

Wednesday: 9:45-10:15 Head Start Reading (when in

Session)

Thursday: 8-9:30-GC Pastor’s Group

1st Thursday of Month: Noon to 1-Chamber of Commerce

Life isn’t about getting and having,
it’s about giving and being.

— Kevin Kruse

December 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5 <i>Recycle</i>
6 10:30 a.m. Worship Mark 1:1-8	7	8	9	10 <i>5:30 Session Financial Advisor Finalist Interviews</i>	11	12
13 10:30 a.m. Worship Christmas Joy Offering 11:30 a.m. Congregational Meet- ing John 1:6- 8, 19-28	14	15	16	17 <i>5:30 Session</i>	18	19 <i>Recycle</i>
20 10:30 a.m. Worship Luke 1:26-38	21	22	23	24 <i>5:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Service— Communion</i>	25 Merry Christmas and Happy Birth- day, Jesus! <i>Church office will be closed</i>	26
27 10:30 a.m. Worship Luke 2:22-40	28	29	30	31		

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

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCH . . .

Please note: The previous week's sermon will broadcast at 7:45 a.m. every Sunday morning on WGCY.

Please note: Online Live Sunday Services will be available on our Facebook Page noted below:

First Presbyterian Church of Gibson City

https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=142499619134911&ref=br_rs

Farlin Farm Update: The final sales contract has been completed and signed by Kurt and Chris Sommer. In addition, the \$15,000 escrow check has been received. Rick Kerchenfaut reports the survey crew has been on the property to start that process now that the crops are out of the ground and it should be completed shortly. Per the contract, the closing date shall be scheduled no later than January 15, 2021. Ron Clow also reported that he has contracted our Farm manager at Heartland bank and he reports that all of the crop has been sold at three different times for approximately \$50,000.

Financial Advisor Search to assist with Farlin Farm proceeds update: A request for proposal was composed by Mary Clow and sent to six Financial Advisors and/or institutions. The proposal outlined our values and goals noting we wanted to make faith based decisions while being socially conscious when making investments. In addition, it is our desire to invest conservatively and avoid risky investments. Anyone replying to the request was asked to answer eight questions about their company when returning their proposal. This included fees, costs, qualifications, investment strategy, who their typical clients were and who was going to be the custodian of our funds. Five written proposals were received and opened on November 17th. Mary completed a tabulation of all the proposals for Session to review outlining the costs and answers to the eight questions. During the first round, three proposals were chosen for further review as they were all Fiduciaries. During the second round of review, two of the three proposals were chosen for further review based on the fees

and investment approach. A follow-up meeting with each representative from the two finalists will be scheduled on **December 10th, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. Session will meet at this time.**

Stewardship Drive: The stewardship letter and pledge card for 2021 has been included with this newsletter. While it has been a challenging year due to Covid-19, the generosity of the church family made a difference in the work our church did in 2020. Please keep this in mind and give prayerful thought when completing your 2021 pledge card.

Annual Congregational Meeting to be December 20, 2020:

The Annual Congregational and required Corporation meeting that was to be held after church service on Sunday, December 20th **has been cancelled.** The meeting will be held in February and will be announced in the Sunday bulletins and upcoming Newsletters.

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

December

03: Jerry Wissmiller
07: Charlie Schultz
07: Tim Shull
24: Ken Kyle
25: Jesus
27: Elinor Nelson



January

02: David Stolz
06: Rick and Aizza Kerchenfaut
13: Danny and Vonna Heustis
15: Ramie Lantz
23: Edith Kaufman



K. P. Duty
Dec: Jeanette Hensley
Jan: Carla Ashmore

Second Sunday Offering
Dec 13: Christmas Joy Offering
Jan. 10: McCormick Tutoring

Ushers
Dec: Ron & Mary Clow
Jan: Rick & Aizza Kerchenfaut

Communion Servers
Dec 24: Ron & Mary Clow
Jan 10:

Communion Set-Up
Dec 24: Ted Swanson
Jan 10: Carla Ashmore

Flower Vases to CM
Dec: Ted Swanson
Jan: Carla Ashmore



ABOUT OUR MEMBER



Barbara (Carter) Williams

Barbara (Carter) Williams was born October 15, 1933, in the family's home on North Church Street to Howard and Edna (Clark) Carter. She had one sister, Virginia.

Barbara completed Gibson City Grade School in 1947, and her family moved that summer to Galesburg (IL), where she graduated from Galesburg Senior High in 1951. In fall 1951, she became a student at Illinois State Normal University (now ISU) in Normal. She graduated in 1955 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education. Barbara's first teaching job was in Downers Grove (IL) for the 1955-56 school year.

In December 1955, Barb married Bob Williams. As fate would have it, the sisters married brothers because Barb's sister Virginia had married Gene Williams in July 1950. Barbara and Bob had served as the couple's attendants during the garden wedding at the family home in Galesburg.

By spring 1956, Barbara and Bob

moved to Gibson City for Bob to join his dad and brothers in their construction business. For the 1956-57 school year, Barbara taught first grade at Fisher. She was then asked by Superintendent Warren Page to teach kindergarten in the Gibson City school district, which she did until 1966.

In 1966, the couple had their long-awaited child son Robert Eric (Rob), who was "a joy." Barbara decided to quit her teaching job so Rob would not have to go to a babysitter, but it was a decision she came to regret when she and Bob divorced in 1976, something she did not plan. Rob graduated from Gibson City High School in 1984 and in 1988 from North Central University in Naperville (IL). In 1990, he married Julianne Zarzy. The couple lives in Geneva (IL), and they are the parents of Barb's three grandchildren: Matt, Taylor, and Alex. Rob teaches health and physical education in Naperville.

Her niece and nephew, Sharla Williams and Lance Williams, also are very special to Barb. Her sister Virginia Williams passed away in May 2013.

Barb enjoined riding horses in her childhood. Equines in her life included a Hackney pony, and she showed Stormy to first place at the McLean County Fair. The family also owned a five-gaited horse which Barb did not ride much, but Dale Ashmore's dad rode the mare in a show. Floyd Walker's sister showed with Mr. Ashmore and rode side saddle.

Barb also enjoyed typical youth activities such as swimming at the local pool and being a member of the Blue Ribbon 4-H Club. Both her mother and Mrs. Herbert (Marion) Green were the leaders. She also belonged to the local Girl Scout troop, led by Juanita Bryant, who took the girls to scout camp in Mahomet.

Barb's Christian life started early when she was baptized as an infant at the First Presbyterian Church of Gibson City (FPC) and attended Sunday School there, where she learned The Golden Rule and continued applying it in her life. She remembers her first classroom was located where the office is now. Mrs. Merle Schrock played the pump organ to accompany songs. Barb went to church camps at Lake Bloomington, and she has twice attended the Passion Play in Bloomington.

Barb joined FPC by certificate in 1962. She has helped with various church projects, including Bible School dinners. She was elected a Deacon three times, serving as moderator once. She also served as an Elder and was a member of the Presbyterian Women's Association. But best of all, she says, was being part of the FPC choir when it was the best choir in town!

A love of music has been a staple in Barbara's life. She took piano lessons from Miss Zelah Newcomb and others until she was in the sixth grade. In fifth grade, she started playing in the band and continued through high school.

Continued next page.

Continued from previous page- When Barb graduated from eighth grade, music teacher Lela Johnson always produced an operetta for the ceremony; the part of Gretel went to Barb for that year's production of "Hansel and Gretel."

Barb's work life included teaching at the local Busy Hands Nursery School and Nazarene Nursery School. For 23 years after that, she was the Activity Director for Gibson Area Hospital's long-term care facility, The Annex. She retired from that position in 1998. Shortly afterward, she worked in the First Christian Church's office and later volunteered at Busy Hands to help then-director Debbie Kirkpatrick, one of her former kindergarten students.

Barb is thankful for her friends, regularly writing or visiting (prior to the pandemic) school friends. She still keeps in touch with Georgie Johnson, and she says Elinor Nelson has been like a "caring sister" to her since Elinor's husband died 20 years ago. She appreciates Elinor's mental strength with her nearly daily contact and help. She also counts various pets as special "four-legged" friends.

Barb has traveled outside Gibson City just six times in her 87 years. She says Gibson City is where her best memories have been made!



ABOUT OUR MEMBER



Mary Jane (McClure) Roth

Mary Jane was born May 14, 1937, and grew up on a farm two miles west of Gibson City that has been in the McClure family since it was purchased in 1868 by her great, great grandfather, Benjamin Harrison McClure. The house was built in 1871 when his son, John T. McClure, returned to Gibson City after serving four years in the Civil War. It presently is occupied by their daughter and son-in-law, Leigh Ann and Steve Sharp.

Mary Jane has one sibling, a brother, John, whose career was in the East Asian Library at Columbia University in New York City. In retirement he continues to live in the city. She says it is a great place to visit!

The church played a big part in her growing up. Reverend Jim Cayton was instrumental in organizing activities for the pre teens and teenagers. Their church is where Gene and Mary Jane met and were married. In later years it was a joy to work in the kitchen for various events and a great feeling of camaraderie. From her first visit

to the church she was, and remains, thankful for the beautiful organ music and the accomplished musicians who play it.

After graduating from Illinois State University she was job searching. The decision was made to interview within a reasonable distance of home and Watseka was perfect. There she taught English and Speech and directed the high school plays (her favorite part!). One of the highlights during that time was being able to spend part of the summer in Europe as a chaperone with the School Band of America, which one of her students was chosen to be in. The week after she came home Gene proposed and they married in June, 1963.

The couple were blessed to welcome three daughters to their family. After 57 years of marriage, her family has grown to include:

Leigh Ann and Steve Sharp live in Gibson city and are parents of Craig Allen and Meghan Jane. Leigh Ann keeps busy as a substitute teacher and Steve works for Arcadis Engineering of Indianapolis.

Barbara Jean Bowen is in Mesa, AZ, where she works as an audiologist. She has three children: Derrick Mitchell, Mark Eugene, and Madison Leigh.

Lisa and Mike Almert live in Fishers IN, where both work for Roche Diagnostics. Their children are Jack Henry and Emma Caroline.

Gene and Mary Jane feel blessed to live in Gibson City with family and friends.

CONGRATULATIONS

GCMS High School
HIGH HONOR ROLL
First Quarter 2020-2021
Emma Swanson
Anneliese Kerchenfaut

GCMS Middle School
High Honor Roll
First Quarter 2020-2021
Addison Kerchenfaut

GCMS FACEBOOK POST:



“Thanks to the generosity of the First Presbyterian Church (McCormick Tutoring) and the GCMS Education Foundation, every K-12 student will be coming home with books to keep.” The generous donation from one of our most awesome missions—The McCormick Foundation—helped make this happen!!



Church Sign: The new transformer recently installed behind the church by Ameren required more space. Therefore, the fence had to be moved to accommodate the new larger unit and the beautiful holly bushes full of berries were transplanted to the front of the church on each side of our church sign replacing the dying evergreens. In addition, the worn out light fixtures in the sign were replaced with new brighter LED lighting.

Christmas
IS NOT AS MUCH
ABOUT OPENING OUR
Presents
AS OPENING OUR
Hearts

The Minute for Mission in December will be used for A Christmas Joy offering. We offer our gifts during this Advent Season to the Christmas Joy Offering because God shows us the power and importance of being together, of “being with.” We might not be able to meet face to face with those who need the support that our gifts provide, but we are very much still together. We see the potential of students of color who will become our leaders and we seek to come alongside them, to encourage them, to be together with them—we are with them. And we see the witness of the whole Church, either gathered in buildings or connected home to home, member to member, sharing what we have, together. We thank God for being “with us” through the gift of Jesus and for joining us together as the Church and, through our gifts, with those who have need.



100% That Great!
Gets Things Done!



- CICS Loomis-Longwood 3rd-5th Grade Art Teacher
- Ms. Kirkpatrick considers herself a glitter fairy as she always finds the silver lining, a light shining through the clouds
- She created the Artist of the Week wall for talented students

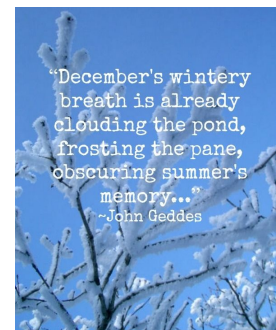
Dail Kirkpatrick

This week's shout-out goes to Dail for being a creative problem-solver to her students; someone who shows them to love art and shine in the classroom. Her YouTube channel exemplifies her creativity and showcases the student's projects and their love for art.

Thank you Ms. Kirkpatrick for being so committed to our teachers, staff, students and families!



Good news on Dail Kirkpatrick, daughter of John and Barb Kirkpatrick



Stained Glass Window: The stained glass memorial that John Kaufman and Lee Barry created that was outside in the Memory Garden was removed by Ron Clow and brought inside the church. We will be working with a contractor to make the memorial into a window hanging that will be placed in one of the windows in the fellowship hall entrance.



Toys for Tots: Ron Clow presents John Kirkpatrick from Napa Auto Parts with a \$250 donation from our church for the Toys for Tots campaign.



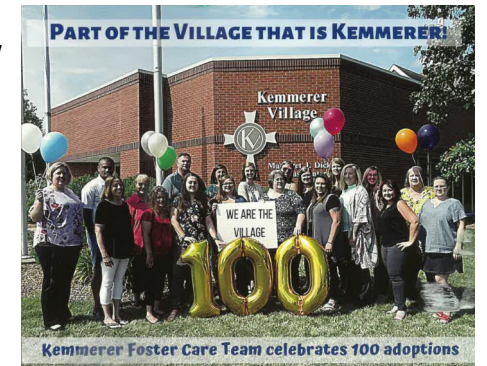
December is the toughest month of the year. Others are July, January, September, April, November, May, March, June, October, August, and February.

Mark Twain

HEED NOW THE CALL for the Congregational Meeting to approve Nominations and By Laws changes. This meeting will be held online (facebook) after the 10:30 service on Sunday, December 13th, 2020. You will be able to vote online at this time. If you are unable to get facebook, please come to the church parking lot outside of Head Start from 11:30 to 12:00 noon, remain in your car, and a paper ballot will be handed to you to vote. **THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT!** We need each member to vote on these important matters.

HOPE, PEACE, JOY and LOVE

Blackhawk Presbytery is excited to offer all of their churches the unique perspectives of 26 Blackhawk pastors and lay leaders as they reflect on the 2020 Advent journey. Based on the four candles representing "Hope", "Peace", "Joy" and "Love", each of these volunteers will be featured in a brief, 4-5 minute video posted to the [Presbytery's YouTube channel](#). A new reflection will be available every day, from November 29 - December 25. The organizer of this project, Rev. Catherine Martin, is "hopeful that it will bless many of our congregations in the Presbytery, as well as give you a bit of a relief from all that you are being called to do during this unique time in history!"



Christmas is Coming!

Preparing to make Christmas wishes realities, we need all the help we can get! If you are able to buy a present for a child in need contact Autumn at (217)226-2131, check our Amazon Wishlist, or our general needs list at kemmerervillage.org

Art Kits • Balls • Gift Cards • Hoodies • Rugs • Games

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Our children love receiving mail! Please consider sending a birthday card & a prayer for the following kids:

GIRLS

- Lanayah I**—11/02/03
- Joanna R**—11/21/03
- Aaliyah S**—12/15/01
- Kristen D**—12/21/01
- Emmilee C**—02/03/07

BOYS

- Joshua T**—11/29/05
- Michael S**—2/16/03
- Trace T**—12/23/04
- Timothy S**—01/25/05
- Shawn V**—2/14/05
- Oliver F**—11/15/07
- Jeremy M**—12/03/08
- Josh S**—02/21/04