

THE FIRST PRES

December 2007

First Presbyterian Church

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Winnebago, Illinois

Pastor's Note

"The Perfect Gift"

Are you ready for Christmas? Every year I hear this question asked countless times, and every year I resolve to be ready, having planned ahead, shopped early, and gotten every thing ready. As hard as I try, I find myself at the eleventh hour, racing the clock. I guess I should make it clear that I am ready in my heart and in my mind for Christmas, just not on the commercial.

In difference to you and I God never hurries. God waits for just the right moment to reveal His most precious gifts. Galatians 4:4 reads, "When the time had fully come, God sent His son".

Jesus is the perfect gift for a world that is sick and tired. He came to bring healing, hope, rest and the peace that passes understanding. Jesus' birth came to fill time with new meaning. John 10:10 reads, "I have come that you may have life and have it to the full".

The wonderful truth is that Jesus is also coming again. We are presently living between the First and the Second Advent. We look back with gratitude and thanksgiving, and look forward in hope to His coming again, when all the struggles, trials and confusion will be answered.

In the book, "Knowing the Face of God", author Tim Stafford suggests that much of Jesus' teaching emphasized the "view from the end." When it's all over, we will be able to understand all of history. Pain and sorrow will also be transformed by this perspective.

As both a father and a pastor I have witnessed a practical example of this. Whenever I visit any hospital there is one particular ward where moans are most likely to assault my ears. Here, young women writhe in severe and helpless pain. Their problem is obvious to the eye: their stomachs have swelled to the size of beach balls. They are about to deliver a baby. As the hours pass, the women's faces grow increasingly worn with pain. If they were there with any other diagnosis, the scene would be heart wrenching. But instead there is a feeling of great joy in a maternity ward. The women there may be feeling as much pain as women on other wards, but they look confidently toward a different end—a joyful end. Later, in the days and weeks to follow the pain that seemed so terrible has faded away because it came to its proper end: she holds a baby.

The perfect gift! Jesus' coming puts everything into perspective. He is born; He is with us. He is coming again; He will be here, at a time we do not expect, but right on time.

Session Synopsis

Our lives like our community, our state, and the world are a microcosm of good and bad, joy and sadness, focused and overwhelmed. Each of us has so much for which to be thankful, even amidst the personal struggles we each deal with daily. We the members of the Board of Elders deal with the same kinds of situations in our lives.

As we gathered on November 19, 2007 past, we discovered that each one of us has something for which to be thankful. In many ways God has blessed us as individuals, families, and as a community of faith. We are upheld by God’s love, mercy, and personal presence. God has gifted us bountifully with the expectation that we share these gifts with others, and so we shall.

After approving the agenda for our meeting, and approving the minutes from our last meeting in October, we proceeded to address current matters before our church family. We reviewed and approved the Treasurer’s Report. Pastor Steve updated us on the “per capita” paid to date, and is obtaining additional information so we can make our final payment for 2007. Pastor Steve shared revised “job descriptions” for our Worship and Music Committee; our Personnel Committee, and our Christian Education Committee. He is also in the process of revising the job descriptions for the Memorial Committee, our Stewardship and Finance Committee, and our Outreach Committee.

Discussion ensued on the recent vote and mandate by the congregation over the purchase, installation and use of a projection screen, projector, and laptop computer. Matt Mitchell will initiate the obtaining of bids for these items.

Elder Bill Naill presented to us a draft of the “Proposed Budget for 2008”. With a few minor changes we will have the budget ready for the Congregational Meeting in January 2008. We approved January 20, 2007 as the date for the annual Congregational Meeting.

Pastor Steve reminded the session that he will be ordaining and installing our newly elected church officers as soon as they are available. Pastor Steve also reminded us that the Christmas Cantata is set for December 16, 2007 as part of our worship service, and that the Sunday School Christmas Program is scheduled also that day at 4:00 PM in the sanctuary. We express our thanks to Lisa Mitchell and Laurie Speers for their time and work in making the Christmas program possible and such a beautiful expression of the true meaning of Christmas.

We are so happy and blessed to welcome several new members and families into our church. And in the weeks to come we look forward to joining other prospective members.

The session committees shared pertinent information, and youth Elder David Smith informed us that our Senior youth group will be at Stronghold at New Years time. We are excited to see our young people using the camp and conference center at Stronghold.

We the session and staff wish you a happy, healthy, and Joyous Thanksgiving Day.

Respectfully Submitted

Pastor Steve

December Greeters	
East/Side Door	North/Front Door
2nd Norm Dean & Ben Degutis	Betty Finley
9th Tom & Cindy Erb	Julie & Russell Fiori
16th Joe & Janet Erb	Mick & Tricia Franklin
23rd Michelle Erb	Brett & Stephanie Friemuth
30th Dale & Merle Fender	Gene, Ann, & Jeff Fuller

Deacons

The Deacons met on November 20, 2007, at 6:30 p.m. with six members present. President Rosemary Runyard welcomed everyone and Ben DeGutis led us in prayer. Minutes from the last meeting were discussed and new correspondence was read. The treasurer's report was not available. Bev Samsel presented the sunshine report with many cards being sent out.

It was discussed what the Deacons could do to help certain members of our church who may need support this holiday season.

Poinsettias will be distributed to deacons members to deliver to our shut-in friends at our December meeting.

Communion schedule was discussed for the month of December. Communion will not be served at the Christmas Eve service. We will host the afternoon service and Middle Creek will host the late service.

There being no other business, the meeting was closed with the reciting of the Deacon's Prayer. Our next meeting will be December 18, 2007. We will be holding elections for next year.

Respectfully Submitted,
Darla Cunningham

Be Not Afraid

Sunday after church, a mom asked her very young daughter what the lesson was about. The daughter answered, "Don't be scared, you'll get your quilt." Needless to say, the mom was perplexed. Later in the day, the pastor stopped by for tea and the mom asked him what that morning's Sunday school lesson was about. He said "Be not afraid, thy comforter is coming."

Trustees

During the month of November, the trustees worked on one project, which took a couple of days to complete. The outside speakers (located along the roofline above the elevator shaft) needed some general maintenance.

We ran new wires from outside of the choir room entrance to the two outside chime speakers by pulling the new wires through the wall, across the attic and to the soffits. On Saturday, we used a boom truck to pull the wires through the soffit and connected them to the speakers. While we had the truck, we also replaced the external light bulb above the stained glass window.

Respectfully Submitted,
Greg Rittmeyer

October Church Budget

Beginning Checking:	\$21,979.70
Month Revenue:	\$9615.40
Month Expenses:	\$14,162.70
Year to date Revenue:	\$125,408.94
Year to date Expenses:	\$122,346.35
End Checking:	\$17,432.40

Newsletter Articles

Newsletter articles are due on December 20, 2007. You may email them to secretary@thewfpc.org.

Fellowship Supper Club

The Fellowship Supper Club will be attending "The Sound of Music" at the Pec. Playhouse and then will enjoy dinner at Cimino's after on December 2, 2007.

Senior High

The Senior High youth group has had a busy couple of months. We have been meeting on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month. In October, we had a traditional Halloween gathering and enjoyed carving pumpkins and bobbing for apples. Aaron Mitchell perfected his "bobbing" technique in just two challenges!! During the month of November, we pooled our money and as a group went to Family Dollar and purchased items for Maya's House in Rockford.

We are looking forward to a great December, also! Please join us as we decorate the church for the Advent and Christmas season on Dec. 1 at 9:00 AM. We will have our regular meeting on the 5th and 19th.

As a highlight for the year, **we will be going to Stronghold for a New Year's Eve retreat.** The Carriage House has been reserved and holds up to 30 people. All high school age students are welcome for this fun and memorable experience. Whether you have been able to join us regularly or not very often, please feel welcome to join us! Let us know if you would like to attend this retreat. More details will be given and discussed at Sunday school and at our Wednesday night meetings or call Lisa at 335-2896.

We have a great group of kids!

Serving Him,

Lisa and Joe



Thank You

Youth Group Christmas Party

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: Youth Group Christmas Party will be :
: Friday, December 7, 2007 at 6:30- :
: 9:30 PM. Movie, games, and FUN! :
: Watch for more details. :
: Cindy Benson 335-1095 :
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Thank you very much for the prayers and thoughtful cards for my recent health concerns. I also appreciated the visit from Pastor Steve. I am glad to be a part of this congregation.
Sue Luna

Mary Martha Circle

On December 13, 2007 Sue Jansen will host the Mary Martha Circle at 7:00 PM. There will be a potluck and gift exchange.

Naomi Circle

Arleene Slocum-Meyers will be the hostess for the Naomi Circle on December 1, 2007 at 12:30 PM.

PW News

A big thank you to everyone who worked so hard to make the Pig Roast Dinner a bid success with their hard work, donations and attending the event. Profit from the dinner and bazaar items was \$2201.79.

PW met November 15 for a business meeting and installation of officers.

Officers installed were:

Vice-Moderator – Dixie Leden (1 year only)

Secretary – Beverly Barker

Treasurer – Cindy Erb

Coordinator of Mission Opportunities

Search Committee – Michelle Erb

Honoraries – Laurie Speers

Emergency Committee – Mary Lee

Please mark your calendars to donate cookies and/or candy for the cookie walk on December 8 - and remember to come and buy the special goodies between 9 a.m. and noon on that day. Tell your friends and neighbors! (Donations can be brought to the church on Thursday, December 6 or Friday, December 7.)

8 x 10 pictures of our church's stained glass window are still available for \$5.00. There is a sign up sheet under the PW bulletin board, or contact me at 335-2081 if interested.

- December 1 (Saturday) 9 a.m. - Decorate Church – Coordinators: Kathy Heeren-Ellis and Lisa Rittmeyer.
 - December 2 (Sunday) - First Sunday in Advent
 - December 8 (Saturday) - Cookie Walk - Coordinators: Avis Lind, Marian Pedrick, Carol Meyers, Faye Reed, Bev Barker and Jodell Brown
 - December 13 (Thursday) – 6:30 p.m. Mary Martha Circle potluck & Christmas exchange at Sue Jansen's. (Also collect food & paper goods for needy families.)
 - December 18 (Tuesday) 12:30 p.m. Naomi Circle potluck and Christmas party at Arlene Meyers. They will have a \$5.00 gift exchange and collect items for a selected family.
 - December 24, (Monday) Christmas Eve Service (4:00 p.m. service at our church)
 - December 25 (Tuesday) Christmas
 - January 5 (Saturday) 9:00 a.m. - Undecorate Church - Coordinators: Kathy Heeren-Ellis and Lisa Rittmeyer
 - January 6 (Sunday) Host Sunday Morning Coffee Fellowship. Coordinators - Circle Moderators
- Coordinating team meeting Tuesday, January 8, 2007 – 7:00 p.m. at Dixie Leden's

Thank you all for your support for our projects throughout the year and have a blessed holiday season.

Sue Jansen, Moderator



December 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 9:00 AM Decorate Church
2 9:00 AM SS 10:30 AM Worship Communion Fellowship	3	4	5 7:00 PM Sr. High Choir	6 7:00 PM Trustees	7 6:30-9 PM Jr. High Christmas Party 4-5:30 PM Program Practice	8 9:00 AM— 12:00 PM Cookie Walk
9 9:00 AM SS 9:30 AM Choir Rehearsal 10:30 AM Worship	10	11	12 7:00 PM Choir Dress Rehearsal	13 7:00 PM Mary Martha	14 4-5:30 PM Program Practice	15
16 9:00 AM SS 10:30 AM Worship CANTATA 4:00 PM Christmas Program	17 7:15 PM Session	18 12:30 PM Naomi 6:30 PM Deacons	19 7:00 PM Sr. High Choir Potluck	20 Newsletter Articles Due	21	22
23 9:00 AM SS 10:30 AM Worship	24	25	26	27	28	29
30 9:00 AM SS 10:30 AM Worship	31 High School Retreat					

Make Ornament Cookies!



Make Christmas ornament cookies to hang on your Christmas tree.



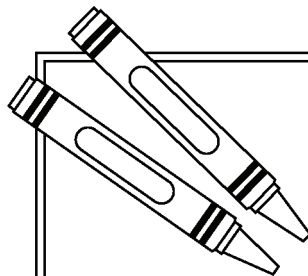
You will need:

- * package of refrigerated cookie dough
- * rolling pin
- * cookie cutters (star, bell, tree, etc.)
- * cookie sheet
- * icing
- * a drinking straw
- * ribbon
- * an adult to help!



How to make them:

1. Roll out the dough and cut shapes with the cookie cutters.
 2. Place on cookie sheet.
 3. Use the straw to make a hole near the top of each cookie.
 4. Bake according to the package directions.
- Important: Have an adult help!**
5. When cool, decorate the cookies with icing and tie a ribbon through each hole.
 6. Hang them on your tree or give them as gifts to friends!



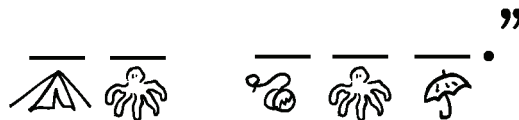
Just for KIDS

The Shepherds and the Angel

What did the angel of the Lord say to the shepherds?
(Luke 2:11)

Write the first letter of each picture on the lines.

“



”

Answer: Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you.