

# The Presbyterian *Messenger*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BURLEY, IDAHO DECEMBER 2023

## Jesus Is Coming Again

Do you know there are two calendars? There is the one that begins on January 1st and ends on December 31st. This is the secular calendar. It marks the passage of time and has its own reference points, and rhythms. There are days of the week, months, holidays (think New Years Day, President's Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, and so on).

The other calendar starts with Advent (December 3, 2023) and ends with recognizing the Kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ (November 24, 2024). This is our Faith Calendar! It is "A Journey with Jesus".

Our journey begins with Advent. If someone asked, "Sum up the Advent Season in 3 words or less!" A good answer would be "Come, Lord Jesus!" So we put ourselves in the "sandals" of those who awaited the advent of the Lord for centuries before the birth of Christ. We sing with them, "Come, Though Long-Expected Jesus, Born to set Thy people free..." (Hymn #1). But just as important, or should I say, "More importantly!" We also are standing and waiting and longing for the Lord Jesus's 2nd Advent.

When we will see our Lord and Savior face-to-face. What will we see? Not a gentle and helpless baby. But a mighty King. What will we see? Not a suffering lamb sacrificed for the sins of the world. But a powerful lion who makes all things new.

But truth be told! It's easier to get into celebrating Jesus' first Advent, than anticipating and preparing for Jesus' return! As someone has observed: "Like relationships on Facebook, sometimes our relationship to the 2nd coming of Christ is...well, complicated." (Charles Whiley).

Yet the 2nd Advent of the Lord Jesus is a reality that should not be ignored! It's the reason we (Jesus' followers) have a confident expectation that the best is yet to come! So we pray "Come, Lord Jesus!"

In Jesus' love,  
*Pastor John*



## Your Light has come



In the introduction to his book *For All God's Worth*, theologian N.T. Wright says, "Christmas is God lighting a candle, and you don't light a candle in a room that's already full of sunlight. You light a candle in a room that's so murky that the candle, when lit, reveals just how bad things really are. The light shines in the darkness, says St. John, and the darkness has not overcome it."

For that reason, Wright explains, Christmas isn't a dream or a momentary escape but reality. And the same is true for Christianity. "Either Jesus is the Lord of the world and all reality makes sense in his life, or he is dangerously irrelevant to the problems and possibilities of today's world," he adds. "There is no middle ground. Either Jesus was, and is, the Word of God, or he, and the stories Christians tell about him, are lies."

### Advent meanings

During Advent, which begins this year on December 3, many churches and families use wreaths to symbolize watchfulness and increasing joy as Christmas approaches. Colors for the candles vary, with some traditions using blue (for hope or creation) and others preferring purple (for royalty, humility or penitence).

The four candles that each represent a week in Advent also signify hope, peace, joy and love. (The third candle is often pink.) In the center is the white Christ candle, representing Jesus as the light of the world. That candle is lit on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

The round, green Advent wreath has special meaning of its own. It symbolizes eternal life and the unending love of God, who sent his only Son to earth to die in our place.

### ADVENT DEVOTIONALS—

There is a variety of Advent booklets for Adults, Teens and Small Children located on the back railing in the sanctuary. Please help yourself!

### Don't miss out!

In his poem "The Inn That Missed Its Chance," Amos R. Wells writes from the perspective of the "fairly crazed" innkeeper who recalls Bethlehem becoming "a hive at swarming-time." Of the couple who requested shelter on what became Christmas Eve, the proprietor asks, "Could I know that they were so important?"

There was a sign, they say, a heavenly light  
resplendent; but I had no time for stars.  
And there were songs of angels in the air  
out on the hills; but how was I to hear  
amid the thousand clamors of an inn?



If the innkeeper had only known Jesus' true identity, he says, he would have turned the place upside down, sending other guests out to the stables instead. When Jesus returns — "as he will surely come" — the anonymous innkeeper wants everyone to know: "Tell my Lord that all my inn is his, to make amends."



# Session Highlights

Greetings from the Session,

The Session met for its regular monthly meeting on November 8, 2023. 4 Elders were present, 2 were excused. Pastor John opened the meeting with prayer. The temporary clerk reported there were 59 on the active roll. Communion was served to 41 members and friends on November 5, 2023.

Pulpit supply while Pastor John & Linda are traveling to Boston: Shane Guinn is going to be giving the message on Sunday, November 19, and Paul Pugh will be filling the pulpit on Sunday, November 26.

The Deacon's Yard Sale was very successful. The ARC people took the majority of clothing leftovers to their Ministry in the Treasure Valley.

PW women will be selling their noodles on November 16 & 17<sup>th</sup>, at the church.

Christian Ed & Worship: Sunday Morning Adult Bible Study is being held at 9:30. The topic is "Reading the Bible in 365 days". It has been challenging, but good. We still need someone to lead a youth class.

The Treasurer reported that all bills and staff are up to date. The Stewardship Campaign is completed, and was dedicated on Sunday, November 19. If you have yet to send yours in, it's not too late, please return it to the office asap!

We still need someone to step up to the plate and volunteer some interest in becoming Clerk of Session! Prayerfully consider helping out!

There was no other business. The meeting was closed with prayer by Pastor John at 8:30 pm.

Respectively Submitted,  
Carleen Clayville, for Clerk of Session



## Our God of hope

Near the end of a long bout with cancer, Washington Post columnist Michael Gerson realized that hope for recovery wasn't credible. The year before he died, he wrote a Christmas message from "the antiseptic wonderland of the holiday hospital ward," asking, "What sustains hope when there is scant reason for it?"

The answer, Gerson said, is found in our "God of hope," who became vulnerable, "cloaked in blood and bone and destined for human suffering." Rather than fulfill our deepest earthly wishes, God offers eternal security: "He promises a transformation of the heart in which we release the burden of our desires, and live in expectation of God's unfolding purposes, until all his mercies stand revealed."

That hope-filled message echoes Gerson's 2012 Christmas column, written in the aftermath of the Sandy Hook shooting. "The point of Christmas is not a sentimental optimism about the human condition or even a teaching about the will of God," he wrote. "It is an assertion that God came to our rescue, and holds our hand, and becomes, at the worst moments, our brokenhearted brother. It is preposterous, unless it is true. And then it would be everything."



# December Scripture Lessons *from the Lectionary*

**December 3** [1st Sunday of Advent/Communion Sunday]  
Isa. 64:1-9; Ps. 80:1-7, 17-19;  
1 Cor. 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37

**December 10** [2nd Sunday of Advent]  
Isa. 40:1-11; Ps. 85:1-2, 8-13;  
1 Pet. 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8

**December 17** [3rd Sunday of Advent]  
Isa. 61:1-4, 8-11; Ps. 126;  
1 Thess. 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28

**December 24** [4th Sunday of Advent / Christmas Eve]  
2 Sam. 7:1-11, 16; Ps. 89:1-4, 19-26;  
Rom. 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38

**December 29** [1st Sunday of Christmas]  
Isa. 61:10-62:3; Ps. 148;  
Gal. 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40

*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*  
**2 Timothy 3:16-17**

## Ponderings at the end of a day — or year

Dutch Catholic priest and theologian Henri Nouwen found it useful to reflect on several questions at the end of the day: "Did I offer peace today? Did I bring a smile to someone's face? Did I say words of healing?" Pondering such questions may prove valuable at the end of a year as well: "How did I contribute to peace in the world this past year? Did I bring smiles to others' faces? Did I offer words of healing?" Nouwen continued, and we can too: "Did I let go of my anger and resentment? Did I forgive? Did I love?"

Many of us set New Year's resolutions for self-improvement, asking, "What are my goals? How can I better myself, my weight, my work-life balance, my habits?" But Nouwen said of his self-inquiry: "These are the real questions. I must trust that the little bit of love that I sow now will bear many fruits, here in this world and [in] the life to come." His resolution was to share God's love with others. With God's help, it can be ours as well, for each new day and each new year.



### Poinsettias

We will once again be selling poinsettias. Order forms will be available Nov. 26—Dec. 17. Please have your order form and money in by Dec. 17th. The price for poinsettias is \$12.00. We will use the poinsettias to decorate our beautiful sanctuary during the Christmas Season. You can take your poinsettia home after the Christmas Eve Service.

## DECEMBER Birthdays & Anniversaries

01 Bill & Valerie Frazier  
06 Susi McCall  
08 Steve Lynch  
08 Pastor John Ziulkowski  
12 Gwen Erickson  
16 John & Linda Ziulkowski  
31 Marcia Lynch

*God Bless Your Special Day!*



**2023  
Year to Date  
Tithes and Expenses**

**October**  
**Tithes** \$5,162.00  
**Expenses** \$6,567.99  
**YTD Totals:**  
**Tithes** \$66,850.98  
**Expenses** \$73,392.48

## Committees & Chairpersons

### Building & Grounds:

Paul Pugh

### Fellowship:

Sandra Clayville

### Finance:

Carleen Clayville

### Missions & Evangelism:

Dan Wittman

### Personnel & Nominating:

Dan Shockey




### Worship & Christian Ed:

Erika Wittman

### Deacons:

Tyson Germann,  
Susan McGee,  
Linda Smith,  
Susi McCall and  
Valerie Frazier



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 <b>1st Sunday of Advent</b> 9:30 am Sunday School 10:45 am Worship, Communion & Cupcake Sunday <b>Hanging of the Greens after worship</b>	4	5	6	7 7:00pm Boy Scouts	8	9
10 <b>2nd Sunday of Advent</b> 9:30 am Sunday School 10:45 am Worship <b>Christmas Program during worship</b> <b>Christmas Buffet after worship</b> Deacons meet	11	12	13 7:00pm Session	14 11:30am Mt. Harrison Christmas Party 7:00pm Boy Scouts	15	16 10:00 am PW Christmas Brunch & Cookie Swap  <b>Christmas Brunch</b>
17 <b>3rd Sunday of Advent</b> 9:30 am Sunday School 10:45 am Worship <b>Deadline to order Poinsettias</b> <b>Christmas Caroling 3:00pm</b>	18	19	20	21 7:00pm Boy Scouts	22 	23
24 <b>4th Sunday of Advent</b> <b>Christmas Eve</b> <b>No Morning Service</b> 7:00pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service	25  <b>Christmas Day</b> <b>Merry Christmas!</b>	26	27	28 7:00pm Boy Scouts	29	30

31  
**New Year's Eve**  
9:30 am Sunday School  
10:45 am Worship



November 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

January 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

**December Servers ~ Thank You!**

**Head Usher:** Dale Martin **Head Greeter:** Sharon Napier

**Liturgist:** 12/3 Dan S., 12/10 Gary, 12/17 Dan S., 12/24 Gary, 12/31 Dan S.

**Coffee Hour:** 12/3 Fellowship, 12/10 Fellowship, 12/17 \_\_\_\_\_, 12/24 \_\_\_\_\_, 12/31 \_\_\_\_\_



# Presbyterian Women In The News

## SAVE THE DATE!

When: Saturday, December 16, 2023

Time: 10:00 am

Place: The Church Fellowship Hall

For: **Our Annual Cookie Bake and Swap!**

Please bake (or Buy) and bring 2 dozen of your favorite cookies! We will be making plates of cookies to take to our special people that we are Caroling to on Sunday, Dec. 17! (and you will be able to make one for yourself!) - Looking forward to this special time together!

Carleen, Moderator

*P.S. We sold all our noodles! A handful of ladies sold noodles on Thursday, and Friday! Next year we plan on having baked goods to sell at the noodle sale! People were asking! Thank you to those who spent those days with us!*

## A season of relationship

For his Christmas album *Milk & Cookies*, worship leader David Crowder wanted to focus on the relationship aspect of the holidays and the mixed emotions involved. Deaths of loved ones, absence from home or having "no home to get back to," he says, can wrap sadness into what's supposed to be a joyful season.

Yet pain and separation perfectly mirror the meaning of Christmas, according to Crowder. "It's about the created being at a distance from their Maker and ... God making a way back into communion with [them]." He adds, "I feel like most of the stuff that we experience around the season points to what is the miraculous — that there was the best gift ever given, and it was to make a way back into relationship with our Creator."



# Committee Reports

## FINANCE REPORT

As John stated in his sermon some time ago, “everyone who makes noodles, clears the sidewalks, takes out the garbage, or helps with Fellowship hour is doing Stewardship for the church. Stewardship, it’s not all about the money!” It’s about giving too; (because we’ve gotten quite used to worshiping in doors where it’s warm (or cool and comfortable)

As you consider what is required of you as one who has been drawn to Jesus by the One who sent him, consider first what Jesus willingly gave? This is the starting point for all discussions about stewardship and giving; first, that the goal is not to hold onto what one has, but to give it fully and freely w/out fear; second, that Jesus doesn’t ask us to give up our lives in the physical sense, but to be part of his sacrifice, so that everything we give of our resources is an echo of the ultimate gift for the life of the world: Jesus’ flesh! I found this article on the PCUSA website “Stewardship giving” and it spoke to me!

We appreciate all who have turned in their pledge of support of our Church for the 2024 year. If you have yet to fill out your Stewardship pledge, and can, it would be very helpful to make our 2024 budget in early January!

Yours in Christ’s service  
The Finance Team

LOOKING  
AHEAD  
TO  
2024

## WORSHIP & CHRISTIAN ED REPORT

Bible Study for adults is going great! If anyone is interested in attending or has any questions, contact Carleen Clayville. Also, if there is anyone who may be interested in teaching Sunday School for children, please talk to me.

We have abandoned our search for an organist. We advertised a paid position for several weeks but have had no success. If you know of someone who plays the organ, please pass along our open position.

In His Love,  
Erika Wittman



## FELLOWSHIP REPORT

Dec. 03 Cupcake Sunday  
Dec. 10 Christmas Buffet after program.  
Dec. 17 Caroling @ 3:p.m. with chili and cinnamon rolls to follow.

Joining us in all the opportunities to celebrate the birth of our Savior.

Respectfully submitted,  
Terrie Shockey

## JANUARY

01: New Year’s Day—*Happy New Year!*  
06: Epiphany of the Lord  
07: Communion / Cupcake Sunday  
07: Baptism of the Lord  
10: Session  
14: Annual Budget Meeting after worship—TBA  
15: **Annual Reports Due**  
28: Annual Congregational Meeting after worship—TBA

## FEBRUARY

04: Communion / Cupcake Sunday  
11: Transfiguration of the Lord  
13: Shrove Tuesday  
14: **Ash Wednesday**  
14: Session  
18: **1st Sunday in Lent**  
21: Lenten Luncheons begin Feb. 21-Mar. 20—TBA  
25: 2nd Sunday in Lent  
25: Easter lilies on sale now thru March 24th

## MARCH

01: World Day of Prayer  
03: 3rd Sunday in Lent  
03: Communion / Cupcake Sunday  
10: **Daylight saving time begins**  
10: 4th Sunday in Lent  
13: Session  
17: 5th Sunday in Lent  
20: First Day of Spring  
24: Palm Sunday (Holy Week begins)  
28: Maundy Thursday/Service & Meal—TBA  
31: **Easter Sunday/Resurrection of the Lord**



**PASTOR:**

Rev. John L. Ziulkowski

Pastor's office hours:

Wednesdays 9:00am—1:00pm  
(also available by appointment)

Pastor's Email: [lrzski@yahoo.com](mailto:lrzski@yahoo.com)

Pastor's cell phone: 208-430-5359

Office Administrator: Barbrea Moore

Office Hours Tue—Fri 9am—2pm

Office phone: 678-5131

Office email: [office@burlevpres.org](mailto:office@burlevpres.org)

Clerk of Session:

Director of Music: Paul Pugh

Pianist: Susan McGee, Susi McCall, Linda Ziulkowski

Flutist: Linda Ziulkowski

Nursery Attendant:

Custodian: Linda Culley

Prayer Chain: Susan McGee 208-312-3864

**Service Times:**

Sunday School 9:30 am

Worship 10:45 am

*The Presbyterian Messenger and  
The Lord's Day Bulletin are published by  
The First Presbyterian Church of Burley, Idaho.  
Please submit your Newsletter items by the  
15th of the month and Bulletin items by Wednesday.*

First Presbyterian Church (USA)

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Burley ID 83318

Visit us on the web at:

[www.burlevpres.org](http://www.burlevpres.org)



"For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given;  
And the government will be upon His shoulders.  
And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor,  
Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

—Isaiah 9:6-7 NKJV

**Prayers:** If you know of someone who is in need of prayers, please contact the church office.

**Prayer Chain:** If you have an emergency prayer request, or would like to join the prayer chain, please contact Susan McGee at 208-312-3864



**PRAAYER  
CORNER** We offer up prayers for . . .

- God answering prayers, big and small! Good is good—all the time!
- All who are fighting cancer and those recovering from various illnesses and injuries
- Prayers of thanksgiving for God's Son—his indescribable gift (2 Cor. 9:15).
- Prayers of support and encouragement for all our shut-ins and those in care centers
- All who have lost loved ones
- The poor, lonely, abused, or struggling with addiction
- Those facing financial uncertainties
- Wisdom for those making difficult decisions
- Our church leaders
- Our military
- Our government leaders
- Our partnership ministries: Hope Community Food Pantry, Operation Christmas Child and Crossroads Harbor Domestic Violence Shelter