

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BURLEY, IDAHO DECEMBER 2024

The Presbyterian *Messenger*

What Are We Waiting For?

What are we waiting for? At this time of the year, it is an easy question to answer. We're waiting for presents under a tree, Christmas cookies, fun time with family and friends. As Christians we would add that we're waiting to celebrate the birthday of Jesus on December 25th.

But just as important, or should I say, "More importantly!" We also are standing and waiting and longing for the Lord Jesus' 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 can sing with Emeli Sande' the song "Brighter Days."

Brighter Days

*We've seen it all
The tears have fallen
And every step is on the edge
And we're so confused
We don't understand
It feels like this night won't end
But there's gonna be brighter days,
brighter days
I'll keep you lifted when you're losing faith
There's gonna be brighter days
brighter days
Though it seems distant,
know the world will change
All of a sudden, the sun will
start to shine on you
Know you've been running
but now it's time for your breakthrough
I'll tell you something,
it's not all for nothing, it's true
Hey, you'll see it soon
There's gonna be brighter days,
brighter days
I'll keep you lifted when
you're losing faith
There's gonna be brighter days,
brighter days
Though it seems distant,
know the world will change
To brighter days
To brighter days
To brighter days
The world will change*

So we pray "Come, Lord Jesus!"

*In Jesus Love,
Pastor John*

A Glorious Hope



Let us today go down to Bethlehem, and in company with wondering shepherds and adoring Magi, let us see him who was born King of the Jews, for we by faith can claim an interest in him, and can sing, "*Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.*" Jesus is Jehovah incarnate, our Lord and our God, and yet our brother and friend; let us adore and admire. ...

Let us reverently bow before the holy Child whose innocence restores to [humankind] its ancient glory; and let us pray that he may be formed in us, the hope of glory.

—C.H. Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening*

The Incarnation

At the center of Christmas is Jesus, both fully God and fully man. "In Bethlehem, humility and glory in their extremes were joined," wrote pastor R.G. Lee (1886-1978). When Jesus came to earth, Lee explained, he descended:

- from the heights of glory to the depths of shame,
- from the wonders of heaven to the wickedness of earth,
- from exaltation to humiliation,
- from the throne to the tree,
- from dignity to debasement,
- from worship to wrath,
- from the halls of heaven to the nails of earth,
- from the coronation to the curse,
- from the glory place to the gory place!



"Born in a stable! Cradled in a cattle trough! Wrapped in swaddling clothes of poverty!" Lee wrote. "No room for him who made all rooms! [No] place for him who made and knows all places! Oh, deep humiliation of the Creator — born of the creature, woman! But in his descent was the dawn of mercy. Because we cannot ascend to him, he descends to us."

Look Upon Love



Let us then meditate upon the Nativity just as we see it happening in our own babies. I would not have you contemplate the deity of Christ, the majesty of Christ, but rather his flesh. Look upon the baby Jesus. Divinity may terrify people. Inexpressible majesty will crush them. That is why God took on our human flesh and blood, that God should not terrify us but rather that with love and favor God would console and comfort us. —Martin Luther

Please continue to pray for Mason Wittman as he begins an Internship to explore becoming an ordained Presbyterian Minister

"He became what we are
that we might become what he is."
—Athanasius (4th century)



Session Highlights

Greetings from the Session,

The Session met on November 13, 2024 at 7:00 P.M. All elders were present. Pastor John Ziulkowski moderated and opened the meeting with prayer and the lighting of the Christ Candle.

Clerks Report: Carleen Clayville, for Clerk of Session
Membership roll: 59
No Baptisms, Weddings, Memorials.
Communion Report: 32. No shut ins.
Clerks Report accepted with a motion by Dan, 2nd, voted, passed. Approve previous minutes, approve with corrections by session, motion by Dan, 2nd, voted, passed.

Pastors Report: Pastor John Michael Barrett is in the pulpit 12/8, plans for 2025 are tabled to December.
Mason Wittman will lead the Christmas play, 12/15, and Christmas Eve Service 12/24.
Time 7 pm, Offering to "Victims Against Violence", motion by Sandra C. MSG.

Deacon's are actively doing their Deacon Duties, Their Yard sale was successful.

No Presbyterian Report:

Christian Ed. Erika Wittman
Christmas program 12/15.

Finance: Carleen Clayville
October Tithes \$4,857.25, Expenses \$7,580.72. TCF update, in the works.

Fellowship: Sandra Clayville
Cupcake Sunday, 12/1. Buffet 12/8.

Building & Grounds: Dale Martin
Hanging of the Greens, 11/24. New screen door in kitchen.

Mission, Outreach & Church Growth:
Mission Payments up to date.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm
Closing Prayer by Mason Wittman

Respectfully submitted,
Carleen Clayville, for Clerk of Session



"When Christ entered our world,
he didn't come to brighten our
Decembers but to transform our
lives." —Rich Miller



December Scripture Lessons *from the Lectionary*

December 1 [1st Sunday of Advent / Communion]
Jer. 33:14-16; Ps. 25:1-10;
1 Thess. 3:9-13; Luke 21:25-36

December 8 [2nd Sunday of Advent]
Mal. 3:1-4; Luke 1:68-79;
Phil. 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-6



Hark
the
Herald Angels
sing

December 15 [3rd Sunday of Advent]
Zep. 3:14-20; Isa. 12:2-6;
Phil. 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18

December 22 [4th Sunday of Advent]
Micah 5:2-5a; Ps. 80:1-7;
Heb. 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-55

December 29 [1st Sunday of Christmas]
1 Sam. 2:18-20, 26; Ps. 148;
Col. 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52

December Birthdays & Anniversaries

01 Bill & Val Frazier
06 Susi McCall
08 Steve Lynch
08 John Ziulkowski
09 Noel Grout
12 Gwen Erickson
13 Rob Grout
16 John & Linda Ziulkowski
16 Kenny Grout
29 Kevin & Judy Morse
31 Marcia Lynch

God Bless Your Special Day!



2024 Year to Date Tithes & Expenses

October

Tithes \$4,857.25
Expenses \$7,580.72.

YTD Totals:
Tithes \$68,516.89
Expenses \$73,403.95

Committees & Chairpersons

BUILDING & GROUNDS:
Dale Martin

FELLOWSHIP:
Sandra Clayville

FINANCE:
Carleen Clayville

MISSIONS & EVANGELISM:

PERSONNEL & NOMINATING:
Dan Shockey

WORSHIP & CHRISTIAN ED:
Erika Wittman

DEACONS:
Linda Smith, Dan Wittman,
Gary Hollinger, Susi McCall,
Sharon Napier and





November 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

DECEMBER

January 2025

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	

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 1st Sunday of Advent 9:30 am Sunday School 10:45 am Worship, Communion & Cupcake Sunday	2	3 Giving Tuesday 	4	5 7:00pm Boy Scouts	6	7
8 2nd Sunday of Advent 9:30 am Sunday School 10:45 am Worship Michael Barrett Teaching Christmas Buffet after worship Deacons meet	9	10	11 7:00 pm Session	12  11:00am Mt. Harrison Quilt Guild Christmas Party 7:00pm Boy Scouts	13	14 10:00 am PW Christmas Brunch & Cookie Swap  Christmas Brunch
15 3rd Sunday of Advent 9:30 am Sunday School 10:45 am Worship Deadline to order Poinsettias 3:00 pm Christmas Caroling	16	17	18	19 7:00pm Boy Scouts	20	21
22 4th Sunday of Advent 9:30 am Sunday School 10:45 am Worship	23	24 7:00pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service— Mason Wittman	25  Merry Christmas!	26 7:00pm Boy Scouts	27	28
29 1st Sunday of Christmas 9:30 am Sunday School 10:45 am Worship	30	31 New Year's Eve	December Servers ~ Thank You! Head Usher: Dale Martin Head Greeter: Sharon Napier Liturgist: 12/1 ____, 12/8 Dan S., 12/15 ____, 12/22 Dan S., 12/29 ____ Coffee Hour: 12/1 Valerie, 12/8 Fellowship, 12/15 Fellowship, 12/22 ____, 12/29 ____			



Presbyterian Women In The News



SAVE THE DATE!

When: Saturday, December 14, 2024

Time: 10:00 am

Place: The Church Fellowship Hall

For: Our Annual Christmas Brunch &
Cookie Swap!

Please plan to join us for Food, Fun and Fellowship!
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. 15! (and you will be
able to make one for yourself)!

Looking forward to this special time together!

Carleen Clayville,
Moderator

Cookie Swap



LOOKING AHEAD—

JANUARY

01: New Year's Day—Office Closed—*Happy New Year!*
05: Communion / Cupcake Sunday
05: Annual Budget Meeting after worship—TBA
06: Epiphany of the Lord
08: Session
12: Baptism of the Lord
15: **Annual Reports Due**
26: Annual Congregational Meeting after worship—TBA

FEBRUARY

02: Communion / Cupcake Sunday
12: Session 7:00pm
14: Valentine's Day

MARCH

02: Transfiguration of the Lord
02: Communion / Cupcake Sunday
04: Shrove Tuesday
05: Ash Wednesday
07: World Day of Prayer
09: Daylight saving time begins
09: 1st Sunday in Lent
12: Session 7:00pm
16: 2nd Sunday in Lent
23: 3rd Sunday in Lent
30: 4th Sunday in Lent

Committee Reports

FINANCE REPORT

As our Session will be in the financial planning for the coming year very soon, we wish to take this opportunity to **Thank You** for your **Time**, **Talents** and **Financial support** in the past years! And to encourage you to return your pledge as soon as possible, if you have not already done so. You have answered God's invitation to become partners in the mission and the life of Burley First Presbyterian Church.

If you have misplaced your pledge forms, that were sent out a few weeks ago, there are additional forms on the back rail of the church. As I have mentioned several times, *"Give generously to God without any reluctance in your heart; then the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in everything else you do."* **Deuteronomy 15:10.**

Yours in Christ's Service,
Carleen Clayville



FELLOWSHIP

Dec. 08 Christmas Buffet
Dec. 15 Caroling @ 3pm

Please join us in fellowship and celebrating the **Reason for the Season.**

Respectfully submitted,
Terrie Shockey

"Christmas began in the heart of God.
It is complete only when it reaches the
heart of man. Why wait for a call
when you have a command?"

—Robert Hughes

PASTOR:

Rev. John L. Ziulkowski

Pastor's office hours:

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

Pastor's Email: 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

Clerk of Session:

Director of Music: Dr. 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
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Please submit your Newsletter items by the
15th of the month and Bulletin items by Wednesday.*

First Presbyterian Church (USA)
2100 Burton Avenue
Burley ID 83318

Visit us on the web at:
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

December 2024

Our Mission Statement

- To proclaim the Word of God to its members.
- To be a place where the community at large is invited to hear God's Word and join in fellowship with the members in the worship of God.
- To minister to its members in time of sorrow, illness, hurt, confusion, or uncertainty and encourage their faith in God, and His son Jesus Christ, during these troubling times.
- To be a haven for the larger community, where people who are troubled can receive support, encouragement, and be led to faith in God and our savior, Jesus Christ.
- To joyfully worship God together, to encourage youth and young adult members to come together with older members to get to know each other, and to develop mutual respect.
- To be known outside of our membership as a place where people of all ages can come together and find meaningful worship of God.

In these days of confusion in our society about what is morally good and right and true; the Session of this congregation, unanimously affirms the following beliefs which we publicly profess:

1. That Jesus Christ alone is Lord of all and the only way of salvation.
2. That Holy Scripture (the Bible) is the Triune God's revealed Word, the church's only infallible rule of faith and life.
3. That God's people are called to holiness in all aspects of life. This includes honoring the sanctity of marriage between a man and a woman.

The heart of Christmas

Sound over all waters, reach out from all lands,
The chorus of voices, the claspings of hands;
Sing hymns that were sung by the stars of the morn,
Sing songs of the angels when Jesus was born!
With glad jubilations
Bring hope to the nations!
The dark night is ending and dawn has begun:
Rise, hope of the ages, arise like the sun,
All speech flow to music, all hearts beat as one! ...

Blow, bugles of battle, the marches of peace;
East, west, north, and south let the long quarrel cease.
Sing the song of great joy that the angels began,
Sing of glory to God and of good-will to man!
Hark! joining in chorus
The heavens bend o'er us!
The dark night is ending and dawn has begun;
Rise, hope of the ages, arise like the sun,
All speech flow to music, all hearts beat as one!

—John Greenleaf Whittier



Christmas Adam

Need a fun new tradition to liven up your Christmas celebrations? Then join the growing number of Christians who observe Christmas Adam — the day before Christmas Eve!

In honor of the first human, enjoy some barbecued ribs and an apple salad or dessert. Your family might exchange small gifts on Christmas Adam or do last-minute shopping together. Some people temporarily rename their pets that day, just as Adam named the animals in the Garden.

No matter how you celebrate, have fun on December 23 as you remember why Jesus had to come to earth in the first place!



As Mary “treasured ... in her heart” all that had happened around Jesus’ birth and childhood (Luke 2:19, 51), help me, God, to treasure your gifts and teachings in my heart always.

That's a (re)wrap!

The Reintgen family in North Carolina will always remember Christmas 2023. At 3 a.m. on December 25, their 3-year-old son woke them up, asking for scissors to open his new action-figure toy. “That’s when we realized something had gone terribly wrong,” said Scott, his dad.

A quick trip downstairs revealed a mess of unwrapped gifts under the family’s Christmas tree. “There was not one thing that he left unscathed,” Scott said. The boy, in his defense, said he was just trying to help everyone know what they’d received.

With only hours until their other children awoke, the Reintgens were determined to save Christmas. Mom Katie raced to rewrap gifts, even managing to get most nametags back on the correct packages. Instead of being angry, the parents found humor in the ordeal. Afterward, they explained to their son the joy that people experience from receiving — and opening — their own presents.

Morals of the story? Remember this 3-year-old when you get overeager for certain parts of the holidays. Don’t rush through anything, and let others enjoy Christmas at their own pace too. When something goes wrong, don’t panic. Like the Reintgens, find joy in any unexpected glitches and grinchies you encounter throughout the season.

—Stephanie Martin



BOUGHT WITH THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST

by John MacArthur

Redeemed used to be a popular word in the evangelical vocabulary. It was a part of many hymns and gospel songs. Reference was often made to Christ as the Redeemer. We don't hear that much anymore, and I think we may have lost an understanding of what it means to be redeemed.

In 1 Peter, the apostle is writing to the believers who are scattered around the Roman world. He describes them in 1 Peter 1:1 as aliens. They are aliens in the sense that they are part of God's Kingdom, and so they are aliens in the world. They are God's chosen. They are those who are being sanctified by the work of the Holy Spirit, who obey Jesus Christ, who have been sprinkled with His blood.

The circumstances for them are dire. The great persecution under Nero broke out in A.D. 64, and it lasted a long time. The Roman historian Tacitus reported that Nero rolled Christians in pitch, or tar, and then set them on fire while they were still alive and used them as living torches to light his garden parties. He sewed them up in the skins of wild animals and set his hunting dogs on them to tear them to pieces. They were also nailed to crosses. Christians perished in a delirium of savagery.

First Peter is written after that persecution has begun, and that tone finds its way into every chapter. For example, in chapter 4, verse 12, he says: "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the suffering of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation."

The emphasis of this epistle is: "Face persecution without losing heart, without wavering in faith, without becoming bitter, and

always realizing where your hope lies. It lies in your eternal inheritance that cannot fade away, for which you are protected, and to which one day you will ascend. No matter what comes, have hope in the promises of Christ. You may not be valuable to the world, but you are priceless to God, so that *'You were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ'* (1 Peter 1:18-19).

Redemption is a more specific word than *salvation*. It focuses on the means by which salvation is accomplished—the payment of a price. And the payment is made to God.

We are in bondage to sin, which consequently has put us in bondage to God, the Judge and Executioner of all who sin. We are in God's prison awaiting judgment. To be redeemed, the redemption price must be paid to God so that God is satisfied and can set us free. And Christ is our Redeemer. That's what Peter is saying.

Redemption looks at our hopeless, helpless condition as prisoners of iniquity on death row, and the price that God accepted for our liberation.

There's little doubt in my mind that as Peter wrote about being redeemed with precious blood, he was thinking about something that was familiar to all Jews—the Passover.

The celebration of the Passover was the celebration of God buying the freedom of the Hebrews out of bondage in Egypt. Moses, in Exodus 11:4, told Pharaoh that all the firstborn in the land of Egypt would die. The Hebrews were then given instruction on how they could escape the slaughter. They had to sacrifice a lamb and spread the blood on the crosspiece and the side pieces of their door.

The lamb's blood would be the shed in place of the blood of the firstborn.

The Hebrew people numbered as many as 2 million, so you can only guess the vast massacre of lambs that went on, and blood splattered everywhere on their homes. This is how an entire people was purchased. The redemption price was the blood of the lamb, and that's got to be in Peter's mind as he says, "Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life but with the precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless," which was exactly how the lamb of the Passover was described.

How can sinners be redeemed? Not with silver or gold, but with precious blood. It's going to take blood. This is a vivid way to describe death—it's going to cause death. The price is sacrificial death. It's going to be with precious blood, the blood of a lamb unblemished and spotless, just as at the Passover. It had to be a perfect lamb, spotless and unblemished, and he had to give his life.

And who is the Lamb? Jesus Christ. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. He is the only acceptable sacrifice.

You have been redeemed by the death of the perfect Lamb of God, and through that you have become believers in God, and now your faith and hope are literally in God. We are joined with God. We are one with Him in Christ. ©2016 GRACE TO



Scripture quotations are taken from the New American Standard Bible 1995

Adapted from a sermon preached June 12, 2016

John MacArthur is the pastor-teacher of Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, California