

Arms of Faith

Faith Presbyterian Church
"To know, to grow, and to show Christ to all people"

December
2020

What are you waiting for?

We began a new church year on Sunday, November 29, as we entered the Season of Advent. Advent is a time for waiting, expecting and looking ahead. This year it seems like we're waiting for a lot of different things.

We're waiting for COVID-19 vaccines to become widely available.

We're waiting for some resolution and closure following the general election.

We're waiting to see whether Congress will be able to pass legislation to help the many families who have been hit hard by the pandemic.

We're waiting for life to return to something like normal.

All that is in addition to the waiting that we typically bring to Advent.

This year we're focusing on Hope and Justice as we once again use worship resources assembled by Worship Design Studio.

From a worship perspective, the Church uses Advent to prepare our hearts for two things: the celebration of Christ's birth and looking ahead and awaiting Christ's return. Both of these themes will appear repeatedly in worship. This year, I believe, we need to add one more thing to await: the birth of Christmas Joy in our hearts.

Last year I was very impressed by the community Christmas concert that has long been a tradition. The music was beautiful and sacred, but what I found most moving, and what nourished my spirit most of all, was the joy on the faces of many singers. This year, I urge you, don't just wait for an experience like that, *look* for one, *seek out* a sight, a smell, a moment that reminds you of what Christmas is all about. You will have to look in new places this year, because many of the usual places are off limits. Look anyway; because one only finds when one seeks.

See you in church,
Pastor Tom

December Birthdays



Dec 1 Debbie Eggers
Dec 1 Scott Jamieson
Dec 2 Steve Norman
Dec 5 Joy Johnson
Dec 6 Robin Gentry
Dec 6 Margaret Hermanson
Dec 7 John Gjersvik
Dec 10 Richard Svoboda
Dec 12 Jackie Bogenhagen
Dec 14 Anne Sulhoff
Dec 15 Karen Greni
Dec 16 Carol Matschullat
Dec 16 Bill Wollenhaupt
Dec 18 Chris Hayes
Dec 19 Pam Bottorff
Dec 23 Jackie Zimmerman
Dec 30 Tom Negley

Advent

Don't forget to have a candle ready to light Nov 29. You will need a total of 5 candles for our series, "I Believe Even When", which will help us bring light and music into these dark times.

November Session News

Your Session met over Zoom on Thursday, November 19. The entire Session was present and they were joined by Tom Negley, Bill Willett and Matt Kasprzak, who were elected at last month's Congregational Meeting. Their terms will start January 1. Their eagerness to serve is impressive and appreciated.

Ruling Elder Debbie Kippley began the meeting with prayer.

Mission & Evangelism Committee chair Lexie Stephenson shared that that committee had donated COVID-19 supplies and hand sanitizer to nearby schools. Substantial funds have come in to support families at Thanksgiving. This year COVID has forced us to offer gift cards for groceries and financial assistance for utility bills.

Facilities Chair Rod Bosserdet shared that his committee and church staff have taken several steps to decrease our utility bills because we are not using as many rooms in our building because of COVID.

The Support Committee reported that pledge income for the month of October was 102% of what was budgeted. Pledging continues to be strong year to date.

Your Session worked more on the budget for 2021. The final budget will be adopted at the December Session meeting. If you plan to pledge for next year and haven't turned in your pledge card, please get it to the office promptly. While pledges have come in very well, the Session expects a substantial decrease in revenue due to less money coming in from building use and loose offering. Currently the Session is exploring cutting staff hours to balance the budget.

Session voted to donate one of our two vans to Moving Veterans Forward, the mission we spotlighted in worship on November 15.

Elder Lexie Stephenson closed the meeting with prayer.

So goes the work of your Session.

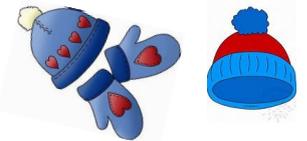
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Faith Church's annual **GIVING TREE** project to provide Christmas gifts for students at G. Stanley Hall and LaVista West Elementary Schools will be different this year. The school district is not accepting gifts from outside sources for their students. They are referring families that need assistance to the Sarpy County Assistance Program which has 6-7 agencies that partner with them to fulfill the needs of families that are either on Medicaid or have income limits.

In talking with the counselors at both schools there are needs that Faith Church can provide in lieu of the gifts to the students. The following are some of the items they need for their Health Rooms:

Boys and Girls sweat pants/elastic waist pants sizes 4-6, 6-8, and 8-10.

Boys and Girls underwear sizes 4-6, 6-8, and 8-10.

The schools also need Sanitizing Wipes, Hand Sanitizer, and Reuseable Water Bottles (all drinking fountains are closed due to the virus).



There is an ongoing need for Stocking Caps/Hats, Mittens/Gloves, and Scarves as the weather gets colder. For many years Faith Church has had a "Mitten Tree" after Christmas to collect these items, but they can be donated now.

If you are willing to donate any of the above items, please take them to the South Door and leave them on the counter, in the basket, or by the Christmas Tree prior to December 15th. Anything our Faith Church congregation is willing to donate to help both schools will be greatly appreciated by them.

CAROLE'S HOUSE OF HOPE is also in need of assistance to help make this holiday season bright for some deserving families. For more information including links to registries and a printable shopping list, please visit: <https://www.carolehouseofhope.org/housewares-drive>. The items are ordered on-line and shipped directly to Carole's House of Hope.

Thank you, in advance, for your consideration of either/both of these Mission projects.

Mission & Evangelism Team

INFLUENZA

Influenza season is upon us as we are in the midst of a pandemic with COVID-19.

Common symptoms of influenza:

Fever as high as 101-103 degrees F

Headache

Cough mostly non-productive

Body aches

Fatigue

Sore throat

Some shortness of breath

May have runny or stuffy nose (less than with a cold)

Not uncommon for children to have nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

These symptoms come on abruptly. Fever may last 3-4 days. Body aches may be severe. Fatigue and weakness are usual. Sneezing may be present. Chest discomfort and/ or cough is not uncommon. You may have sneezing and a sore throat. Headache is common.

Who is at highest risk for influenza?

People who are 65 or older.

Adults with chronic medical conditions.

Pregnant women and children less than 5 years of age, especially children less than 2 years of age.

Influenza season begins in the fall and usually ends by March or April.

It is estimated that the US average death rate per year is between 12,000-61,000.

COLD

Common symptoms of common cold:

Runny or stuffy nose

Sneezing

Sore throat

Cough

Sinus congestion

Post nasal drainage

Low grade fever

SEASONAL ALLERGIES

Common symptoms of seasonal allergies:

Runny nose

Sneezing

Tickle in the back of the throat

Feeling "plugged up"

COVID 19

Common symptoms of COVID 19:

"Dry" cough

Fever and chills

Sore throat

Headache

Fatigue

Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing (major symptom)

Muscle or body aches

Loss or altered sense of taste or smell (unique to COVID-19)

Possible runny nose

Possible nausea, vomiting and diarrhea

Source: Dr. Frank Bures: Deciphering cold vs. COVID vs flu symptoms [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)

IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO GET YOUR INFLUENZA VACCINATION!!!!!!

Per capita

The per capita amount for \$39.68. This is the amount that our congregation pays for each member to support the wider church.

The past two years the Presbytery's Commission on Ministry and staff have been very, very helpful, helping us find a Transitional Pastor and preparing us to begin search for our next settled pastor.

Pastor Tom has received Transitional Pastor training through the Synod of Lakes and Prairies.

The nationwide denomination has been a huge help providing information and guidance to churches confronting the pandemic.

A lot of the work the wider church does is not obvious, but all of it is essential. And all of it is supported by your per capita donations. Paying per capita, in addition to your annual pledge, will be a huge help as we seek to have a balanced budget in 2021.

Faith Church COVID-19 Policy

Sunday, November 15, we stopped offering in-person worship because the COVID-19 infection rate exceeded 65 cases per 100,000 residents in Sarpy and Douglas Counties, for the prior week. Your Session adopted that figure as the trigger point to shut down church activities early in November. At this point, the plan is to begin offering in-person worship again when the infection rate in our two counties falls below 50 cases per 100,000 for two weeks. Session is using data from COVIDACTNOW.ORG to make these decisions. A visit to that site will show how dramatically COVID cases have increased since October.

If you have questions about the church COVID-19 policy, please contact the church office 402-331-6944.

Streaming Sunday Worship Service 10:00am

We will continue to broadcast the worship service on Facebook. If you do not have computer access, you may listen to the service by calling 1-844-855-4444 and entering access code 716966#.

If you would like to join Virtual Coffee Hour following the church service, the link is

[https://zoom.us/j/99782007363?
pwd=L042cGQza2tjVTZvSINOYk1xYIBLQT09](https://zoom.us/j/99782007363?pwd=L042cGQza2tjVTZvSINOYk1xYIBLQT09)

Your Session

Clerk of Session -	Joe Seda
Fellowship	Carolyn Ernst
Facilities	Rod Bosserdet
Mission & Ev	Lexie Stephenson
	Debbie Kippley
Discipleship	Peter Svoboda
Support	Marc Wagoner
	Chuck Shafer
Worship	Debbie Eggers
Human Res	Scott Jamieson

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