



# First Pres News monthly

## *A note from pastor...*

November is a month to turn our thoughts to gratitude. So, I would like to thank everyone for their kind words, cards and gifts for Pastor Appreciation Sunday. Thank you to the Session for the gift of an extra week of study leave. I am already compiling a list of books. I am extremely grateful for all the ways you have been supportive of my family and I since we have been with you here in Racine. We have a wonderful church family and great staff here. We have our challenges, but we have so much to be grateful for and much to look forward to. Thank you all again.

November this year is packed with liturgical happenings. We begin November 2<sup>nd</sup> with *All Saint's Sunday* and an opportunity to remember those who we have lost over the year and consider all those who have shaped our faith over the years. Our losses this year have been significant and there is no space here to detail all the ways we mourn and miss those who are with us now in spirit but not body.

November is also our stewardship season, when we express our gratitude for all that this community is for us and our community by making a pledge of support for the coming year. I will not spoil the coming stewardship letter by going into all the inspiring activity going on here at First but ask that we all prayerfully consider how we can support the mission of the church in the coming year.

Finally, November 30<sup>th</sup> is the *First Sunday of Advent*, and you can find some information about this year's theme inside the newsletter. I will only say here that the theme seems very timely, and I look forward to sharing it with you this Advent and Christmas Season.

Peace, Darren



Volume XI -  
November 2025

## *First Presbyterian Church*

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## *Music & Arts Initiative*

### **Collaborative Cookie Caper Kickoff**

Crescents, thumbprints, cutouts, crinkles. We're not talking geometry here; we're talking cookies! That's Candlelight Cookies. Available for purchase **ONLY** at the Choral Arts and Music & More Candlelight Concert on Saturday, December 6, at 7:00<sup>PM</sup>.

Join the First Presbyterian/OBUUC Collaborative Cookie Crew and BAKE. Make 6 or 12 dozen of your most beloved seasonal recipes. Email Pat Badger at: pbadger@prairieschool.com to sign up.

And, then, come to the concert, and enjoy beautiful music, graceful dance, and spoken words in a meditative candlelit setting. Leave with delicious homemade cookies. \$10 a box with all proceeds going to the Music & More Youth Scholarship Funds.





## Liturgists

- 2 Victoria V
- 9 Royce
- 16 Pam S.
- 23 Mary B
- 30 Steve B

## Poetry

30 Shelley

## Candlelighting

30 Steve & Mary

## Greeters

- 2 Bev E, Ginny H
- 9 Bud E, Vi S
- 16 MacCaugheys
- 23 Ritters

## Ushers

- 2 John, Linnea, Jeff
- 9 Larry, Alan
- 16 Ken S, Steve
- 23 Nancy
- 30 TBA

## Fellowship

- 2 Deb, Bev
- 9 John & Linnea
- 16 Jerry & Nancy
- 23 Dave & Ginny
- 30 Jen, Ken S



happy birthday

- 5<sup>th</sup> Sheila Lawrence  
Gloria Zember
  - 8<sup>th</sup> Theresa Revis
  - 10<sup>th</sup> Alan Galle
  - 13<sup>th</sup> Bev Eifert
  - 16<sup>th</sup> Elie Hunt
  - 17<sup>th</sup> Autumn Eifert
  - 19<sup>th</sup> Chris Hansen
  - 23<sup>rd</sup> Jen Seversen
  - 24<sup>th</sup> Harper Bohman
  - 25<sup>th</sup> Bill Gunderson
  - 29<sup>th</sup> Annli Nakayama
- 

# Candlelight

## CONCERT

A Music & More and Choral Arts Society collaboration

Saturday, December 6

7:00 p.m. • 716 College Avenue • Racine, WI

Performers: Mark Paffrath, Choral Arts Society, The Studio of Classical Dance Arts, and More!

Tickets: \$20 Adults • \$10 Students



Boxes of Homemade Christmas  
cookies for sale \$10/box

Music & MORE  
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Choral  
ARTS  
Society

FOR TICKETS: [choralartsonline.org](http://choralartsonline.org) | (262) 634-3250

This season is supported in part by a grant from the Racine Community Foundation, a grant from the Racine Arts Council's ArtSeed Grant Program funded by the Racine Arts Council and the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin, and a grant from the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin and the National Endowment for the Arts.



## Holy Mountain

I want to climb the holy mountain  
ascend over weight of stone  
and force of gravity, follow the  
rise of a wide and cracked earth  
toward eternal sky,  
measured steps across the sharp path,  
rest often to catch my heavy breath.  
I want to hear the silence of stone and stars,  
lie back on granite's steep rise  
face to silver sky's glittering points  
where I can taste the galaxies  
on my tongue, communion of fire,  
then stand on the summit and  
look out at the laboring world.  
I want to witness earth's slow turning  
with early light brushing over me,  
a hundred hues  
of grey, pink, gold,  
speckles of Jackson Pollock light,  
then ribbons of mist floating  
like white streamers of surrender.  
I want to look back down the trail  
as if over my past, forgive a thousand tiny and tremendous transgressions  
because now all that matters  
is how small I feel under the sky,  
even the sparrowhawk takes no notice of me,  
how enlarged I feel by knowing this smallness.  
I want to be like St. Patrick,  
climb the holy mountain full of  
promise and direction and knowing,  
forty days of fasting aloft among clouds  
until my body no longer hungers  
and something inside is satisfied  
and my restless heart says here,  
no longer dreaming of other peaks.



© Christine Valters Paintner

Paintner is an American poet and writer living in Galway, Ireland.  
She holds a Ph.D. in Christian spirituality and is the author of 22 books  
on spirituality, creative process, and contemplative practice.  
More at her website: [www.abbeyofhearts.com](http://www.abbeyofhearts.com)

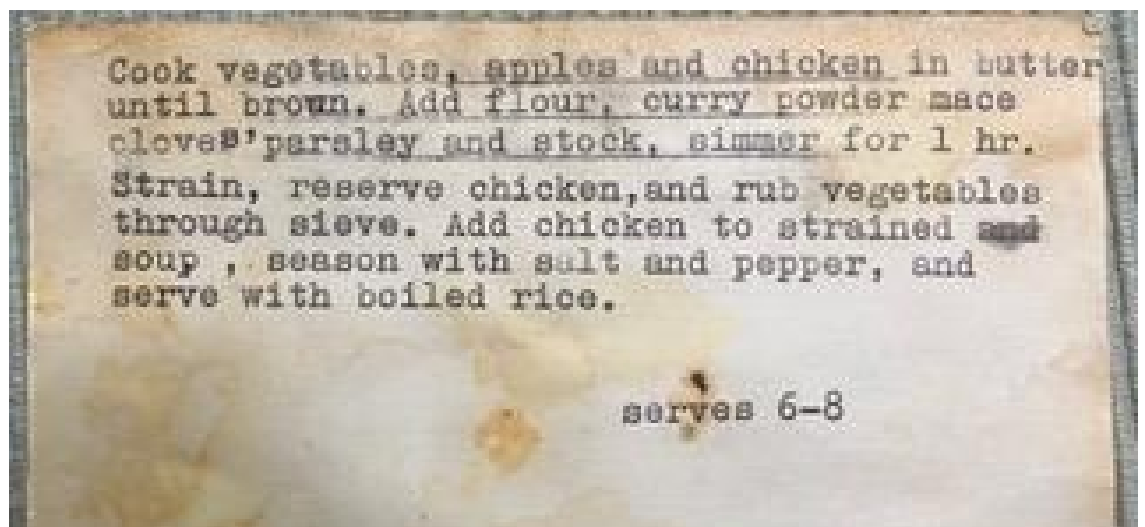
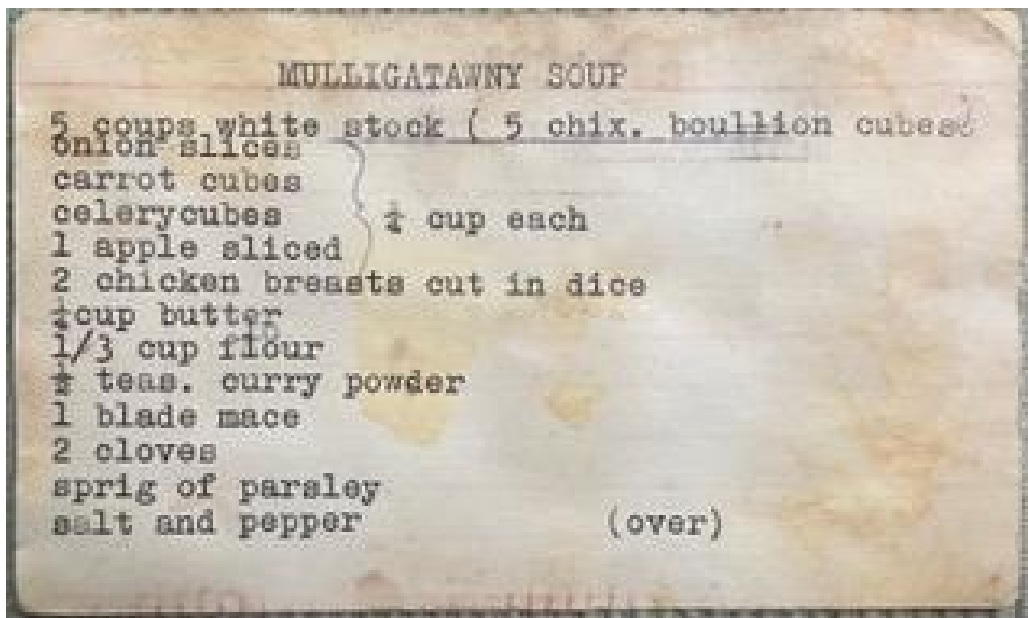


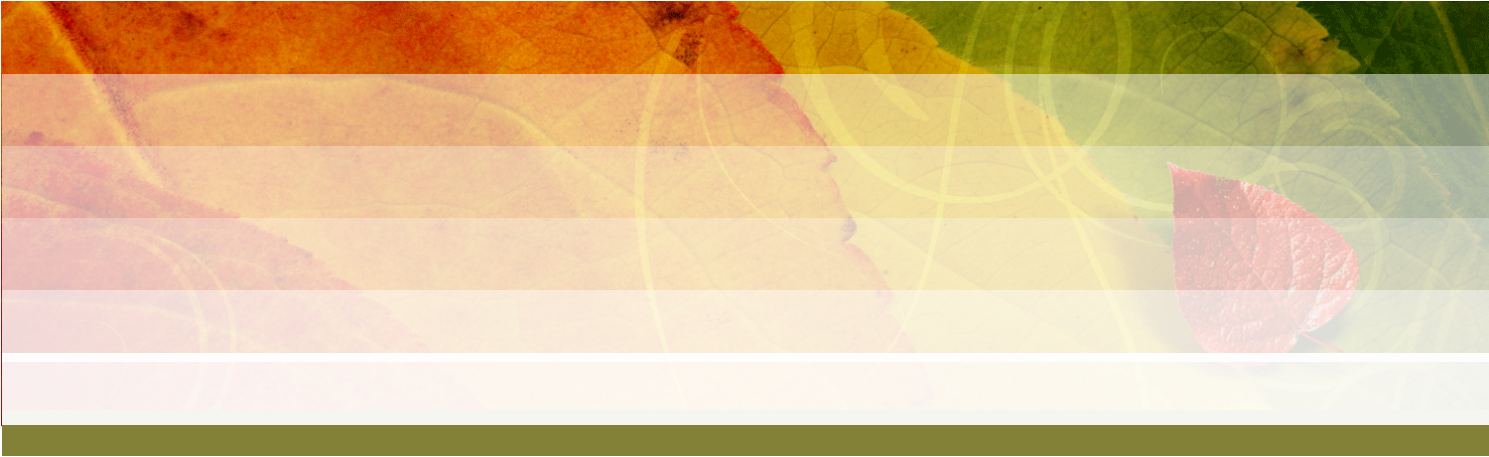
# "From the Recipe Archives"

## Mom's Mulligatawny Soup

This is a family favorite that my mom made often (as evidenced by the number of stains!). I have adapted the recipe over time: I puree the broth and vegetables instead of rubbing the vegetables through a sieve, and I use a lot more curry powder and have never added a blade of mace...I don't even know where I would find one. Enjoy!

Barbara Earnest  
(Mom -Dorothy Little)





## Mission Initiative & Deacons

LET'S HELP SPREAD SOME CHRISTMAS JOY!

This year we are collecting for two initiatives to help support the Children and Families of Julian Thomas Elementary School:

**Holiday Food Cards:** The deacons need help with cash/check donations for food cards. Rather than giving families an actual food basket, the selected recipient families will each receive a gift card for ALDI so they can purchase the food items that their family needs. All monetary donations that are given to Julian Thomas School will support this initiative. Donations in any amount are appreciated. Checks should be made payable to First Presbyterian and note JT Gift Card on the memo line. Or you can make a secure donation by visiting [firstpresracine.org/donate](https://firstpresracine.org/donate) and click on SECURE GIVING THRU PAYPAL. From the dropdown list, please select Julian Thomas Gift Card. Donations can be made through December 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Christmas Toy Drive:** We are also collecting toys, crafts and gift items for Julian Thomas School through December 7<sup>th</sup>. There is a decorated box in Ihrman Hall for the donations. Every year, the teachers and staff identify students whose families may be in distress and could benefit from having a brighter holiday. They then put together Santa Bags for all of the children in the selected families. Our target gift price range is \$10-\$30 per item.

With joy and gratitude,

Meg Daniels and Georgia Herrera on behalf of the Mission Initiatives Committee

Mary Bernstein and Ken Nakayama on behalf of the Deacons Committee

**Homecoming Sunday Apple Sale** to benefit the Food Pantry was a wonderful success! Macoun, Honey Crisp, Cortland: Which was your favorite?

Delicious fresh-picked apples from Ela Orchard were sold and consumed at our Homecoming Sunday gathering. Thanks so much to Deb Yale who took on the order-placing and pick up of the apples and to all of you who helped at the event and gave generously to the free-will offering. Thanks to your participation, we raised over \$700.00 to benefit the First Presbyterian Food Pantry!

Sun., Nov. 9<sup>th</sup>—Mission Initiatives Planning Meeting - 8:30<sup>AM</sup> in the Chapel. All are welcome!



## Sketcher Cards

It's almost Christmas card time again and I will be bringing my sketched cards to either pre-order what you would like or purchase "on the spot! I will be in Ihrman Hall after the service on Sunday, November 16th, December 7<sup>th</sup> and December 14<sup>th</sup>.

The cards are still 3 for \$10.00 and you can mix and match designs.  
Cash or Venmo accepted @Kathi-Wilson-20

Here are some designs to choose from:



### About the logo...

As we discussed our Advent theme and how hope and fear are interwoven in our lives, a vision emerged: hands gently cupped around candles at a vigil. When we gather at a vigil, fear is often present, weighing on us like a heavy fog. The candle in our hands can feel fragile, insignificant, the flame easily extinguished. But when we turn to our neighbors to spread the light, it multiplies, wrapping the whole community in warmth. The darkness is not eradicated; if anything, it further illuminates the flicker of the candles. In these vigil spaces, grief and fear dance with gratitude and hope. In these spaces, we find courage and unity. We are reminded that God is near. This vision captures our prayer for this Advent series: that it will illuminate both our hopes and our fears and remind us that God is near.

As we developed the branding, we thought that the image of a lantern could similarly hold these ideas together. Lanterns are often used to light the way as we gently step forward into unseen or unknown territory. The lantern, like hope, steadies our hands and eyes as we walk forward through the night. In the logo, a lantern contains the swirl of a flame—it's active and powerful, like the Holy Spirit, and like the hope that burns inside us. The candlelight cannot be contained, and so, like hope, it grows, emanating into our guiding question for the season, "What do you fear?" The branding photography captures the beauty of both dark and light by focusing on the patterned shadows cast from a lantern. From this ethereal space where our greatest fears greet our most palpable hopes, possibility emerges.

*A Sanctified Art, LLC*



## Cuba Update

On October 13, 2025 Pastors Ary and Beidy announced that they would be leaving our partnership church, Central Church in Matanzas Cuba to continue their work at the Evangelical Seminary in Matanzas. Luckily for Central Church in Matanzas the Seminary is just up the hill from the church, a short walk. In Summer of 2024, Pastor Ary assumed the role of Principal and Professor at the Seminary. All of the Cuba travelers from our church have stayed at the Seminary and walked down to Central Church to participate in activities.

Attached is the letter the Pastors wrote to the church family to explain their new roles.

Please keep Central Church in Matanzas in your prayers as we all know how important it is to embrace change and growth in our church families.

Matanzas, October 13th 2025

To: Partner churches of the Central Presbyterian-Reformed Church of Matanzas

“May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of our Lord Jesus”

II Pe 1:2

Dear siblings in Christ:

Through this letter, we greet you in the name of the Lord and inform you that as of yesterday, Sunday, October 12th, we are no longer the pastors of Central Church of Matanzas. After twelve and a half years of diligent ministry, during which gradual growth was experienced numerically, spiritually, and in community service in this beloved church, we have decided not to renew the pastoral contract.

After taking on important responsibilities at the Evangelical Theological Seminary (SET) since June 2024, Ary as Principal and Professor, and Beidy as Executive Assistant and professor, it has become increasingly evident to us that it is not possible to carry out work in both institutions with full dedication, as we wish to do. This decision has not been easy to make, but its purpose is to allow us to focus on the institutional development of the Seminary. SET is an essential part of the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba, and we consider this new opportunity to serve the church as part of our pastoral vocation, which we have always developed as a pastoral team.

You have been an important part of this journey that we, as pastors, have had, and we also want to thank you for all your support and especially for the love for this beloved church. It is our hope that the relationships we have built up to this point can continue to be strengthened in the future. We also hope that, with the new pastor that the church calls, relationships of respect and love between your churches can continue to be built.

We are copying this letter to Pastor Anays Noda Linares, who is the assigned pastor by Matanzas Presbytery until the church is able to make a new pastoral call. Please, we ask for your prayers for this new moment of our lives and ministries.

En el amor de Cristo

P.P. Ary Fernández Albán

P.P. Beidy Casas Aragón

c/c P.P. Anays Noda Linares