

The January FIRST FOCUS NEWSLETTER

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NORMAL | ISSUE #1 | 2024



A NOTE FROM SENIOR PASTOR *Matt Wilcox*

Come sailing with us! Over the course of 2023, the session of elders and pastors read and studied the book *Sailboat Church: Helping Your Church Rethink Its Mission and Practice* by Rev. Dr. Joan Gray. The insights and wisdom of the book sparked great conversation and curiosity among our leaders and we are thrilled to extend this conversation to our entire church family. The primary focus of Gray's book is that churches are at their best and most faithful when they are being moved and powered (sailing) by the wind of the Holy Spirit. While this might seem like an obvious observation, the truth is that many churches fall into the rhythm and practice of what Gray calls a "rowboat church" or a church that "believes and acts as if its progress depends on its own strength, wisdom, and resources. It's all about how hard, long, and well people are willing to row."

On Sunday, January 7th, we will begin a sermon series on the insights of *Sailboat Church* and the biblical principles at their heart. These will include *Rowing vs. Sailing*, *the Wind of the Spirit*, *the Voyage/Mission of the Church*, and more. We will also begin an adult study between services on the book that will be facilitated by our pastors, elders, and other leaders. Finally, we are thrilled to share that Rev. Dr. Joan Gray will be joining us on Sunday, February 11th, to close out both the adult study and our message series! We hope you will join us for worship and the study and especially plan to be with us when we welcome Joan to First Pres. We plan to have copies of the book available in the new year but they can also be found on Amazon and through other book retailers.

PER CAPITA FOR 2024

Every year we are encouraged to pay the "per capita" for each church member in our household. Per capita for 2024 is \$37.25 per member. The money goes toward expenses of Great Rivers Presbytery, the Synod of Lincoln Trails, and General Assembly. Your generosity helps to strengthen our local church budget. Please write checks to First Presbyterian Church, and mark for "Per Capita" on the memo line.



MISSIONS COMMITTEE: A NEW APPROACH

Have you ever heard of a Super Committee? No, it's not a committee that wears tights or leaps tall buildings. It is a new idea regarding the Missions Committee here at First Pres. The desire to faithfully serve God by loving our neighbor is deeply ingrained in the DNA of our church and always has been. The ways in which we do this faithful work have grown over the years, especially recently. The Missions Committee has identified three primary areas of focus for their work: mission partnerships, Matthew 25 initiatives, and affirmation and inclusion. Each of these areas is multi-faceted, deeply important, and far-reaching in its potential impact. All three also fall under the emphasis of mission work. So, the Missions Committee is excited to invite you to participate in the first Super Committee here at First Pres.

The committee meeting will be open to anyone who wishes to listen, learn, or participate in the areas of mission partnerships, Matthew 25 work, or affirmation and inclusion efforts. Everyone will gather together briefly for an opening devotion and general discussion items. Then, the Super Committee will separate into three smaller groups focused on conversation and planning surrounding either mission partnerships, Matthew 25 initiatives, or affirmation and inclusion efforts. If you have an interest or passion in any of these areas of our church ministry, you are invited to attend at any time, on any month. Formal Missions Committee membership is not a requirement or expectation. Be on the lookout for details concerning the date and timing of the meeting. If you have any questions about this new approach, please connect with Pastor Matt.



THE SALVATION ARMY

JANUARY CARE & SHARE DONATIONS

Items in BOLD = greatest need:

- **Peanut butter (16oz)**
- **Ramen**
- **Tuna**
- Canned chicken
- **Ready-to-eat canned meal** (Chunky soup, Progresso, etc.)
- **Canned tomatoes (sauce, diced, stewed, whole)**
- Corn muffin mix (Jiffy etc.)
- Stuffing mix
- Hamburger Helper
- Taco seasoning packets
- Macaroni & cheese
- **Instant oatmeal**
- **Shampoo (full size)**
- Body wash (full size)
- Toothpaste (full size)
- **Maxi pads (24ct-48ct)**
- **Tampons**

Join Pastor Matt at the

JOY LUNCH AT IMPERIAL BUFFET

Tuesday, Jan. 30th at 12pm. Please RSVP by Tue., Jan. 23rd.
For those age 60+



JOIN A SMALL GROUP AT FPC

If you are looking for a way to get more connected with others in our church, consider participating in one of our [small groups!](#) These unique gatherings are intended to help us grow in faith and share God's love, and they are often formed around a shared experience or interest. If you would like to join or lead a new or existing group, please contact [Pastor Karol, Associate Pastor of Discipleship.](#)

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

FIRST	LAST	BDAY	FIRST	LAST	BDAY	FIRST	LAST	BDAY
Fred	Lamkey	Jan 3	Jason	Han	Jan 14	Irene	DenBesten	Jan 25
Mary Kay	Stimpert	Jan 4	Leslie	Walker	Jan 15	Tom	Harms	Jan 26
Carolyn	Shoemaker	Jan 5	Seth	Lambert	Jan 17	Kurt	Benckendorf	Jan 26
Gloria	Kelley	Jan 7	Aprile	O'Keefe	Jan 17	Sheila	Smith	Jan 26
Mark	MacDonald	Jan 7	Carol	Kehl	Jan 19	Pat	Michaels	Jan 30
Liam	Walles	Jan 11	Jonah	Johnson	Jan 21	Bill	Bartley	Jan 30
Brad	Dulee	Jan 11	Stacy	Armstrong	Jan 22	Rory	Doss	Jan 31
Evan	Walles	Jan 12	Shawn	Homler	Jan 22	Taylor	Kern	Jan 31
Brent	Evenson	Jan 12	Kelsey	Kern	Jan 24	Lauren	Frederick	Jan 31
Hazel	Litwiller	Jan 13	Claire	Meyer	Jan 25			

If you would like to be added or removed from this list, please contact the church office at (309) 452-4459 or alunt@firstpresnormal.org.