



The LINK



A Monthly Publication of 1PC December 2023

Through Stained Glass: Advent Belonging

ad·vent (/ 'ad, vent/)

means: coming or arrival

mantra: "Come, Lord Jesus"

Advent begins on Sunday, December 3. We will remember we belong to hope, peace, joy, and love for four weeks. As Christians, Advent is the season we remember the story of the Divine Face of Love incarnating in the person Jesus of Nazareth.

Advent is about the incarnation. It is about redemption. It is about the Divine saying it is good to be human – to be made of the Earth. The Franciscans say the Incarnation was already the Redemption; that is to say, in Jesus of Nazareth, we see God's 'Yes' enfleshed.

Advent is about the Christ. Christ isn't Jesus' last name. Christ is God's love – the life force behind all that is and will be. Remember, when we speak of Advent or preparing for Christmas, we're not just talking about waiting for the baby Jesus to be born. That already happened 2,000 years ago. We're welcoming the Universal Christ, the Cosmic Christ, the Christ that is forever born in the human soul and history.

be·long (/bə' lôNG, bə' läNG/)

means: be a member or part of (a particular group, organization, or class)

mantra: In Christ, through Christ, with Christ – I, We, Belong

Everything belongs. All things have a place. We are a part of a great love story. The first revelation of the Creator's love – or the first incarnation – is creation itself. All of matter – the stuff of stars – is the hiding place for the Spirit. Thus, it is the Body of God.

Since the very beginning of time, God's Spirit has revealed its glory and goodness through the physical creation. We are waiting and preparing, creating room and opening our hearts to the arrival of Love. Once in the infant Jesus, now in the oneness we share with God.

The second incarnation – the presence of God poured into the person of Jesus – came from the first. If everything belongs to God, then Jesus didn't come *into* the world, but Jesus came *out* of an already Christ-soaked world. The One for whom we wait revealed to us a oneness, an intimacy with God that draws us into the fullness of communion and connection.

Advent is about belonging. The stories we read during this season reveal to us the longing of God – to be in relationship with Their creation. Advent pulls back the curtain on the myth that God is absent from the world. Into this world, the Christ is birthed again and again – whenever there is justice and wherever peace occurs. We participate in this birthing – we are the midwives of another world being possible – where every creature knows of their belonging!

In Advent, we hear the good news that Christ is born. Not just then but now. In the Incarnation, everything belongs. Everything is connected. Advent is a season we remember we aren't apart from God but are a part of the divine Body of Christ. Thus, not all is lost – there is hope. Peace is found in the path of descension, a letting go to allow God in. At that place, the threshold of our going and God's coming is where we find our joy. And all of it – everything – belongs.

See you at the Kirk House and in Town! A

MINISTRY OF THE HANDS

Co-Chairs: Cathy Maciariello & Kelli Owens, Paul Kasa, Rob Harmon, Becca Brant, Ashley Ried, Zack Embery, Ken Schweitzer, and Cheri Aper



The Ministry of the Hands

Co-Chairs: Kelli Owens & Cathy Maciariello

All of us on the Ministry of the Hands team would like to thank members of the congregation for their support, presence and contributions to help further our mission of service to the community in 2023. It has been a busy year, and we are blessed and grateful for the opportunity to do our work. **We wish you and your families an Advent and Christmas season full of hope, joy, peace, and love.**

In November, we voted to make the following contributions to our community partners: \$500 to Kemmerer Village to purchase gift cards for residents; \$1,000 to the Logan County Food Pantry; and \$1,000 to the Central Illinois Veterans Commission for the Regional Supportive Housing Project at the former St. Clara's facility. We also committed to purchasing additional snacks for the Center for Creativity and Community which now has attendance of between 20 and 25 students on Tuesdays and Thursdays. We would like to highlight the impact the Center has had on these students—and on the adults who help each day. This is exactly what we mean when we say that we want our missional work to be relational! The success of the Center means we need more adult help, and our team encourages you to join us—just talk to Adam if you are available. This is truly meaningful community work and individually rewarding for students and volunteers.

The year is not over, and December is busy, too. We are once again collecting donations for Kemmerer Village gift cards. Checks should be made to Debbie Schweitzer and given to her before December 2. The annual *Holiday Shopping Project* for children at Head Start and Christian Child Care will take place on December 12. This year, we have 95 children! A total of 67 children from Head Start will come to shop; we will also prepare gift bags for them and for 28 children at Christian Child Care. We need lots of volunteers for this project, and there is a sign-up sheet in the Parlor. This is a really fun day full of joy and laughter.

Looking ahead to 2024, our team will focus on expanding the visibility of our critical community partners. We will be highlighting an organization monthly in the Link, producing bulletin inserts, inviting representatives to speak to us, posting their stories on our Facebook page and/or reposting their announcements, among other possibilities. In addition to community partners, we would also highlight the *Summer Food Program*, *Food for Thought* and other projects the church undertakes. Watch for more information about this in 2024 Links.

MINISTRY OF THE RESOURCES

Team members: Mel Anderson, Bob Chamberlain, Cathy Tiffany, Rob Harmon, (Co-Chair) Keith Leesman (Co-Chair), Adam Quine

The Ministry of the Resource team spent November preparing the 2024 budget. The team is thankful for all of you who made a pledge for next year.

Another exciting highlight from the Resource Team is the hiring of our new Administrative Assistant, Lindy Manuel.

Lindy Manuel is joining the staff of 1PC as the Administrative Assistant. Lindy has been married to Jeff for almost 20 years. They have 3 children, Lillian (17), Ryne (15), and Maggie (11) and a pet hedgehog named Fable. Lindy grew up in Lincoln and is the daughter of Jon and Jane Diers. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Graphic Communication from Western Illinois University, a Master of Science in Project Management and Training & Development from Illinois State University and is working on her Doctorate of Technology in Technology Innovation and Leadership from Purdue University. She is an avid fan of the Green Bay Packers and St Louis Cardinals. Currently, most of her time is spent at her kid's activities or studying but she loves to travel, be creative with crafts, and spend time with friends and family. Lindy will be in the church office Monday and Friday 8:00 am -4:30 pm and Wednesday 4:30 pm - 7:00 pm.



MINISTRY OF THE HEART

“Celebrations of the Heart “

Co-Chairs: Brittney Cosby and Beth Green

Saturday Dec. 2 Want to help? Sometime between 9-12 a.m. please join us to decorate the sanctuary for Advent and drop off nativity sets/displays.

Church Family Christmas Gathering Sunday, December 3, 2023. We hope you keep Sunday afternoon, December 3 open to stop by the church between 2 and 4 pm. Our Advent journey will begin by together viewing the various Nativity scenes and reading the shared stories of family, friendship, and love related to each scene. We have a wonderful array to enjoy – all different and telling of the birth of our blessed Savior. There also will be Christmas goodies to enjoy as we gather as a church family. Come and join us. We hope to see you there!

Poinsettias

If you wish to purchase a poinsettia for the Advent and Christmas seasons, a signup sheet is in the parlor.

Caroling, Caroling, Now We Go

Church Caroling after worship Dec. 17th. All members are invited to gather with carolers at the Brants homestead after caroling from 11:15-12-30 p.m. or so.

Thursday, Dec. 21st - 7 p.m. – The Longest Night: A Blue Christmas Service

Advent is a season of peace, hope, joy, and love. However, this time of year is full of grief, loneliness, fear, and sadness for some individuals and families. The Longest Night service, sometimes called “A Blue Christmas” service, offers a space for anyone struggling to find joy during the holiday season. Although loss and pain seem out of place as we celebrate the birth of Jesus, it is very much a part of the Christmas season. Amid the hustle and bustle, bright lights, and the merry cheer, we grieve many losses: our loved ones, financial security, physical safety, and so much more. This service creates space for us to honor this grief, a place to sit in our pain even as the joy of Christmas resounds. We are excited that Kathy Swaar will provide the meditation for this year’s service. Our time together will include prayers, psalms, hymns, and a ritual that allows us to bless any person or group experiencing the need for heart, body, mind, or soul.

All are welcome.

This event will be held on [Thursday, December 21st at 7:00 p.m.](#) in the parlor at First Presbyterian Church.

Kirk Night in December

We will continue our journey through Philippians while incorporating Advent elements into our time together. Our last Kirk Night for 2023 will be Wednesday, December 13. Look for information about Youth Sponsors and meal sign-ups in the bulletin and emails.

Highlights from the November Session Meeting

The Session met on November 14 with all eight members present.

The projected 2024 budget presented by the Ministry of Resources included expenses that exceeded income. Session spent considerable time examining the proposed budget and seeking to balance it. The Session could not close the gap despite reducing approximately 75% of the difference between expenses and revenue. Therefore, the Session could not adopt a budget for 2024 at the meeting. The Ministry of Resources will continue to seek a balanced budget, and Session expects to meet again in December to consider the issue. The Session approved a motion from the Ministry of Resources to hire Lindy Manuel to fill the position of Administrative Assistant effective Nov. 27, contingent on her passing the required background checks.

A Note from the Clerk of Session: Called Congregational Meeting

The Session of First Presbyterian Church is calling a congregational meeting for **Sunday, December 17, 2023**, for the purpose of electing the new class of Ruling Elders, Deacons, and the Nominating Committee for 2024.

DEC2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						01 02 9 am – 12 pm Advent & Xmas set up
03 10 am Worship 11 am Deacons 2 pm IPC Family Xmas	04	05	06 6:15 pm Kirk Night	07 9:30 am Ministry of Resource meeting 3 pm The Center	08 2 pm LMH Bereavement Group	09
10 10 am Worship	11 Head Start Shopping 3 pm The Center 6 pm Session	12	13 6:15 pm Kirk Night	14 3 pm The Center	15	16
17 10 am worship 11 am congregational meeting 11:30 Caroling 12:30 Open House @ the Brants	18	19	20 No Kirk Night	21 7 pm The Longest Night: A Blue Xmas service	22	23
24 10 am Worship 6 pm Christmas Eve Service	25 Merry Christmas!	26	27 No Kirk Night	28	29	30
31 10 am Worship	Lincoln / Logan County Food Pantry Donation for December: Dish Soap					

December Worship Notes
Ruling Elder in Charge: Rob Harmon
Deacon in Charge: Ken Schweitzer

Sunday, December 3, 2023: The First Sunday of Advent

Scripture Lessons: Isaiah 64.1-9 & Mark 13.24-37

Sermon Title: We Belong to Hope

Preacher: The Rev. Dr. Adam R. Quine

Worship Assistant: Karen Sams-Davis

Communion will be by intinction.

Sunday, December 10, 2023: The Second Sunday of Advent

Scripture Lessons: Isaiah 40.1-11 & Mark 1.1-8

Sermon Title: We Belong to Peace

Preacher: The Rev. Dr. Adam R. Quine

Worship Assistant: Ashley Ried

Communion will be by intinction.

Sunday, December 17, 2023: The Third Sunday of Advent

Scripture Lesson: Isaiah 61. 1-4, 8-11 & John 1. 6-8, 19-28

Sermon Title: We Belong to Joy

Preacher: The Rev. Dr. Adam R. Quine

Worship Assistant: Debbie Schweitzer

Communion is by intinction. The third Sunday in December is Gaudete Sunday or Rose Sunday. We pause from our contemplation and celebrate the good news of the Christ born unto us. Please wear pink!

Sunday, December 24, 2023: The Fourth Sunday of Advent

Scripture Lesson: 2 Samuel 7. 1-11, 16 & Luke 1. 26-38

Sermon Title: We Belong to Love

Preacher: The Rev. Dr. Adam R. Quine

Worship Assistant: Cathy Maciariello

Communion is by intinction.

Sunday, December 24, 2023: The Nativity of the Christ

Scripture Lesson: Isaiah 9.2-7 & Luke 2.1-20

Sermon Title: The Gift of Belonging

Preacher: The Rev. Dr. Adam R. Quine

Worship Assistant:

Tonight at 6:00 p.m. is the annual Christmas Eve candlelight service. Communion will be by intinction.

Sunday, December 31, 2023: The First Sunday of Christmas

Scripture Lessons: Multiple Lessons

Sermon Title: Belonging in Song and Story

Preacher: The Rev. Dr. Adam R. Quine & The Congregation of 1PC

Worship Assistant:

Today's worship service will be in the church parlor. While drinking warm beverages and snacking on breakfast foods, we will share stories and sing songs of Christmas.

December Birthdays

4 Ellen Dobihal

5 Abby Olson

8 Chet Lord-Remmert

9 Ashley Ried

12 Bob Green

15 Keith Leesman

15 Les Plotner

17 Logan Brant

18 Jackson Ahart

December Anniversaries

27 Andy and Becca Brant