

NOVEMBER 2025

Newsletter

“What shall I return to the Lord for all His bounty to me?” (Psalm 116:12)

Dear Church Family,

This is a fitting question for those of us who claim to be “Rooted in Jesus, Growing in His Love and Branching Out to Serve Others.” Before the Psalmist asks the question in verse 12, we discover God heard his cry for healing and deliverance. The Psalmist describes the Lord as One who listens and protects; is gracious and merciful.

We don’t know many other details about his life circumstances: how bad it got (although it sounds like it was bad), what the struggle was which he was delivered from or how, in fact, God healed him. But do we really need to know the Psalmist’s story? What about our stories?

How has God blessed you and me? How has God rescued and healed us? In Jesus Christ, how has God delivered and protected us . . . even **“saved our lives”** (Psalm 116:4)?

Going through “Gentle and Lowly” this Fall has made me increasingly aware of how gracious God has been and continues to be. Are you becoming more aware of this too? Are you and I growing in our awareness of God’s goodness and grace – not only in and through Jesus but also in countless other ways. Would you describe God’s provision with the word **“bounty”**?

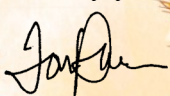
Depending on who we compare ourselves to or how we define **“bounty,”** we may not be planning to give thanks at all. We might be seeing scarcity more than abundance. We might not be asking what we can “return to the Lord.” But let’s not get caught up in the comparison game or only look at material possessions as evidence of God’s provision and protection.

Like the Psalmist, let’s discipline ourselves to look at our lives with honesty and gratitude. Let’s remember we serve a God who answers when we cry out to Him. And let’s remember that the Father gave His One and Only Son – who also sent His Spirit to live in us. What more could we be given? What more could we “even ask for or imagine”? (see Ephesians 3:20) And how, in light of God’s incredible generosity, might we ultimately answer the question above?

May you and I join the Psalmist in his answer: **“I will offer You a thanksgiving sacrifice and call on the name of the Lord.”** (Psalm 116:17) Whatever that looks like for each of us, may you and I find ways to, like Jesus, sacrifice our time, talent and treasure to the God who is worthy of our thanks and praise. And, who knows? We might end up being used by God to be His conduit in providing someone else’s **“bounty”**? And, who knows? That person may **“call on the name of the Lord.”**

Happy Thanksgiving!

Faithfully yours,





Congregational Meeting



Our elders have called a **Congregational Meeting for the purpose of electing new elders and deacons** - as well as those returning to serve a second three-year term. The meeting will be on Sunday, November 16 - after the 11 am service. New and Returning Elders include: Janie Duffy, Bill Rash, Betty Rosenwald, Chad Finnigsmier, John Stead and, Bruce Kronkright. New and Returning Deacons include: John Young, Janet Brink and Sara Lozada.



Joy Offering and Local Joy Offering



As we have been doing for several years, we will be taking a **Christmas Joy offering at the Christmas Eve services**. The offering will be for either the PCUSA Joy Offering or our local mission organizations. If you use the Joy Offering envelope, it will go to the PC(USA) Joy Offering. If you choose to support our local mission organizations, make your check out to FPC with "local mission support" on the memo line. Further information about the Joy Offering will be in the December newsletter.



Women's Ministry



Women of the church, on November 16 from 12:15 - 2:30 come and enjoy lunch and craft time! We will be making different ornaments and fun Christmas crafts to enjoy this holiday season. You only need to bring yourself; we will have food and all the supplies. Please sign up in the Lobby or outside the MPR to be sure we have enough food and supplies. Contact Chris at the front office or office@firstpresgj.org with any questions!



Operation Christmas Child

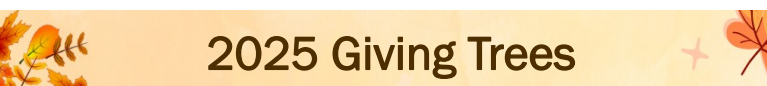


Shoeboxes for Samaritan's Purse **Operation Christmas Child** are due back at the church **Sunday, Nov 16**. Please bring them to the church during the week or on Sunday morning. There is still time to go online as well and build a shoebox at: **samaritanspurse.org/operation-christmas-child/buildonline**. If you don't want to go online or shop in person, you can help by writing a check to First Presbyterian Church with Operation Christmas Child on the memo line. We know that which-ever way you decide to contribute to the shoebox event some child will benefit. Through Operation Christmas Child, Samaritan's Purse has established church networks in over 100 countries to empower pastors, train teachers, supply Bibles, and prepare the way for those who preach the Gospel. Children often invite their parents to attend the churches where they received their shoeboxes. Many struggling families and broken marriages have been restored as mothers and fathers discover how deeply Jesus loves them. Samaritan's Purse developed The Greatest Journey, a 12-lesson Bible study, especially for children who receive shoebox gifts. They teach them how to live for Jesus and share their faith, multiplying the Gospel among their family and friends. Every gift-filled shoebox is a powerful tool for evangelism and discipleship – transforming the lives of children and their families around the world through the Good News of Jesus Christ. This year, more than any other year, Samaritan's Purse needs our help.



Poinsettias

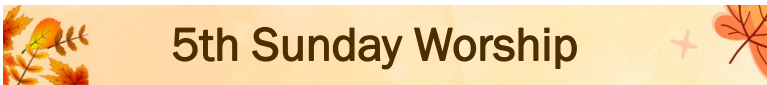
Poinsettias may be purchased at either sign-up location starting **Sunday, November 2** through **Sunday, December 14**. The cost is \$25. You may designate whom you would like to honor or memorialize with your purchase. The poinsettias will be displayed in the Sanctuary and the Multi-Purpose Room throughout the season and will be available to take home after the 4:30 pm and 6:00 pm Christmas Eve services (or they can be donated to our shut-ins).



2025 Giving Trees

This year we are working with the Salvation Army to bring Christmas cheer to children in the Grand Valley. Gift tags will be on the **Salvation Army Giving Tree** on Sunday, Nov. 30. Please choose a tag and record your name and telephone number next to the appropriate number in the books near the tree. Should you decide to give a gift certificate (i.e. Walmart, Target) rather than purchase a gift, please give the certificate with the gift tag to Debe Colby. The **UNWRAPPED** gifts should be returned by Sunday, December 14. Please attach the tag to the gift.

We will also be doing the nursing home give tree with four nursing homes participating. The gift tags will be on the **Nursing Home Giving Tree** on Sunday, Nov. 30. Please choose a tag and record your name and phone number next to the appropriate number in the nursing home books near the tree. **WRAPPED** gifts should be returned by Sunday, December 14. Please attach the tag to the gift. Questions, please contact Debe Colby at outreach@firstpresgj.org or 970-242-1923.

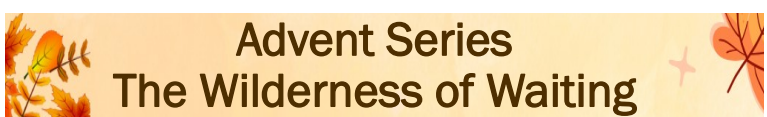


5th Sunday Worship

Sunday, November 30

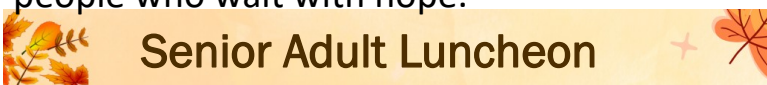
9:00 & 11:00 am - Sanctuary

We've recently introduced a new tradition for months with five Sundays: gathering for two services at 9:00 am and 11:00 am, rotating between the Sanctuary and MPR. These special Sundays create space for us to come together, deepen our faith, and build meaningful connections across our church family that might not happen otherwise. November brings another 5th Sunday, and this time, it is also the first Sunday of Advent. We invite you to join us on **Sunday, November 30**, as we worship at **9:00 & 11:00 am in the Sanctuary**, entering a season of waiting and hope together.



Advent Series The Wilderness of Waiting

This coming Advent, our worship and teaching will center on the theme of Waiting—honoring both the anticipation of Jesus' first arrival and the faithful longing for His return. Each week we will explore moments of waiting from Zechariah and Elizabeth's long-awaited hope, to Mary and Joseph's quiet trust, to Simeon's patient expectation for the "consolation of Israel". This series will invite us to reflect on how waiting is woven into the story of Christ's coming and how we too, are called to be people who wait with hope.



Senior Adult Luncheon

Join us Monday, November 10 at 11:30 am in Fellowship Hall for the next luncheon. Sherry Verdick will be speaking about Blue Star Mothers and Patriot Guard Riders, and we will honor our veterans. A turkey dinner is provided, please bring a dish to share.



Light Born of Light Christmas Festival 2025

Saturday, December 6

3:00 & 5:00 pm - Sanctuary

Join us for a joyful celebration of the season at First Presbyterian Church on **Saturday, December 6** at **3:00 pm** or **5:00 pm** as we present “Light Born of Light” — a festival of music and worship proclaiming the wonder of Christ’s birth. Featuring the Chancel Choir, Handbell Choir, Orchestra, and Congregation, this uplifting program will fill your heart with the beauty and hope of Christmas. Arrive early to secure a seat and enjoy the music. Bring family and friends as we lift our voices in celebration of the Light that shines in the darkness!



Blue Christmas Service

Sunday, December 14

3:00 pm - Multi Purpose Room (MPR)

For many, the Christmas season carries grief, loneliness, or quiet pain. Our Blue Christmas service offers a gentle, contemplative space to acknowledge those feelings together. Through candles, music, silence, and prayer, we’ll remember the One who shares our burdens and brings light into darkness. Whether you come seeking comfort or simply to hold space for others, all are welcome. Come alone or invite a friend—this is a time for the church to be present for one another.



Caroling & Chili Cook-Off

It’s time for our annual **Caroling and Chili Cook-Off Party!** Caroling will begin at 4 pm on Sunday, December 7. Then at 6 pm, the chili cook-off kicks off! Warm up your voice and fire up your best chili recipe and come join the fun! Prizes will be awarded in a variety of categories. Sign up at the Info Desk and come join us for a great time of fun and fellowship!



Christmas Eve Services

Wednesday, December 24

We invite you to join us for one of our Christmas Eve services as we celebrate the birth of our Savior together. Please note that things will look a little different this year—services will be slightly shorter, and the Children’s Program will run concurrently with a Traditional service.

Service Times:

- ◆ 3:00 PM – Traditional Christmas Eve Service in the Sanctuary
- ◆ 3:30 PM – Children’s Program (held during the 3:00 service) in the MPR
- ◆ 4:30 PM – Traditional Christmas Eve Service in the Sanctuary
- ◆ 6:00 PM – Contemporary Christmas Eve Service in the MPR

We’ll gather to hear the timeless story of Christ’s birth, sing beloved carols, and remember that the story of Jesus’ birth invites us not only to celebrate His arrival, but to enter into the waiting and expectation of His coming again.