

Presbyterian News

First Presbyterian Church of Paw Paw, Michigan

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Dec 2022



Greetings Friends in Christ

The season of Advent is meant to be a time of waiting, watching, and preparation — a time of anticipation! It is meant to be a spiritual journey while together we prepare for Christ's birth and allow Christ to become that much more significant in our lives.

The challenge of course is to find the time to reflect, to observe, and to listen to God's movement in our lives within a season that is packed with busy activities and the commercialism of Christmas. So, I have a few questions for you: How will this season of Advent shape your life and that of your family? How does the story of the birth of Christ shape your life? How might God be calling you to journey differently through Advent this year, making space and time for the Spirit's movement?

So in light of these questions, I invite you to make the effort to join us in worship in our Advent Journey in December to the manger on Sunday mornings as we light the Advent Wreath and praise God with seasonal music. We will also have a Silent Night Service which will be a time for contemplation, centering, and prayer in the midst of this busy season. Then please join us on Christmas Eve as we celebrate together in the sanctuary with the Christmas story and wonderful music. There will also be devotional materials at church and on Facebook for you to dig deeper.

I also encourage you to invite a friend or two to join you in these various worship opportunities. This is a special time of year: people are looking for connections with others and with God. We all seek and need a sense of holiness, especially in light of what we have all been through during the pandemic.

(Continued)

Advent/Christmas Worship & Gathering Opportunities:

- 1st Sunday of Advent, Nov. 27, 10am
- Thurs. Dec 1, 7pm, C.S. Lewis Movie
- 2nd Sunday of Advent, Dec. 4, 10am
 - Holiday Happenings & Crafts, 1-3pm
- Thurs. Dec 8, 5:30-7pm, Dinner with Friends
- 3rd Sunday of Advent with the Choir, Dec 11, 10am
- Silent Night Service, Wed Dec 14, 6pm
- 4th Sunday of Advent Dec 18, 10am
 - Caroling, 4pm
- Christmas Eve Worship, Sat., Dec. 24, 7pm
- Sunday Worship Christmas Day, Dec. 25, 10am



Oh, and look for opportunities, yes as adults too, to have some creative fun coloring Advent posters that will be around the church.

It is my prayer and hope this year that we will journey together during Advent, and listen to how God is calling and speaking to us as individuals, families, and as a community of faith. May we watch and prepare to be changed by God's vulnerability of coming into the world through a baby, one who shared our humanity, one who grew and lived into his faith sacrificing his life for all, and one who now shows us the way to new life and rebirth!

In Christ's light and love,

Gail

Rev Gail Monsma

Cell: 269-275-6998

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Holiday Happenings & Crafts



Community Christmas Crafts Day, Sunday December 4th 1-3pm in Fellowship Hall! The Mission and Formation Committee is sponsoring crafts for children and families of all ages to make and take home.

Dinner with Friends and *Trunk or Treat* brought out many community members, so we want to offer an activity in the Advent Season for children.

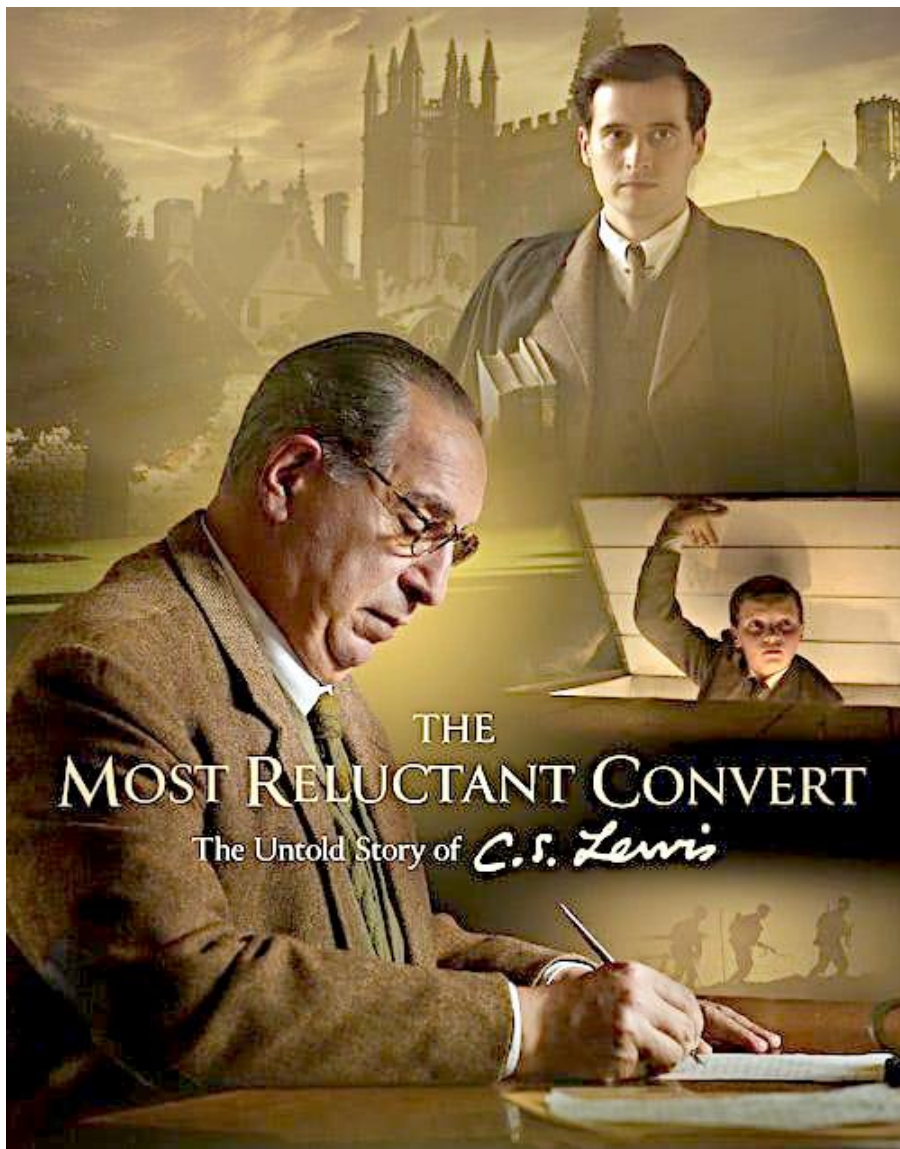
Volunteers are needed for this project. All crafts have been planned, but we need people who can guide the children through these activities.

Supplies that are needed:

small to medium white and blue buttons,
narrow Christmas ribbon,
leftovers from Christmas Crafts,
flat sided "gems",
unwanted Christmas decorations we can cut apart
T.P. and paper towel cardboard rolls

There will be a box in the Narthex for donations. Questions? Contact Nancy Turk, Kathy Vought, Eleda Zygadlo or Pat Conner.

Let's get together and have a great craft day!



Please join us on December 1st at 7:00 as we explore the amazing faith journey of C S Lewis. After watching the movie, and enjoying our popcorn bar, Rev Gail Monsma will lead us in discussion.

The Most Reluctant Convert movie is based on a stage play. Like Ebenezer Scrooge traveling back in time to see his early life, the middle-aged Lewis (played by McLean) travels back in time to his childhood, teen, and young adult years, where he walks the same streets and visits the same houses and classrooms of his younger self. **The Most Reluctant Convert** is an inspiring tale about an atheist who was consumed by intellect and became the greatest defender of the faith of the 21st century.

The Most Reluctant Convert features award-winning actor Max McLean as the older Lewis and Nicholas Ralph — breakout star of PBS Masterpiece's *All Creatures Great and Small* — as young Lewis. Beautifully filmed in and around Oxford this engaging biopic follows the creator of *The Chronicles of Narnia* from the tragic death of his mother when he was just nine years old, through his

strained relationship with his father, to the nightmare of the trenches of World War I to Oxford University, where friends like J.R.R. Tolkien challenge his unbelief.

Written for the screen and directed by two-time Emmy and BAFTA winner Norman Stone (BBC's *Shadowlands*), **The Most Reluctant Convert** brings to life the spiritual evolution of one the 20th century's sharpest minds and keenest wits.

Save the date! December 1st at 7:00 pm in Fellowship Hall we watch **The Most Reluctant Convert** together followed by a group discussion. Join us.



Join us December 18th, Sunday afternoon at 4:00pm to go Christmas caroling. We plan to go to about 12 homes, led by Brandon and his guitar. Afterwards we'll come back to fellowship hall for some chili. Please join us. You don't need to be able to carry a tune, just 🎵 sing!!! Contact Pat Peters for more information.

Poinsettia orders cost \$10 and are due by Dec 4 2022. Forms are available at church, through Marge McKee, or call 269-657-3111.

Stewardship Thoughts

The year has flown by, even though there were sometimes we felt as if it would never end. And now, here we are at the end of 2022 immersed in our Stewardship drive for 2023.

I'll admit that I have never served on a stewardship committee because I thought it was a money ask, and it also seemed like the single most boring thing I could ever do. This year as the Administration commission began to talk about Stewardship there were no raised hands when asked who would like to serve on the committee. Finally, Mary Ellen said she would do it again, after having chaired the committee five years in a row. That just offended my sense of what's right, and I said I would take it on. And I am so glad I did.

Stewardship is not dull, monotonous, or a "money" ask. Being on this committee has certainly not been boring, but very educational. Having this time at a table surrounded by really smart people is invigorating and hearing the stories of their faith journeys makes me realize that by being stewards of this church and all its programs is not really even a "money" ask, but a commitment we make to God to honor his promise to us to prosper us, and not harm us, give us hope and a future.

Stewardship is an every day promise that can be achieved by commitments of time, talents and tithes. It is not something that ends on Dec 18th with the dedication of pledges, but a commitment we make to be stewards of our church home and each other 365 days a year.

The most common question about stewardship seems to be "how much should I pledge". I believe the best answer to this was written by C.S. Lewis who said,

"I do not believe one can settle how much we ought to give. I am afraid the only safe rule is to give more than we can spare."

Wendy Mickle



Some Highlights of 2022

I can hardly believe that I'm already going into my sixth month with you. Please know that I love serving as your Interim Pastor and getting to know all of you. And I'm totally blown away by what you accomplished this past year as you moved forward in faith and service. Take a look at the following highlights — Wow! Just wow!

2022 accomplishments and ministries — just some of them

- Worship and Sunday morning Bible study restarted
- Sunflower sale throughout the community brought in \$2897.00 and paid for 9,000 meals in Ukraine through World Kitchen
- Started monthly Dinner with Friends Community with funding from the community, in November we feed over 77 people including some families
- AA (Alcoholic Anonymous) and NA (Narcotics Anonymous) continues to use our building for weekly meetings and special gatherings
- Sleepy Hollow Boys bluegrass band sang twice during worship
- Our new Interim Pastor began in June
- Our new bookkeeper began in November
- Successful Trunk or Treat event serving over 60 children from throughout the community
- Pub Theology monthly meetings to talk about God issues in our lives
- Blessing of the Animals Sunday worship included the local Canine Patrol
- Choir restarted
- QPR (Question Persuade Refer) suicide prevention for 10-24 yr olds for church members and the community
- Magnify the Light during Advent served area families
- Montagne de Luz in Honduras: we raised over \$800 in support
- Kindness Campaign with a Book, Calendar and author
- Earth Day, we distributed trees of kindness for planting
- United Christian Services: our partnership and support continues for local missions
- Wings of God: our involvement continues in addressing new beginnings for women
- Necessity Bags for folks moving into the motel after prison stays
- Gift from the Heart (Hurricane Ian) PCUSA support for emergency kits
- Crop Walk: we walked to work against local and world hunger
- Scholarships for the Department of Health and Human Services Kids Camp Program
- 4 PCUSA-Denominational Special offerings

I'm so excited to see what 2023 brings! In Christ's love, Rev Gail Monsma (Gail)

Every Sunday 10am Livestream

youtube.com/@1stprespawpaw

The Gift

It's that time of year again – lots of hustle and bustle, living in the comfort of our holiday traditions, and searching high and low for the perfect gifts. But in our organized chaos have you ever thought of the dictionary definition of a gift? It is a notable capacity, talent or endowment; something voluntarily transferred by one person or persons to others without compensation; the right or power of giving.



We here at 120 Pine receive gifts all year long. In the winter we enjoy the gift of walks being cleared of snow and then salted to prevent falls. Plus we have a warm and toasty church within which to worship. When Spring arrives we are treated to protection from the rains and maintenance of our beds of flourishing plants. In the summer we not only worship in air-conditioned comfort but come on Sundays to find newly mowed grass. The Fall brings us walking spaces without leaves, and the beginning of winter maintenance. Besides these seasonal duties, there are cables to coddle, lights to be lit, roofs to be repaired, appliances to align, and an infinite array of items to be installed.

These gifts are given to us freely and with a good-natured countenance by the **Building and Grounds Commission**. The current commission has been raised in attitude and training by the many wonderful members who have come before them. They should all be thanked for their selfless devotion to the congregation and our home at 120 Pine. So, if you happen to see these guys (Jerry Dundon, Bert Ogden, Bill Welling, Dave Wilder, Tom Shoemaker, Dick Schallhorn) please thank them for their services in providing us with year-round gifts. Having so many bosses can't be easy!!

Pat Peters

You Can Make a Difference!

Those who attended the QPR Training on November 16th learned how to offer hope through their positive actions.



Tracy Fay
MA, LLP, CAADC

QPR, Question, Persuade, Refer, was led by Tracey Fay of Van Buren Community Mental Health. Tracey guided us by teaching the difference between suicide myths and facts and encouraging us to learn the serious clues and warning signs of suicide.

When we apply the principles of QPR, we are planting the seeds of hope to people in crisis.

Sincere Thanks

The Personnel Committee would like to sincerely thank Joan Ford for her dedication as our bookkeeper since 2019. During the pandemic, procedures, protocols, and routines changed but Joan adapted and kept the bookkeeping piece of our church orderly and current.

*Sincere Thanks to Joan Ford
and Welcome to Sally Howe*



We are pleased to introduce Sally Howe as our new bookkeeper and appreciate Joan and Sally working together for a smooth transition. Sally and her husband Tom have lived in Paw Paw for 30 years. They have two children and their first grandchild, 8 month old Theodore (Teddy). Sally's interests include gardening, preserving, and crafting. She has worked in accounting for over 20 years and is pleased to be our new bookkeeper. Sincere gratitude to Joan wishing her all the best and a warm welcome to Sally.



Every second Thursday of the month 5:30-7:00 pm

Our November community dinner was a great success! The food was lovingly prepared by Sally, and it showed. Jan's dessert was so tasty it disappeared in a flash. We were out of almost everything by 6:00 (although it does appear that folks come early to these types of gatherings). Seventy-seven meals were served and deliveries were made to our home bound members for the first time, as well as deliveries to the guys restarting their lives at the motel. We were all thrilled to see so many guests!

The love, enthusiasm, excitement and dedication supporting this event is very apparent and appreciated. We are making a difference in lives and it just feels so good to be able to serve in this capacity.

With enthusiasm and excitement come many, many volunteers. Our church family has always been so happy to help with missional activities, and that is very apparent with the community dinner.

Thanks to all for your compassion, support, and energy. We are lucky to have this opportunity, grateful to Kate for her dedication to delivering fliers to Paw Paw businesses and residents, thrilled to have such fine folks (Craig Hess, George Bolton, Jeff Marcelletti) deliver the meals, and most of all grateful for all the people who come to an unfamiliar (at this point) place to share a meal and conversation.



As we turn our thoughts to Advent the Worship and Music Commission is preparing for a Christ-centered series of worship events at our church. Advent begins on November 27 and we will again light the Advent Wreath each Sunday as we wait with anticipation for the celebration of Christ's birth. The sanctuary and church will be festively decorated with greens, wreaths, and bows and our nativity scene will be on prominent display. It is indeed a special time of year. We will hear again the scriptures of the prophecy that

God's Messiah will come to usher in the promise of a new kingdom. God comes to us incarnate at Christmas to fulfill the scriptures but more to show His glory and to command us as believers to love one another. Advent will feature special music and our choir plans to be back in the chancel on the 11th of December and at our 7 pm Christmas Eve service. This is a special time in our corporate worship and we invite you to join us as together we remember what the greatest gift of the season is.

December Birthdays

12/1	Sue Miller	12/5	Nancy Beck	12/21	Drew Marcelletti
12/2	Madelyn Randall	12/12	Freida Duringer	12/26	Peg Brabb
12/2	Donna Zabonick	12/12	Mary Martin	12/28	Thomas Garceau
12/2	Alan Lanphear	12/13	Sally Schallhorn	12/28	Make Lewis
12/3	Pam Baney	12/14	Ryan Turanzas	12/30	Lynn Hess
12/3	Josh Bradish	12/17	Royal Haefner	12/31	Margaret McNeil
		12/19	Patricia Conner	12/31	Charles Williams

December Anniversaries

12/7	Dennis and Ann McGrew
12/13	Orville Griffith and Marlene Tucker
12/18	Chuck and Debby Williams
12/19	Dan and Tammy Hulst
12/19	Alan and Katie Lanphear
12/20	Jerry and Sue Miller

December 2022

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
W1	27 • 10am Worship Service-1st Sunday of Advent • NA • 8:45 Bible Study	28 • 6:30 Theology on Tap • 10am YOGA	29 • 3:00 Personnel Meeting • Noon AA	30 • 7:30am TOPS • 6:30 MISSION	1 • 7pm Choir practice • 7pm C S Lewis	2 • 10am Yoga • Noon AA	3 • 7pm AA
W2	4 • 10am Worship Service-2nd Sunday of Advent • NA • 1-3 Holiday Happening • 8:45 Bible Study	5 • 10am YOGA	6 • Noon AA	7 • 4:30 Worship & Music • 6:30 Deacons • 7:30am TOPS	8 • 7pm Choir practice • 9:30 Tech Crew • 5:00 Community Dinner • Noon Rotary	9 • 10am Yoga • Noon AA	10 • 7pm AA
W3	11 • 10am Worship Service & Choir-3rd Sunday of Advent • NA • 8:45 Bible Study	12 • 11am Admin/Fin • 10am YOGA	13 • 10am ShareNet • 6:30 Bld&Grds • Noon AA	14 • 6pm Silent Night service • 7:30am TOPS	15 • 7pm Choir practice	16 • 10am Yoga • Noon AA	17 • 7pm AA • Men's Breakfast
W4	18 • 10am Worship Service-4th Sunday of Advent • NA • 4pm Caroling • 8:45 Bible Study	19 • 10am YOGA	20 • Noon AA • 6pm Session Meeting	21 • 7:30am TOPS • NEWSLETTER DEADLINE!	22 • 7pm Choir practice	23 • 10am Yoga • Noon AA	24 • 7pm AA • 7pm Christmas Eve service & Choir
W5	25 • 8:45 Bible Study • 10am Worship Service- Christmas Day • NA	26 • 10am YOGA	27 • Noon AA • 3:00 Personnel Meeting	28 • 7:30am TOPS • 6:30 MISSION	29	30 • Noon AA • 10am Yoga	31 • 7pm AA

Latest updates always at pawpawpres.org/calendar

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Return Service Requested

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Winter Reminder

Any weekday when the Paw Paw Schools close, the church closes too.

Trunk or Treat Big Thank You!



Serving over 60 children from the community.



Church Office 269-657-3111 + firstpres120@gmail.com + Office hours Tues-Wed-Thu 9 am - 3 pm
Rev. Gail 269-275-6998 revgailfcpawpaw@gmail.com