

Help Us Usher In The Season Of Epiphany

Greetings Friends in Christ,

With the New Year comes the season of *Epiphany* which will take us through to *Lent*.

Epiphany is derived from the Greek word “*epiphaneia*” meaning “*showing or manifestation*”. The church established it as a time following the celebration of Christ’s birth to celebrate the major times in Christ’s life when he was recognized (shown or manifested) as divine: the Wisemen’s visit, the young Jesus reading in the temple, Christ’s baptism, the Transfiguration, Christ’s miracles etc.

Epiphany is a time to reflect and celebrate the events in our own lives and the lives of others when we see or have seen Christ’ light—when God is or has been made manifest. Those “ah-ha” moments, when we have seen Christ’s light shining or when God has made known to us a new and better understanding as individuals and as a congregation.

On Sunday January 7 we will celebrate Communion and each person will receive a Star Word to carry us through the year to help usher in the season of Epiphany.

During this season where we anticipate God's presence and revelation, it just so happens that we as a congregation are at a pivotal and exciting time as we move forward following Christ while we begin to discern what our relationship will be with First Presbyterian Church of Decatur. This will take a few months as the Transition Team begins to meet more often yet also works to keeping you all informed. The team consists of myself and from Paw Paw: Joan Pohl, Tom Shoemaker, Andy Thorburn, and from Decatur: Shannon Allen, Judy Kish, Marcia Sikkema, and David Vliek. And remember, if you have questions, please feel free to call me or one of the team members.

The Transition Team has reviewed the results of the *Focus Groups* and remains hopeful for what could be possible for us in the future. A few things stood out: both congregations appreciate it when more people are in worship—they feel energized and better sense God’s presence, and both congregations appreciate good music and a choir. We are similar theologically and believe that God calls us to mission, especially in our communities. It is apparent that we have more similarities than differences. We will be sharing more details with you in this coming month.

The Transition team will also be writing a grant to Lake Michigan Presbytery asking for funds to bring in a consultant with experience working with churches discerning whether or not to merge. This grant money comes from the sale of properties of churches that have closed with the intention of helping congregations that are looking at mergers and other ways to become more vital. We will also be holding at least a monthly Town Hall Meeting and opportunities for coffee times for discussions. Our goal is to keep both congregations informed as we together discern where God is calling us in this time and place—what our vision is in light of following the risen Christ.

May we joyfully celebrate and live into the season of Epiphany! During this season may we confidently look forward with hope and trust that God promises to be present with us now and in the future! And may the light of the living Christ shine with brilliant rays in and from each of you in 2024.

Shine in your church, O God: embolden us, in a dark world, to speak truthfully and to act with the courage of love.

Shine on your world, O God; heal the warring of nations and the wounding of the earth to give us peace at last.

Shine for your people, O God; make us one human family who clothe each other with mercy and feed each other with justice.

Shine in our hearts, O God; help us to reach to the heavens and deep in our souls to see you, to find you, and to know you.

Shine, O God, as the Light that creates, the Light that calls, the Light that comes again with every dawn. Shine as the Light that scatters every shadow, and the Light in which we promise to walk, with your help. Amen

Prayer from *Liturgy for the Whole Church* by Susan K. Bock

In Christ's love, light, and hope,

Gail

Rev Gail Monsma

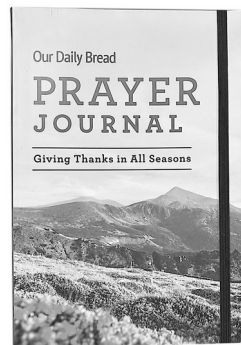
Email: revgailfpcpawpaw@gmail.com

We Make the Road by Walking

A Fresh Way to Practice Your Faith

If you're seeking a fresh way to experience and practice your faith, if you're a long-time Christian seeking new vitality, or if you feel out of place in traditional church circles, we have a book that will inspire and activate you in your spiritual journey. All January, at the Library Kiosk near the Sanctuary entrance, check out "We Make the Road by Walking" to explore a thrilling reintroduction to Christian faith. Start the new year in a fresh way!

Free Prayer Journals



Do you take others needs to the Lord in prayer? Have you considered using a Prayer Journal? Prayer Journals are a handy tool to keep track of those you pray for. You can also use it to document how your prayers are answered. If you would

like to try this, the Library kiosk has prayer journals available in the "Freebie" basket.

Did You Know?

Did you know it has been a busy year for First Presbyterian Church of Paw Paw? The people of our church have once again shown their love and compassion for others. From baking cookies to opening their homes to others. The following are all the wonderful things this church has done in Christ's name.

- ✓ CROP Walk \$420.00
- ✓ Communion Sunday "Bucket" offering to help support United Christian Services, Eleanor's Pantry and Hunger Program
- ✓ 4 Special Offerings - One Great Hour of Sharing, Pentecost, Peace and Global Witness and Christmas Joy
- ✓ Support for Erick and Loida in Honduras - \$750.00
- ✓ Help send kids to camp through Department of Health and Human Services - \$200.00
- ✓ United Christian Services - personal hygiene items campaign
- ✓ Dinner with Friends - Free meals for the community once a month
- ✓ Gone to the Dogs - Therapy program for school children \$250.00
- ✓ Offering homes to Detroit Presbyterian Church youth while they help with the migrant program
- ✓ Provided homemade cookies for Paw Paw teachers
- ✓ Provided facilities for NA and AA
- ✓ Backpacks filled with items needed for prisoners being released from prison
- ✓ Collect food for Eleanor's Pantry on Communion Sunday
- ✓ Work with United Christian Services for food and garment collections
- ✓ Provided space for Paw Paw Community Choir, Boy Scouts and Wings of God
- ✓ Provided vegetables for Thanksgiving Community Dinner
- ✓ Operation Winter Warm Up - Donating winter clothing to United Christian Services
- ✓ Handmade Christmas ornaments made by two talented women of the church - \$400.00 to be used for mission
- ✓ Christmas packages for prison release group
- ✓ Magnify the Light - provided Christmas gifts for five families

The generous support of our church family is a beacon of hope to our community. Our congregation continues to be a source of great strength, vision and inspiration. We are very blessed to be able to do all these things for our community.

Eleda Zygadlo
Mission Committee

Share Your Faith Story. The church newsletter invites you to share your faith story with a picture of yours. It could be from long ago (confirmation, wedding, Easter) or recent. Please put it in Chuck's mailbox at the back entrance or email it to Chuck.

Presbyterian News - Volume 93 Issue 1 - Jan 2024
Editor Chuck Williams aroundvanburen@gmail.com

The poinsettias that adorn our sanctuary in this Advent Season have been donated in loving memory or in honor of special people in the lives of members and friends of our congregation

<u>GIVEN BY</u>	<u>IN LOVING MEMORY OF</u>
Jim vanWestrienen	Donna vanWestrienen John & Paul vanWestrienen Leone & Henry vanWesteriennen
Harold & Zoe Schuitmaker	Harold Schuitmaker Jane & Harold Schuitmaker Allen & Dorothy VerHage
Sue Martin	Rick Riegle Virginia Miller Riegle
Marlene Suter	Mertis Odom
Chuck & Debby Williams	Richard, Marion & Gary Williams Ray, Nancy & Brian Meyers
George Catey Bolton	Paul & Bette Kaiser Bill Kaiser
Pat Peters	Jim Peters Marty Alber
Marge McKee	John McKee Howard Dewitt Jacob & Mildred Dewitt
Eleda Zygadlo	Stan Zygadlo Kensel Adele Giddings
Tom Shoemaker & Tonda Boothby-Shoemaker	Dixie & Charles Shoemaker
Richard Cameron	Muriel D Cameron
Randy & Andy Thorburn	Jessica Silber Mary Alive & Bob Burns
Todd & Joan Pohl	Gary & Sharon Pohl (Todd's parents) Richard & Ellen Roberts (Joan's parents)

<u>GIVEN BY</u>	<u>IN LOVING MEMORY OF</u>
Frank & Adele Walters	Zoe & Sadie Walters Max & Fern Mumford Theresa Walters
Sally & Jim Brinkman	Pugsley family: Fred, James, Ruth, Matthew & John Justin Paul Hill
Jerry & Barb Dundon	Jean & Burt Dundon Robert Dundon Joseph & Vi Champion
Danna Dent & Rhodes family	Sierra Rhodes Charles 'Bud' Dent
Tom & Mary Ellen Smith	Mel & Mary Jane Norburg
Barbara Bryant	Daniel Bryant Donald & Ruth Boysen

<u>GIVEN BY</u>	<u>IN HONOR OF</u>
Tom Shoemaker & Tonda Boothby-Shoemaker	Martha Shoemaker Mary Bolen Meachum
Nathaniel & Steve McCloskey	Kathy McCloskey
Tom & Mary Ellen Smith	Heidi, Russ Towle & girls Heather, Steve Johnson & family Trevor Smith
Jeff & Laura Wells	Nicole Parker & family Sarah Peterson & family Adam Wells

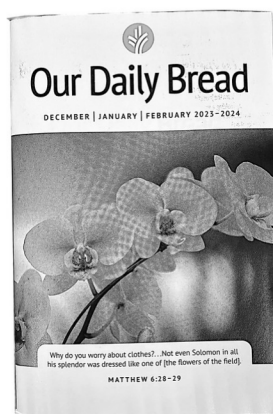
Bible Study Sunday Morning

Dave Nielsen reports that Bible Study had a great study of Matthew 1:18-25, the birth of Jesus, on Dec. 10.

Next they tackle the Gospel of Mark during January at 9:15 am each Sunday morning in the church library.

You can also participate via Zoom – email firstpres120@gmail.com for details or find Bible Study in your church email weekly update.

Our Daily Bread Devotional



We still have a few copies of Our Daily Bread Daily Devotional booklets for the months of December through February in the Library kiosk. Pick up yours today!

1st Pres Paw Paw Goes Caroling!



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN



Presbyterian Women enjoying High Tea at Kellogg Manor on Dec. 19.



Christmas packages to Kalamazoo Probation Enhancement Program for the men at the Red Arrow motel. Thanks go out to everyone for their contributions!

The Presbyterian Women have been busy. Thanks to all who contributed items to bring Christmas to the men involved in KPEP. We packed 15 bags of goodies to help them have a Merry Christmas. Thanks to Tom Shoemaker also who will be delivering them for us.

We had a lot of fun Christmas caroling with Chris. We sang for and delivered poinsettias to our shut in. Afterwards we enjoyed chili and fellowship.

Good time was had by all who attended the tea and shopping at Kellogg Manor.

We are looking forward to the New Year. Planning for the SouperBowl on February 11 and the Plant Sale in May. Put these dates in your calendars.

Marge McKee

First Presbyterian Church of Paw Paw
P.O. Box 435
120 Pine Street
Paw Paw, MI 49079

Return Service Requested

Presbyterian News

[youtube.com/@1stprespawpaw](https://www.youtube.com/@1stprespawpaw)

facebook.com/1stprespawpaw



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

Rev. Gail Monsma + 269-275-6998 + revgailfpcpawpaw@gmail.com

