



The Home Page

First Presbyterian Church, Hastings, Nebraska 68901-5175
Vol. 19.45 December 06, 2015

Dear Fellow Companions of the Way,

I hope you all had a great Thanksgiving. Mimi and I were blessed to be with my mom in Naples, FL., and we hope to visit her parents in Dayton, OH after Christmas. As I mentioned last Sunday, the four-week season of Advent (that began the Christmas cycle on November 29th this year) is about the **three-fold coming of Christ: future, past, and present.** Throughout this season and always let us reflect the love of God made known in the coming of Jesus Christ:

“If I decorate my house perfectly with plaid bows, and strands of light, but do not show love, I am just another decorator.

If I slave away in the kitchen, baking dozens of Christmas cookies, preparing gourmet meals and arranging a beautifully adorned table, but do not show love, I am just another cook.

If I volunteer at the soup kitchen, carol in the nursing homes and give away a lot to charity, but do not show love, it profits me nothing.

If I trim the spruce with golden angels and crocheted snowflakes, attend myriad holiday parties and sing in the church choir concert, but do not focus on Christ, I have missed the point.

Love sets aside the decorating to kiss one’s partner. Love stops the cooking to hug the child. Love is kind, though harried and tired. Love does not envy another’s home that has coordinated Christmas china and table linens.

Love does not yell at the kids to get out of the way, but is thankful they are there to be in the way.

Love does not give only to those who are able to give in return, but rejoices in giving to those who cannot.

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. Love never fails.

Video games will break, pearl necklaces will be lost, golf clubs will rust... but giving the gift of love will endure.”

Thanks to the Apostle Paul for his inspirational “chapter on love.”

Soli Deo Gloria!

Charlie

Charles Marshall Webster

December 6 Adult Sunday School Classes

1. *The Purpose of Christmas*. A three-part DVD series taught by renowned author of *The Purpose-Driven Life*, Rick Warren. At 9:15 in Anderson Conference Room.
2. *Conversations that Matter: Welcoming the Stranger*. First Presbyterian welcomes Yolanda Nuncio, immigration specialist with Lutheran Family Services of Grand Island. Yolanda will help us explore the topic of immigration from a Christian perspective. At 9:15 in the Fellowship Hall. Note: This is the final installment of our Conversations that Matter series.

Prayer Vigil for PNC

Our Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) is undertaking the challenging and monumental task of finding our next called pastor, and our role is to support their work with patience and prayer. To that end, a prayer vigil is being organized. Participants are asked to commit to praying once a week--on a particular day of the week--from now until the time our next pastor is called. We need at least 7 participants (one committed to each day of the week), but more would be better! As a prayer vigil participant, you can pray from wherever you are, for as long or as briefly as you wish. To find out more or to sign up, call or email Kili. *Even if you don't wish to be a part of the vigil, please still pray for the PNC as you are able!*

On-line Advent Devotional

If you're looking for a daily devotional to keep your spirit focused on the true meaning of the season, check out d365.org. If you enter your email address in the "Subscribe" window, each morning you'll receive an email with a link to d365's daily devotion. The devotions are written by a group of authors and sponsored ecumenically by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the Episcopal Church.

Churchwide Christmas Caroling

On Sunday, December 13, at 4:00 p.m., all interested carolers should gather in the Fellowship Hall to assemble cookie gift plates and to divide into caroling teams. After caroling for an hour or so, we will return to the Fellowship Hall for soup and fellowship. Please call Kili at the church office if you can donate cookies, soup, or bread for the event. (Please come, even if you can't donate food!!) All voices needed: young, old, and in between!

Upcoming Taize worship: Thur, Dec 10, 7 p.m.

For December's Taize service, we will focus on *Waiting*. In a quiet and contemplative atmosphere, we will utilize prayer, scripture and song to reflect upon this universal human experience that promises both challenges and gifts.

The Giving Tree

The tags are now on the Giving Tree! The Giving Tree in the Memorial Room supports clients of Assertive Community Treatments, people with severe and persistent mental illness and living in our community. Most are without family support and live on disability or nothing. Please help support these people by taking a tag from the tree and returning gifts to the tree by Sunday, December 20. The gifts should be wrapped and the tag placed back on them. Monetary donations may also be given.

Sponsored by the Mission Committee.

Don't want to drive in the dark but want to attend Taize worship?

Our deacons are ready to assist! Don't let dark, wintry conditions keep you from experiencing the beauty and tranquility of our Taize worship services. Call the church office to sign up for a ride: [\(402\) 462-5147](tel:4024625147).

AN ADVENT REFLECTION

The last paragraph of the chapter titled “Of the Last Judgment” in the Westminster Confession of Faith (*Book of Confessions*, 6.182) reads:

As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there shall be a day of judgment, both to deter all (people) from sin, and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity: so will he have that day unknown to all (people), that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come; and may be ever prepared to say, Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen.

In this season of Advent -- how prepared are we to meet the Lord? Do we truly believe in the concept of a Last Judgment and life in a world to come? The loss of a sense of another world toward which we travel as pilgrims through this life has impoverished the lives we lead. The loss of a grand vision of the City of God in which God’s people have citizenship even in this life has left us little to live for, much less to die for. These losses, in turn, are a function of a human-centered religion that focuses not on God’s plans for the world as revealed in Christ through Scripture, but on human plans for personal and social improvement.

A healthy otherworldly emphasis might not be such a bad thing for the church. Such a perspective, far from withdrawing our attention from the needs of the world, would provide the under girding and the resolve to be faithful partners with God in the unfolding drama of redemption in human history. History has a beginning - and it will have an end. The biblical promise is that God will bring to consummation that which God created.

When you stop and think about it, if our vision is large enough, our perspective long enough, much of the struggle that consumes our lives can take on new meaning. With the Apostle Paul we can affirm:

So we do not lose heart. . .because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal (2 Corinthians 4:16-18).

“Do not lose heart” - place your lives in the hands of the God who made and sustains all and whose Son reigns. With confidence and hope we pray each day - not just during Advent - **“Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.”**

- C.M. Webster

**CONGRATULATIONS TO ANNE
FAIRBANKS AND JON BOLKE
ON THEIR MARRIAGE,
NOVEMBER 21ST!**

Want email notifications about opportunities for adults?

Kili will be sending out weekly-ish emails with notifications about church and community classes and events related to Christian Education and Spiritual Formation for adults. If you'd like to be added to this list, simply email Kili with your request: kili@fpchastings.org

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**BID BOARD CLOSES SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13<sup>TH</sup>**  
**SHOW YOUR SUPPORT BY STOPPING IN THE PARLOR**  
**DONATIONS ARE STILL BEING ACCEPTED**  
**GO AND SERVE BID BOARD**

Supporting the Go and Serve Mission Trip for June 2016. An essential part of the Bid Board process is the generous donations and support from YOU, the congregation. If you would like to donate an item or service for the 2016 Bid Board fundraiser, complete the following form and return it with the item to the church office as soon as possible.

**I am donating the following items:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Donated by:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please be sure items are in new to like-new condition.

The Bid Board will be open December 6 & 13, 2015.

**Past donations have included:** baked goods, centerpieces, lawn services, gift certificates, glass work, autographed items, quilts, note cards, candles, art work, wreathes, child care, sermons, snow removal, tutoring, babysitting, tickets to events, jewelry, bead work, et.al.

**Your contributions are greatly appreciated!**



***All Senior High students that are considering participating in the Go & Serve Trip in June should plan on attending monthly planning/work gatherings. The gatherings will be held the 1st Sunday of each month at 1:30pm in the Senior High Youth Room in the Annex.***

*Finances at First*

Thank you to the faithful who contribute generously to the finances at First Presbyterian Church.

Unfortunately, as of November 1<sup>st</sup>, our 2015 budget was \$90,000 in the red. Last year at the same time the church budget was \$65,000 in the red.

Actions taken by the church Session in personnel changes this year will see an annual savings of \$90,000 from the 2014 budget to the 2016 budget.

Over the past several years, per member giving at First Presbyterian Church has been less than 2/3 of national average for Presbyterians.

The mission of the Church needs responsible giving from members and friends.

-CMW

*POINSETTIAS*

*Poinsettias may be purchased in honor or in memory of a loved one. Additional proceeds will be remitted to the Salvation Army for their Utility Assistance Program - the need is great! The cost is \$10. Please return this order form to the church office. Poinsettia in memory of: \_\_\_\_\_*

*Poinsettia in honor of: \_\_\_\_\_*

*Given by: \_\_\_\_\_*

**Hands Around the World** and Eternal Threads will be hosting a sale on December 12 from 9am-1pm. Both the Church of Christ and First Presbyterian Church will use all proceeds for mission work. Both Eternal Threads and Serrv organizations buy handmade products from Fair Trade Cooperatives where the artisans are given a fair wage for their work.

December 12, 2015  
First Presbyterian Church  
621 N Lincoln Ave  
9:00 am - 1:00 pm



Shop our  
*Christmas Event*  
and give a gift that keeps on giving!



Give a gift that keeps on giving! Shop for unique and handcrafted fair trade items made and produced by artisans and farmers from around the world. By purchasing their work, you can be a part of providing them and their families hope and a future.



Sponsored by:  
First Presbyterian Church-Hands Around the World  
Church of Christ-Eternal Threads

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website: [www.fpchastings.org](http://www.fpchastings.org)**

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**The Home Page**

A publication of  
First Presbyterian Church  
621 North Lincoln Avenue  
Hastings, NE 68901

Transitional Pastor  
Rev. Charles M. Webster

**Publishing Guidelines:**

The *Home Page* is a weekly publication for the people and mission of First Presbyterian Church.

The newsletter seeks to inform, instruct and challenge its readers to become engaged in the ministry of FPC.

**Articles** will be accepted on Monday of each week. Submissions will be edited for length and suitability. You may send articles to the church office: [tarci@fpchastings.org](mailto:tarci@fpchastings.org) or call 402-462-5147.

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**Holiday Schedule:**

**December 13**

**December 20-27**

**January 3**