



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HASTINGS

SHARING THE LOVE OF CHRIST SINCE 1873

Home Page Newsletter

My dear church family,

This week I have been given the privilege of writing to you via the weekly newsletter, and I wanted to use this opportunity to share with you my reflections on the sermon series we recently experienced entitled “Building the Beloved Community in an age of polarization.” In my reflection, I am filled with gratitude for the space it created for deeper contemplation on the unity we share. Although originally intended to help prepare us for a particularly divisive election season, it offered so much more: an opportunity to appreciate the extraordinary gift of community we have here at First Presbyterian Church of Hastings.

When my family joined this church in the fall of 2021, I stepped into an environment marked by national tension and division. The year before had been tumultuous, amplifying existing fractures in our nation and even within local communities. Yet, amid these stormy cultural waters, I discovered something profound in our congregation: a sanctuary of hope. Here, I encountered people committed to living out the teachings of Christ with humility and forgiveness, a collective intent on being set apart for God's work.

To be “set apart” is not to disengage from the world’s struggles or to isolate ourselves within the comfort of like-mindedness. Rather, it means embodying a different path—one rooted in hope and anchored in love. When Christ called us to be a light to the world, He was inviting us to reflect His divine love and forgiveness, even in the most polarized environments. This community has shown me what it means to accept that calling with open hearts.

One of the most powerful aspects of our church is the way we embrace humility and forgiveness. In a world where pride often dictates the tone of interactions, humility is a rare treasure. Here, I have witnessed people acknowledging their imperfections and extending grace to one another. This humility allows us to grow together, fostering a safe space where mistakes can be stepping stones rather than stumbling blocks. When we embrace humility, we create room for forgiveness—forgiving others and ourselves—which paves the way for real transformation.

“Fear not, abound in hope”: this biblical encouragement reminds us that, despite the challenges we face, we are not to succumb to fear. Our hope is not rooted in transient solutions or fleeting moments of peace, but in Christ’s unchanging love. I see this hope manifested in the way our members support one another—praying earnestly, breaking

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bread, and offering a listening ear without judgment. This shared hope is the foundation that allows us to remain steadfast, even when we encounter differing perspectives. In our church, I have seen people with varied opinions share meals and conversations that nourish both body and soul, demonstrating that unity does not require uniformity.

Being part of a beloved community means understanding that our freedom in Christ is not simply freedom *from* sin but freedom *to* love unconditionally. The world tells us that love should be earned or given selectively. But in Christ, love is a boundless gift that we are free to share without reservation. This love is powerful—it breaks chains, heals wounds, and transforms lives. As I witnessed during my time here, acts of kindness and intentional service speak louder than any rhetoric. They declare that we are committed to being conduits of God’s love.

This congregation stands as a beacon of hope, demonstrating what it means to be set apart in an age of division. We are called to be a people who exemplify humility and forgiveness, who shine with the light of hope, and who walk in the freedom and love that Christ has given us. To those feeling weary, I say, fear not. Abound in hope, for God’s work continues through us, and His love remains the unyielding thread that binds us together.

As we move forward, let us remember that our mission is not limited to the walls of our church but extends to the community beyond. Let us be the hands and feet of Christ, embodying the message that even in an age of polarization, love and unity can thrive.

May the Peace of Christ be with you,



Rose Koepf

Ushers and Greeters

December Ushers (Team #4) Captain – George Howard, Susie Graham, Dixie McDonald, Gale McDonald, Lori Schroeder, Ted Schroeder

DECEMBER GREETERS	MEMORIAL ROOM	NARTHEX
8	Paul & Lynette Krieger	Clyde Sachtleben, Carolyn Nowka
15	Kathy & Curtis Reimer	Susan Hoff
22	Jenna Jorgensen	Melissa Davis
5:30pm 24	VOLUNTEERS NEEDED	VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
7:30pm 24	VOLUNTEERS NEEDED	VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
29	Cathy & John Pershing	Milrae & Harold Korb

Sunday 12/1	8:30am	Contemplative Worship Service	Chapel
		<i>No Sunday School</i>	
	10am	HAW Store Open	Library
	10:30am	Traditional Worship Service	Sanctuary, Facebook, Radio
	11:30am	HAW Store Open	Library
Monday 12/2	9am-11am	Hastings Pickleball Club	PEACE Gym
	1-3pm	1 st Pres Pickleball	PEACE Gym
	1:30pm	Quilters	PEACE Quilting Room
	6-8pm	Mexican Folkloric Dance	PEACE NE Classroom
	7-9pm	Chorus of the Plains	Choir Room
Tuesday 12/3	10:30am	Staff Meeting	In-Person
	11:45am	Habitat for Humanity	PEACE NW Classroom
	12pm	Bible Study	Anderson Room
	6-7:30pm	WAM Meeting	Anderson Room
Wednesday 12/4	11am	PW Coord Team	
	11:45am	PW Program and Luncheon	Fellowship Hall
	12pm	Noonday Book Club	Sbbrooks52@gmail.com for link
	1-3pm	Hastings Pickleball Club	PEACE Gym
	5-7:15pm	PreK-12 th Grade WNL	various
	6:30pm	Woodcarvers meet	Basement
	6:45pm	Chancel Choir	Choir Room
	7:30pm	Chancel Bells	Bell Room
Thursday 12/5	12:30pm	Dulcimer	HCMA Room 112
	4-6pm	Hastings College Choir Rehearsal	Sanctuary
	5:30pm	Global Mission Committee	Anderson Room
	6-8pm	Mexican Folkloric Dance	PEACE NE Classroom
	7-8pm	Cub Scouts	Scout Room
Friday 12/6	9-11am	Hastings Pickleball Club	PEACE Gym
	10am	Mahjong	Basement Youth Room
Saturday 12/7	10am-1pm	Christmas Craft Event	Fellowship Hall
	10am-1pm	HAW Christmas Open House	Library



Sunday 12/8	8:30am	Contemplative Worship	Chapel
	9:15am-10:15am	Sunday School for all ages	Various
	10am	HAW Store Open	Library
	10:30am	Traditional Worship Service	Sanctuary, Facebook, Radio
	11:30am	HAW Store Open	Library
	3pm	Hastings College Christmas Concert	Sanctuary
Monday 12/9	9am-11am	Hastings Pickleball Club	PEACE Gym
	1pm-3pm	1 st Pres Pickleball	PEACE Gym
	1:30pm	Quilters	PEACE Quilting Room
	6pm	Mexican Folkloric Dance	PEACE NE Classroom
	7-9pm	Chorus of the Plains	Choir Room
Tuesday 12/10	10:30am	Staff Meeting	In-person
	12pm	Bible Study	Anderson Room
	5:30pm	Trustees Meet	Middle School Youth Room
	6:45pm	Deacons Meet	Anderson Room
Wednesday 12/11	12pm	Noonday Book Club	sbbrooks52@gmail.com for link
	1-3pm	Hastings Pickleball Club	PEACE Gym
	5-7:15pm	PreK-12 th Grade WNL	Various
	6:30pm	Woodcarvers meet	basement
	6:45pm	Chancel Choir	Choir Room
	7:30pm	Chancel Bells	Bell Room
Thursday 12/12	12:30pm	Dulcimer	HCMA Room 112
	5:30pm	Columbarium Meeting	Anderson Room
	6pm	Mexican Folkloric Dance	PEACE NE Classroom
	7pm	Cub Scouts	Scout Room
Friday 12/13	9am	Hastings Pickleball Club	PEACE Gym
	10am	Mahjong	Basement Youth Room
	12pm-6pm	Red Cross Bloodmobile	Fellowship Hall
Sunday 12/15	8:30am	Contemplative Worship	Chapel
	9:15am	Sunday School for all ages	various
	10am	HAW Store Open	Library
	10:30am	Traditional Worship Service	Sanctuary, Facebook, Radio
	11:30am	HAW Store Open	Library
	7pm	South Central Nebraska Children's Chorale Concert	Sanctuary

December Communion Offerings

Giving Tree, Reverse Advent donations, and PC-USA Joy Offering. PC-USA Joy Offering provides assistance to current and retired church workers in need and helps develop future church leaders at schools and colleges that are Presbyterian related.

Christmas Eve at First Presbyterian Church of Hastings

Tuesday, December 24

2:00 p.m. – Service at College View

5:30 p.m. – Family Service in the Sanctuary

7:30 p.m. – Traditional Service in the Sanctuary

11:00 p.m. – Contemplative Service in the Sanctuary



While By Their Flocks

A Christmas Musical

On Sunday, **Dec. 15th** at **10:30am**, the PreK-8th Grade students will be putting on a Christmas musical as part of the morning worship service!



Hastings College Christmas Concert

Sunday, December 8
3 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church
of Hastings
Sanctuary

Company and Food Needed for Lonely HC Students

Every year, we know that some students stay at Hastings College for Winter break. HC's Dr. Amanda Solem was fortunate to receive an Innovation Grant to help make sure no one is lonely for the whole break and to foster fellowship between HC and the First Presbyterian Church. Often, Student Engagement has worked with 10-15 students to support them during the break, but we would like to have room for up to 30 if needed. We know that our students are often missing home cooking and feeling part of a community. Part of the funding will go towards a main dish and tableware for potluck meals on campus with students, and we hope you will join us! We realize many of you will probably want to spend time with your own family on the holidays, so we've chosen holiday-adjacent dates:

12/26 – 12-2 p.m. the day after Christmas at Daugherty Center

12/31 – 2-4 p.m. New Year's Eve afternoon for an appetizer potluck at Daugherty Center.

For the Christmas-adjacent meal, we'd love to have salads, sides, and desserts. For the New Year's potluck, appetizers are welcome.



JOIN US!

Christmas Craft Make-and-Take Event!

**BRING YOUR FAMILY TO MAKE A CHRISTMAS CRAFT THAT THEY CAN GIVE AS A GIFT THIS HOLIDAY SEASON!
ENJOY A HOT CHOCOLATE BAR WHILE OUR VOLUNTEERS HELP YOUR CHILDREN CRAFT!**

7 DEC. / 10 A.M.- 1 P.M.
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
621 N LINCOLN AVE,
HASTINGS, NE

CRAFTS ARE TAILORED TOWARDS ELEMENTARY STUDENTS, BUT FUN FOR ALL AGES!

FREE WILL DONATION



The American Red Cross and First Presbyterian Church are hosting a blood drive on Friday, December 13, from 11am-5pm. There is a critical need for donated blood.

Please consider making an appointment to give blood during this drive. To make an appointment go to redcrossblood.org, select the drive at First Presbyterian Church, Hastings, and make your appointment.

Hands Around the World Christmas Open House

**Saturday, December 7
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.**

Come check out our new items from SERRV, new shipment of coffee, Christmas decorations, etc.

Please remember your purchase also helps our local mission partner United Harvest, to whom we donate monthly.

POINSETTIAS



Poinsettias may be purchased in honor of or in memory of a loved one. The cost is \$15 each. Money raised over the cost will be donated to Heartland Health Center.

Heartland Health Center has begun providing medical care at 223 E. 14th Street in Hastings. Improving health outcomes for all people in Central Nebraska, Heartland Health Center accepts uninsured, insured, Medicaid, and Medicare patients. Services are paid using a sliding fee scale to reduce costs. Next steps are in the plan to provide dental care and behavioral health.

Your donation makes a difference. *Please return your order form to the church office as soon as possible.*

Poinsettia in memory of:

Poinsettia in honor of:

Given by:

I will take my poinsettia home after the Christmas Eve services: Yes No

I will leave my poinsettia at the church: Yes No

Christmas with Cathedral Brass



Sunday, December 22
3:00 p.m.
First Presbyterian Church
Sanctuary

UPCOMING FORUMS

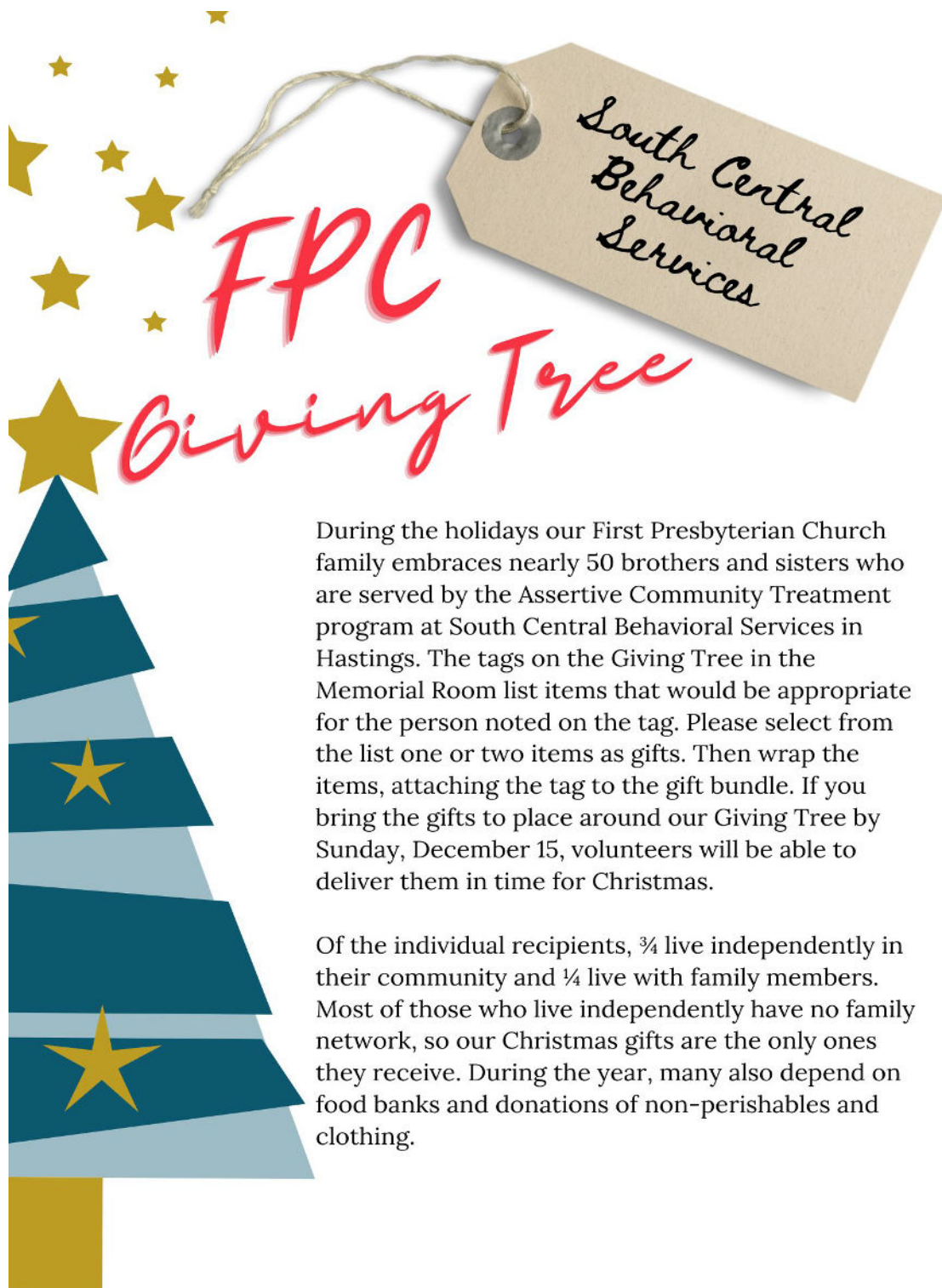
SUNDAYS - 9:15 A.M. - LYDIA ROOM

DECEMBER 8

“Hope and Humility in Jesus’ Birth”
Led by Dan Deffenbaugh

DECEMBER 15

“Hope and Humility in Jesus’ Birth”
Led by Dan Deffenbaugh



FPC

Giving Tree



*South Central
Behavioral
Services*

During the holidays our First Presbyterian Church family embraces nearly 50 brothers and sisters who are served by the Assertive Community Treatment program at South Central Behavioral Services in Hastings. The tags on the Giving Tree in the Memorial Room list items that would be appropriate for the person noted on the tag. Please select from the list one or two items as gifts. Then wrap the items, attaching the tag to the gift bundle. If you bring the gifts to place around our Giving Tree by Sunday, December 15, volunteers will be able to deliver them in time for Christmas.

Of the individual recipients, $\frac{3}{4}$ live independently in their community and $\frac{1}{4}$ live with family members. Most of those who live independently have no family network, so our Christmas gifts are the only ones they receive. During the year, many also depend on food banks and donations of non-perishables and clothing.



Please pray for

Elaine Schumacher	Ashley Ibach
Carter Johnson	Carl Utley
Tarah Davis & family	Barry Thomson
Matt Campbell	Greg Howard
Janey Nottage-Tacey	Pam Canady
Bob Wolf	Kathy Carrier
KyMani Riek	family of Eleanor Jorgenson
Ken Fisk	Darcie (McDonald) Brink
Howard Mathews	David Hauch
Vicki (Fisk) Nieves	Monte Malouf
Jim Boeve	Eli Struss
Candice Unger	family of Ken Stein
Nytha & Dave Glass	John Pershing
Lexi Longshore	Pat Kleiber



In memory of

Ken Stein, who passed
away on 10/30/24
Eleanor Jorgenson, who passed
away on 11/8/24



**SOUTH CENTRAL
NEBRASKA
CHILDREN'S CHORALE**
 &
**HCMA
SEMI-PROFESSIONAL
HANDBELL CHOIR**
Concert
**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15TH
7:00 PM
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

**Blue
Christmas**
 Worship that Honors Grief & Loss
 An Ecumenical Service

December 19, 2024 at 7:30 pm
 First Presbyterian Church
 Hastings, Nebraska

FOR LOVE REFUSES TO BE EXTINGUISHED BY DESPAIR

First Presbyterian Church

621 N. Lincoln Ave.

Hastings, NE 68901

402-462-5147

fpc@fpchastings.org

Return Service Requested

First Presbyterian Church of Hastings
Sharing the love of Christ from the heart of Hastings since 1873

Head of Church: Jesus Christ

Senior Pastor: Rev. Greg Allen-Pickett

Organist and Music Director: Linda Vollweiler

Chancel Choir Director: Dr. Brett Epperson

Chancel Bells & Calvin/Westminster

Bells Director: Dr. Byron Jensen

Calvin/Westminster Choir Director: Linda Johnson

Praise/Alleluia Choir Directors: Tim and Teresa Canady

Praise/Alleluia Bells Choir Director: Dr. Susan Oliver

Accompanist and Music Coordinator: Mary Plock

Ministers: Members of the Church

Associate Pastor: Rev. Damen Jensen-Heitmann

Director of Children & Family

Ministries: Rose Koepp

Church Office Administrator: Melissa Davis

Facilities Manager: Tony Calhoun

Bookkeeper: Deb Hamburger

Scholar in Residence: Dr. Dan Deffenbaugh

Pastor Emeritus: Rev. Dr. Bill Nottage-Tacey