

DECEMBER 2023/JANUARY 2024

THE CHALLENGE

The Official Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church of Port Huron
811 Wall Street, Port Huron, MI 48060 ♦♦♦ (810) 985-6191

PASTOR'S POINT **From the desk of: Pastor Roxie Davis**

As I prepared to write this Pastor's Point for December, 2023/January, 2024, I reread the Pastor's Point for October/November 2023 newsletter.

I said: "In December, our journey of blessings seems to culminate with Christmas, the generous gift of Jesus, the Savior of the world. With grateful hearts, we try to emulate the graciousness of God by giving meaningful and treasured gifts to each other to celebrate the greatest gift of all--Jesus."

We are fast approaching Christmas, the birthday celebration of the most important person in all of human history: Jesus Christ. For many of us, the preparations and celebration are exciting and meaningful. Most of us enjoy the task of buying those special gifts for family and friends. A lot of us enjoy baking the cookies and preparing those big meals for friends and family. Some of us love to take the time to hang sparkling lights, decking the outside of our houses. Others of us like helping out at places where holiday meals are served or where the Salvation Army bell is rung. Many of us enjoy all the festivities of the Season: The Children's Christmas Play at church; the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service; the Special Events which are identified and publicized in the local newspaper.

But the transforming significance of the most important event—the birth of the Lord and Savior of the World—can get swallowed up in the excitement and the enthusiasm of the Christmas event itself. We try desperately to keep the Birth of Jesus, front and center.

But it is not easy. We know deep in our hearts and souls that Jesus is called Emmanuel—God With Us! That is an amazing proclamation that we desire to live out in our lives and share with the rest of the world.

With that in mind, I, as your pastor, will try to raise up how we come to Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus in human form. Each of us come to Jesus, in our own way and at our own speed. We have good models of that journey to Bethlehem in the Wisemen, the Shepherds, the Angels, Mary and Joseph. During December, through the interpretation of scripture, we will look at their paths to Bethlehem. We will explore the ways in which we come to Bethlehem to live out the amazing news: Jesus is Emmanuel, God With Us.

It will be in January that we will ask ourselves the question: Does the birth of Jesus Christ change us—Does His presence in this world transform us to have a new perspective on how we live our lives? If it makes no difference, we are just like those who celebrate Christmas with all its trimmings and then move on to the next event on the calendar.

Jesus Christ came to earth to transform us and transform our world. We will explore how we can be partners with God in that transformation—making this world a better place, trying to fulfill what we say in the Lord's Prayer every week, "...Your Kingdom come; Your Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven." May the joy of Christ's birth live through you and through me, in the coming year, 2024.

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Preaching Series
- Christian Education Classes for Children and Children's Play
- Committee Updates/Thank You's
- Important Dates/Upcoming Events
- Advent Special Offering

► DECEMBER PREACHING SERIES ◀

"The Road to Bethlehem"

December 3rd - The Trek to Bethlehem: Honoring Jesus-The Wisemen; Communion

December 10th - The Run to Bethlehem: Finding Jesus-The Shepherds

December 17th - The Flight to Bethlehem: Glorifying Jesus-The Angels

December 24th- 10 AM: The Journey to Bethlehem: Parenting Jesus-Mary and Joseph

December 24th- 5 PM: The Christmas Story- The children portray the Christmas Story in costume during the service.

December 31st - The Words and Songs of Bethlehem: Lessons We Hear and Carols We Sing

► JANUARY PREACHING SERIES ◀

"Jesus, The Game Changer!"

January 7th - Does Jesus' Birth Change Us?
With Guest Lay Preacher, Liz Lozen

January 14th - Is Transformation Possible?; Communion

January 21st - Can Life Perspectives Change?; Ordination and Installation of Elders and Deacons, pending Session approval

January 28th- Can Our/My World Be Different?; Annual Congregational Meeting

Thank You

The Mission Committee would like to thank all the chili makers, the bakers and the buyers who contributed to making our fundraiser for the victims of the fire in Maui so successful. We made over \$1000 plus a match from Endowment for \$1000 giving us a total amount of over \$2000.



Thank You



Thank you from the Mountain Movers! Earlier this summer, our children were able to attend a trip to the zoo after the tremendous financial support we received from the talent show. With the funds that were left after our zoo trip, we were able to hold a roller skating party for our Mountain Movers. We enjoyed a fun evening of skating and fellowship! We are so thankful to the congregation for their support to allow us to make fun memories together!

KIRKIN' O' THE TARTANS



CHILDREN'S CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

NURSERY

Ages 0-3 years

Elly Block will be available in the Nursery each Sunday, 9:30 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. She would love to care for your little one while you enjoy the service!

G.I.F.T. (GROWING IN FAITH TOGETHER)

Age 3 years-3rd grade

MOUNTAIN MOVERS

4th grade-8th grade

G.I.F.T. and Mountain Mover students, please join us in the Christian Education Wing following the Children's Message for faith, fun, and friends!



CHILDREN'S ADVENT/CHRISTMAS PLAY

December 17th during the Worship Service

"Angels Among Us"

This year's Advent Play "Angels Among Us" will be held during worship on Sunday, December 17th. Rehearsals will be held Sunday, December 10th after worship, Saturday, December 16th from 9:30-11 a.m. and Sunday, December 17th at 9 a.m. before church.

Then, during the Christmas Eve 5 PM Worship Service, children will help tell the story of Christmas during the church service. All children attending worship on Christmas Eve are welcome to be a part of the portrayal. No rehearsal required! In order to help make Christmas Eve run smoothly, children who plan to be at the Christmas Eve Service can pick out their costumes after the service on Sunday, December 17th. If you can't get your costume then, we will get it on Christmas Eve. If you have any questions or want your children to be involved, please see Laura Nurnberg, Jennie Carolan, or Pastor Roxie.

PASTOR/CHILDREN CLASS

First class is on January 14th at 11:30 a.m.

Pastor Roxie will lead a once-a-month Class for Children of all ages, after each month's Communion Worship Service. Communion, Baptism, 10 Commandments; Great Commandment and Commission, Disciples, Books of the Bible are just some of the topics to be taught. Families: Mark your calendars for both parents and children to attend these classes which will help children learn important Biblical facts. Typically the class will be from 11:30-12:00 p.m., after the First Sunday Worship every month. The first Sunday in this Pastor/Children Class will be January 14th (Communion is on the second Sunday in January because of Pastor Roxie's vacation).

NEW MEMBER SPOT LIGHT

JOAN VANDAWAKER



Hi, I'm Joan. My family and I moved to my husband's home state of Michigan from my home state of South Carolina in Summer 2022. After two careers in the Air Force, my husband, Rob, and I decided to make Awesome Michigan our home. That included finding a church family where we could worship and serve Jesus, in a loving environment, with other believers who are serious about loving people the way Jesus loves. It was clear from our first visit that First Presbyterian has such people. Not perfect people, but people who try daily to be more like Him. I enjoy educational TV and radio programs, historical fiction, and reality competition shows. I also love spending time on the water and camping with my family. I'm thankful for First Presbyterian's warm welcome of my family and I look forward to serving with you all.

LAURA DAHNKE

I live in Port Huron with my husband David and our son Christian. Christian is currently attending Michigan Technological University in Houton so we don't get to see him as often as we like, but he loves the Upper Peninsula, and we are so proud of him. When I'm not working, I enjoy gardening, hiking and downhill skiing. We love being outdoors with our dog Sophie. I'm so thankful to be a member, once again, with the First Presbyterian Church. I would like to thank Roxie and other members of the congregation for helping me grow spiritually, and to develop a stronger relationship with God and his son Jesus Christ.



Laura and her son, Christian

COMMITTEE UPDATES

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

SHELLEY KAMER,
CLERK OF SESSION

OCTOBER

The following actions were taken at the Regular Session meeting on October 9, 2023:

- Approved Sue Brackenbury for membership at FPC.
- Approved receiving new members during worship on November 12, 2023.
- Approved funds from Endowment for renovations to the Fellowship Hall.

NOVEMBER

The following actions were taken at the Regular Session meeting on November 13, 2023:

- Approved a contemporary worship service to be held at 8:30 a. m. in the Community Room beginning in February 2024.
- Approved hosting a "Day of Giving" mission project at the church on December 9, 2023.
- Approved the Interim Contract for Pastor Roxie for 2024.
- Approved vacation time for Pastor Roxie from December 28, 2023 through January 10, 2024.
- Approved vacation days for Laura Gaffney, Office Assistant for December 26-28th.

ELECTION MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION

SHELLEY KAMER,
CLERK OF SESSION

The Election Meeting of the Congregation was held on November 12, 2023 immediately following the Worship service.

The following people were elected as Elder for a 2 year term:

- Shelley Kamer
- Bruce Morrison
- Ann Murphy
- Helenann Norwood
- Kerry Norwood
- Joan Vandawaker

The following people were elected as Deacon for a 2 year term:

- Janet Brown
- Nancy Domke
- Linda LaFrance
- Kim Matthews
- Lisa Matthews

Nominating Committee:

- Anne Wilton- Elder Representative
- Steve Ahlquist- At large
- Deacon – open

ADULT CLASSES

WEDNESDAY NIGHT - "NOOMA"

Every Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. in the Parlor, there are new people added to this wonderful study group every week. We talk, we watch a short episode from the video series, "NOOMA," by Rob Bell and we listen to each other. "Nooma" means "spirit" in Greek! Come whenever you can and join us in the Parlor.

"THE BACK STORY"

10:00 a.m. on Thursdays- If you are serious about living out the faith, as written in the Bible, you need to come to this class. Lively discussion. No Bible expertise needed—just a willingness to set aside one hour a week to be in God's Word. The Scriptures studied will be the preaching Scriptures for the following Sunday.

"WONDERFUL INTRODUCTION FOR NEWCOMERS (W.I.N.) CLASS"

The W.I.N. class will happen on **Sunday, January 21, 2024, following worship at 11:15 a.m.** If you are interested in knowing more about the Presbyterian Church or desire to join the church in membership, please come to the W.I.N. class. Or if you want to renew your membership, this is a great opportunity. Anyone desiring to join the church will be able to talk with the Elders on **Monday, February 12, 2024** during Session at 7:00 p.m.



♪ ♪ ♪ INTERESTED IN CHOIR? ♪ ♪ ♪ ANYONE IS WELCOME TO JOIN!

1. Bell Choir: Presentation will be on December 3rd during worship. Rehearsal is on Sunday, December 3rd at 9:00 a.m. The Bell Choir will also be playing on Sunday, December 24th during the 10:00 a.m. worship service.
2. Adult Choir: Presentation will be on December 10th during worship. Rehearsals are on Sundays- December 3rd after worship at 11:15 a.m. and December 10th at 9:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary.

DATES TO REMEMBER

DECEMBER

- December 3: Communion; Bell Choir Plays; Birthday/Anniversary Celebration; Movie at Sperry's Moviehouse at 12:30 p.m.
- December 7: Olde Town Advent Luncheon at St. Johns Church 12 p.m.
- December 10: Adult Choir Sings
- December 11: Session Meeting at 7 p.m.
- December 13: Sarah's Circle at 1:00 p.m. (Christmas Party at Vintage)
- December 14: Olde Town Advent Luncheon at St. Johns Church 12 p.m.
- December 17: Children's Advent Play "Angels Among Us"; Christmas Joy Offering
- December 24: Worship at 10:00 a.m., Bells Play, Christmas Joy Offering, Candlelight Christmas Eve Service at 5:00 p.m. Children portray the Christmas Story in costume during the service.
- December 25: Merry Christmas! Office Closed
- December 26-28: Office Hours 9 a.m.-12 p.m.
- December 31: New Years Eve; Lessons and Carols Service 10 a.m.

JANUARY

- January 1: Happy New Year! Office Closed
- January 7: Birthday/Anniversary Celebration
- January 10: Sarah's Circle at 1:00 p.m.
- January 14: Communion; Pastor/Children's Class 11:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
- January 15: Session Meeting at 7 p.m.
- January 21: Ordination and Installation of Elders and Deacons (pending Session approval); Wonderful Introduction for Newcomers (W.I.N.) Class at 11:15 a.m.; Annual Reports Due

FEBRUARY

- February 4: Communion; New Casual Contemporary Worship Service begins at 8:30 a.m.; Birthday/Anniversary Celebration; Pastor/Children's Class 11:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
- February 11: Children's Valentine's Day Play; Annual Congregational Meeting 11:15 a.m. (pending Session approval)
- February 12: Session Meeting at 7 p.m.
- February 14: Ash Wednesday; Happy Valentine's Day!
- February 18: One Great Hour of Sharing Begins

CHRISTMAS EVE

Candlelight Service

Sunday, December 24th at 5:00 PM
The children will portray in costume the
Christmas Story during the service.



MERRY
CHRISTMAS

MONDAY, DECEMBER 25TH
THE OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED



WE WISH YOU A HAPPY

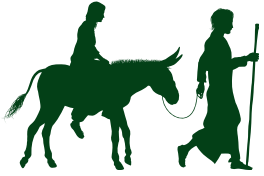
New Year!

2024

MONDAY, JANUARY 1, 2024
THE OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED

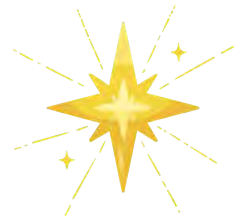
UPCOMING EVENTS

SPERRY'S MOVIE HOUSE SPECIAL VIEWING "JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM"



December 3, 2023 at 12:00 p.m.

***Sperry's Moviehouse
301 Huron Avenue
Port Huron, MI 48060***



Please join us on Sunday, December 3rd following worship for an extended coffee hour and then head over to Sperry's Movie House at 12:00 p.m. (the movie begins at 12:30 p.m.) for "Journey to Bethlehem." (Rated PG) Membership and Outreach has rented a theater for up to 40 people, and it is \$8.50 per ticket. Please call or sign up at the church office.

CHRISTMAS JOY SPECIAL OFFERING

December 3-December 24, 2023

The Christmas Joy Offering begins on December 3, 2023. By giving to the Joy Offering, you honor God's gift of Jesus Christ by providing assistance to current and retired church workers in their time of need. It also aids in developing our future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges.

THURSDAY ADVENT LUNCHEONS

December 7th and 14th

You're invited to St. John's Church (corner of 7th and Pine) for Advent Luncheons on Thursdays, December 7th and 14th at 12:00 p.m. The theme of the luncheons is "Welcome Jesus, Prince of Peace." Pastor Roxie will be speaking on December 14th and we will be providing lunch, courtesy of Rob Williams.



ANGEL TREE

Return Gifts by December 13th



The Angel Tree program provides toys, clothes and food baskets for families in our neighborhood. We will have angels available throughout December. The Board of Deacons asks that a maximum of \$25.00 be spent per angel gift. If you do not like to shop, you may make a donation towards a present or the food baskets. Return your wrapped gift to the church on or before Wednesday, December 13th, 2023 with the appropriate angel attached to the gift. This is very important as we use the tags to identify which presents belong with which people. Gifts will be delivered on Sunday, December 17, 2023. Thank you for your cooperation and generosity. You are making an enormous difference in the lives of these families during the holiday season. If you have any questions, please contact Carolyn Ahlquist at (810) 841-5541.

DONATION FOR FEMININE HYGIENE KITS

Every Sunday in December

Several of our church members sew feminine hygiene kits for girls in third world countries under the Days For Girls program. Occasionally we are asked if we are doing anything locally, as certainly there is a need, which in many ways is as basic as food, but may not fit into the family budget. To help these girls and women we would like to ask you to bring one or more boxes of feminine products to donate during the month of December. There will be a box located in the entry way where you may place your donations. The products will be placed in the Angel Tree Baskets and others will go to service agencies for girls and women in the area. If you have any questions please contact Jacquie Green at 810-434-1748 or Linda Hall @ 810-357-1226. Thank you for your support.

FOOD DEPOT

Every Sunday in December



Please consider helping those suffering from food insecurity. The Blue Water community Food Depot is in need of men and women's toiletries, paper plates (25 count), plastic cutlery (24 count). Monetary donations also are greatly appreciated. The Christmas Ornament Sale table is set-up in the portico entryway. If making a monetary donation, please make your check out to Blue Water Community Food Depot (Paper Ornament Sale in the Memo line). Every \$1 gives 6 meals.

TRAINING NEW ELDERS AND DEACONS

Pastor Roxie will hold a training for all new Elders and Deacons, who were elected during the Congregational Election Meeting on November 12, 2023. Please mark your calendars for **Monday, December 11, 2023 at 6 p.m. or Monday, January 15, 2024 at 6 p.m.** for the training session. You only need to attend one of the sessions. You will attend the Session meeting, following the training on the same day.

ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION OF ELDERS AND DEACONS

January 21, 2024 during the Worship Service, 10:00 a.m. (pending Session approval)

We will ordain and install our newly elected church leaders, Elders and Deacons, who will serve God and God's church. They will use their God-given talents and leadership skills for the next two years, beginning in January, 2024.



CONGREGATIONAL ANNUAL MEETING

PROJECTED AS February 11, 2024

The Congregational Annual Meeting is projected to be held on February 11, 2024 after worship (pending approval) so please mark your calendar. Any item can come up during the Annual Meeting and all reports from all groups in the church will be reviewed and approved. Chairs of All Committees and Groups, both Session and Deacons, please turn in your Annual Reports by **January 21, 2024** so they can be printed.

NEW CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP SERVICE

***First Sunday in February 2024
at 8:30 a.m.***

Beginning the Sunday, February 4, 2024 at 8:30 a.m. Please join us for the new casual contemporary worship service held in the Community Activity Room in the Christian Education Wing. The services will be about 45 minutes long and include relevant messages contemporary worship music played by Price Smith. We would love to have you join us this February!

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

In case of inclement weather, Sunday morning worship will proceed unless you hear differently from the church on that day. Please be safe and use your best judgement. If you cannot attend the service in person, tune-in for our live stream on our youtube page!



If Port Huron Area Schools are closed for inclement weather, the office will be closed on that day.

Office Hours Change
December 26-28th will be from 9-12 p.m.

ATTENTION: SONSHINE SISTERS

Before you leave the church each Sunday, please look at the countertop by the elevator doors to see if your Sunshine Sister has left you something special.

Happy Birthday!

DECEMBER

Alan Kuester	12/02
Daniel Shogren	12/03
Anne Wilton	12/04
Mary Bell O'Connor	12/10
Darla Hayes	12/17
Robert Williams	12/17
Ayana Brooks	12/18
Richard Tinsley	12/22
Robin Ferguson	12/23
Mollie Brown	12/26
Ellie Pretty	12/29
Ann Crandall	12/31

JANUARY

Judy Hall	01/01
Miah Kallapure	01/06
Christopher Lee	01/07
Judith McLean	01/07
Taylor Matthews	01/09
Helen Weston	01/09
Jennifer Carolan	01/13
Dene Tyrrell	01/14
Sheryl Neal	01/17
Jacqueline Green	01/18
Nancy Hunter	01/20
Maryann Kiger	01/30
Sally Meier	01/30

Happy Anniversary!



DECEMBER

Steven and Jill Emery	12/02
Ross and Jacqueline Green	12/11
Patrick and Peggy Dempsey	12/28
Robert and Joan Vandawaker	12/30



Repairs and renovations continue in the Fellowship Hall.
Please excuse the work you might see being done to
improve our church building!

COME WORSHIP WITH US

Sundays

Sanctuary Worship - 10:00 a.m.

**Fellowship time immediately
following worship.**

**OUR MISSION:
KNOW the love of God,
GROW in the Christian faith,
GO share our faith in Jesus
Christ.**

Connect with us!

**Facebook: @FirstPresbyterianChurch
Port Huron**

YouTube: @FirstPresbyterianChurch

Website: www.fpcporthuron.org

**Reverend Doctor Roxie Davis
Pastor**

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**Christian Education Director
portpresby.ce@gmail.com**



**Paige Cronce/Laura Gaffney
Social Media/Marketing Tech
portpresby.social@gmail.com**



**Kristie Lamb
Financial Secretary
fpcbookkeeping811@gmail.com
(Tuesday 9am-2pm)**



**Gary Rhody
Organist
1st Sunday of every month**



**Elizabeth Roe
Pianist, all other Sundays**



**Laura Gaffney
Office Administrator
portpresby@gmail.com
(M-TH: 9am-2pm)**



**Bill Briscoe
Custodian/Maintenance Director
(Contact for appointments)**



**Elizabeth Block
Nursery Attendant
September-May;
Sundays 9:30-11:30 a.m.**



Amy Block, Nursery Assistant