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**Presbyterian Times**

**January 1st, 2020**

First Presbyterian Church

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**A Message from Our Pastor**

Rev. Lou Ellen Hartley

On Epiphany Sunday each person in worship received a star. On the stars were words which are to be our words for the year. This practice of receiving Epiphany Stars has been a part of some congregations’ annual celebrations for years. Others, like us, are just starting this spiritual practice. According to the website [www.reformedworship.org](about:blank), “Everyone who receives a star gift is encouraged to take it home and hang it up where they are sure to see it every day. It may be on their bathroom mirror, or next to their computer screen. Often when I am visiting in someone’s home, I will notice a star gift adorning the refrigerator or posted by the back door where it will be seen as people depart and enter their home. Many people keep their star gifts from year to year; gradually accumulating a virtual constellation of wise words and encouragement displayed as a reminder of God’s presence in our lives.”

Several of you have asked if there was a method to the madness. Did I intend certain people to receive a particular gift? The answer is no. I used the list of words provided by the reformed worship website, and the stars were given randomly. Although they are random gifts, the words may seem like they are deliberate. Some might call that serendipity, but I like to think it is more providential than that. Perhaps God is using this word as a tool to help you grow, to provide comfort, to challenge in the new year.

Whether you *like* the word you received, how you use the gift if up to you. Some of you may ignore the word and discard it without another thought. Others of you may use it as it was intended, an opportunity to seek God’s voice in the weeks and months to come.

If you were unable to attend the service on January 5 but would like to receive a star, please let me know. We have a star waiting for you.

May Christ’s peace surround us all in the coming days.

Pastor Lou Ellen

**Annual Congregational Meeting on January 26, 2020**

Immediately following the worship service on January 26, we will have our annual congregational meeting.

We will receive the annual report, vote on the pastor’s terms of call, and elect new officers.

The Congregational Nominating Committee will present the following slate of nominees:

Elder: Maudanne Pursley, Pam Cottingham, Deanne Jackson

Deacon: Jean Moran-Day, Bob May, Cheryl Koederitz

Trustee: Ray Fox, Steve Skelton

**PC(USA) MATTHEW 25 CHURCH**Using Matthew 25 as the inspiration for the church’ vision and mission, the General Assembly is encouraging each church, presbytery and synod to consider embracing what it means to be a Matthew 25 church.   
**What is a Matthew 25 church?**Matthew 25:31–46 calls all of us to actively engage in the world around us, so our faith comes alive and we wake up to new possibilities. Convicted by this passage, both the 222nd and 223rd General Assemblies (2016 and 2018) exhorted the PC(USA) to act boldly and compassionately to serve people who are hungry, oppressed, imprisoned or poor.

**How the vision unites all Presbyterians**By accepting the Matthew 25 invitation, you can help our denomination become a more relevant presence in the world. We recognize Christ’s urgent call to be a church of action, where God’s love, justice and mercy shine forth and are contagious. And we rejoice how our re-energized faith can unite all Presbyterians for a common and holy purpose: our common identity to do mission.

**Discerning the Call**Some of you may be thinking, we already engage our community in many ways! Why do we need to declare ourselves a Matthew 25 church?   
It’s true, we engage in and support ministries which reflect Matthew 25, but part of our calling is to join together to discern the meaning of our life together, how we may better engage in mission, what we may need to change, what we may need to revitalize, what we may need to try. The world is always changing and so must we as we discover where God wants us to minister and what God wants us to learn.

**Take the Opportunities**Throughout the year, take the opportunities to discover and rediscover Matthew 25, and let’s see where it takes us.

**Matthew 25:31–46**31 ‘When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. 32All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, 33and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. 34Then the king will say to those at his right hand, “Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; 35for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.” 37Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? 38And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? 39And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?” 40And the king will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” 41Then he will say to those at his left hand, “You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; 42for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.” 44Then they also will answer, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?” 45Then he will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.” 46And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.’

**DINNER AND DISCIPLESHIP**

Join us every Thursday evening following Fired UP! for a time of dinner, fellowship, and discussion. Starting February 6 we will begin a Bible Study on Matthew 25.

Join us at Alex’s Pizza at 7:15 beginning on February 6.

😊 😊 😊 Congregational Life Committee 😊 😊 😊

**1**. **Friday Night Dinner** will be **January 10th** at **Bandana’s BBQ** at **6:00 p.m.** Please let Lee Bennett know that you plan to come so he can inform the restaurant of the number for seating. We always have a good time visiting with each other as we eat.

**2**. The **“Open House”** for members and the community was held Sunday, December 22, from 3 – 5 p.m. in our Sanctuary. A “Journey to Bethlehem” and “Christmas Caroling” was shared … along with cider and cookies, decorations, more music, and fellowship. We received positive feedback on this event.

**3**. **Small Group Dinners** will begin!! To get this idea going …. Jan & Larry Roberts …. Bob & Carlene May will host the first two opportunities to have dinner in their home. The Roberts’ will host **6 individuals** to join them on **Friday, January 24th at 5:30 p.m.** The May’s will host **6 individuals** for **Friday, February 14th at 5:30 p.m.** …. (also known as Valentine’s Day!!) …

If you would like to participate in the **Small Group Dinners**, please fill out a slip of paper available in the pew and drop it into the offering plate. We will collect these names and be in contact with you. (If you have any questions, you may talk to Jan or Bob who are with the Congregational Life Committee.)

God so loved the world that he gave …. And we give our love to God in return.

WISHING YOU A BLESSED YEAR IN 2020

**OUTREACH COMMITTEE NEWS**

As we end the year of 2019, the mission committee would like to thank you for your generosity in giving to missions this past year. The Basket of Hope during Lent, crayons for Back to School and Disaster Buckets in the fall, Thanksgiving baskets, Christmas gift and food boxes, plus the special offerings of One Great Hour of Sharing, Pentecost, Peace and Global Witness, and Christmas Joy, all were used to benefit our community and beyond.



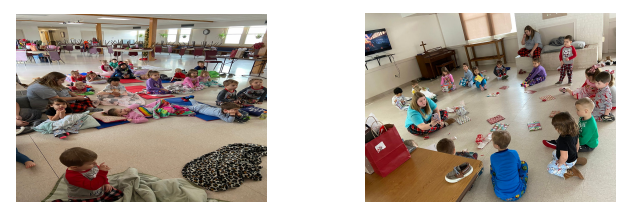
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May you have a safe, healthy and happy New Year!



**Preschool News**

December brought us holiday fun with our friends and our first snow day. The snow came on the day we were to have our Christmas Program and unfortunately, we had to cancel it. We did go to the sanctuary and recorded some of the songs to send home for parents to see - though it wasn’t the same. We are excited to announce a partnership with The Community Partnership. Missouri was awarded a big early childhood grant. There is a pilot program that is called the Infant Toddler Specialist Network. We are the first program in Phelps County to get started. They will be working with our 2’s teachers and kids. They have been here to rate the rooms (there is a universal scale that is used). The ladies rating us have been very impressed, but with everything there is always room for growth. They will help us develop an improvement plan and provide coaching, mentoring and training to reach our goals. There are incentives for our program along the way.



**FIRST FRIDAY NIGHT OUT LOCATION CHANGE**

Due to the recent fire at Bandannas, First Friday Night will move to Alex’s Pizza.

**FROM THE OFFICE**

Katie Sands, Office Manager

The staff would like to extend a sincere thank you to everyone for their holiday wishes and gifts. It is very much appreciated to be thought of and recognized.

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**2020 Per Capita** goes up to **$38.00**

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**January 1st** – Office closed for New Year’s Day

**January 10th** – First Friday Night Out at Alex’s Pizza

**January 26th** – Annual Congregational Mtg immediately following worship

**January 21st** – Office closed for Martin Luther King Jr. Day

**January 29th** – Newsletter article deadline.

Our ***Birthday***wishes go out to:

**9th** *Melba Read, Pat Look,*

***11th*** *Katherine Cook- Russell, Dixie Finley, Jan Roberts*

***12th*** *Angela Isaac, Jim Jackson*

***16th*** *Tricia Lewis, Carlene May, Morgan Romine*

***18th*** *Bob May*

***20th*** *Carol Bennett*

***28th*** *Eban Fox*



Our ***Anniversary*** wishes go out to:

**17th** *Leslie & Steve Skelton*

***21st*** *Bill & Sharlene Morgan*

***27th*** *Cheryl & Lenn Koederitz*



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