**First Presbyterian Newsletter December 2023**

**Songs of the Season – by Kimby Young**

You will probably catch me humming or singing at some time in the next month. And I know I will not be alone. Many of us have a song on our tongue or a melody in our heart. This season is filled with music. Even the scripture we read started out in musical form. We remember an angel chorus and the songs of all those who gather at the time of the birth of Jesus.

In worship on the first two Sundays of December we will explore some of those scriptural songs. The third Sunday our musicians will offer our Christmas Cantata. On Christmas Eve morning and evening we will sing lots of carols as we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.

In the busy month ahead listen to the message in the music, and know that Christ is with you. May you be blessed as we share the hope, peace, joy and love of Advent and Christmas.

**Scripture for Upcoming Worship**

December 3 – Songs of Hope: Isaiah and Zechariah – Isaiah 40:1-11; Luke 1:67-79.

December 10 – Songs of Peace: Hannah and Mary – 1 Samuel 2:1-10; Luke 1:39-55.

December 17 – Song of Joy – Cantata

**Advent Devotional booklets** are available for all ages around the theme – “Songs of the Season.” Devotions begin as Advent begins in December.

**One Worship Service at 10:00 a.m. for Three Weeks –**

**December 17, December 24 and December 31**

December 17 we will have one worship service at 10 to share the music of our Cantata.

On December 24, we will offer a children’s Christmas pageant at 10a.m.

On December 31 we will count down to the new year together celebrating God’s grace.

Join us **all three Sundays at 10 a.m.** if you are able.

**Christmas Eve Service, Sunday, December 24, 4:30 p.m. – Communion and Candlelight Worship**

Join us for worship on Christmas eve at 4:30 p.m.

Remember to invite family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers.

**Gardner Christmas Project**

For years we have supported the local volunteer program to provide gifts for children and families in need over the holidays. Each person receives 5 gifts. The children’s gifts are - Something You Want; Something You Need; Something To Wear; Something to Read and one extra. You may select names off our list. Please return gifts for children and families in our area by December 10. Mission Pillar will sort them and deliver to the drop off point. You may also include cash (checks to FPC Gardner) for gifts cards or committee purchases.

**Hanging of the Greens – Decorating Party - Friday, December 1, 3-8 p.m.**

Join us in decorating the sanctuary and narthex for Advent and Christmas. Work will begin at 3pm on Friday, December 1, and will continue until completed. Come after work or when you are free. Leave whenever you need to leave. Stay all or part of the time. Call Oliver Schwab if you are coming late to check on progress. (486-8562) All strength and skill levels are welcome.

**Mrs. Claus will visit Sunday School**

**Sunday, December 10, 10 a.m.**

**Fellowship Hall**

Mrs. Claus is coming to read to our children and youth. Mrs. Claus is a dear friend of deacon Barbara Sue Sweetwood. She visits area schools and libraries and has agreed to work us into her schedule. Adults are welcome to listen in as well and take pictures. Guests are welcome.

**Fair Trade - Hot Chocolate Tasting**

**December 10 - between services**

Fair Trade products are distributed so that the profits go to small farms or farm workers at a just wage. Chocolate bars are a favorite product and great for Christmas. Hot chocolate and teas are also available. Several new flavors of chocolate have been added to the inventory. Come try some of the new products on Sunday, December 10, in the narthex between services, and shop for Christmas gifts and treats.

**Ordination and Installation**

New officers for 2024 will be ordained and installed during both worship services on Sunday, December 10. Members present promise our support in their work and our prayers for the years ahead. Please join us in worship.

**JOY offering – PCUSA**

By giving to the Christmas Joy Offering, one of the four offerings of the Presbyterian Church, USA, you honor God’s gift of Jesus Christ by providing assistance to current and retired church workers in their time of need (ministers, educators, musicians and administrators) and by developing our future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. At First Presbyterian Church we will receive the Joy offering at any time in December including Christmas Eve. Mark your checks with the designation “PCUSA JOY offering.”

**Monthly Financial Report**

At the end of October our records indicate:  
total income this month is $ 36,262.63

total expenses this month is $ 26,122.26

The session and finance/operations pillar thank each of you for your contributions to the church – financial or any other contribution. A complete line by line expense report is available upon request. We will close finances for November after December 3.

**Weather Cancellation Policy**

Usually, we try to worship if possible. We may modify worship or cancel Sunday school. Even if we don’t cancel. Be smart. Be cautious. Don't take any chances. Even if a church event is not cancelled, if you do not feel comfortable getting out, you are excused. If you have a duty, we will find someone to cover for you.

Generally, midweek if school is cancelled, events are cancelled. But discretion is given to event leaders to cancel if needed. Check with the event leader to be sure.

Check emails, Facebook or the website (www.fpcgardner.church) for announcements about cancellation. Also check KMBC-TV notices.

Call Rev. Kimby 913-481-7076, or Connie 913-244-8185.

**PW Holiday High Tea**

**Saturday, December 2, 1 p.m.**

Our annual Christmas event will take place in the Fellowship Hall at 1:00 p.m. Bring 2 dozen cookies to share for a cookie exchange. Also bring a white elephant gift to share. All are welcome.

Please Pray for *Karen Elliott, Sarah Ritter, Pam McSwane, Dax Hoover, Mike Fraser, family of Susie Lane, Mitch McSwane, Heather Elliott, Juanita Murrow, Jon Deiley, Dennis Patton, Arlene Carroll, Mary Dean, Dustin Toman, Jerry Seim, Abe Portenier, Amanda Allen, LeMoyne Zimmerman, Mike Judah, Dozer Reed, Trinity D’Autorio, Skyla D’Autorio, Jackson Tijerina, Reagan Barnadt, Steve and Laurie Holben.*

**Ushers for December 2023 8:45 a.m.**

Phil Lenahan, Paula Waters, Karl Allen, Kim Allen



***CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS FOR SANCTUARY COST $13.00***

Poinsettias for the sanctuary may be purchased in memory of or in honor of someone special, just place your order by Monday, December 4th, using the forms provided in the bulletins or call it in (856-4099). The poinsettias are $13.00 each and will be used for Sunday, December 10th, December 17th and the Christmas Eve service. You may take them home after the Christmas Eve service if you wish.

Quantity:\_Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

In Memory\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

In Honor\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Women’s Fellowship Group** will not meet in December 2023, we will join the PW group for a Christmas Tea.  See their write up for details.

Our group meets on the first Wednesday of each month from March through November in Fellowship Hall and is open to all women of the church. Our purpose is to care and support through fellowship, and to support mission and service projects of the church.

**Men’s Breakfast on Tuesday**, December 12 Perkins at 7:00 a.m.

**Offering envelopes** if anyone needs offering envelopes for 2024, please let Connie know. Thanks

**Presbyterian Youth Fellowship** would like to thank everyone who attended the brunch in November. Hopefully your hearts were filled as well as your stomachs through fellowship and a good meal. The continued support of the congregation and the community is a vital part of keeping youth mission experiences affordable. We are already looking forward to the 2025 trip. Please know that through your participation and donations, you are a huge part of the work that is done, even if you don't travel with the group.

|  |
| --- |
| A colorful logo with black text  Description automatically generated**Store Hours**  **MONDAY 10 – 7**  **TUESDAY` 10 – 7**  **WEDNESDAY 10 – 4**  **THURSDAY 10 – 7**  **SATURDAY 10 - 2** |
| A large pile of garbage in a room  Description automatically generated**Blessed with Donations!!**  **Donations are up and everyone is busy. It’s a great time to volunteer!**  **Still looking for volunteers in every department.**  **Volunteer Opportunities:**   * **Cashier Assistant every other Thurs 10-1 and on Mon 4-7** * **Men’s clothes, Bedding, and Shoes** * **Come visit us and fill out a volunteer card or see Cathy Cochran.** |
| **Lots of things happening at JOY Closet:**   * Children’s book week was Nov 6-11. We provided 81 children with free books. We love encouraging children to become readers! * On Veteran’s Day, we honored Veterans with 50% off sales up to $50. It was a small way of letting them know we appreciate them and all veterans. * November designated donations will go to Gardner Gold Special Olympics group. * Quilt raffle: tickets are being sold for two quilts. Proceeds will go to the JOY Closet Scholarship Fund. * JOY Closet provided clothing and coats to the homeless. |
| **Thank you to the volunteers from Sacred Heart Catholic Church.**  A group of women standing in a warehouse  Description automatically generated  A group of people in a room  Description automatically generated  **We appreciate the hard work and encourage you to volunteer again soon!** |
| A group of women in a store  Description automatically generated  **Thank you!**  A group of women standing in a room  Description automatically generated**We were blessed with a group from New City Church of Edgerton, who helped empty bins and did initial sorting.**  A group of people posing for a photo  Description automatically generated  **Thanks so much and come see us again!** |
| **See Cindy Rollf if you have a group that would like to help!** |
| Top 18 Bible Verses-Faith - Everyday Servant**For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me.**  **Matthew 25:35-36 NIV**  ***JOY Closet is a ministry of***  ***First Presbyterian Church of Gardner, KS***  ***Serving our community since 2013*** |