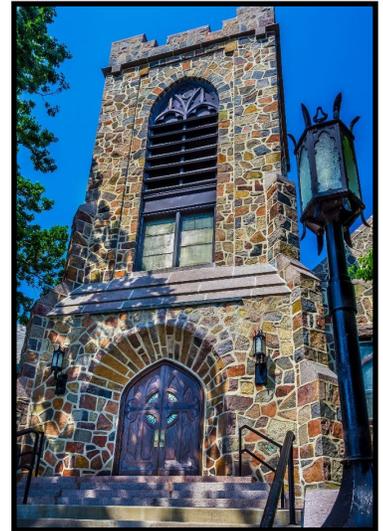


The Tower

January 2026



Soup Dinner

Connect with us once again during our next soup dinner. Our Wednesday night community meal is January 21. Dinner begins at 5:00 pm. Watch for the sign-up poster in the main entrance. A free-will offering supports the youth ministry of the congregation. Invite someone to join you.



First Presbyterian Church

340 South 5th Avenue
Saint Cloud, MN 56301
Telephone: 320-251-8277
www.fpcstcloud.org

Church Staff

REV. DARIN SEAMAN
Pastor

KRISTINA SCHAAB
Administrative Assistant

JULLIAN EUTENEUER
Music Director

LORA HANSEN
Youth Director

BRAD JOHNSON
Facilities Coordinator

PATTY SCOTT
Custodian

DON ONDRACEK
Asst Custodian

Annual Meeting

Please join us on Sunday, January 25 after worship for our Annual Meeting of the corporation and congregation. Annual reports will be made available. We will gather in the Fellowship Hall and give thanks to God for another year of ministry here at First Presbyterian.



Pastor's Reflections

In the insert of this Tower, you will find the Service Groups list for 2026. Service groups play a vital role in the life of the congregation. They, along with others in the church, offer hospitality to members and friends. In Christine Pohl's book about hospitality, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*, the author explores the biblical and historical research regarding hospitality. The central theme is that for most of church history practicing hospitality was central to Christian identity. Yet, some would say, our current generation knows little about this rich, life-giving practice. The author reminds us:

Hospitality is not optional for Christians, nor is it limited to those who are specially gifted for it. It is instead, a necessary practice in the community of faith. One of the key Greek words for hospitality, philoxenia, combines the general word for love or affection for people who are connected by kinship or faith (phileo), and the word for stranger (xenos). Thus etymologically and practically, in the New Testament, hospitality is closely connected to love.

To extend our hospitality beyond worship we provide opportunities for fellowship. We call them Service Groups. These groups serve after worship each Sunday offering hospitality to those who make it downstairs. Specifically, they bring cookies and help serve throughout the year including helping with the monthly dinner we provide. Below are some questions that have come up over the years.

What if I can't serve anymore?

We realize that not everyone can serve after worship in the kitchen and Fellowship Hall. But, some may prefer to bring cookies or help out in some other way rather than serving in the kitchen.

If I am the coordinator, do I serve every Sunday?

Not at all. You are responsible for lining up servers for your particular month. Please do not think that you are required to do the work by yourself.

Do I need to do everything exactly like it was last week?

No. Service groups vary in form and function and some like to put their own personality on their own service.

The grace and peace of Christ be with you.




Rev. Darin Seaman

December Sermon Titles

January 4

“The Word Became Flesh”
John 1:1-18

January 11

“Why Debts?”
Matthew 18:21-35

January 18

“Why Bother With a Church?”
1 Corinthians 12:12-26
Hebrews 10:19-25

January 25

“Why Pass the Peace?”
John 14:25-31

Mission Committee

Do you ever wonder what the Mission Committee does? Well, lots of things!

We [are blessed](#) to [be provided](#) with an annual budget, thanks to our generous congregation. At the beginning of each year, we distribute the money and authorize the payments throughout the year. We support local groups like Terebinth Refuge and FACT (Feeding Area Children Together). Nationally, we were able to support the mission team that recently helped to rebuild homes affected by hurricanes in North Carolina. Internationally, we support Orongo Missions in Kenya and a nursing school in Pakistan.

Our biggest project is Angel Tree, which just wrapped up in December. We also partner with Hope Covenant six times throughout the year to give food out to our neighbors in need. This is a very moving ministry, handing groceries to anyone who shows up.

Committee members are Betty Payne, Kathy Arnold, Norm Seehusen, Tami Calhoun, Thijin Gatwech, and Rhonda Siltman (moderator). We meet the second Tuesday of each month at 3pm in the church library. We would love to have new members. Talk to any of the members to learn more about all the fun we have and the difference we [are blessed](#) to be making.

Thank you!

Thanks to your generosity, we were able to serve 65 children and 9 caregivers this year through the Gift Tree/Angel Tree ministry. As the gifts were delivered, we were able to see the impact this made on the families served. Your donations are the only gifts many of these children will receive. For children served through the Angel Tree Prison Fellowship program, children were able to receive a gift from a parent who has no other way of giving to them. What a wonderful program to allow us to meet this need! Many in the community will have a brighter Christmas thanks to you.

Mission Committee



YOUTH

C.O.R.E Children's Ministry

Each member of C.O.R.E ministry is challenged every series to memorize a selected Bible verse. Please help me in congratulating Theo and Gwen Pennertz for rising to this challenge. Both of them were able to recite John 8:12 last week. The next challenge will begin on the 7th of January. Watch our website to find out the new memory verse and get a headstart on memorizing!

This month, our C.O.R.E teens made care packages for individuals who are shut-in.

Thank you to all of the members who contributed and attended the annual Crusade Concert with children's nativity. The program gives the children an opportunity to be a part of something bigger than themselves. They can experience what it is like to perform in front of others in a warm and loving environment, helping them gain skills and confidence in themselves. Your words of encouragement and recognition to all the participants are impactful.

If you took pictures during the program, please consider mentioning or tagging First Presbyterian Church on Facebook. For the photos to be shared with First Presbyterian, the post audience must be set to public. Thank you to all who have shared, liked, or commented on our social media posts over the last few months. It has helped us; we have been recognized by Facebook as a recommended page.

Let's continue to grow our C.O.R.E!

Lora Hansen

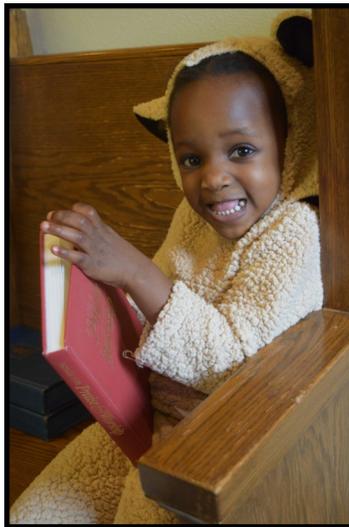
Director of C.O.R.E Youth Ministry
First Presbyterian Church St. Cloud
320-492-2403



January Activities

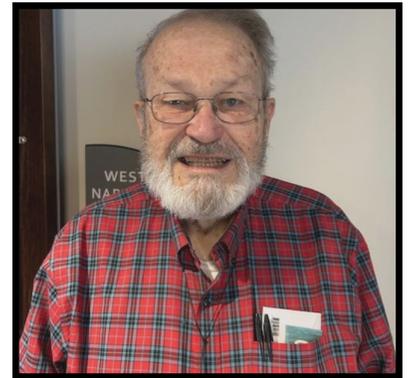
Jan 4	No Sunday School
Jan 11	No Sunday School
	G.I.F.T Sunday
Jan 18	Sunday School
Jan 25	Family Gathering 1 p.m. Bowling at the SCSU Underground Alley

YOUTH Scenes from December



Who's Who in the Pew?

Jim Johnson



Tell us about yourself.

I attended Hibbing High School then Bemidji State College graduating from Mankato State College with a degree in industrial arts and science. I taught two years at a high school in Cleveland followed by teaching industrial arts at a high school in Maple Heights, Ohio for six years. I then earned my master's degree from John Carol University in Ohio.

After that I was principal at Randolph High School in Randolph, Minnesota for three years. I then earned my Education Specialist degree and for the next twenty four years worked at Rocori School District finishing as principal of the high school before retiring. I lived in Cold Spring for 50 years.

How long have you been attending FPC? Before that, where have you attended?

I became a member 6-7 months ago after attending FPC for about a year. I attended the Methodist Church in Paynesville and then went to Peace Lutheran Church in Cold Spring because it was closer to home

Share anything you wish about your family/children.

I have three children. Jay who is CEO of a conglomerate of handicapped care units, Bart who teaches at Spring Lake Park and is the basketball coach and Maria who is an ICU nurse. I have six grandchildren-Gianna, Wesley, Millie, Nora, Jameson and Bennett.

What is a Bible verse or verses that hold deep meaning for you?

Many verses, especially John 1:1 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." I recently got out of the hospital after nearly fainting. Concerned it was a heart attack but it turned out I needed an adjustment to my blood pressure medication. I am so grateful.

What are favorite pastimes/hobbies of yours?

Woodworking and painting stones-I make canes, decorations, Christmas ornaments and diamond willow coat racks. In the past I did a lot of hunting and fishing-sometimes twice a day.

What are some small things that brighten your day?

I have 9 reasons to live-my 3 children and my 6 grandchildren. I like to see young people dressed up as they go about their day. I wore a tie every day until I retired!

(cont. from page 6)

Given the choice of anyone in the world past or present, whom would you enjoy as a dinner guest and why?

I would like to have dinner with Jesus when He comes again

Share anything unique or memorable you do/have done that others might not know about you.

I have traveled to the Holy Land two times-I walked where Jesus walked and baptized myself in the Jordan River.

I went on a caribou hunt about 100 miles north of Yellowknife, Northwest Territories in Canada. While watching female caribou walk between some rocks, one came and sniffed me-found me uninteresting and walked away. I was glad she didn't bite me!

Thank You

Thank you to everyone that supported our Advent activities during the month of December: Crusade Choir and Nativity Program, Youth Christmas Party, Salvation Army Bell Ringing, Christmas Tea, Angel Tree, etc. By working together we are able to make a difference to our members and neighbors.



Deacon's Corner

In December the Deacons and Elders held a joint potluck. We thanked the class of 2025 for their service and welcomed the new members of the class of 2028. We would like to introduce you to three new Deacons. The nominating committee is continuing their search for two more Deacons.

Mike Tollefson

I was raised in Wisconsin (go Packers) and served 20 years in Army Aviation. After the service, I made a career of being a Custodian in various school districts in Fridley, Elk River and the St. Cloud area. I have 1 grown daughter. Kim and I married in 2011 and that is when I became a member of First Presbyterian Church. I look forward to partnering with Kim and serving as a first time Deacon.

Kim Tollefson

I started attending First Presbyterian Church as a college student (a long time ago!) I have 2 children, both baptized and confirmed at First Presbyterian Church. Mike and I were married here. Between the two of us we have 9 grandchildren ages 19 down to 2. I have served in various capacities in my 50 years of membership and now I look forward to serving as a Deacon, once again, this time partnering with Mike. I am so blessed to be a part of this church community.

John Detra

I was born in Boulder CO and was raised 3 blocks away from First Presbyterian Church on 4th Avenue right here in St. Cloud. My parents were both professors at SCSU. I went to Campus Lab school K-8 and then graduated from Tech High School. I then went on to St. John's and graduated in 1978 with a BA Degree in Public Administration and a minor in Psychology. I spent my career in part ownership of 2 companies and then went on to be a Software National Sales Manager at Bankers Systems and Regional Sales Manager for IKON, Ricoh Direct and Loffler. I have one daughter, Hannah, who is married and lives in the Twin Cities.

Worship Update

What do we do in the Worship Committee? Our Worship Committee meets on the second Monday of each month at 3:00PM to help provide “for the worship of the people of God.”

We receive training in how each of the following informs our worship:

- a. Our Book of Order Directory for Worship
- b. Our Reformed Tradition
- c. The Bible



We respond to congregational feedback and assist Pastor Darin and others in worship. We also look at trends in other denominations as well as our own. We recommend pulpit supply when the Pastor is gone, provide Advent and Lenten leadership, and oversee the overall worship in our congregation.

Do you have an interest in helping create meaningful worship in our church? You do not have to be a Session member. Our committee currently consists of the following members: Bob Butter, Nancy Coleman, Marsha Elg, Mark Scholer, Betty Vigen, Don Watkins with Pastor Darin. You may speak with any of us. You are invited to join us in the Library for our next Worship Committee meeting on Monday, January 12 at 3 PM.

Submitted by Marsha Elg

During this season of joy and thankfulness, I am so thankful for my church family. A sincere thank you for all the prayers, cards, phone calls, and visits during my stay in Rehab. A special thank you to Pastor Darin for his visits and encouragement.

They are very much appreciated.

Sara Dorn





Service Group — January 2026 Chairs - Sandy Ross and Betty Vigen

Dick Andzenge
David/Vicki Baston
Carrie Butter
Phil/Jeannie Chu

Arsene Foka
Jan Larson
Lynn Miller
Verlyn Owen

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVERS SCHEDULE

Listed below is the Server Schedule for Sunday Worship. If you are unavailable for the assigned date, please swap with someone else scheduled that month. Also notify the office of any swaps. Thank you for your service to the Church.

	Worship Leader	Ushers (2)	Greeter (1/2)
Jan. 4	Dick Andzenge	Gail Aalderks/Mike Rutter	Nancy Coleman
Jan. 11	Carrie Butter	Randy/Kathy Arnold	Kari Ahles
Jan. 18	Randy Hammond	Nancy Coleman	John Bowden
Jan. 25	Rhonda Siltman	Karen/Ron Larson	Jan Larson/Lois Buchin
Feb. 1	Jackie Benn	Linda Bettison	Gail Aalderks/Mike Rutter
Feb. 8	Bob Butter	Dan Owen/Ryne Pentz	Karen Larson
Feb. 15	Bobbie Lampi	Leroy/Paula Tift	Lynn Rae Olson/Carrie Raiche
Feb. 22	Michelle Chan	John Bowden/Shauana Seaman	Betty Payne

Thijin Gatwech 01/01
Mary Ruble Johnson 01/01
Elizabeth Tot 01/01
Susan Hornibrook 01/14
Jan East 01/18
Caroline Johnson 01/18
Alarie Chu 01/19



Richard Lawrence 01/19
Vicky Pelzer 01/19
Ken Picha 01/19
Don Casey 01/24
Dorothy Paskvan 01/24
Braylon Yogerst 01/28
Joy Weeres 01/30

Finance Update

As we approach year-end, we wanted to give you an update on the year. We are thankful for the results of our Covenant Sunday annual campaign. Your generosity allowed us to raise our budget 2% over last year. We are grateful for all your pledges to make our 2026 budget projections without having to make any adjustments to the on-going programs and activities.

As year-end approaches, Session voted to give our mission committee an additional \$2,000 to help our local community. In addition, they voted to make a payment to Clearwater Forest for their current capital campaign.

During the fourth quarter, we were able to fund the repair of 3 smaller stained glass windows. With this project completed, all of our stained glass windows have been repaired and new outside protective coverings have been updated.

We are finishing the year in good shape financially.

Thank you for your generosity!

Tom Horn, Finance Chair

“Finishing The Race”

We continue to get members submitting their commitments to this fundraiser. In December, we received an additional \$15,000 funds from outstanding commitments. This allowed us to make an additional principal payment. This payment lowered our loan balance to just over \$26,000. As we continue to receive outstanding commitments, our loan balance is on track to be retired by the end of June 2026.

THANK YOU!!

Karen Ondracek

Don Watkins

Finances	November	YTD
Contributions	27,995.50	\$359,935.50
Expenses	\$38,943.47	\$331,228.89
Over/under	-\$10,947.97	\$28,707.01



First Presbyterian Church
340 South 5th Avenue
Saint Cloud, MN 56301
Telephone: 320-251-8277
e-mail: admasst@fpcstcloud.org
web site: www.fpcstcloud.org

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
PERMIT NO. 311
Saint Cloud, MN
56301

Our Mission Statement

*"Bringing the Living Hope of
the Gospel to the World by
Knowing and Serving Jesus
Christ"*

Our Vision Statement

*"The Kingdom of God made
known one sacred space at a
time"*

Office Hours

Monday - Thursday

8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
BIBLE STUDIES**

Tuesday 9:00 a.m.
Men's Bible Study

Wednesday 9:15 a.m.
Women's Bible Study

Friday 7:00 a.m.
Men's Bible Study

*You're invited to join a study that
works for you!*

**JANUARY 2026
SESSION**

Pastor Darin Seaman, Moderator
Bobbie Lampi, Clerk

Class of 2026: Tom Horn (Finance), Marsha Elg (Worship),
Bob Butter (Worship), Norine Schmitt (Personnel)

Class of 2027: Jim Anderson (Youth), Brenda Espelien
(Fellowship), Thijin Gatwech (Mission), Sandy
Ross (Fellowship)

Class of 2028: Rhonda Siltman (Mission), Jacob Priest (Property),
David Pennertz, Charlie Pentz

DEACONS

Class of 2026: Michael Rutter, Gail Aalderks, Paula Tift, Mary Lease,
Carrie Butter

Class of 2027: Jackie Benn, John Johnson, Sharon Johnson,
Linda Sarff, Lori Smith

Class of 2028: Kim Tollefson, Mike Tollefson, John Detra