

The Tower

December 2025

Christmas Tea

Dec. 6 @ 12:00 pm

Join us for the annual Christmas Tea to be held on Saturday, Dec. 6 at noon. Tickets can be purchased at the church or by calling the office at 320-251-8277. Tickets are \$20. Limited to-go orders are also possible this year.

For more information, please see Brenda Espelien.



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

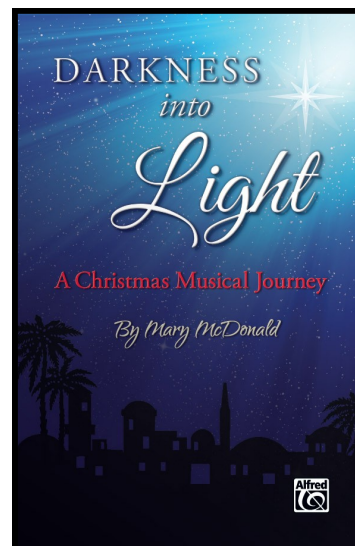
DON ONDRACEK
Asst Custodian

Darkness Into Light

Come celebrate the season with us during the Crusade Choir's December concert series. Jullian Euteneuer leads a cast of many from various churches as they shed light into our Advent and Christmas celebrations.

Performances are:

Friday, Dec. 12 7 pm
Saturday, Dec. 13 7 pm
Sunday, Dec. 14 2 pm



Freewill donations will go to help offset a few costs and benefit local families in our community.

Pastor's Reflections

Recently, I was at an event where the people sitting at my table were discussing their family of origin stories. "I don't drink alcohol because my father was a raging alcoholic." His father's alcoholism impacted his childhood greatly. Another member commented that her mother was addicted to various painkillers. Their family was torn apart by her mother's addiction. I sat there thinking about the brokenness of the world. I was reminded of the hymn lyric from A Mighty Fortress Is Our God, "And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us, we will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us."



Rev. Darin Seaman

Each year during Advent and Christmas, we proclaim the familiar words, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." Theologians refer to it as the incarnation. The doctrine of the incarnation is the belief that the second person of the Trinity became a human being and assumed flesh in Jesus Christ. But, it is more than a doctrine. It is a reminder that God's love is not distant but close and personal. God does not save us from afar but enters our world with all its beauty and brokenness.

This mystery of the incarnation also calls us to a new way of life. As God comes near to us in Christ, we are sent to draw near to one another. We do so with compassion and courage. In a world that often keeps its distance, the incarnation empowers us to embody God's love with our hands, our words, our presence. (1)

During Advent and Christmas we don't focus on the limitations of this world. We properly think about the idea that God has broken into the world. We sing about it. We long for it. We wait.

Grace and peace to you this Advent and Christmas.

Darin

(1) Thomas Torrance in Trinitarian Perspectives, 2000.

December Sermon Titles

December 7

The Annunciation

Luke 1:26-38

New sermon series: Drawn to the Word

December 14

"The Visitation"

Luke 1:39-45

December 21

"The Magnificat"

Luke 1:46-56

December 24

"The Birth of Jesus"

Luke 2:1-20

Choir Opportunity

Hello Singers! Do you like to sing but don't have a lot of time to rehearse? Join the Chancel Christmas Season Choir for a few weeks, with rehearsals on Wednesdays, at 5-5:45! Connect with our Music Director, Jullian, at jeuteneuer@fpcstcloud.org, or by calling 320-251-8277, or stop by her office at church anytime!



With sincere gratitude, we thank everyone for the prayers, cards, and Pastor Darin's visits during Bob's surgery and rehabilitation.

He is no longer in pain and improves his mobility each day. We are very blessed.

-Bob and Betty Payne



Thank you Pastor Darin, Deacons, and church friends for prayers and good wishes for my recovery following a fall. They are very much appreciated.

-Phyllis Bowden

YOUTH

C.O.R.E Children's Ministry

Recap

We were blessed with the opportunity this month to have many of our youth serve us during the worship service on Nov 9th. Our youth assisted with greeting, handing out bulletins, ushering, and leading worship.

We also had the St Cloud Christian school reach out to bless us with a service day. A special thank you to Jeanne Duininck and Brenda Espelien for assisting with coordinating projects for 10 youth. The youth assisted with polishing silver, inventorying the kitchen supplies and deep cleaning the sanctuary.

G.I.F.T. Generations in Faith Together

During G.I.F.T. this month the youth and parents made "spirit rocks". The children picked an inspirational word to paint and decorate on the top of the rocks. Parents then assisted the children with finding Bible verses that focused on the inspirational word and painted it on the back of the rock. The youth will pray over these rocks prior to hiding them in the community, directing others that find them to the Bible for inspiration. Please join us in our prayer that these rocks are able to be a light to those that are in need of an uplifting message.



YOUTH

During the Wednesday night children's ministry, the youth again assisted with outreach by making sugar cookies to decorate for the upcoming Christmas party on the 20th of Dec. The Christmas party will be a community outreach opportunity. Please be on the lookout for further details and a Sign Up Genius. C.O.R.E will be needing volunteers for this fun and exciting event.

Last week we finished up with the series "Now You See Me" and the new series "Follow the Star" started Nov. 19. You may notice the new bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall. If you see Paula Tift, please give her a thank you for her creativity to create a fun and engaging environment for the children. You will also see that there is an interactive table in front of the new board. These are activities for young and old to do together. Feel free to check them out and use them to connect with the youth.

Upcoming Events in December

Dec. 10 Crusade Rehearsal 6:00 pm

Dec. 13/14 Christmas Pageant-involving the youth

Dec. 28 No Sunday School (Christmas Break)

Dec. 31 Family Game Night with Karaoke 6:00 - 9:00 pm



Who's Who in the Pew?

Barb Isaacson

Tell us about yourself

Born in Minneapolis, I lived near Lake Nokomis with my parents, 2 sisters, 2 brothers & usually a dog until moving to Burnsville when I was 11 years old. It was a newer suburb then with basically a drive-in movie theater, a Dairy Queen and a bowling alley. After high school, I went to St Olaf College in Northfield, MN, graduating with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing. This allowed for an interesting and diverse career. I've worked in hospitals, a nursing home, public health, worker's compensation rehabilitation and ended my career as a certified diabetes nurse educator. Steve and I met the old fashioned way (at my sister's wedding) and recently celebrated our 53rd anniversary.



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

We moved to St Cloud in 1981 and joined FPC in 1982. Before that we attended a UCC church in New Ulm & a Lutheran church in Minneapolis. When my family moved to Burnsville, we were charter members of a new church: Prince of Peace Lutheran Church. My mother was the organist and my dad was on the pastor call committee. It was a wonderful experience helping to start a church and watch it grow.

Share anything you wish about your family/children

Steve and I have 4 adult married children and 6 grandchildren ages 2-18. One son and his family lives in Wisconsin, the others live in MN. All of our children were confirmed at FPC & our youngest was baptized and married here. Two of our grandsons were baptized at FPC! We also have a "mostly good Lab" named Max.

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

Psalm 121-This beautiful psalm assures us of God's unwavering love for us.

John 3:16-This gives us God's promise through His gift of Jesus for our salvation.

What are favorite pastimes/hobbies of yours?

Music (many types), reading (book club), dog walking, gardening, boating, monthly lunch with friends, bird watching, knitting.

What are some small things that brighten your day?

Daily calls from my children/grandchildren sharing their stories, smiles and love, serving home communion, morning coffee with Steve.

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

Some things that have surprised even me include:

Skiing a black diamond run in the Rocky Mountains (I'm not that great a skier)

Doing a zip line in Costa Rica

Buying, riding (and loving it) my own jet ski when I retired (I share it with others!)

Annual Bake - Soup - Craft - Sale

A huge Thank You to those who donated baked goods, soups, craft items and money for our 2025 sale.

A special Thank You to the extra helpers who helped with setting up.

Proceeds totaled \$2,112.25. Money donations can still be put in the offering plates (marked "Bake Sale" on the memo line) or send them to the church office.

-Bake Sale Committee



Mother's Hubbard Cupboard

We have had another successful round of Mother Hubbard's Cupboard! Thank you all for your donations. The Deacons collected approx. 430 lbs of items including 30+ lbs in requested paper & cleaning supplies.

The donations were equally split among 3 groups: Terebinth Refuge, Husky Pantry, & Anna Maries. All were quite happy to receive these gifts, especially in light of the current SNAP situation. Again, as in the past, any monetary gifts to this ministry will be donated to appropriate recipients.



Deacon's Corner

In 1974, 42-year-old Charles was sent to prison in Alabama. Charles was not a career criminal. In fact, he was a well-respected attorney. No, Charles did not start life out as a criminal.

Charles was born in 1931 in Boston. As a child, he witnessed the charitable works of his parents. His mother cooked meals for the hungry during the Depression and his father donated his legal services to the United Prison Association of New England.

During World War II, young Charles organized fund-raising campaigns in his school that raised enough money to buy a Jeep for the army. Charles went on to serve in the US Marine Corps during the Korean War. Following his military service he founded his own law firm.

In 1968 Charles left his law firm to serve as counsel to presidential candidate, Richard Nixon. In 1969 he was appointed Special Counsel to the new President Nixon. It was during this time that things changed for Charles. He was described by others as a "hard man, the 'evil genius' of an evil administration." Charles himself stated that he was "willing...to be ruthless in getting things done."

Finally, on March 1, 1974, Charles was indicted for conspiring to cover up the Watergate burglaries. As he was facing arrest, a close friend gave him a copy of Mere Christianity by C. S. Lewis. After reading it, Charles became an evangelical Christian. After prayer and consultation with his fellowship group, Charles decided to plead guilty to the charge of obstructing justice and was sentenced to 1-3 years in prison.

After his release from prison, Charles founded "Prison Fellowship" which is today the nation's largest outreach to prisoners, ex-prisoners and their families. It is this organization that created the "Angel Tree Christmas" that churches across the country support to provide gifts for the children of incarcerated parents. Through this program children and their families know that they are not forgotten, that their mom or dad still loves them, even though they are separated by prison walls.

When you take a tag from our Angel Tree this year, remember Charles "Chuck" Colson, President Richard Nixon's "hatchet man" who was saved by Christ and led by the Holy Spirit to start this outreach.

Now, in the words of the last radio announcer, Paul Harvey, "You know the rest of the story."

Submitted by Jackie Benn, Deacon

Angel Tree

Children who live in poverty or with a parent in prison often face a bleak holiday season. Christmas can be a time of sadness and heartache instead of a time of joy. This Christmas you can help these children know they are loved by their parents, their community, and their Father in heaven.



Our Gift Tree will again include tags for children in our community who will likely not receive a gift without our help. These are children we know about through our local schools and through the Angel Tree program, a part of the Prison Fellowship* program.

The tree is up near the entrance so you can start shopping! There may be more than one idea on each tag so you can choose what you want to purchase. You do not need to get everything! We anticipate you can purchase the item(s) for between \$30-40.

All gifts are to be wrapped and the gift tag attached. Please return them to church no later than Sunday, Dec. 14th so the Mission Committee members can deliver the gifts before Christmas. If you have any questions or would like to assist with this ministry, please contact Kathy Arnold (290-4629) or any member of the Mission and Social Action Committee.

Help Support Kid's Hope

Each Christmas season, First Presbyterian Church joyfully hosts a POP-UP Shop during our Annual Christmas Tea fundraiser — not as a shopping event, but as a heartfelt glimpse into the experience of children served by Place of Hope's Kids Hope Shop.

This special initiative allows disadvantaged children to select gifts for every member of their immediate family — at no cost. They also hear the Christmas Story and enjoy a hot meal, making the day truly memorable.

Our POP-UP Shop exists to raise funds and collect gifts for this beautiful cause. We aim to stock shelves with items for babies, tweens, teens, moms, and dads — ensuring every child can give with joy.

Cash donations are especially impactful, thanks to Pastor Carol's tax-free buying power with local retailers. If you prefer to shop, a Wish List of needed items is available, and drop-off boxes will be located in the West Narthex until December 15th.

Visit the Campbell Room between December 6th and 14th to see how your generosity can touch hundreds of lives in our community.

For questions or more information, please contact **Brenda Espelien at (320) 291-5084.**



Service Group 10 — December **Chairs - Mike & Joni Karl**

Jay & Brenda Espelien	Elizabeth Mews
Bobbie Lampi	Paige Nutter
Mary Lease	Jan Shaver
John & Marilyn Lee	Jon Tufte

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)
Dec. 7	Rachel Buchin	John Bowden/John Detra	Randy/Kathy Arnold
Dec. 14	Tami Calhoun	Jeanne Duininck/John Hoffman	Alvin Chan/Michelle Yu
Dec. 21	Nancy Horn	Ryne Pentz/Duane Scherbing	Phil/Jeannie Chu
Dec. 28	Ryne Pentz	Lynn Rae Olson/Carrie Raiche	Jan Larson/Lois Buchin
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	Nancy Horn	Karen/Ron Larson	Jan Larson/Lois Buchin

Our internal system has been down for several weeks so we were unable to ascertain December birthday dates.



Faithfully Generous

*⁶ Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷ Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for **God loves a cheerful giver.** 2 Corinthians 9:6-7*

A huge **Thank You** to everyone that participated in our Covenant Sunday, November 16th. We had a tremendous response. We are grateful for the generosity of our members' giving of time, talents and tithes in this church. There is still time to submit your 2026 estimate of giving/pledge card. You can call the office with your pledge or mail it to the church office.

Our church family is special!!

God's blessings to you,

Tom Horn Finance Chair

"Finishing The Race"

Based on current commitments, we are within \$,8000 of meeting our goal.

We continue to receive monetary gifts each month, which allows us to make extra principal payments above our monthly scheduled payment. In November, we made a principal payment of \$8,600. To date, we have made \$69,800 additional principal payments. As of November month-end, our loan balance is \$42,900.

THANK YOU! You are amazing.

Karen Ondracek

Don Watkins

Finances

	October	YTD
Contributions	\$20,670.25	\$331,940.40
Expenses	\$24,541.89	\$292,285.42
Over/under	- \$3,871.64	\$39,654.98



First Presbyterian Church
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Saint Cloud, MN 56301
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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

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

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

DECEMBER 2025

SESSION

Pastor Darin Seaman, Moderator
Bobbie Lampi, Clerk

Class of 2025: Rhonda Siltman (Mission), Randy Hammond
(Property), Lynn Rae Olson (Campus),
Mark Scholer (Worship & Evangelism)

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)

DEACONS

Class of 2025: Kari Ahles, Margeret Brooks, Karen Larson,
Julia Owen, Duane Scherbing

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