

From the Pastor

Advent: Investing our love and our lives as we wait to meet the One who comes to us

Sometimes popular music hits us in just the right spot, opening our understanding or teaching us something. All music has the potential to do this, since music, with or without lyrics, has poetry to it. Poetry in words or notes (or both) can help us name or feel or learn something we have no words for. For example, most of us have hymns that touch such a tender part of our hearts that we cannot get through them without tears coming to our eyes.

The song “Awake My Soul,” by Mumford and Sons has touched many through its words or notes (or both), including me. The music shifts melody back and forth and then builds up in tempo and volume until “Awake my soul, for you were made to meet your maker” is sung at the top of your lungs in exultation and conviction as you drive on Interstate 65 in your Honda Fit.

It’s these recurring lines that grab my attention the most:

In these bodies we will live, in these bodies we will die
And where you invest your love, you invest your life

Awake my soul
For you were made to meet your maker

My mind has been on the hope we ponder during the first week of Advent at the same time I have been thinking about the sixth of the Ends of the Church. The Exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the World reminds us that the patterns of our lives matter. One way or another we exhibit what we believe because our actions speak louder than words. People can see where and how we invest our lives, which means they can see where we invest our love. Our bodies matter. In and through them we live in hope of Christ’s coming to us, and in and through our bodies we reveal what we believe hope in Christ actually is.

But that hope needs some poetry for us to understand it. Above I mentioned how the notes of music in a song or hymn are a sort of poetry: even music without words can make us feel or think something important. Poetry is also in our lives, in the actions that exhibit what we believe. I hope that at some point in your life the way someone behaved showed you the love of God (or God’s compassion or kindness) in a way which needed no words. Sometimes it’s just the touch of a hand on our arm.

I’m writing this the week before Advent begins, so Hope, what we ponder the first week, is especially on my mind. But what I am saying here is equally applicable to peace, joy, and love.

In these bodies we will live, in these bodies we will die
And where you invest your love, you invest your life

What shows up in your life, in the actions of your body, that reveals what you love? What you hope for? The Exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the World means that we show forth what it is we really love: is it God in Christ, by the power of the Spirit? Is it Love? Is it Joy or Hope or Peace? How do people see these things in us?

Each year when Advent begins we are celebrating as those who know how this story will go. We know that in the birth of Jesus God is fulfilling promises – wonderful, beautiful promises – of love, salvation, of wiping away our tears, peace between all people and within creation. Jesus has been born, Jesus has lived, those around him did come to know him as Jesus the Christ (the Anointed one), Jesus did die, and was raised from the dead.

So the hope, peace, joy, and love that we long for now – for the world is in need of it, we are in need of it – has been longed for from generation to generation through thousands of years.

But that’s not all that previous generations have done. The author of Hebrews describes one faithful person after another who persevered even though they did not see the

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promises fulfilled. The author writes “And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of.....” person after person after person who lived faithfully, with endurance, love, hope, joy, peace.

In these bodies we will live, in these bodies we will die
And where you invest your love, you invest your life.

Advent is the reminder that in the midst of everything in this world that grieves us, hurts us, everything that oppresses the most vulnerable or breeds violence and cruelty, Jesus is coming to us – that is what Advent means. Jesus is coming to us with all his healing, teaching, and compassion. Advent is a reminder that at this time of the church year we wait for that moment when Jesus’ arrival meets us right where we are.

Awake my soul,
for you were made to meet your maker.

How we live our lives in these bodies reveals this meeting. Where do we invest our love? Where do we invest our lives? Do we realize that our actions reveal the truths of what we love? Can people tell from observing us that Christ has come to us in our lives?

Advent is not simply a time of sitting on the sidelines, waiting for Jesus to show up. Advent is our practice of meeting and being ready to receive Christ when he comes to us.

In these bodies we will live, in these bodies we will die.
And where you invest your love, you invest your life.

Awake my soul,
For you were made to meet your maker.

We read this in Psalm 108:

My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast;
I will sing and make melody.
Awake, my soul!
Awake, O harp and lyre!
I will awake the dawn.
I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples,
and I will sing praises to you among the nations.
For your steadfast love is higher than the heavens,
and your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.

Let us awake! Let us invest our love and our lives! Let us meet Jesus Christ as he comes to us, for we were made to meet our maker!

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit,

Pastor Michelle

The anchor is an ancient
Christian symbol of hope.



Choir Practice
Choir will be practicing
Dec. 4th & 11th at 6:30-
7:30 to sing in worship on
Dec. 15th and 22nd.

The season of Advent starts on
Sunday,
December 1st, 2024.





Christmas Joy Offering 2024

developing & sustaining our leaders

Each year during the Advent and Christmas season, we lift up our past, present, and future leaders of the church.

God has blessed the Church with incredible leadership in every time and place, but those leaders often need to be supported by their communities as well. This Offering addresses the support needed by some of our leaders, including supporting leadership development for communities of color, and providing support for Presbyterian church workers in their time of need.

The offering will be collected Sunday, Dec. 15 and Sunday, Dec. 22.

First Presbyterian Church
2024 Chili Supper & Cookie Walk
December 7th 5-7pm

Volunteers Needed!

- Setting up
- Tearing down
- Getting chili prepped the morning of the supper
- Baking cookies (volunteers will need to bake cookies on their own)
- Overseeing cookie tables
- Putting out yard signs
- Delivering flyers

Sign-up sheets in the sanctuary!
Tickets available in the office!



Our hybrid discussion group will resume on **Monday, January 13th, at 4pm central time.** We will meet in person and a Zoom link will be made available-just contact Pastor Michelle at mjbartel@gmail.com. Articles will be available at least one week ahead of the discussions.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CALENDAR



2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Worship 9:30 am Communion	2 AAA-Abuse Awareness & Accountability 5pm-8:30 pm	3 Stated Assembly Meeting Lafayette, IN (Hybrid) 10am ET/9am CT	4 Youth Group 5:00-6:30pm Choir practice 6:30pm	5 Bridge Club 12:00pm	6	7 AA-Alcoholics Anonymous 7pm
8 Worship 9:30 am	9 AAA-Abuse Awareness & Accountability 5pm-8:30 pm	5 Dance Magic 3:30 pm Bible Study 4pm	11 Youth Group 5:00-6:30pm Choir practice 6:30pm	12 Session Meets 4pm Forestry Council 5pm	13	14 AA-Alcoholics Anonymous 7pm
15 Worship 9:30 am New Member Sunday w/ fellowship Choir sings	16 AAA-Abuse Awareness & Accountability 5pm-8:30 pm	17 Bible Study 4pm	18	19 Bridge Club 12:00pm	20	21 AA-Alcoholics Anonymous 7pm
22 Worship 9:30 am Choir sings	23 AAA-Abuse Awareness & Accountability 5pm-8:30 pm	24 Christmas Eve Service 5pm	25 	26	27	28 AA-Alcoholics Anonymous 7pm
29 Worship 9:30 am	30 	31 				

Dates To Be Aware Of:

- Tuesday, December 3: Stated Assembly Meeting, Central Presbyterian Church (Lafayette, IN), In-person and Zoom hybrid.
10 am Eastern/9 am central
- January Congregational Meeting: Sunday, January 19th, 2025
(Installation of Ruling Elders the following Sunday)
- January 15, 2025 : Youth group returns from break.

What happened at Session?

- Session approved Tony Butler as a new member of First Presbyterian Church
- The minutes of the Congregational Meeting January 2024 were approved.
- PAC facility use dates were approved for February 2, 2025, February 23, 2025 and April 6, 2025
- Request from Rick Comingore for facilities use with the Northwest Indiana Lawyers approved.
- The Congregational meeting will be on January 19, 2025, with Installation of Ruling Elders the following Sunday.
- The Christmas Eve service was approved for 5 PM CST.
- Session elected Kristi Slaby as commissioner to Presbytery for December 3, 2024.

First Presbyterian Church
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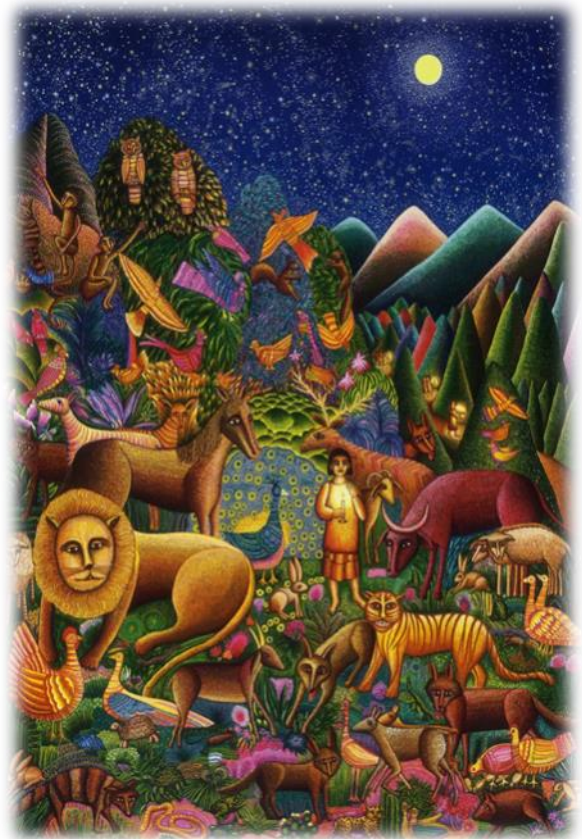


Selections from Isaiah 11

The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.
The wolf shall live with the lamb,
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,
and a little child shall lead them.

They will not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain;
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of
the Lord as the waters cover the sea.



Peaceable Kingdom, John August Swanson, 1969.