

THE CHURCH'S LIFE
News of the First Presbyterian Church
Oregon, Wisconsin
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December 2011 - January 2012

GOOD NEWS FROM YOUR PNC!

The Pastor Nominating Committee is pleased to invite the Reverend Le Anne Clausen de Montes to candidate at First Presbyterian Church the weekend of December 3rd, 2011.

Pastor Le Anne received her Master of Divinity Degree at Chicago Theological Seminary and was ordained into the Chicago Presbytery in 2009. She and her husband, the Reverend Jorge Montes-Clausen have most recently served as interim co-pastors at St. John's United Church of Christ in Waukegan, Illinois. St. John's is a bilingual, multicultural redevelopment congregation.

While her roots are in rural Mason City, Iowa, Pastor Le Anne has traveled the world working and advocating with peace and human rights organizations. These activities have taken her to places such as Bagdad, Jerusalem, Hebron and Nazareth. She is literate in Spanish, Arabic, German, Greek, Hebrew, and French.

Pastor Le Anne's references describe her as 'passionate, bright, outgoing, thoughtful,' and having a 'tremendous ministry of presence.' The PNC found this to be true during the time we spent with her. She has a special interest in child and family ministry, and community outreach. Spending time outdoors and with music are special to her.

Pastor Le Anne, her husband Jorge, and two-year-old daughter (and big-sister-to-be!) Sophie are looking forward to returning the weekend of December 3rd and meeting our congregation. Please plan to join the potluck social on Saturday evening and listen to Pastor Le Anne preach Sunday morning.

PASTOR JESS MOVES ON

Pastor Jess's last Sunday in the pulpit at First Presbyterian Church will be December 25. Join us in church on December 18 for a celebration acknowledging her contributions during the past year and a half. Pastor Jess guided us through one of the most exciting but also one of the most challenging times in our churches life. Her leadership resulted in the beautiful building we now call home and she will always be remembered for helping us complete this project

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

“You are the light of the world... Let your light shine before others.”
(Matthew 5:14, 16)

As we enter into Advent, light becomes a theme in our lives as a congregation. We light the Advent wreath each Sunday. Lights will go in the windows to celebrate the season. And this all will culminate Christmas Eve with the traditional Christmas Eve candlelight and Silent Night.

If you recall, last year, as part of the transitioning from the N Main Street building to N Bergamont, we brought our candles home with us last Christmas Eve to sit somewhere we could remember them and pray for how to share our light in the new location. And now, one year later, don't forget to bring those candles back with you for Christmas Eve worship at 4:30 or 7:30 pm on Saturday, December 24.

While you might have to hunt around for your candle and remind yourself to bring it with you on the 24th, hopefully none of us have to be reminded that we are also lights for Christ, that as Christians, our lives should reflect the light of Christ in all that we do. Light is our faith in action—Jesus' love shining through us as we are his hands and feet on earth.

In this Advent and Christmas season—and throughout the year—may we all shine our light before others, that they may see our good works, and give glory to God!

Grace and peace and much light,
Jess

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CHRISTMAS at CHURCH

... for those who plan ahead!

Knowing that some of you are already thinking of Christmas, we share these highlights of the Advent and Christmas season at church.

November 27 First Sunday of Advent

9:00 AM Sunday Coffee Bar

9:15 AM Church School

10:30 AM Worship Service

December 4 Second Sunday of Advent

9:00 AM Sunday Coffee Bar

9:15 AM Church School

10:30 AM Worship Service

Sacrament of Holy

Communion

December 11 Third Sunday of Advent

9:00 AM Sunday Coffee Bar

9:15 AM Church School

10:30 AM Worship Service

Children's Christmas

Program

December 18 Fourth Sunday of Advent

9:00 AM Sunday Coffee Bar

9:15 AM Church School

10:30 AM Worship Service

Cantata Sunday

Christmas Joy Offering

Received

4:00 PM Blue Christmas Service

December 24 Christmas Eve

4:30 PM A Service of Lessons and
Carols, including the candle
lighting ceremony

5:30 PM Finger Foods Christmas Eve
Potluck

7:10 PM Christmas Carol Sing-Along
in the Sanctuary

7:30 PM Traditional Christmas Eve
worship, including the
candle lighting ceremony

December 25

9:00 AM Sunday Coffee Bar

9:15 AM All Sunday School classes
will be on vacation

10:30 AM Worship Service

January 1

9:00 AM Sunday Coffee Bar

9:15 AM All Sunday School classes
will be on vacation

10:30 AM Worship Service
Sacrament of Holy
Communion

ANNUAL MEETING REPORTS DUE DECEMBER 5!!

A copy of all reports which are to be included in the Annual Report Packet are to be emailed to the church office no later than Monday, December 5, 2011. Karen Detra, our Office Manager, will then distribute them to the Session for the December meeting. Please be sure to get your report in on time. Thank you!

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

On Sunday, December 11, the Children's Christmas Program will take place during the 10:30 Worship Hour. The Children's Christmas program is a much loved tradition in our church and we hope you can join us. Please note the program will held during the regular Worship Hour.

CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS BRING CHEER AND GOODWILL

Candles! Trees, not one but two!
Poinsettias! Wreaths and greens! A creative decorating committee has been assembled by Tana Palmer to create a joyful space in which to worship our Lord! Trees have been donated by Susan and Tom Niebauer, poinsettias by members of the church family, greens and candles and lights and wreaths by many others. A new tree skirt is being created by Connie Mitchell. We are grateful to all for helping to make our beautiful new space even more lovely for Christmas.

CHRISTMAS EVE FINGER FOOD FEAST!

Looking for a little fellowship on Christmas Eve? Come join us for a light finger food

supper between the services. If you plan to join us, please bring a food item to share with everyone. We'll plan to begin around 5:45.

BLUE CHRISTMAS

Sunday afternoon, December 18
4:00 PM

In the church sanctuary Christmas can be a painful time for some. It may be the first Christmas without beloved family members or friends who have recently died. The strong emphasis on family and togetherness promoted in the secular world can emphasize the loneliness of those who are separated from loved ones. The anguish of broken relationships, the insecurity of unemployment, the weariness of ill health, the pain of isolation. All these can make us feel very alone in the midst of the celebrating and spending.

If you have recently lost a loved one, or still find Christmas a difficult time after many years; if you tend to feel "blue" rather than festive during the holiday season; if you are feeling far away from those you love, then you are especially invited to the Blue Christmas service on Sunday afternoon, December 18, at 4:00 PM. We will meet in the church sanctuary for a quiet and reflective service where we can acknowledge both the pain and the joy that the season brings. And through our sharing, we will welcome the Christ Child once again.

All are welcome. If you would like to have childcare provided, please let the church office know by December 14.

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING

JOY TO THE WORLD

The 2011 Christmas Joy Offering will be received on December 18, at the 10:30 AM service of worship.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES on CHRISTMAS VACATION!

All Sunday School classes will be on "vacation" December 25 and January 1. Worship will remain at 10:30 AM each of those mornings. Sunday School classes will resume January 8, beginning with fellowship at 9:00 and classes at 9:15 AM.

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

What would Christmas be without candlelight and the reading of the 2nd chapter of the Gospel of Luke? What would Christmas be without the music? What would Christmas be without church? You and your neighbors and friends are invited to join in any of the celebrations of Christmas that best fit into your family's schedule:

4:30 PM This "Service of Lessons and Carols" has become a favorite among many of our families. Familiar Christmas Scripture readings, lots of music, the ringing of bells, and the singing of "Silent Night, Holy Night" as we each light our Christmas candles are featured.

Clearly a child-friendly service, childcare will be available for families with wee ones.

7:30 PM "A Traditional Christmas" This worship service will be more traditional in nature, with music provided by our Adult Choir and with the preaching of the Word. It too will conclude with the candle lighting ceremony as we sing "Silent Night, Holy Night." Child care will be provided at both of the Christmas Eve worship services.

Join us in worship as we celebrate the birth of our Lord... *together!*

Columbia).

BRING YOUR BELLS! RING YOUR BELLS!!

Everyone participating in the 4:30 PM Christmas Eve service is encouraged to bring a favorite bell to ring as part of the service. Please bring a dinner bell, a cow bell, a jingle bell, or any bell that you like. Children, youth, and adults ... let's ring in Christmas together!

FROM THE TREASURER

All contributions that you would like reflected on your 2011 giving statement (for tax purposes) must be in the church office *no later than December 30, 2011*. Thank you!

EPIPHANY CELEBRATION

We will be celebrating Epiphany in worship on Sunday, January 8. As we remember the gifts that the wise men brought to the Christ Child, we will also each receive a special gift from God for 2011. Epiphany Stars will again be received as we think about what spiritual gifts God may be bringing us in 2011. This service has become a special tradition in our church family ... don't miss it!

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS

What does it mean to "practice what you preach"? The ADULT CLASS will be discussing "Living the Faith" in January and February at 9:15 to 10:00 am on Sunday mornings. We will have several guest speakers sharing their own experiences. Check the bulletin for specific details.

ADULTS' NIGHT OUT

Back by popular demand, another Adults' Night Out is planned for Saturday, January 28, to be held at Mulligan's on Jefferson St. in Oregon. We will have a room reserved and dinner will start at six o'clock. Child care will be available at the church for parents who would like to enjoy a night off. As is our tradition, this will be a Dutch treat, (or "estilo Americano," as they say in

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING: January 29, 2012

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation will be held on Sunday, January 29, immediately following worship. Please plan to stay for this important meeting as we review the work of the church in 2010 and dream together of what we are called to be and do in the years to come. Annual Report Packets (including all committee and organizational reports) will be available on January 22 so that people can read the information before the meeting.

WHAT ABOUT THIS?

WHAT ABOUT THAT?

These are questions that are being asked, sometimes silently and other times out loud as we try out and adjust to our new space. The list has been long of "things" the Worship Committee has to consider, discuss, try out, rearrange, repair, replace, place anew, etc. We are very pleased with the "new" cross which is now on the chancel but can be moved around the sanctuary as needed and as appropriate. A few of our more creative ideas proved to be impractical and Ted Belanus came up with a great solution using the lovely cross that had hung previously in the narthex of the old church building, over the handicap lift. The baptismal font, symbol of a sacrament, has been placed on the same level as the communion table. The table is bare to symbolize Christ's welcoming us to the table. The "Banner Team" of 9 talented seamstresses and quilters are reviewing our supply of banners, coming up with some new ideas, and thinking about storage methods. This team is being led by Char Hanson, Lori Johnson and Nancy Nelson. Some banners will be refreshed, some retired, and some created anew. Please be patient with all of us as we try new things,

new placement of historical or beloved items and new ideas while we continue to learn about our new space and ourselves in our new worship space.

HOSPITALIZED

Christy Archer and Nancy Holloway have been in the hospital recently. The church family is asked to keep them in its prayers.

FROM OUR MAILBAG

We would like to thank all the special people at First Presbyterian who assisted with Annette's funeral service. It was appreciated more than we are able to express. First Presbyterian was very dear to Annette and had a special place in her heart. Thank you for your compassion and love at this difficult time.

Harry and Karla Hayter

PER CAPITA APPORTIONMENT

Each year, members of the church are invited to pay their share of the Church's per capita apportionment. Enclosed in church members' year-end statement is an envelope for your convenience, which you may return with your per capita gift. This year's per capita is \$27.63. Please remember it is per confirmed member, not per household.

Our per capita gifts enable the denomination at the Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly levels to perform the necessary ecclesiastical functions of the church, thereby enabling the ministry of Christ to be carried out. Thank you for your per capita gift!

WINTER CANCELLATION POLICY

If church is cancelled due to weather during the winter months, we will seek to notify the congregation via radio station WIBA 1310 and the following television stations: FOX (WMSN 47), ABC (WKOW 27), NBC (WMTV 15), and CBS (WISC 3). If a storm

is headed our way, we will try to give the cancellation notice on Saturday night.

We count on the wise judgment of all our church members and friends and trust that no one will endanger themselves trying to get to church, even if worship is not cancelled. Please be safe!

FINANCIAL UPDATE – October 31, 2011

GENERAL FUND

Amount pledged year to date:	\$109,238.60
Pledges received year to date:	\$102,400.20
2011 Per Capita bill:	\$6,877.00
Received to date:	\$3,241.70

Can you help by meeting your financial commitment?

BILL'S RECEIPTS

Since we started saving Bill's receipts (Sept. 2009 to now) we have received \$2083.25! What a great way to support our local grocery store and an awesome way they support us in return. Working together is what community is all about. Thank you all for shopping at Bill's and asking for an "orange sticker" at the register and turning them into the red striped container on the coffee table at church. It all adds up!

OPEN HOUSE THANK YOU

On November 6, 2011, one year and one day from our groundbreaking, we opened our First Presbyterian doors to our friends, families and community to *Celebrate Our Journey*. And they all came! We had a "full house" for our "open house" and it was a memorable afternoon.

A special thanks to Tom Mielke for

organizing the music program, Ralph Stromquist for the “who we are” slideshow, Jess Barmack and the Fellowship Committee for making sure there were tasty treats for the afternoon, Connie Mitchell and Deb Ray for their creative decorating touch, Lori Johnson for making sure the children were entertained, Char Hanson for the artistic signs identifying areas, Nancy Freeman Wallace for making sure we had the outdoor banner signs, Pastor Jess and Jess Barmack for creating our brochure, and all those who extended invitations, greeted guests, took guests on tours, came to enjoy the afternoon, sang in the choir, played bells, performed a special music number, donated food, cleaned up

One final thank you to everyone who faithfully prayed for First Presbyterian throughout our building journey. Thanks be to God!

TURKEY DINNER THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone who helped with the turkey dinner again this year. As usual, everyone pitched in to make sure it was a success. A special thanks to those of you who provided the turkeys!

THANK YOU

First Presbyterian has a long history of a dedicated and generous congregation. This has been obvious over this past year of construction. We are most appreciative for the donations of time, talents, services, building materials, funds for special projects, and lawn upkeep equipment.

BUILDING NEWS

The projects for our new building continue even as we enjoy using the space. Did you notice the sign from the old building out front? It has been repaired and repainted and is movable! Hopefully, you also noticed the cross at the front of the worship space. It hung over the elevator at the old building and was donated by Lyle and Sharon Rudy. It can now grace our

worship space after a stand was built with donated materials.

In addition to these projects, pictures and bulletin boards have been hung, all the windows were washed and trees have been watered. The Property Committee is working at learning all the “nuts and bolts” of the new building and is preparing for the winter weather that is just around the corner.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

Our latest Sunday School rotation has been about Creation. We got to spend one Sunday in the servery (we still think it looks like a kitchen) and we got to make fruit salad and muffins. We looked at the seeds in fruits and, well, it’s pretty amazing what can grow from a tiny seed. Actually, we think it is pretty amazing that God created everything – no wonder he needed to rest on the seventh day!!! We’re also talking about needed to take care of our world. One Sunday the “Art Room” had trash thrown all over, one of our friends said it was a disgusting mess. Don’t worry we cleaned it all up and will remember to

take care of our world and new church building.

In case you are wondering... Do you know where "The Cave" is in our new church? Just ask us and we'll show you. It's really cool because the teenagers hang out in there and there is a couch and two poof chairs - we really like being in "The Cave"! Until next time...