

# THE MESSENGER

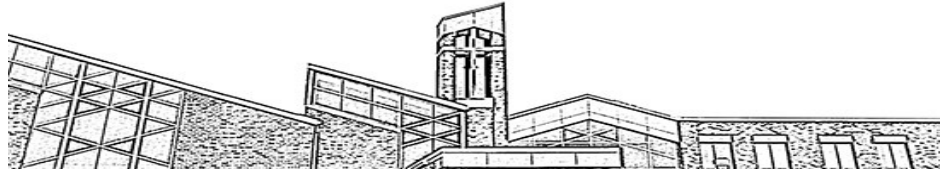
December 2023

The First Presbyterian Church of Hastings, MI

405 N. M-37 HIGHWAY - HASTINGS, MI 49058

## WELCOME

We are so blessed to know you, and to serve alongside you! We hope The Messenger brings everyone closer together, and helps YOU to stay connected at FPC!



## Worship Schedule

<b>Dec. 3</b>	<b>Mark 13:24-37</b> <b>Communion Sunday</b>	<b>Rev. Nick Marlatt</b>
<b>Dec. 10</b>	<b>Mark 1:1-8</b>	<b>Rev. Nick Marlatt</b>
<b>Dec. 17</b>	<b>John 1:6-8, 19-28</b>	<b>Rev. Nick Marlatt</b>
<b>Dec. 24</b>	<b>Luke 1:26-38</b>	<b>Rev. Nick Marlatt</b>
<b>Dec. 24</b>	<b>Luke 2:1-20</b> <b>Christmas Eve</b>	<b>Rev. Nick Marlatt</b>
<b>Dec. 25</b>	<b>Christmas Day</b>	<b>Rev. Nick Marlatt</b>
<b>Dec. 31</b>	<b>Luke 2:22-40</b>	<b>Rev. Nick Marlatt</b>

**12/3**

Advent Begins

**12/3**

Jazzy Christmas Concert  
3 pm

**12/9**

Wonder of Christmas Show  
Dinner @5:30pm  
Show@6:30 pm

**12/17**

Lakewood Choral Society Concert  
3:30 pm

**12/24**

4th Sunday of Advent 10am  
Christmas Eve Service 6pm

**12/25**

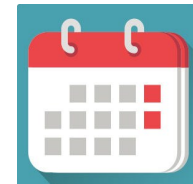
Christmas Day Service  
Wear Your Pajamas  
10am

## DEADLINES

Bulletin - Wednesdays by noon

Newsletter- 3rd Wednesday

Ministry Minutes- 3rd Wednesday



*Click on the calendar to see upcoming events and meetings.*



Live services can be reached if you click on image above or go to the church's website, [www.firstchurchhastings.org](http://www.firstchurchhastings.org).  
Look for, and click on, the Facebook image.

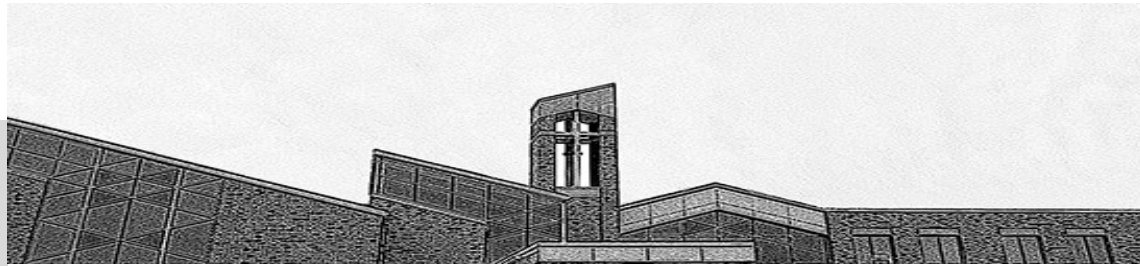
# Pastor's Corner



**Pastor Nick Marlatt x3003**  
[nmarlatt@firstchurchhastings.org](mailto:nmarlatt@firstchurchhastings.org)

If you would like pastoral care, counseling, spiritual direction, aid, assistance, or a request added to the prayer chain, please call the church during business hours: Monday-Thursday, 9am - 4:00pm. Speak to Julia. We will connect you to the correct person within the church or community for your specific request. Emergencies occurring after normal business hours, please contact Pastor Nick at (360) 927-3782

We can lend a helping hand if you reach out. We are here for you.



To all God's beloved children at First Presbyterian Church,

I hope this finds you all well as we turn toward the end of the Church year on Christ the King Sunday. Christ the King is the last Sunday before Advent begins. Each year the Church year begins on the first Sunday of Advent. This year Christ the King is on Sunday, November 26 while Advent begins on Sunday, December 3. I bring this up because we are tempted to jump right from Thanksgiving to Christmas this time of year. The constant Black Friday commercials as well as Christmas music on the radio and Christmas displays, which seem to appear in stores earlier each year, can make it a challenge for those of us who want to enter the Advent season in a contemplative way.

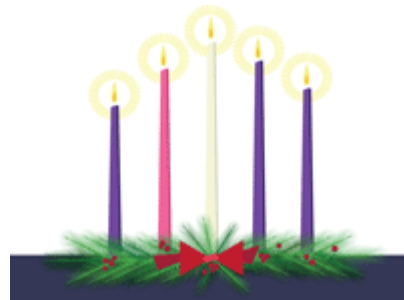
The season of Advent (the four weeks before Christmas Day) has long been a season in the Church of quiet anticipation for the coming of Jesus. During the season of Advent, we remember the many years and centuries that the people of God waited for the long-prophesied Messiah who eventually arrived in the birth of Jesus. The word Advent means "coming" or "arrival." Advent marks the beginning of the liturgical year because it is where the story of Jesus begins. During the season of Advent we assume a posture of waiting. We intentionally enter into the story as it happened for those who came before us: with anticipation, with groaning, with longing, with hope.

Prayer is one of the spiritual practices which best helps us to slow down, wait for Christ and keep us aware of the presence of God. The congregation will provide an Advent devotional, which I encourage you to utilize as a way of slowing down and connecting to God in through prayer. Prayer is also one of the hallmark characteristics I desire for this congregation. I have found this congregation to be a praying congregation and I am so encouraged by your devotion to prayer. To that end, the deacons are tweaking the prayer request guidelines for the congregation. Prayers will be classified as either confidential or public based on the request of the person asking for prayer. Confidential prayers will be placed in the "purple Prayer Box" at the connection point and I will pray for these. All other prayers will be classified as public and will be published in the weekly printed order of worship and emailed to the congregation so we all can be in prayer for the needs of our church family.

I look forward to remaining in prayer with you for our church family and the world.

In Christ,

Pastor Nick



# FPC Announcements

## DECEMBER Birthdays

Jeff Arnold  
Lauren Bloom  
Charles Surratt  
Fred Koning  
Harold Lewis  
Bryleigh Johnson  
Mike Reynolds  
Nancy Bradley  
David Preston  
Sue Larghi  
Noah Strimback  
Johnathan Solmes  
Rick VanDenBerge  
Sandra Billingsley  
Larry Bell  
MaryMartha Melendy  
Arlene Kuizema

## DECEMBER Anniversaries

Bosma, Michael and Kimberly  
Teaegardin, Gary and Beverly



FPC invites you, your friends,  
and family to come and walk.  
Monday through Thursday,  
10am-3:30pm on our second  
floor.

**We request that you sign in &  
out in the church office.**

## Unsure who to contact for a specific need?

For a copy of our  
2023 Board  
Listing, please visit  
the  
welcome table in  
the Narthex. This  
document will help  
you to  
pinpoint the  
correct contact  
(Deacon,  
Elder, or  
Ministry Teams)  
as events arise.

We hope that you  
have  
enjoyed being  
greeted by  
members of our  
congregation as  
you enter FPC on  
Sunday  
mornings. We  
would love to see  
more people  
volunteer to help.  
Reach out to  
Joann Logan if  
you would like to  
be added to the  
schedule.



**What:** Christmas Eve Service

**When:** December 24th @ 10am  
December 24th @ 6pm

**Where:** First Presbyterian Church



### Christmas Day

**What:** Christmas Day Service  
Wear Your Pajamas

**When:** December 25th @ 10am

**Where:** First Presbyterian Church

## FPC Announcements

**CAROLS N' JAZZ AT FPC!** The Thornapple Jazz Orchestra under the direction of Joe LaJoye and FPC's organist, Bob Oster, will present a joint concert in our sanctuary on **Sunday, December 3, at 3:00 p.m.** You will be treated to a variety of seasonal jazz selections by TJO as well as a carol sing-along accompanied by our newly rebuilt Scott Smith pipe organ.

**LAKEWOOD AREA CHORAL SOCIETY-Presents *The Music of Christmas* at FPC!** The 80-voice choir, now in its 38<sup>th</sup> season under the direction of founding artistic director and conductor, Robert C. Oster, will present its annual Christmas concert in our sanctuary on **Sunday, December 17, at 3:30 p.m.** There is no charge; however, a freewill offering will be taken. Doors will open at 3:00p.m.



Scan Me



To Give Electronically

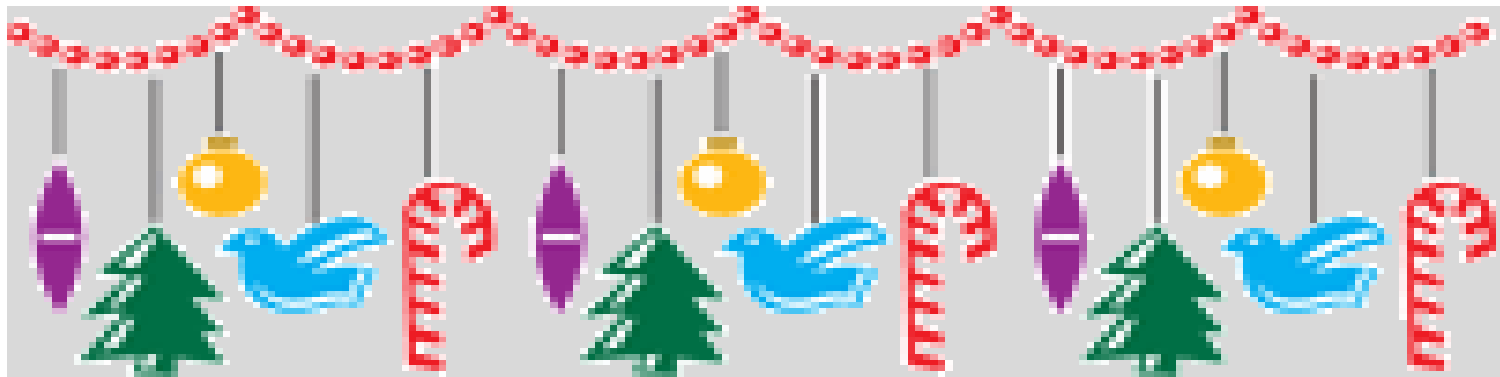
This QR code will take you to our electronic giving platform. Thank You for all your continued support for our ministries here at FPC!



### CHURCH DIRECTORY ANNUAL UPDATE

The deacons are requesting that all who are members or regularly participating friends of FPC check and edit your directory information and submit changes to Julia in the office ([office@firstchurchhastings.org](mailto:office@firstchurchhastings.org)). If you are not yet in the directory, please provide your names, address, phone numbers, email addresses, and children's names if applicable. You may also submit a family photo. For your convenience, you may check, edit, and add information at the Connection Point to be submitted to the office. This year you will receive an update page to add to your current directory. Thanks for helping us all stay connected!

# FPC Announcements



Saturday, December 9th 2023

*The Wonder of*  
**CHRISTMAS**

Dinner @ 5:30pm      Show @ 6:30pm



**\*\*\*Stuff the Church Van\*\*\***  
we are trying to stuff the church van with a teenage gift this year at our Christmas Show. Partnering with the United Way, let's stuff the van on December 9th. See You There

\*\*\*\*See the website for more details





**The Worship and Work of the Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Hastings, MI**

**Minutes of the November 27th 2023 Regular Session Meeting**

The meeting was held at the Church, 405 N-M37 Highway, Hastings MI in the Adult classroom.

In attendance were Elders Cindy Preston, Gary Kimble, Sunny Anderson, Dave Allarding, Tracy Solmes, Sally Keller, Larry Winkler, Sandra Billingsley, Scott Allarding, Kim Bosma, Steve Laubaugh, Jim Bruce, and Moderator Rev. Nick Marlatt. Absent: Elder Michael Behrendt,

A quorum was established and Pastor Nick opened the meeting with prayer at 7:02 followed by a reading from the book "

**The Consent Agenda** containing Minutes from the October Regular Session Meeting and tonight's Agenda was approved.

**Clerk Report:** We received a sanctuary use request from Bob Oster and the Lakewood Choral Society for the Dec 17<sup>th</sup> Concert, with a free will offering to benefit charity and 20% coming back to the church. The request was approved. We will record the deaths of Larry Melendy member number 1012 and Marjory Barcroft member number 38. Both funerals were held here last week.

**Pastor's Report,** Larry Winkler was elected a Commissioner to the Presbytery Meeting next Tuesday, as he is attending with Pastor Nick at Forest Hills Presbyterian. A letter to the Curtis' was circulated regarding our regret that they have chosen to leave our congregation, along with best wishes. The draft was approved and Session members will sign it. The LGBTQ+ statement task force rough draft statement on what we believe was distributed. We were encouraged to read it through, suggest edits via email to Pastor Nick and be prepared to vote on it next month.

**Personnel Report** An Evaluation Summary of Pastor Nicks review was circulated. He is meeting or exceeding all our expectations and standards. The full evaluation is available upon request. Zoey Zinney is recommended for hire as our Children's Ministry Director. She reports to Family Ministries and Pastor Nick. Her hiring was approved. The operations manual for 2024 is nearly ready, should be good for December, Custodian interviews are ongoing.

**Trustees** No meeting this month but projects are ongoing, the gas fireplace project hit the irrigation lines, so that damage will need to be fixed. More expenses are coming on the RTU's about \$13,000 worth, which would run over the trustee's budget, it involves computerized valves and controllers.

**Worship & Music** The Outdoor Nativity will be put up Saturday, other than that decorations are done. December 24<sup>th</sup> is a Sunday so it will have a 10 am 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent Service, and a 6:00 pm Christmas Eve Service, and Monday the 25<sup>th</sup> will be a 10:00 am very casual and simple Christmas Day service. A mitten offering was also approved for the Christmas Eve service.

**YOUR 2023 FPC**

**SESSION:**

**2023**

Mike Behrendt  
Tracy Solmes  
Steve Laubaugh  
Gary Kimble

**2024**

Jim Bruce  
Dave Allarding  
Scott Allarding  
Sally Keller

**2025**

Sunny Andersen  
Sandra Billingsley  
Kim Bosma  
Cindy Preston



**Financial & Stewardship** Gary shared an article from the Michigan History Magazine about Hannah Harkness Love who was married in our church in Jan 1936. She was a female pilot. A bit of legacy. Ned predicts our 2023 finances may come in as nearly balanced (as opposed to the -70,000 budget) The Presbytery has asked us for our pledge to support their shared missions. Recently we have been giving \$8,000 after discussion a motion was made to divide this \$8000 in half \$4000 to Presbytery and \$4000 to our own mission committee, it was seconded discussion was held, and the motion failed. A second motion was made to give the Presbytery Shared Missions \$2,000 and our Mission Committee \$6,000. The motion was seconded and passed. It was also agreed to concur with the recommended percentages.

Gary also provided a worksheet regarding the current pledge drive. 65 of 79 units have pledged. Currently it looks like we will have again a deficit budget of approximately \$80,000. Those 15 giving units may yet come in. Reminder letters will go out. 50% of our pre-paid pledges will be invested in a 6 month CD.

**NAPs** Christmas Bedtime Stories and sing alongs will be Dec 15<sup>th</sup>. Congregation is invited. \$2000 was received from the Messer Trust fund. NAPS is receiving requests to expand to a larger school. (K-3rd or something like that) Angie will investigate what that would actually take. We can't make any sort of decision without more information.

**Family Ministry** 25 kids and 8 leaders would like permission to attend Spring Hill winter retreat. The trip was approved; leader's names will be submitted before the trip. They would also like to hold a pancake fundraiser on Dec. 17<sup>th</sup> in support of the trip. That was supported and approved. On Dec. 9<sup>th</sup> they would like to receive donations of teenage age Christmas gifts in support of United Way's Christmas Program. Request approved. Family Ministry Team members are desperately needed, it's currently staff and Scott.

**Deacons/Mission** Love Tree is ongoing, the tags were all taken. The families were selected through South Eastern School and NAPS and not thru Barry County Cares. The South Eastern Mentor program was recognized at the school board meeting Jim Bruce and his birdhouse building program presented. The Costa Rican team had a successful trip and many came back with Covid (15 of the 27) the Costa Rican church recognized Jim Spindler, it was very nice. He was gifted a couple of pieces of art from a local artist. A motion was made to approve for the Costa Rican kids camp donations to be collected by us, and transferred to Costa Rica at the end of the ask. Camp costs about \$150, per child, Supported and approved. The Mission Committee will direct some of the endowment fund dollars toward this project.

**The Nominating Committee** consists of Elders Jim Bruce, and Kim Bosma, Deacon Bernie Oom and Members at Large: Debbie Rang, Dale Billingsley, Eldon Cassell, and Lisa Brown. They are on target and waiting for some nominated candidates to prayerfully consider their requests.

**New Business:** Reminder it's scam season and Pastor Nick will never text or email anyone for donations.

The meeting was adjourned with a prayer by Nick Marlatt at 9:11 pm.

**Next Session Meeting rescheduled for December 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm**

These minutes respectfully submitted by Cindy Preston, Clerk of Session



405 N. M-37 Highway  
Hastings, MI 49058  
[www.firstchurchhastings.org](http://www.firstchurchhastings.org)

## The MESSENGER

Visit with us at

[www.firstchurchhastings.org](http://www.firstchurchhastings.org)

Watch us on Facebook Live



2023

Newsletter