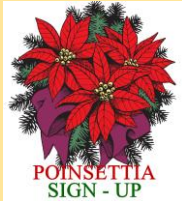


DECEMBER 2019

CURRENTS

A publication of Eagle River Presbyterian Church

Advent happenings:



Each advent season we decorate the sanctuary with poinsettias purchased by the congregation in memory, or in honor, of loved-ones. They are \$12 each, and forms will be available in worship beginning Dec. 1. The plants will adorn the sanctuary on December 15, and the list of names of honorees will be published in the bulletin that day. Poinsettias can be taken home after worship on December 29.



Christmas choir rehearsals will be on December 15th and 22nd at 9 a.m. **Handbell** rehearsals will be on the 15th and 22nd as well, after worship. Both groups will need an additional rehearsal; date and time to be determined (Maybe Saturday, the 21st) Come and join us! We will sing and ring at the 7:30 Christmas Eve service.

From the Pastor:

Dear Friends,

Here we are in Advent again! Every year I am so grateful for this season. Even though we've been hearing Christmas carols for weeks and Christmas decorations are everywhere, the church gives the four weeks before Christmas to preparation and anticipation, not full out Christmas celebration. Advent is a time to slow down a little, to ask God's Spirit to prepare our hearts and lives for the coming of his Son. In the Middle Ages Advent was a penitential time, perhaps even more so than Lent. People gave themselves to the traditional spiritual disciplines of prayer and fasting and acts of charity, just like they did during Lent. We try to balance the joy and anticipation of Christmas celebrations with honest confession and repentance and a focus on the difference the Christ child's birth makes in our lives.

During worship this December we will be talking about *a geography of salvation* – the idea that preparing for Jesus' birth involves getting to know the holy places in Scripture while God makes a holy place in our hearts ready to receive his Son. The concept makes so much sense to me because as human beings we are bound to where we live. Some of us move around often and some of us are rooted here, but wherever we are the local geography becomes a part of our life. Just as here in Alaska we are surrounded by God's grandeur, and the mountains and sky and the valleys shape how we live together, so in Scripture we see how the geography of the Holy places shaped the story of Jesus' birth and his ministry. Those places also shape our hearts because the gospel story is *our* story as God prepares our hearts to welcome his Son.

In December as the days get darker it's sometimes hard to remember the light, hard to remember our place, hard to focus on the hope we have in Christ. Presbyterian pastor and writer Frederick Buechner says *What keeps the wild hope of Christmas alive year after year in a world notorious for dashing all hopes is the haunting dream that the child who was born that day may yet be born again even in us*. The story we tell in Advent, the story that breaks the darkness and bursts into light on Christmas, is that story – the child will be born in us. My prayer for all of us this December is that God will be with us in all the high and low places of our lives as we give ourselves to preparing our lives for Him.

Yours in Christ's unfailing love,

Piper

Special Events:



Cy Kiehl	1-Dec
Andy Kmak	6-Dec
David Arlington	15-Dec
Brooke Freimuth	22-Dec
Evie Gibson	24-Dec
Kelsey Davidson	25-Dec
Ross McCarthy	25-Dec
Carol Pool	28-Dec
Peter Hobbie	28-Dec
Kaitlin Kelly	28-Dec
Tony Petroccia	31-Dec

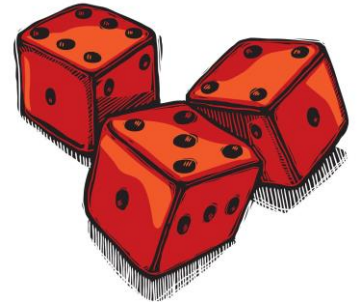


Matt & Elizabeth Hobbie...	Dec 9
John & Patti Malecha...	Dec 16
Jamie & Whitney Lewis...	Dec 21
Wayne & Linda Armstrong...	Dec 23
Gary & Jean McCarthy...	Dec 27
Jim & Kim Arlington...	Dec 30

The holidays can be a difficult time for anyone who has suffered loss or hurt. Our **Blue Christmas Service** is a way we can help acknowledge those feelings while also recognizing God's gifts of healing and hope. If you or someone you know is having trouble this Christmas season, please join us on Wednesday, December 11 at 7 pm for a time of reflection and prayer.

Holiday Bunco

Joanne Banks will be hosting this year's holiday Bunco game. The game is fun and easy to learn, and it's a great way to share fellowship with church friends, new and old! Games will be Dec 21st at 2pm. For more details contact Joanne at: 907-229-3858.



Christmas Eve Worship

There will two worship services on Christmas Eve: a 7:30 family candlelight service and a 10:00 candlelight communion service. All are welcome. It is our tradition to have cookies after the 7:30 service, so bring your favorite treat to share during fellowship time!



Cookies for our Neighbors!

Every Saturday the Food Pantry that is housed in our church shares produce, dairy products and baked goods with hungry people. They start lining up in our side parking lot around noon and the food is distributed between 1 and 2 p.m. On December 21st ERPC is joining with Skyline Family Fellowship to share cookies and coffee with these neighbors. The coffee will be donated by a local coffee shop but we need cookies! If you like to bake, we'd love your cookies – please bring them to church the week of December 15th. We'll also need a few volunteers to help from noon to 2 p.m. Questions? Talk to Piper.



From the Trustees:

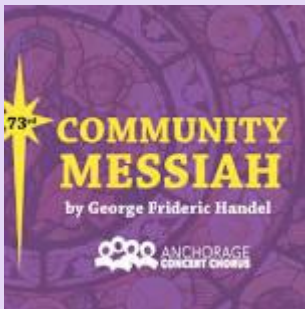
The latest work by our amazing volunteers includes: repairing a new leak in the roof that was above the piano, connecting the electrical outlets in the Sanctuary and Narthex, as well as hanging new lights in the church office, the entry, and the Sanctuary. They reconnected the organ to speakers and installed a speaker with controls in the new cry room. Sound installation was installed above the new Sanctuary wall.

We now have a signed contract for the floor leveling that will occur in January, and we are working on the contracts for the drywall repair and painting. The FEMA relief process is moving ahead and is currently working with the Alaska Homeland Security office, which focuses on contracts and payments.

Youth news:

The combined youth group continues to meet most Sunday afternoons in rotating locations: First Presbyterian, Immanuel Presbyterian, and ERPC. They usually do some kind of service project, have a devotional, and share snacks and fellowship. In January the youth will participate in the MLK Mission Immersion Youth Retreat. Questions about the combined youth group? Email secretary@erpresbyterian.org

Community Event:



The Anchorage Concert Chorus will have its 73rd annual Community Messiah performance on December 8, at West High School in Anchorage, from 2-4pm. This year's concert includes selections from Handel's iconic treasure, with local soloists, over 150 volunteer Messiah chorus members, and the Messiah orchestra. Several of our own choir members will be performing this year!

Symbols of the season
Many traditional decorations convey the meaning of Christmas.

Directions: Use the picture clues to the right to complete the words. Then write the boxed letters in order to complete 2 Corinthians 9:15, NIV.

shepherd's staff _ □ □ _ _ _ □
tree that keeps its leaves _ _ _ □ _ _ _
shines to lead the way _ _ _ □
green for eternal life,
red for Jesus' blood □ _ _ _ & _ _ _ □ □ _ _
sounds to announce
good news □ _ _ _
has no beginning or end _ _ _ _ □ _

Th □ □ ks b □ to □ od fo □ □ is
indesc □ □ ba □ le gif □ !
2 CORINTHIANS 9:15, NIV

Answers: candy cane, evergreen, star, holly & berries, bell, wreath.
Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift! 2 Corinthians 9:15, NIV



We will have a **Christmas Pageant** with the youth and children during the **December 22nd** worship service. It is called **Fumbly, Bumbly Angels**: "four angels set their sights on singing in the glorious Heavenly Choir, but instead, they find themselves singing in the tiny village of Bethlehem." The children's chime choir will play as well. Please join us for this special worship service, led by the young people in our congregation.

E-Currents! The monthly Currents newsletter is available by email. Just let the office know if you would like to start receiving by email instead of, or in addition, to the hard copy that is mailed. Please send a message to Secretary@erpresbyterian.org



In December, ERPC participates in a special offering through the Presbyterian Church U.S.A., the **Christmas Joy Offering**. This collection distributes gifts equally to an assistance program for current or retired clergy in need and to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. There will be special offering envelopes in the bulletins throughout Advent, and the offering will be taken on December 22. You can read more about the Christmas Joy Offering, and other ways to help nationally and globally, at <https://specialofferings.pcusa.org/>

Eagle River Presbyterian Church
PO Box 771337
12836 Old Glenn Hwy.
Eagle River, AK 99577



Eagle River Presbyterian Church

Celebrate with us this Holy Season

12836 Old Glenn Hwy
694-5753
www.erpresbyterian.org

Advent Worship Services
Every Sunday at 10am

Blue Christmas Service
December 11 at 7pm

Family Candlelight
Christmas Eve Service at 7:30pm

Candlelight Community
Christmas Eve Service at 10pm

