

First Presbyterian Church of Strasburg

News for December 12, 2025

Dear FPC family and friends,

The church is abuzz with activity especially on Sunday mornings when we see so much activity and lately a huge presence of children that it can only make you smile. I'm doing more and more of that lately, smiling. It simply feels good on Sunday morning here at FPC as we see so many new faces and they tend to be getting younger and younger in age. I am sure that it has nothing to do with me getting older and older. This year, more than other years, it seems like our church is experiencing a growth in families and children and new births that is somewhat unprecedented.

Did you know that since Covid we have had over 20 infant baptisms and 1 dedication? In that same time period we have had 8 adult baptisms. That is crazy for a church our size, crazy good. We have had a number of new births recently, and some who are expecting within the next few months. I know the saying goes that Christmas was really designed for children, but I don't see that anywhere in the Bible. It certainly does make you smile, though, when you see children running around the church around this time of year. We are so blessed as a church to have a culture in which children smiling, and laughing, and crying, and gurgling on a Sunday morning in worship is not only welcomed, but expected.

I want you to think about your own baptism. On January 11 we will be celebrating what is called liturgically the Baptism of Jesus Sunday. It is normally in our bulletin every year but we don't make that big of a deal about it. The Sunday before, the first Sunday in January, we always have our covenant renewal service and it is there where we take communion and get a blue bead to help us remember our baptism. We will do that this year on January 4, but then the next Sunday we will be celebrating and honoring all those who have been baptized by First Presbyterian over the past five years, since Covid.

Since Covid it does feel like we are beginning again after what arguably could be considered one of the most difficult times in the life of the church and the world. Sometimes you just have to reset. As we do that we could be able to see that baptism is all about being cleansed from our sin and starting over again. If you or your child has been baptized in this church since March of 2020 expect something from us by email next week, and by letter as well. We want to celebrate the new start that took place in your life and in the life of the church through you and your presence.

It is always important to take inventory of where we are and where we are going. This allows us to do that. So even if you aren't in that group since 2020, we do want to remember our baptism. What does it mean to us today that we are a child of God who has been welcomed into the kingdom of God? As we have been seeing in the Gospel of Matthew, it should mean at least that we are striving to be like Jesus in our life of pursuing righteousness. It doesn't just mean to be spiritual, we do want you to read Scripture and pray, but it means to be like Jesus.

But wait, let's not skip over Advent and Christmas and jump right to Jesus' baptism in January. Take part with us in the activities of the church over this Advent season, and then invite a friend and family member to take part in our Christmas Eve services at 4:30 (children's pageant for the whole church and beyond) and 8:11pm candlelight for the whole church and beyond. It is a good time to be a part of FPC, pass it on!

Your servant in Christ,
Pastor Bob

HAPPENING IN THE LIFE OF FPC...

Upcoming Advent & Christmas Programs: Join us for a cozy CHRISTMAS MOVIE NIGHT! Bring your family and friends on Sunday, December 21st at 6pm for an evening of fun, snacks and holiday cheer as we enjoy a festive film and warm fellowship to round out the Advent season. All are welcome!

Christmas Eve Schedule •December 24

Children's Christmas Pageant •4:30 PM

Candlelight Worship Services •8 PM & 11 PM

SANTA'S HELPERS Thank you to our generous congregation who selected all of the tags the first Sunday that they became available! This is a friendly reminder to those who signed up to purchase a gift, that all gifts should be placed under the tree by TODAY, Sunday, December 14th. Gifts do not need to be wrapped. Please be sure to attach the tag to the gift.

Auction for Mission to Italy 2026 – Mark your calendars for our quadrennial auction to raise support for our youth on their Mission trip to Naples, Italy. We are in need of items of value to auction off, as well as people to attend the auction. Please see Pastor Bob, Don Welk, Pam Johnson, or Linda Lawrence if you are interested in donating to the auction. The Auction will take place on February 21 with the doors opening at 5:30pm. Invite all of your friends and all of your family.

The **WELCOME DESK** is looking for some smiling faces to greet friends, neighbors and members who come through our doors here at First Pres! You will be richly compensated with friendly conversations, a sense of belonging, and the feeling of being needed as well as helping out our church. We currently need Monday morning volunteers, but whether you are available weekly, bi-weekly, once a month or only as a substitute, we would love to have you join us as a member of this team! Please contact Pam Johnson with any questions @ 717-989-0998 or see me around our church. Thank you so much for considering joining this ministry.