



**PLEASE JOIN US FOR WORSHIP ON
SUNDAY, JANUARY 7, 2024 AT 10:30 A.M.**

Please join us for worship this Sunday, known liturgically as Baptism of the Lord Sunday (which is also the First Sunday after the Epiphany), at 10:30 a.m. Our Scripture readings will be Isaiah 60:1-3 (“Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you”) and Mark 1:4-11 (“I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit”). Because of all the happy liturgical activity described below, the sermon, entitled

“Our Lasting Baptism,” will be brief. A copy of the bulletin can be found here: <https://fpcovictoria.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/2024-1-7-New-Member-Instalation-5-PDF.pdf>

A Special Musical Note

On the first Sunday of the New Year, we welcome back Kimberly Schneider who will sing our anthem, “How Beautiful.” What a wonderful way to begin our worship services for the New Year!

Special Liturgical Notes

From a liturgical perspective, we are in for a very special worship service this Sunday. First, we will experience the joy of participating in the two holy sacraments recognized in the Reformed tradition: baptism; and the Lord’s Supper.

Please join us as we baptize Bain William Rogers whose parents, Virginia Whitaker Rogers and Wilson Bain Rogers, were married in our Sanctuary. Bain’s grandparents are Gayla and Robert Whitaker and Elizabeth and Bruce Rogers.

We will also joyfully celebrate the installation of our Session Class of 2026:

Paula Leski
Christopher Neel
Marsha Ricottelli

The installation of individuals into any “office” within our denomination (Deacon, Elder, Minister of Word and Sacrament) is always a sacred occasion. From the taking of vows to the laying on of hands in the apostolic tradition, this is a special time when we recognize those individuals whom we have chosen to lead our congregation. We will pray for God’s blessings upon these good people, and we will ask God to grant them wisdom, discernment, and vitality to lead us in worship and to guide us in service to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Finally, because this will be the first Sunday in the month (and in the New Year!), we will celebrate the Lord’s Supper. As we did on Christmas Eve,

we will be using a briefer liturgy for the consecration of the elements, but of course this remembrance of the Lord's death will be as sacred for us as it always has been. Also, those who will be watching our service via social media (www.fpcofvictoria.org; www.facebook.com/fpcofvictoria) will want to have some bread and liquid on hand to participate with us in this holy sacrament.



Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these". Matt 19:14

KINDOM KIDS RESUME THEIR SUNDAY SCHOOL IN THE NEW YEAR

After enjoying a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, the Kingdom Kids and their leader, Leila Galvan, return to Sunday School at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday, January 7, 2024. Continuing their progress through the Old Testament, the Kingdom Kids will be learning all about David and Goliath!

If you know of a child (whether kin to you or the child of a friend or neighbor), why not invite them to join the Kingdom Kids as they study, draw pictures, and prepare crafts and snacks in response to their age-appropriate Bible lessons? Good times are guaranteed!

THE AMAZING GENEROUSITY OF OUR CONGREGATION

The Advent Season is always a time of special generosity in the lives of Christians. Of course, we are taught always to be generous and full of grace, but Advent is an especially good time for us to remember (and practice) these virtues. Therefore not with pride, but with gratitude and humility, the Finance Committee would like to report the following levels of giving by our

congregation in response to the opportunities we were offered for “special giving” at the end of 2023.

For the Joy Offering, which was made during our Christmas Eve service and the proceeds of which aid current and retired church workers and their families in their time of need, and in addition, which support future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color, our generous congregation collectively donated \$500!

With respect to our Poinsettia Project to honor or memorialize loved ones and those for whose lives we are grateful, we received the following contributions, totaling \$935:

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|--------------------|-------|
| For VCAM: | \$380 |
| For Promise Point: | \$30 |
| For our church: | \$525 |



**FINAL REPORT FOR OUR SUCCESSFUL
2023 ANGEL TREE CHRISTMAS PROJECT**

Sincere thanks to everyone who participated in the 2023 Angel Tree Christmas Project. Once again, our congregation's response to the project was overwhelming.

The members and friends of First Presbyterian Church provided a brighter, happier Christmas for 51 area children! The Salvation Army provided the names of 20 children from needy families. Nine children reside at Perpetual Help Home with their mothers. The names and important information regarding each child were printed on individualized handmade ornaments, which were

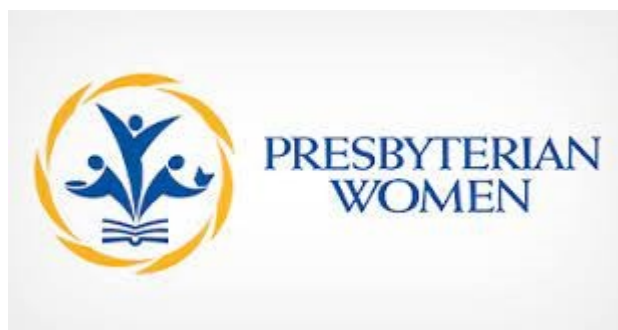
hung on the Angel Tree at the front of the Church. FPC families selected the children's names and provided clothing and toys for each child. Several church members provided towels and washcloths. The monetary donations we received were used to purchase additional gifts, toiletries, shoes, socks, towels, and bedding. A generous donation from one FPC family provided gift cards for 22 children from Mid-Coast Family Services.

Whether you selected a child's name, provided gift-wrapping materials, donated additional gifts or money, or prayed for the Angel Tree children and the Presbyterian Women "elves" who worked all year on this important project, your contributions and participation are valued and appreciated. Presbyterian Women view the Angel Tree project as an important mission of First Presbyterian Church of Victoria, and thanks to your generous support, we know that you do, too.

Blessings,

Frances Miller

Christian Community Action Chairman, Presbyterian Women



VISD Connections is the Presbyterian Women Mission Focus for **January 2024**. Presbyterian Women will be collecting:

Laundry Pods

Disposable Plates (8" or 9"; paper or plastic)

Food Storage Bags (all sizes)

Battery Operated Alarm Clocks (with batteries)

Pots, Pans, Skillets, (with or without lids)

Hand Held Can Openers

Condiments: chili powder, cumin, salt & pepper,
garlic powder, onion powder

Sugar

Flour

FPC members and friends can assist Presbyterian Women by purchasing any of the above items and leaving them in the church office.



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

- This Sunday, January 7, 2024, the *Nellie Hudson Adult Sunday School Class* will finish up their study in the familiar series of publications entitled “Being Reformed, Faith Seeking Understanding.” This will be the final lesson in “Illuminating Advent,” by Donald K. McKim. As always, Dawn Neel will have copies of the study material for all who wish to participate.
 - Kid’s Kingdom, Sunday, 9:30 a.m.: The Kingdom Kids return to Sunday School to learn about how David, with God’s help, overcame his bigger, more powerful foe, the giant Goliath!
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**BE PREPARED FOR
INTERMITTENT PUBLICATION
OF THE NEWSLETTER
(PLUS A CALL FOR VOLUNTEER[S]!)**

As we enter the New Year, there is a bit of uncertainty surrounding the publication of our Newsletter. Going forward, there may be weeks when we will not be able to publish a Newsletter, and we pray that you will be patient with us.

The Session is prayerfully considering how to maintain this important means of communication during the period while we await the arrival of our new minister. Erica Colding is, of course, a crucial resource for the publication and distribution of our Newsletter, and the various chairs of our Committees have done a wonderful job this year of submitting timely articles to be inserted directly into the Newsletter.

Still, every publication needs an “Editor in Chief.” So, have you considered whether God might be asking you to “do your part” in helping us during this period of transition? We really could use one or more dependable volunteers to step forward to help us publish the Newsletter. Keeping things simple, we are asking for a volunteer or volunteers (who could work from home) to help us a maximum of three to five hours a week (principally on Tuesday and Wednesday) to help Erica compose, edit, and publish the Newsletter.

This is not, by the way, an empty, futile task. Fifteen homebound or out-of-town members and friends of our congregation receive printed copies of the Newsletter which we mail every Wednesday. Our electronic distribution (also on Wednesday) reaches over 100 readers. There is a congregation to be served, and a ministry to be met among believers who are physically

unable to come to our church, not to mention the many folks who do attend regularly but who depend on the Newsletter to keep them informed of the many exciting activities going on in our church every week.

If you feel a tug in your heart--a quiet whisper in your ear, "you know, I would enjoy doing that"--please do not resist. Your church needs an editor for a while. Are you the person God is calling to help carry this church through this critical transition between ministers?



**FELLOWSHIP AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEES PLAN
A POTLUCK LUNCHEON
FOR SUNDAY, JANUARY 14, 2024**

Those among us of a certain vintage may remember a popular tune that was sung by Dale Rogers at the end of every child's favorite Western television series, "The Roy Rogers Show." The chorus of that song began, "Happy trails to you, until we meet again. Happy trails to you, keep smiling until then!" Departure can bring melancholy, but our faith that things will be all right for those who will remain and those who must depart can gladden and strengthen our hearts because we know, as Christians, that in Christ no departure, no separation is ever permanent.

After six years of service at First Presbyterian Church of Victoria, Rev. DeMent and his wife, Sally, have been planning to return to their home in Missouri City (the home where their children were raised and which is full of many happy memories) -- there to wait for God's next call in their lives. Last

month, that call came as the good folks at First Presbyterian Church of El Campo, Texas, asked Pastor Jim to serve (for an indefinite period, but certainly not six years!) as their Interim Pastor while their Pastor Nominating Committee continues to search for a minister to serve on a permanent basis. After a brief period of transition and rest, Pastor Jim will report for his first day of service at that church on Monday, February 12, 2024.

Meanwhile, the PNC and Session of our church continue their plans for a smooth transition as we wait for God to identify the one whom he has already called to come serve and worship with the saints at FPC-Victoria. Please pray for those who will lead the church during this period; please pray that God will help the PNC identify the church's new minister soon.

To mark the departure of Pastor Jim and Sally while we await the arrival of our new minister, and to wish them "Happy Trails" as they leave us, the Finance and Personnel Committees are organizing a Potluck Luncheon to be enjoyed following the last worship service during which Pastor Jim will be preaching, Sunday, January 14, 2024. Please plan to join us on this happy occasion, and please bring a salad, a side dish, or an entrée. The Finance and Personnel Committees will be providing the beverages and dessert.

Peace, grace, and mercy,
Pastor Jim

