

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! I just got back from a beautiful vacation in Saint Louis with my family. And even though we mostly just hung out, it was one of the most wonderful vacations I have ever had. And I got a bonus day there because Southwest canceled my flight.

I really hope things get better this year. It has been so long since we have been able to do things together. And it is hard for me to keep waiting, but I know I must. In our area things seem to be on the increase, so please stay safe and take care of yourself.

What's happening in church?

Annual Meeting

In just a few weeks (Sunday, January 30th), we will have our annual meeting. We will do the usual business of the church and elect a replacement elder for Susan Garmon, who goes off Session this year. Susan did a great job this past year during challenging circumstances. Well done! Thank you for your service.

Since we didn't have an annual meeting last year, we have to install the replacement elder as well as ordain and install Steve Yehl as an elder and Lanna Waterman as a deacon on Sunday, February 6th.

Adult Discussion

The Adult discussion will be using a book by Rachel Held Evans called *Searching for Sunday*. Goodreads describes it this way:

Like millions of her millennial peers, Rachel Held Evans didn't want to go to church anymore. The hypocrisy, the politics, the gargantuan building budgets, the scandals--church culture seemed so far removed from Jesus. Yet, despite her cynicism and misgivings, something kept drawing her back to church. And so she set out on a journey to understand church and to find her place in it.

Centered around seven sacraments, Evans' quest takes readers through a liturgical year with stories about baptism, communion, confirmation, confession, marriage, vocation, and death that are funny, heartbreaking, and sharply honest.

A memoir about making do and taking risks, about the messiness of community and the power of grace, *Searching for Sunday* is about overcoming cynicism to find hope and, somewhere in between, church.

This will be followed by the book *White too Long: The Legacy of White Supremacy in American Christianity*.

Youth News

Three things are coming up.

In February, we are going to conduct a brief confirmation class for those young people who are interested in exploring joining the church.

Before you know it, it will be time to apply for college scholarships from the church. These are open to all graduating young adults who are members of the church. Watch for details.

And this summer is the Presbyterian Youth Triennium, a gathering for High School age youth, youth leaders and young adults in the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Cumberland Presbyterian Churches. You can learn more about this life-changing event at

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/story/changes-are-coming-to-triennium-a-life-changing-event-for-thousands-of-presbyterian-youth-and-young-adults/>

and at

<https://presbyterianyouthtriennium.org/>

If you would be interested in going, please contact me.

Thanks, Rick

While the choir has been on a COVID break, Rick has continued to go above and beyond and bless us with music. Thanks so much.

United Way

We welcome The United Way to our building. They have moved in and we are in the process of relocating the nursery to the former Christian Education office. We are moving the Christian Education Office downstairs to the former Brides Room.

MEF and Flower Committee

Many thanks to the members of MEF, the flower committee and those who decorated the sanctuary for the Christmas season. It was a real blessing, even if we couldn't all pitch in like we did in the past.

It is easy to overlook someone who deserves thanks, since so many of you contribute. So if I missed you, thank you so much for all you do.

And a personal thank you...

Speaking of thanks, so many of you showered Marlene and I with Christmas gifts and I have tried to send a thank you note to everyone. However, somehow I lost the card to one gift: two holiday potholders; please let me know who gave it to us so I can thank you.

Peace and Blessings

Pastor Bruce