



e-News

December 11th, 2024

805 Western Ave., Joliet, IL 60435

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firstpresjoliet.org

A letter from Lead Pastor Bo Mircea

Psalm 30:5

For his anger lasts only a moment,
but his favor lasts a lifetime;
weeping may stay for the night,
but rejoicing comes in the morning.

This coming Sunday is the Sunday of Joy. What is joy? For me joy is more than that warm feeling that we have when we run into someone we love, or receive a gift or a compliment. Joy, for me, is like the fuel that keeps you going, even when life feels overwhelming. Joy is more than a feeling. Maybe JOY is the understanding of God being with us. Maybe JOY is the effect of peace that surpasses all understanding. As we are chasing after that feeling, maybe we should learn to rest in the promise that God is near to us.

May JOY be yours this day, and may JOY fill your heart like never before as we are looking forward to Christmas.

Blessings,
Pastor Bo

Happening at 805 Western

- **This Saturday we are going to the ZOO.** Hopefully the weather will be kind to us and we can enjoy a nice outing. If you have purchased tickets, Kris Hayden will communicate with you about picking them up and further details.
- **Sunday, Pastor Matt Robinson**, will join us in worship and will encourage us through the word to "Rejoice in the Lord Always".
- **Session is meeting this Thursday**, and I ask for your prayers for this group of dedicated people that care for and help find the direction for this church we all love.
- **Midweek**, after tonight, will be on Winter Break until January 8th.
- Please share the information about **Christmas Eve services** 4 pm - the Family Service, at 10:30pm a Christmas Musicale by our FPJ musicians, and an 11 pm- Traditional Service.

One last thing:

Thank you to all that came out last Friday night for the Harvest Arts concert. Not only was the sanctuary filled with people, some traveling all the way from Lombard or Bolingbrook, but the fellowship and sharing that took place after the concert was amazing. Thank you to all that helped us welcome so many people, and show that "Christmas Spirit" that lives in the hearts of this congregation.

Church Family

Prayers of health and healing for:

Jean Smietanski, Clint DeGeus, and Mary Jane Johnson.
Prayers for baby Anna, granddaughter of Sarah and Craig Randolph, as she struggles with heart complications.
Prayers for the successful upcoming surgeries for Judy Garrison, Judy Bartels, and Henry Province.

Are You a Shepard Also?

In Luke, Chapter 2, the angels announced the birth of our Savior to the shepherds. Upon hearing this news, they immediately left their flocks and went in search of the baby Jesus. When they found Him, wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger, they fell to their knees and worshipped Him. After leaving the stable, they shared the news with all of the wondrous things that they had seen and heard.

What will we do this Christmas season? Will we be like those Shepherds? During our time at work, at Christmas parties, and gatherings with family and friends, will we continue to spread the news of our Savior, the Christ Child? Will we remember that He has given us peace, joy, comfort, and salvation in our lives?

May the Lord bless us this Christmas season and in the upcoming year.

- Dave Steinberg

POINSETTIAS

Poinsettia orders are now open! Donate a pot of Poinsettias for \$15 . Orders are due by December 15th. Forms are available on our website and as an insert in your Sunday bulletin. Flowers will be beautifying our church for the Advent season, but will be available for pick-up afterwards.

Children's Church Corner

Faith Focus: Christmas Storytellers—We prepare for Jesus together.

Lesson for Sun. 12/15: Joseph and the Angel
—Matthew 1:18-24

Bible Verse: "A child is born to us." Isaiah 9:6

Faith Idea: Faith in Community—how do you practice faith in your community?

OASIS: Women's Ministry

during Midweek (12/11, 1/8, 1/22 and more)
Room 217 from 6:45—7:15pm (after dinner)

Oasis is meeting again this week - inviting women to come relax and enjoy the Christmas spirit together 5-6pm room 217 / 6pm dinner in HH - 6:45 dessert & tea back in 217. We may still need a few Christmas cards signed to go with the Veteran's gifts.

THANK YOU to everyone who has donated their time to our Soar High program each Wednesday and on Sundays when the kids share the songs they've been learning. Thank you to our Soar High families and everyone who makes this ministry possible.

We'd appreciate your help taking down our Christmas decorations! Worship council sincerely thanks all the volunteers who assisted us with Advent decorating on Saturday, November 30th—you did a WONDERFUL job! Now we must think about taking these decorations down after the Christmas holidays. **We'll be meeting on Saturday, January 4th at 9am to complete this task.** There is a FREE pancake breakfast that day as well, so you can come early (starting at 8:30) and have breakfast beforehand! Please consider helping—putting away these decorations doesn't take very long, so we should finish well before noon with YOUR help! If you can assist, please sign up on our website.— With sincere gratitude, First Pres Worship Council

GIVING AND TAX SAVINGS

Those with Traditional or Rollover Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) must begin taking mandatory withdrawals at age 73. You're required to pay US and IL income taxes on these Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs). If you add the Qualified Charitable Distribution step, YOU PAY NO U.S. or IL INCOME TAX WHILE THE CHARITABLE GIFT QUALIFIES AS AN RMD. In effect, you can donate SOME OF WHAT YOU'D OTHERWISE PAY IN TAXES to the church or another public charity! Savings typically range from 30 to 40% of the gift amount. If you're not familiar with QCDs, contact Ken Graham at kengraham8@msn.com Please put your name and QCD in the subject line.



What a great time at the Harvest Arts concert!



December 11th, 2024

Stewardship Report

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|------------------------------|-----------|
| 2024-2025 Budget | \$747,600 |
| Year to Date Income | \$368,496 |
| Year to Date Expenses | \$356,758 |
| Per Capita | \$43.00 |

Received for Hurricane Relief \$6,270.00

You may text your gift to FPJ at (815)205-3044 or go online to use a credit card. You can give by mail, by online giving through our website using the "Give" tab, and through electronic giving.

Thank you for your generosity.

SAVE THE DATE— COMING UP

12/11 Oasis meeting during Midweek
12/11 Special Christmas Midweek
12/14 Brookfield Zoo trip
12/15 Poinsettia orders due
12/22 Christmas Fellowship Breakfast
12/24 Family Worship Service at 4pm
Christmas Musicales at 10:30pm
Traditional Worship Service at 11pm

Christmas Midweek!

Tonight (12/11) is our special Christmas Midweek. Since we will not meet again until January, we're celebrating tonight! Soar High still meets in their rooms at 5 for special Christmas lessons, we will have a pizza dinner at 6, followed by some hot cocoa, treats, and Christmas carols. This is going to be one joyful Wednesday evening, hope to see you there!

FPJ Oasis Women's Ministry is looking to Bless our Veterans at the Manteno Veterans Home this Christmas!

Their needs list is simple but their gratitude is great! Take a look and see what item(s) you might be able to help with! Oasis will collect items until Dec. 14th. Items DO need to be NEW. Collection bin is in Hoffman Hall. You can find the item list on our website and at the collection bin in Hoffman Hall.

SUNDAY SERVANTS 12/15/24

PREACHING: Matt Robinson

USHERS: Ed Schultz, Mark Dykema, Joe Boyd, Reed Mott

COFFEE: Jasmine Keir

LITURGIST: Dee and Dale Mullen **ACOLYTE:** Nora Moretti

SOUND: Keith LeVasseur **VIDEO:** Todd Hayden

Soar High is excited to have 38 active children participating! However, we need at least two adult volunteers to help each Wednesday from 4:45-6pm. (No musical experience needed.) We are asking people to have fun with the children and sign up to help at least one Wednesday between now and April. Volunteer sign up on our website—go to the Events tab, click on coming up, and scroll down to Soar High. Once you fill out the Google Form, you will be sent an email link to a Google Sheet to sign up for the date(s) you can to help. Thank you so much!

Childcare Volunteers

Thank you to those who responded and will help our Children's Ministry Team in the future. We are still looking for some folks who are willing to help in the nursery if needed on a Sunday if there's an abundance of kids. If you are interested please contact the church office.