



e-News

December 4th, 2024

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A letter from Lead Pastor Bo Mircea

It is December! The month of the year that fills the air with expectation, joy, and laughter. At least for some...

Yes, you guessed it, this will be my traditional Grinch Update. As your resident Grinch, I feel that my job from time to time is to remind you that some expectations or social norms, or even self imposed standards for the season, are not realistic. Because it comes down to a lot of busy time, a lot of running, social interactions, and gift buying that at the end of the day can leave you running on fumes. So, as a good Grinch, I will say: Before you take care of others take care of yourself. Maybe start the day by staying in bed for five more minutes, breathing, thinking about the day, and putting all that in a prayer before the Lord. Hey if the kids can write letters to Santa, maybe you can write a little note to Jesus this year. In the same manner, every time you hear on the radio: "All I want for Christmas is you"...take that as a reminder that God does want your attention this season.

My point is: Please find balance this season before anything else. Remember that the little journey to Bethlehem was indeed stressful, and filled with uncertainty, but nevertheless it was a trip that was worth taking. So as we venture into the rush of Christmas, let us find balance along the way.

Blessings,
The Grinch (aka Pastor Bo)

Happening this week at 805 Western:

- **FRIDAY FRIDAY FRIDAY - Harvest Arts Concert** - 6:30 open doors, 7:00 Concert, following the concert will be treats and fellowship. I hope to see you here for this moment of breathing in the mad rush of Christmas.
- **Saturday Breakfast** - Free Pancake Breakfast this week at 8:30am. Good stuff happening here all the time. Stop and say hello and grab some grub.
- **Zoo Trip** - Parish Council extended the sign up for one more week, until Sunday 12/8. You still have this week to say yes to December 14 for a Zoo Trip.
- **Christmas Breakfast** is coming up on December 22nd - save the date and look for more details in the following week
- **Youth Group** is at church the Sunday at 5 pm.

See you around the church this week,
Bo

Church Family

Prayers of health and healing for:

Sheila Lundeen, Jean Smietanski, Klint DeGeus,
Mary Jane Johnson, and Pastor Bo's mom.

Prayers for baby Anna, granddaughter of Sarah and Craig Randolph, as she struggles with heart complications.

Sympathies and prayers for the family of Caley Alessio Maradei after her recent passing. Her Visitation will be Dec. 6th from 3pm-8pm at Blackburn Funeral Home, and her Funeral service will be Dec. 7th from 11am-12pm here at First Pres. Joliet.

SUNDAY SERVANTS 12/8/24

USHERS: Ed Schultz, Mark Dykema, Mark Fumagalli, Mark Morrison **COFFEE:** Sue Mott

LITURGIST: The Strimel Family and Sue Mueller

ACOLYTE: Jacob Pritz

SOUND: Cliff Stepina **VIDEO:** Matt Blaser

BROOKFIELD ZOO TRIP

Saturday, December 14th 3pm-9pm

Our congregation will visit the zoo together and see our decorated tree and all the lights! Discounts and carpools available. Find more info online or on the attached form.

Deadline to purchase tickets is extended to December 8. This is the last chance for discounted tickets and carpools!

Children's Church Corner

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

Lesson for Sun. 12/8: Mary and Elizabeth—Luke 1:39-45

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 (12/4, 12/11, 1/8, 1/22 and more)
Room 217 from 6:45—7:15pm (after dinner)

Ladies - join us on Dec 4th & 11th Midweek to do Christmas cards for our shut-ins and local Veterans. We'll gather in room 217 from 5pm-6pm. Enjoy dinner with the families, back upstairs for dessert, and to finish more cards until about 7:30pm. All are INVITED!!!

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.

ADVENT CONCERT

Friday, Dec. 6 at 7 pm in the sanctuary
This Friday!

Bring family and friends to enjoy a Christmas concert by Harvest Arts featuring flute, harp, cello, violin, and viola. Come rekindle the joy and glory of Christmas!
This concert is free so bring the whole family!

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.

HURRICANE RELIEF

We have completed our collection for Hurricane Relief. You contributed a grand total of \$ 6,270.00 to help with the recovery efforts from hurricanes Helene and Milton through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. Thank you for your generosity.

December 4th, 2024 Stewardship Report

2024-2025 Budget	\$747,600
Year to Date Income	\$348,467
Year to Date Expenses	\$354,683
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

12/6 Advent Concert with Harvest Arts
12/8 Zoo trip form deadline
12/14 Brookfield Zoo trip
12/22 Christmas Fellowship Breakfast
12/24 Family Worship Service at 4pm
Christmas Musicales at 10:30pm
Traditional Worship Service at 11pm

From Your PNC

The Pastor Nominating Committee is excited to report that the Presbytery of Blackhawk unanimously approved the recommendation to install Rev. Bogdan Mircea as Lead Pastor! We will let you know the details about his installation service as soon as we have them. Please continue to pray for Pastor Bo and the people of First Pres as we look forward to the ministry opportunities ahead.

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.

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.

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.

