



# The LINK

Volume 1 | January 2022

## Through Stained Glass: Here's to the New Year!

I look out my window and sense the strangeness of the season. Today, the high will be in the middle sixties. The birds are chirping, as if it were May. The muddy paw prints throughout my house are proof enough of how soggy the soil is here, in mid-December. We just celebrated the winter solstice, but it doesn't feel like winter at all.

In the distance, I hear a small engine. Surprisingly, it isn't a snowblower, but possibly a lawnmower. The sound disrupts the stillness of the day. A break in the weather—a noticeable change in the climate—seems to send people into a frenzy. Unlike the Birds that continue to go slow, humans think we need to do something. So, we wash our cars, leaf blow a yard already void of leaves, and run around, because “who knows when we will have another day like today.” The irony, in that logic. We fill our time with tedious tasks to be more “efficient,” yet we are trying to clear calendars to fill them up again.

I love this time of the year. The cold weather turns my skin red, reminding me that I am alive! The snow and ice slow me down. I become more intentional and mindful about each step I take. It is the time of the year when we have permission from nature to turn inward, be like those pesky chipmunks, and allow our breathing—our lives—to slow down. We can even turn to that passage in scripture that wisely whispers, “For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven.”

Despite being in yet another wave of the pandemic, life seems to have picked up right where we left off back in March, 2020. Other than the face masks we wear, normal moves back into the neighborhood. Seasoned saints pack into diners to talk about the Rainers' basketball games. The parking lots at gyms are at capacity, as people promise to take better care of themselves in the New Year. Parents deliberate over which commitment to strike from their calendars, as students weigh their extracurricular activities. The

refrain from folks before the pandemic has returned, “I'm just so busy these days.”

We need familiarity in our lives. But not at the expense of our wellbeing. The winter months of the Midwest invite us to begin our new year slowly. They help us resist the temptation to busy our lives for the sake of—well, whatever reasons we think we need, to do all the things for all the people at all times. At the start of the year, we can set the pace for how we care for ourselves. We can be mindful of what we give our attention to, because what we give our attention to shapes so much in our lives.

What will you give your attention to this year? What will guide you in 2022? What will you say “yes” to in the days to come? Remember, we are finite creatures living in a finite time. To live life to its fullness, I believe it is essential we face up to this fact. Before we rush out to busy our lives, might we begin by turning inward and making space to see the sacred in our lives? Winter is the time when we in the Midwest have the opportunity to ask, “On the other side of this season, how will we emerge? How will we begin again?”

Of course, to answer this question—we must slow down enough to hear it in our lives. It's like what poet David Whyte says, “The antidote to exhaustion isn't rest. It's wholeheartedness.” Maybe this year, we will resist the temptation to do all the things. Or, we are intentional with the ways we care for ourselves for the sake of self-love, rather than a means to an end. Perhaps, this is the year you say, “I will participate, but not as asked.” In the days to come, may we live the questions, beginning with our inherent goodness, living everything now for Love's sake!

Outside my window, it doesn't feel like winter. The birds hold tight to their winter ways, while the squirrels assess their investment plans. The trees wave to me with their leafless branches, inviting me to rest, be still, and trust the hidden work of love. In them, I see the invitation to abandon myself—my plans, my productivity—to the One Great Love.

Peace,  
Adam

## Ministry of the Hands

### LINCOLN LOGAN FOOD PANTRY

Monthly Distribution Report Comparison			
	Individuals	Children	Households
September	675	140	226
October	701	178	239
November	942	232	295

There was an increase in the number of customers to the Pantry, compared to September numbers. We saw an increase of returning customers (those that haven't been here in the last three to six months) and new customer registrations. There continues to be a need to provide food to food insecure families. Some days in November, we served between 35 to 45 families within the two hours on the days we were open.

Thank you to the Logan County residents and churches that sent monetary donations to the Pantry. We have purchased hams and turkeys for distribution to families in November and December.

Customers were very grateful, thanking the volunteers for their efforts and in turn, the Pantry volunteers extend their words of thanks and appreciation to Logan County residents and churches. "Thanks again!" from Rick Releford and Norm Newhouse.

***Donation focus for the month of January is Body Wash and Bar Soap.***

### NEWS FROM THE MISSION AND OUTREACH TEAM

Many thanks to all who bought gifts for the Angel Tree. All the tags were taken and 20 gifts were provided to residents at The Christian Village.

The Food for Thought program is looking for additional volunteers to help with sacking and/or delivering food to Northwest School during the second semester. Sign up sheets are in the parlor.

Several kids and adults from the congregation helped fill gift bags for the children at Head Start on December 12. Each child enrolled at Head Start received a gift bag from the church.

Many thanks to all who contributed to the Kemmerer Village Christmas project. Ken and Debbie were able to purchase 52 \$25 gift cards for Christmas gifts for the students there!

One of the inmates that our church has been supporting at Logan Correctional Center is scheduled to have a clemency hearing in January. She has been very grateful for the help our church has provided through financial help with college coursework and visits with Gary and Karen.

Other opportunities to be on the lookout for are:

- Center for Creativity and Community: Adam is applying for the second year of a three-year grant to help with operating costs for the Center. Stay tuned as we look forward to continuing this program and ways you can help!
- Creekside Outdoor Center: The facilitator of the center has approached Adam about possibly collaborating on some outdoor spiritual activities/outreach opportunities.
- Have ideas for outreach or ministry opportunities? The Ministry of the Heart team welcomes new members! Check the calendar for meeting dates.

## Ministry of the Heart

### FELLOWSHIP, WORSHIP & SPIRITUAL FORMATION

As we move into the new year, we offer “Thanks” to everyone, for their patience and understanding in observing the church imposed guidelines during the pandemic. The health and safety of everyone continues to be of great concern during this time. May the Joy and Hope, brought to us through the birth and life of Jesus Christ, fill our hearts and guide us in the new year of 2022.

#### WORSHIP & SPIRITUAL FORMATION:

- Sunday, January 2, Second Sunday of Christmas, Communion
- Thursday, January 6 Epiphany
- Sunday, January 9, Baptism of the Lord, Communion
- Sunday, January 16, Second Sunday after Epiphany
- Sunday, January 23, Third Sunday after Epiphany
- Sunday, January 30, Fourth Sunday after Epiphany
- Kirk Nights and the Book Study group will resume on Wednesdays in January. More information on these activities will follow.

#### FELLOWSHIP:

This year, as conditions of safety from COVID allow, we look forward to resuming more of our Fellowship activities.

## Ministry of our Resources

### DECEMBER SESSION MEETING

The Session met November 9. In addition to reviewing the reports and activities of the three Ministry teams (described elsewhere in the LINK), the Session spent considerable time discussing the pandemic responses currently in place for First Presbyterian Church. One change was made. Effective November 19, light refreshments may be served in the building. Light refreshments include cookies, snack items, cake, beverages, and other similar foods. Potlucks and other forms of a complete meal are not light refreshments. At each meeting, the Session continues to examine the strategies in place at the Church in response to Covid 19. Adding, subtracting, or otherwise modifying the strategies may occur as the rate of infections change.

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