



# The Sextant



Following the Lord's Direction

Volume 4, Issue 11 | December 2018

## Letter from Rev. Jim Porter



Dear Friends and Members of First Pres., Elk Rapids,

Wow! It's hard to believe that Thanksgiving has come and gone, and here we are at the beginning of December! I love this time of year, though, as we get ready for Christmas, and most importantly, prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ once again into our lives today. It is a special— and sacred— time of year!

With this in mind, we are getting ready to start a new Advent series, called "Because of Bethlehem," based on the book by Max Lucado. I invite you to join us as we look at the promises of God found in the babe of Bethlehem. Max says it all starts in a manger:

**"A remarkable gift can arrive in an unremarkable package. One did in Bethlehem more than 2,000 years ago. No one expected God to come the way He did. Yet the way God came into the world was every bit as important as the coming itself. The manger is the message."**

**Because of Bethlehem, we no longer have marks on our record... just grace. We have the promise that God is always near us, always for us, always within us— that we have a friend and Savior in heaven. Long after the guests have left, the carolers have gone home, and the lights have come down, these promises endure."**

*"You don't want to miss any of these special events and services!"*

I invite you to join us for worship each Sunday of December at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m., as we explore these wonderful promises of God. Also, as a part of this series, we are doing "Wednesdays in Advent" once again. Please join us Dec. 5, 12, & 19, as we share a meal together, followed by a DVD of Max Lucado looking a little deeper into how we can live into these promises today. (Please note that on Dec. 5 & 19, we will have a soup supper

followed by the program, and Dec. 12 will be catered meal with lots of Christmas activities in addition to the small group study with Max Lucado. We are asking that everyone buy a ticket for the dinner on Dec. 12.) You don't want to miss any of these special events and services!

**Finally, don't forget our Christmas Eve services!** We are planning three services this year: a Family Worship Service at 5:00 p.m. and Traditional Services at 7:00 and 9:00 p.m. All services will conclude with the lighting of candles and the singing of "Silent Night."

This is a wonderful time to invite friends and neighbors to church, as we remember what this holy season is really all about!

Blessings to you in Christ,

*Pastor Jim*

## Wednesdays in Advent

Plan to attend our "Wednesdays in Advent" on December 5, 12 & 19. Dinner each night is followed at 7:00 p.m. by the short DVD/study "Because of Bethlehem" by Max Lucado. Childcare is provided.

- ♦ **December 5 & 19 - Soup supper** from 6:00-7:00 p.m. (feel free to come early or late). Sign up in the narthex if you would like to bring soup or bread.
- ♦ **December 12 - 5:30 p.m. Catered dinner** (by Chef Jonathon Heeke), an Advent program including the DVD/study "Because of Bethlehem" by Max Lucado, Christmas Carol singing, and a craft and drawing for two Camp Hay-o-wen-tha gift certificates for young folks ages 5-10 years old. Cost is \$10/person, \$25/family. Tickets are on sale Sundays in the narthex.

You won't want to miss these special evenings with your church family. Invite a friend and join us!



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## Outreach Trip to Eagle Village

Louise Pond made what is becoming her annual trip to Eagle Village on October 25.



She has formed a beautiful relationship with the art teacher and the students by taking over the art classes for the day. This year, Louise planned to do three portraits of students as she taught the class. She ended up doing twelve. (That's three portraits in less than an hour.) She said she was exhausted by the end of the day, but the kids were thrilled, and Louise's talents showed in her compassion. Now she has framed the portraits and is sending them back to be hung on the walls in the school. There is one condition she asked of Eagle Village; the portrait goes with the student when they leave the Village. Thank you, Louise, for your continued love and passion for this Outreach program.



The Outreach Team plans to attend the Christmas Open House at Eagle Village on Wednesday, December 19. Call Peggy Bushnell (231-322-4926), if you would like to join us.

## Year End Contributions

We are rapidly approaching the end of 2018 and want to remind you that in order to have your pledge or other year-end giving included in your 2018 contribution statement, it must be received in the church office by 12 noon on Friday, December 28. Thank you for your investment in the ministry and missions of First Presbyterian Church.

## Christmas Memorial Plants

Christmas is a time to honor our loved ones with an \$8.00 donation for a poinsettia plant to decorate the church sanctuary. The names of those you wish to remember will be printed in the bulletin on Christmas Eve.



Please make checks payable to First Presbyterian Church (Christmas Memorial). Place this form and your donation in the Christmas Memorial box by Friday, December 14.

Names of donors:

\_\_\_\_\_

☐ In Honor Of: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ In Remembrance Of: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I would like to order \_\_\_\_\_ poinsettia plant(s)

☐ I would like to make a contribution for greenery

☐ I will be picking up a poinsettia after the Christmas Eve services

## Presbyterian Women

Presbyterian Women met in November to plan the disbursement of money received through our various fund raisers and donations. We were able to designate \$8,000 as gifts to various charities. We were able to increase our giving by \$500 over the \$7,500 disbursement of 2017. We enjoyed our Bible lesson of references to angels and were reminded of their past presence and discussed the possibility of their current involvement in our present day lives. Plans for next year were also discussed. Please check the bulletin for future gatherings. ~ Cheryl Knight

## GUITAR CLASS

**THE LIGHTHOUSE  
COMMUNITY CENTER**  
503 Elm Street, Elk Rapids MI 49629



### Free Guitar Class

**Thursdays after School  
December 6 & 13  
3:15 for High School & Jr High  
4:15 for Elementary**

**Call Melanie Stoll for info.  
231-392-1862**

**At the Lighthouse**



Come have fun  
and learn:

**CHRISTMAS  
SONGS**

## CAR SMARTS FOR TEENS

**THE LIGHTHOUSE  
COMMUNITY CENTER**  
503 Elm Street, Elk Rapids MI 49629



### RESPONSIBLE TEENS

**WHAT DRIVER'S ED  
DOESN'T TEACH YOU**

**Wednesday  
December 12  
7-8:30pm**

**AT THE ELK RAPIDS  
FIRE STATION  
209 S. Bridge Street**



**Free Class  
For Appointment  
Call 231-392-1862**



## Christian Education & Youth Update

God is doing great things in the life of our church family and that was evident again in November. The month started off with our second annual youth group Fall Retreat where a group of 19 students from Elk Rapids joined 100 other teens from around Northern Michigan for a night of faith and fun. November 11 was a Service Sunday where our Sunday School children teamed with our youth group to pack 70 boxes for Operation Christmas Child. These boxes will be delivered to children around the world helping them experience the joy of Christmas and the love of Jesus. On November 18 we took a group of 15 to the movies for a youth group Sunday Funday outing. Everyone had a great time and we continue introducing new students to the youth ministry.

December starts off with our first Community Advent Kickoff that is being held in conjunction with the library and is an exciting addition to our family ministry calendar. We will be opening our church on December 1 to our community as we celebrate the beginning of the Christmas season with crafts, advent wreaths, cookies, story time, and singing. Please join us as we mark the start



of this special time of the year with our entire community. The next Service Sunday for the youth group will be held on December 9. These Sunday's are intentional opportunities for our students to be the hands and feet of Jesus. This time we are returning to Food Rescue and helping to prepare food for those in need across Northern Michigan. We will be holding a youth brunch on December 16; these fundraisers are one of the ways our students pay for mission trips. I would encourage you to make plans to join us during the Sunday School hour to support our youth and enjoy some great food. As always I thank you for the privilege of being a part of this family of faith and serving this community.



### Vimeo & Video Expertise Needed

Do you have experience putting videos on Vimeo? We are looking for someone to help us get Vimeo operational for uploading Sunday sermons. Contact Pete VanDenBerge or the church office if you can help.

**Youth Brunch**  
**Sunday, December 16**  
**10:00 - 11:00AM**



### Community Dinner Update & Thank You

We are excited to see how our free community dinners keep growing. Between 140 and 150 people were served a delicious Thanksgiving dinner on



November 19. This was the only Thanksgiving some had, and a blessing to all. Check out the "flags" in the narthex to see what those at the dinner are thankful for.

A huge "thank you" to Anne Conrad and her team for coordinating the dinner, Chef Jeremy Burns for preparing such a scrumptious meal, Rick Young from the Village Market for food donations, and all our volunteers who helped make this dinner so special. We couldn't do it without everyone's help!

We will be hosting Free Community Dinners once each month January thru April next year. Watch for information on dates and volunteer opportunities. Let's all get involved!





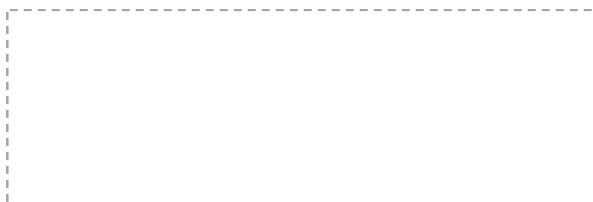
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## December Event Schedule

Check out these events this holiday season:

**Saturday, 12/1**      **Community Advent Kickoff**  
2-4 PM—Church  
Free

### WEDNESDAYS IN ADVENT

**Wednesday, 12/5**      **Soup Supper & Video**  
6-7 PM—Dinner  
7 PM—Video/Discussion

**Wednesday, 12/12**      **Advent Dinner & Video**  
5:30 PM—Catered Dinner  
7 PM—Video/Discussion  
\$10 per person  
\$25 per family

**Wednesday, 12/19**      **Soup Supper & Video**  
6-7 PM—Dinner  
7 PM—Video/Discussion

**Saturday, 12/22**      **Christmas Cantata**  
4 PM—Sanctuary  
Free

## Christmas Eve Worship Schedule

Christmas Eve is a special time to gather with friends and family and celebrate the birth of Jesus. Join us for one of the following services:

**5 PM**      **Contemporary Family Worship**  
Wayne Potter and Melanie Stoll will lead this family oriented, informal service. There will be lots of participation from our children and youth. The message will be geared for all ages, and children will be invited to join the hand bell choir.

**7 & 9 PM**      **Traditional Worship**  
Pastor Jim will lead these traditional services with specially prepared music by the chancel choir, under the direction of Cheryl Knight, and lots of traditional Christmas carol singing. Both services will conclude with candlelight and singing Silent Night.

Invite your family and friends and make plans to attend on Christmas Eve!



BECAUSE OF  
*Bethlehem*  
LOVE IS BORN, HOPE IS HERE