

# THE MESSENGER

News for the Pews December 2022

## From Pastor Kimberly Secrist Ashby

Dear Friends,

It's Advent! Welcome to the holy season of preparing our hearts and lives to receive Christ! As a quick reminder, preparing means decorating, but it also means making room. I always have to put away some of my usual decoration around the house to make room for the Advent and Christmas pieces, and that's an intentional work. Inside us, we need to put away some of the busyness and distraction in order to make time and space for Jesus...I commend that work to you!



Also, we really hope you will be inviting others to join us for Advent celebrations!

**Enclosed are TWO of each flyer - one to keep and one to use as an invitation.** Or you could make a photocopy for yourself and give BOTH away! Just remember - a personal invitation means a lot more to someone than something that arrives by mail or email.

See you next Sunday as we consider Jesus as our Prince of Peace! And I'll pass you on the road as we start Advent on the Road this week!

Advent Blessings,  
Pastor Kimberly

### **The Story Small Study Groups** *Still Time to Join! Contact the Office*

- Sunday mornings at 9am with Carter Bishop
- Monday nights at 7pm with Mark Pellerin
- Wednesday mornings at 9:30am
- Thursday nights at 6:30pm with Pastor Kimberly

### *Gifts of Service*

- Sign up to bring Sunday lunch to youth group  
*Contact the office*
- Volunteer to light Advent Candles during Worship  
*Contact the office*
- Sign up for Coffee and Conversation  
*salinepres.org Signup Spot*
- Donate cookies to the 12/4 hot chocolate stand  
by 4pm Saturday, December 3





# Advent

## ON THE ROAD

First Presbyterian Church of Saline  
143 East Michigan Avenue Saline, MI 48176  
734-429-4140 [salinepres.org](http://salinepres.org)

The homes on our tour are listed by date and theme. Text the theme word of each house to **888-313-8027** and receive the audio accompaniment as you view each home. *All addresses are Saline unless otherwise noted.*

December 1 - **Shoes** - 324 N. Ann Arbor Street

December 2 - **Cards** - 2887 Hawthorne Way

December 5 - **Evergreens** - 426 Amherst Circle

December 6 - **Angels** - 186 Burwyck Park Drive (in a cul-de-sac)

December 7 - **Candles** - 583 Woodhill Drive

December 8 - **Music** - 539 Sycamore Circle (in a cul-de-sac)

December 9 - **Inn** - 102 East McKay Street

December 12 - **Trees** - 880 Watson

December 13 - **Ornaments** - 7782 Platt Road

December 14 - **Bells** - 514 Woodland Drive

December 15 - **Stars** - 107 Commons Circle (look up!)

December 16 - **Gifts** - 216 Currant Court, Ypsilanti, MI 48197

December 19 - **Candy Canes** - 1658 Judd Road

December 20 - **Bethlehem** - 100 Hall Street

December 21 - **Joy** - 7347 Fosdick Road

December 22 - **Nativity** - 1562 York Terrace

## Session Notes for November 2022

**The November Session meeting focused heavily on understanding the financial position of the church and preparing the budget for 2023.** With all of the transition that happened this year, the budget creation process is running a few months behind schedule.

**Troy Newberry, Treasurer, reviewed all of the financial information** about the church with the elders, paying particular attention to the reports each elders receives about their area of responsibility and how to interpret and use those reports in the creation of the new budget. Elders asked lots of good and helpful questions. Budget material is due by the first of December to Troy and the Finance Committee, which will then move towards getting a draft budget to everyone in December to review with their committees. Final review and approval will happen in January.

**The Session took care of removing from the rolls** some who have moved away, died, or cannot be located, and received new members by transfer. New members will be officially welcomed in January in worship. The Session also made sure to record items required by the Presbytery, such as ordination and installation dates of elders and deacons and days we approved for serving Communion.

**The Finance Committee is in the process of clarifying** and writing down the purpose of the Cook Fund for posterity, and will do the same with any other designated funds. They will draft overall policies and procedures for handling dedicated donations to the church so that we have those in place before we accept further donations.

**Committees gave updates on each area of church life,** including the stewardship drive, outreach opportunities, the new church management software we are purchasing, and mission disburse-ments for the end of the year. The Session reviewed plans for Pastor Kimberly's installation and the Session retreat.

**The Session Retreat** focused on structure and governance issues. We reviewed our mission and vision and considered what each committee does. Where is there overlap? Where are there gaps? We noted a list of gaps and recognized the reality that there is much overlap in what we do, and a structure which took that into account might be a better option for us.

We have tentatively created two teams of committees which are linked by the Communications Committee, and for a while in the new year, the two teams of committees will try meeting at the same time to collaborate a bit, then have the normal separate meetings. It will allow for better transparency and communication between groups, as well as increased opportunities to work together.

### **The teams are:**

Foundational – Finance, Admininstration & Personnel, Property

Programmatic – Worship, Christian Education, Mission, and Community Connection

Communication Committee serves both teams and the church by effectively getting the word out about what we're doing together and linking it strongly to our mission and vision.

**We discussed what impact this revision of structure** might need to have on the budget and other areas of our work, and set team meeting dates for January. The Foundational team will meet together quarterly, and the Programmatic team will meet together monthly, and we'll test this structure in 2023 to see how it helps advance our ministry and our collaboration.

If you have questions, please contact an elder or Pastor Kimberly!



## The Story

**It's coming on January 1!** Thanks to all of you who have ordered your books and signed up for small groups. There is still time if you want to jump on board! This chronological look at the Bible can teach us so much and open the doors of curiosity for more study of Scripture. We have a few extra books, or you can order your own - just make sure you get the main book (not curriculum) entitled, *The Story: The Bible as One Continuing Story of God and His People, with foreword by Max Lucado and Randy Frazee, NIV version*. We have room in small groups, too, so let us know if you'd like to join one! See page one for a list of small groups.

In 2017, Pastor Kimberly published an article in the Presbyterian Outlook entitled, "Learning the Bible Together: A Presbytery Experiment in Biblical Literacy" based on her previous church's experience with The Story. She and three other pastors started with comments from church members like these: "The Old Testament and the New Testament seem so different from each other - God acts differently in each part."

"I'd like to share my faith story with others, but I don't know Scripture well enough to answer any questions people might have. So I just don't share."

"I know the beginning of Scripture, and how Moses led the Israelites through the desert and to the Promised Land... but how does it connect all the way to Jesus?"

The four pastors chose to use The Story and worked together, studying and writing liturgy, meeting every two weeks and connecting the churches. Pastor Kimberly's church wrote Lenten devotionals based on what they were experiencing in The Story, and people said, "It wasn't until our church started reading this book that I found myself going back to the Bible and my daily readings."

**"I have always wanted to read the Bible, but have not been able to get through it.**

Reading this book together has helped me to interpret passages and the sequence of events that I didn't know or understand... I also believe reading this book has helped me in my spiritual growth because I am praying more and reading the Bible more."

**"The old saying of 'history repeats itself' comes to mind...** The more that I read and the more that we discuss the stories from long, long ago, the more it applies to my life and those that I know, today."

**"From Exodus to the story of Daniel, I have come to appreciate God's patience and love for the human race.** God has not given up on us, and I wonder why... The words love and patience do not even come close to defining how God feels about us. God has been and still is dedicated to us. That is more than I can say about my dedication to God - up, down, in out, hot, cold."

**"This study has brought me to the resounding theme of opening one's heart to God's intent in our lives.** Repeatedly those who listened, believed, and followed reaped the rewards of God's grace, mercy, and unending rewards."

**"Reading about Elisha's pilgrimage to the mountain of God, it occurred to me that even a great prophet who was so in touch with God had his moments of doubt and uncertainty in his walk with God.** The more I thought about it, all the prophets and apostles had their own troubles in their walks. What the prophets and apostles also show us is their faith and hope in their God of mercy, grace, and love."

We hope this gives you some insight into what you might gain from stepping on board and participating as fully as you can in The Story!

Rev. Kimberly Secrist Ashby, Designated Pastor