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Deepening Our Discipleship

BY REV. REBECCA LUTER

Last year we started a tradition of receiving “star words” in worship on Epiphany Sunday as we celebrate the star that guided the magi to worship the Christ child with their gifts. I would love to hear how your star word has guided you closer to God this year – stop me in the hallway or send me a message. We will again receive star words this year on Epiphany, January 5, in worship. I like what Rev. Anna Strickland wrote about this tradition, “Though we’d prefer a straightforward, step-by-step plan for our lives, God instead has given us an invitation to wander, to seek, to take a different road, to be guided by a star.”

We continue our journey seeking to follow Christ by celebrating his baptism on January 12, and then the church year enters into “ordinary time.” During ordinary time the color of decoration in the Sanctuary is green because it is in the ordinary time that we grow.

This year, I hope that you will engage in growing in your faith during the ordinary time between Christmas and Lent by considering your own journey to God. I will be teaching a Sunday School series at 10am on Sundays in the East Room and preaching in worship each Sunday at 11am on doubts and the mysteries of our faith. Why do bad things happen, even to good people? How is it that to be strong, we have to be weak? How can there be joy in suffering? Why does it seem like prayers go unanswered? Can small acts really bring transformation?

May we – regardless of the path we travel, no matter how lost we may feel, even in the bumps and twists and turns and chaos of our journey – find that God is with us every step of the way.

If you have doubts or questions that you would like included in those we will consider, send me an email at rluter@farmingtonpres.org.

Happy New Year!

We hope everyone had a blessed and Merry Christmas.

As we return to school for the second semester, it is already time for registration for the 2025-2026 school year. All returning families will be able to register for Summer 2025 and the 2025-2026 school year beginning January 13th at 7am.

All NEW families will be able to register for Summer 2025 and the 2025-2026 school year beginning at 7am on January 27th. Our best advertising is word of mouth. Please share the dates for enrollment with your friends with preschool children and elementary and middle school children in need of before and after care.

We look forward to continuing to serve your families and meeting the families of your friends with children.

Ms. Gretchen & Ms. Andrea

Farmington Day School



FPDS Christmas Program





The Advent Season was filled with singing! Thank you to our Director of Music, Jim Thrash, for beginning our journey to Christmas with a Christmas Carol Sing-a-long, to all who brought the joy of Christmas to our members with limited mobility with our Caroling Caravan, and the musicians and choir who led us in Lessons and Carols. Indeed, it has been a joyful season of beautiful music!



Epiphany, Sunday January 5

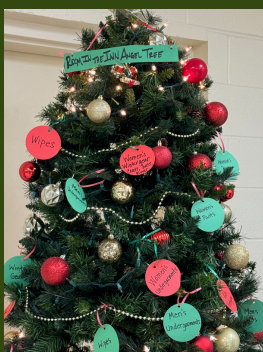
As we celebrate the arrival of the Magi, we remember that they were led by the star. As we receive star words in worship, we pray that Christ's light might guide us. Star words are words for us to use in reflecting on God's presence among us and consider how God might be leading us even now.

Potluck

Bring a dish to share and place it in the kitchen prior to worship with instructions for warming and serving. Lunch will be ready in Fellowship Hall following worship.

Boxing of the Green

After potluck lunch, we will wrap up Christmas by taking down our Christmas decorations. It always comes down faster than it goes up! Stay and enjoy some laughter and fellowship as we bid farewell to the Christmas season.



Mothers in Community (MIC) have decorated our Fellowship Hall Christmas Tree with items needed by Room in the Inn and First Presbyterian Church Soup Kitchen. Please take an ornament and fill a need! We will be collecting throughout the month of January.



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN



The women of Farmington Presbyterian Church made sure there were plenty of home baked goodies for our preschoolers, after school students, and members of the community to satisfy the sweet tooth and help us earn money for the mission projects we support. In addition to the bake sale, Rev. Luter networked with Shady Grove Presbyterian Church to offer fair trade items to purchase and help support developing communities. It was a successful project for all!



PW Schedule 2024-2025

December 11 Bake Sale 10:00-6:00

January 26 Lesson 5. Meet in the East Room at 12:30 PM

February 14 Lesson 6. Valentine treats in the East Room at 2:00 PM

March 23 Lesson 7. Meet in the East Room at 12:30 PM

April 16 Bake Sale 10:00-6:00

April 27 Lesson 8 & 9. Meet in East Room at 12:30 PM

May TBD Possibly a pool party

MIC

Mothers in Community

Bee Positive.

January meeting

in the fellowship hall

Thursday, Jan 16th

6 pm - 8 pm

Free childcare provided

Social Event

TBA later this month



Sunday Fellowship Schedule 2025

We will have Fellowship Potlucks
the **first Sunday** of the month
January - May and August - November.



We will have Fellowship Coffee
the **third Sunday** of the month
January - March and May - November.

We ask each family to consider
participating in hosting Fellowship Coffee
at least once this year. The sign-up has the
opportunity for you to sign up to bring
either something sweet or something
savory.

www.farmingtonpres.org/sign-up

Associate Pastor Nominating Committee



The Associate Pastor Nominating Committee meets on
Tuesday nights, either in person or virtually.

After meeting the requirements of the Committee on
Ministry of the Presbytery of the Midsouth our committee
was provided with a liaison, Rick Baker, for assistance
with any questions that we might have as we proceed in
viewing resumes matching our MDP (Ministry Discernment
Profile). If you know of anyone that is interested in
applying for the position of Associate Pastor for
Community Life, our email is apncefarmingtonpres.org.
As we continue with our search, we ask that you pray for
our committee as well as our Farmington congregation.

APNC Committee,

Elizabeth Moots (Ch.), Tom Bryant, Mike Colley,
Kay Patterson, Sandy Wann, Rick Baker (COM Liaison)



Thursday Adult Ministries Luncheons

The **Adult Ministries Group** will host a luncheon on
Thursday, January 23, at noon. Members of the
mission team to Xpujil, Mexico will share pictures and
stories of their experiences. Please mark your
calendar to attend this event. Lunch will be prepared
by Chef Scott Hutchins. The cost is \$13. Please
contact Sandy Wann to make a reservation by
Monday, January 20.



Mexican Cistern Ministry Mission Trip

January 13-18

Please pray for our Mission Team who will be travelling to Xpujil, Mexico to build 4 cisterns:

Carolyn Demaree | Steve Demaree | Ann Evans | John Hazen
Rev. Rebecca Luter | Mark Schielke | Charlie Smithers

An update about the Mexico Cistern Ministry:

Dear Friends,

During Thanksgiving Week, Victor, Felipe Torres, and I met with hundreds of cistern owner families from 12 communities to receive construction material loan repayments and cistern updates. Again and again, moms and dads let us know how valuable the cistern water is for their daily lives. We will visit another dozen villages in early December.

Scores of families in many villages have requested a cistern. We hope to build about 32 cisterns in 2025. During the next few weeks, we will decide where those cisterns will be built. Please pray for our decision-making process as we pray and reflect. We may work with three communities for the first time and return to towns where the families worked well with our building crew and continually honor their loan commitments.

Four American work teams are scheduled to visit this winter. Another three or four groups will arrive in June. We are thankful for our American partners who organize these trips and raise the funds to build the cisterns they will work on. There is no cistern ministry without God working through them in this unique way. So, thank you.

Please pray often for Victor, Raul, Isaias, Ezequias, Saul, Diego, Felipe Meneses, Lucas, Felipe Torres, Pati, Maria, and Teresa. These are some of the people, just like you and me, who keep this ministry moving forward. Include prayers for Pastor Eleazar in Castilla Brito and Pastor Abdiel in Xpujil. They are the pastors who oversee the churches where these folks are active disciples of Jesus.

Muchas Gracias.

Todd Luke

Welcome New Members



Jim and Catherine Laycook

Following their marriage on November 2nd, Jim joined FPC December 29, 2024.



Saturday, January 18

The Cottage at Germantown United Methodist Church

We host Room in the Inn on the 3rd Saturday each month at The Cottage at Germantown United Methodist Church. This ministry provides housing for homeless persons. Each time we host, a group of people prepare a meal for the evening: a casserole or meat, side(s), salad, bread, and dessert. The meal should serve 22 adults. A group of 6-8 people host our guests by setting up at 5pm and welcoming the guests at 6pm. We eat together and visit or play games until 9:30pm. At 9pm, 2 overnight shepherds arrive to spend the night, prepare coffee and a to-go breakfast, and do light clean-up after the guests depart at 6am. After we host, 2 laundry angels volunteer to launder the sheets, pillow cases, and blankets after we host our guests. This is a great way for someone who cannot be there in the evenings to still be a part of this ministry. The sign-up is on the website.

Session Report

Session reviewed Rev. Luter's current terms of call and approved a motion to recommend changes to the terms of call at the next congregational meeting. Session recommends changing the terms of call to add an additional week of vacation and to provide a 2% increase in salary with no change in housing allowance. Christmas bonuses for employees were approved. Session approved the wage rate scale for 2025. The annual review of the church roll was completed. A letter from Hord Architects was reviewed with further discussion needed at the Stated Session meeting in January. The 2025 budget process was discussed and an update on Stewardship was received regarding the number of pledges received to date.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Children's Sunday School

Children's Sunday School Sundays at 10am-10:45am in the Transition Kindergarten room (A6) on Sunday mornings. This winter we will be journeying with Jesus as he goes to the Temple, comes to John to be baptized, preaches in the synagogue, and performs miracles of healing.

Youth Sunday School



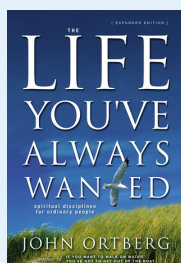
December held a lot of Christmas cheer for the youth, who decorated the youth room and made homemade ornaments for their very own Christmas tree! In Sunday School, the youth enjoyed a four week series on each foundational Advent word of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. Later in the month, the youth Christmas party included homemade chili provided graciously by Davis' mother, hot chocolate, a white elephant gift exchange, and a movie night watching Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer.

In January, the youth will continue to have Sunday School from 10-10:45am in the youth room, and meet Sunday evenings from 5:30-7:30 pm.

Sunday School for Adults

Beginning January 12 at 10am, Rev. Rebecca will lead an exploration of Faith and Doubt. Everyone has doubts. Where is God when bad things happen? Does God hear our prayers? Is there a heaven? How can we know? Often we treat such questions as the enemy of faith. But uncertainty doesn't mean our belief is lacking. Doubt can be a path to a deeper, richer encounter with God. Bring your questions, and Rev. Rebecca will plan a lesson to focus on them.

Cooper Patterson is leading a study of John Ortberg's *The Life You've Always Wanted* in the Fellowship Hall from 9:30am to 10:30am.



FOOD PANTRY COLLECTION

Oakland Presbyterian Church's Food Pantry is open 24/7/365.

This month, consider adding an item to your grocery list to help feed a person who is hungry. Items may be dropped in the basket at the West entrance.



You can HELP

- Soups and stews
- Grain breakfast
- Canned or dried beans
- Canned fish, meat
- Peanut or other nut butters
- Pasta sauce
- Canned tomatoes
- Shelf-stable milk
- Canned vegetables





Sunday Worship Online

Join us, Sunday mornings for worship on YouTube. You can find us through our website, www.Farmingtonpres.org or on YouTube at www.youtube.com/c/farmingtonpresbyterian. Don't forget to subscribe so you never miss our services or video events.

And don't forget to like, share, and hit that subscribe button!



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 2 Jennifer Young
- 13 Bettye Lucas
- 16 Rebecca Hutchins
- 16 Sandra Hilliard
- 23 Thomas Nagel, Jr.
- 29 Jon Still
- 29 Kristie Lively

Staff Extensions

Rev. Rebecca Luter, Pastor, Ext. 3134
Davis Howe, Interim Youth Director, Ext. 3130
Polly Knight, Financial Records Keeper, Ext. 3136
Renee Abel, Church Office Administrator, Ext. 3131
Gretchen Burch, Director of Day School, Ext. 3132
Andrea Soto, Assistant Director of Day School, Ext. 3138
Anthony Jones, Maintenance Technician

Session Members

Moderator - Rev. Rebecca Luter
Administration – Ann Erickson
At-large - Paul King
Congregational Life - Paula Gale
Christian Education – Liv Palmer
Clerk – Laurinda Ingram
Discipleship - Charlie Smithers
Property and Grounds – Bob Plotner
School Board – Tom Moots
Service – Jinney Hart
Treasurer—Melissa Still
Worship –Jackie Hall

Content for the February New Vision newsletter is due Monday, January 20.
Email articles and event information to church@farmingtonpres.org



New Vision | **January 2025**



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