



MAPLE LEAF



First Presbyterian Church of Maple Plain

December 2025

*So are the paths of all who forget God.
Hope perishes for the godless,
whose confidence is a fragile thing,
their trust, a spider's web.
— Job 8:13-14*

Contemplative Service: December 3rd @ 7:00pm *Dave Tillman*

The next Contemplative Service will be December 3rd at 7:00pm at the church. This is a quiet, reflective service with simple-repetitive music, reflective readings, and times of silence. The style is very different than our normal Sunday morning worship service.



Christmas Caroling: December 13th @ 4:30pm *Julie Lokken*

Join us in spreading the Christmas spirit by caroling at Lake Minnetonka Shores and Haven Homes on Saturday, December 13th. Meet us at Minnetonka Shores (main lobby) at 4:30pm. We will sing in the dining area and then go to Haven Homes to sing in the dining areas there.



A signup sheet is posted in Fellowship Hall for anyone interested. In addition to sharing your name, share your requests for carols that you would like to sing. We will prepare music, including the requested songs. All you have to do is show up and sing along!

See page 3 for more December events!

Cookies, Carols & Crafts December 10th @ 6:00pm *Julie Lokken*

Our annual Cookies, Carols & Crafts night will be held on Wednesday, December 10th at 6:00pm. Come decorate (and eat) a cookie (or two), make a craft, sing some Christmas songs and win a prize for your cookie decorating skills (or attempt!). The choir will sing, and Dave will play his glass harp in addition to Jonathan playing our favorite Christmas songs. Come join the fun!



Help Tell the Christmas Story December 24th @ 4:00pm *Julie Lokken*

This year, because we have limited resources available, we are trying a new approach for the Christmas Pageant. Rather than having the pageant on December 21st as communicated earlier, Pastor Dan will lead us in telling the story of the birth of Jesus using audience participation during the Christmas Eve service. Children, grandchildren, adults and visitors are all welcome to help tell the story. No rehearsal or experience is required!



If you would like to participate and/or have family coming who may want to participate (perhaps visiting grandchildren?), please let Pastor Dan know.



Hope Beyond Hope

For Advent this year, we will continue our look at spiritual disciplines by focusing on hope. As I think about this word and its importance for us, a particular phrase comes to mind.

Have you ever heard someone say they were “hoping against hope”? At first, it feels redundant, oxymoronic, and nonsensical, but I understand it to mean that you inexplicably find yourself hopeful despite evidence to the contrary.

You may or may not know, but the phrase comes from the Bible. Paul uses it when he is talking about Abraham, who, despite very real biological challenges of being in his 90's, hoped against hope that he would be the father of many nations (Romans 4:18).

The phrase can also be translated another way: “hope beyond hope.” But either way, a hope against another hope, or a hope beyond a hope, gets me thinking about the different kinds of hope we experience, and also their sources.

On one hand, there are things that I hope for. I hope for a great holiday season with my family. I hope I'll finish my Doctorate in Ministry degree in 2026. I hope I don't get cancer. Those things usually come from an internal desire. Abraham hoped he would have kids. But alas, sometimes our hopes don't work out.

But then, some things also come from the outside to give us hope. Like things that might surprise us and challenge our expectations. Like

when someone is full of gratitude despite a very difficult circumstance. Or when you see someone doing something incredibly generous. Or when someone on the opposite end of the political spectrum goes against the party line because of an internal ethic. Those moments can infect you. Change your thinking. Your posture. Your heart.

The Bible is full of these stories. God's promise to Abraham that he would have a child. God's promise to free the people from slavery. Isaiah's word that a new baby will be a Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Stories that counteract our pessimism, cynicism, skepticism...our despair. Stories that awaken our sense of hope, even when you've lost your own source of it. A hope beyond hope.

I don't want to sound cheesy here. Like I'm just trying to rekindle that holiday magic. Rather, I suppose what I'm trying to get at is that the stories we tell this time of year are all more important for us to retell and remember the farther away our hope feels.

This Advent, my prayer is that we would discover a hope beyond our own. A hope that, despite our doubts and fears, might transform us into hopeful people. Even when, or maybe, especially when, it seems absurd.

Be well and do good,
Pastor Dan

December 7 – See Hope
Genesis 1:1-5, 31; John 1:1-5

December 14 – Share Hope
Luke 1:39-56

December 21 – Proclaim Hope
Luke 1:57-80

December 24 – Christmas Eve – 4:00pm
Luke 2:1-20
Pageant, Carols, and Candles

December 28 – TBD

Congregational Meeting

December 7 @ 10:30am

By order of the Session, in compliance with the by-laws, the Congregation of the First Presbyterian Church of Maple Plain, Minnesota, is called to meet in a Congregational Meeting on Sunday, December 7, 2025, immediately following worship, in the sanctuary of the church at 558 County Road 110, Maple Plain, MN.

The meeting is called for the purpose of approving changes in the pastoral Terms of Call.



Sue Prok

Once again, FPC is participating in WeCAN's Christmas Adopt-a-Family program. We have a family of three, which includes a 17-year-old daughter. WeCAN provides us with a wish and a want list for each child and the family.

If you are interested in donating, there are envelopes in the narthex for cash or checks which can be given to Sue Prok or put in her Deacon box. If you prefer to shop, Sue has a shopping list available. Time is short, as presents need to be delivered to WeCAN on December 9th. So, unwrapped gifts must be at church by December 8th. Extra donations will be used to purchase emergency needs for WeCAN. Thank you for continuing to help our communities.

Men's Breakfast: December 13th @ 8:00am

Dave Tillman

The next Men's Breakfast will be December 13^h @ 8:00am. We'll have good food, lots of conversation, just enough reflection, and end in prayer. Be thinking of any prayer requests that you might want to share with the group.



I'm not sure who will be cooking, but someone will (I'll figure it out after Thanksgiving weekend).



**American
Red Cross**

**Blood
Services**

Red Cross Blood Drive Results

Dave Tillman

The Red Cross blood drive on November 11th collected 23 units of life-saving blood. Thank you to everyone who donated.

This total was less than our other recent blood drives. This was in part because the Red Cross has been having trouble getting the supplies for their Power Red machine. Therefore, they had to cancel those appointments.

In case you don't know, Power Red donation utilizes an automated process called apheresis. During this procedure, a machine separates red blood cells from other blood components (like plasma and platelets) and returns the non-red cell components back to the donor. This allows for the collection of two units of red blood cells in one donation session, which is particularly beneficial for patients requiring transfusions due to surgery, trauma, or chronic illnesses.

Hopefully, their supply chain problems will be solved for future events.

New Administrative Assistant

Heather Baker, Personnel Committee

Please join me in welcoming our new Administrative Assistant, Emily Roering. She has been training with Julie and will be working on Thursdays and Fridays starting December 4th. Below is an introduction from Emily.

Introducing Emily Roering



My name is Emily Roering, I am 26 years old, and I currently live in Excelsior. My husband Dylan and I are celebrating ten years together this April, and we welcomed our son Beckett on July 30th of this year. Outside of working with the church, I am a stay-at-home mom who loves cooking and photography.

We also have three cats at home, Hiccup, Happy, and Holly, who are very special to us. I have previous experience working with veterinary medicine, so we chose to adopt animals that all have special needs and health issues,

and we plan on continuing to adopt and foster special needs animals for the rest of our lives.

I am only 26 but feel like I have lived many lives! I worked as an au pair in Germany and England, studied graphic design at UW Stout, and now am working to grow my photography skills in hopes of eventually working as a professional photographer.

I was raised in a Christian family, with my mom being raised Catholic and my stepdad being raised Lutheran. Together we would usually attend church with my brother at the Westwood Community Church in St. Cloud, then during the holidays we would worship at my parents' hometown churches with the rest of our families. My brother and I also grew up going to Camp Lebanon every Summer, a Christian camp just outside of St. Cloud.

I love the sense of community that you can find through church and worship, and I am looking forward to getting to know this community better.



Dates to Save:

Get these on your calendar now, so avoidable personal conflicts do not get scheduled.

- Jan. 23-25, 2026 – Men's Retreat @ Clearwater Forest
- Mar. 22-28, 2026 – Mission Trip to Spruce Pine, North Carolina



North Carolina Service Project: March 22–28, 2026

Dave Tillman

Hurricane Helene tore through Mexico, the Caribbean, and several US states in September 2024. In its wake were many areas that are still working on recovery. The area most impacted by this hurricane (in terms of dollars and lives) was western North Carolina.

In conjunction with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, FPC is planning our annual Service Trip to this area March 22–26, 2026. Our hosts will be First Presbyterian of Spruce Pine. Travel arrangements and other details of this trip are still being worked out.

If you are interested in this opportunity, please contact Phil Benson or Pastor Dan.

NOTES ABOUT FINANCES:

- If you are interested in going on this trip, but cannot afford it, there is scholarship money available.
- Conversely, if you cannot go but want to contribute, you can donate scholarship funds to allow someone with more time than money to go.
- In previous years, we have found opportunities to use monetary donations at the worksite that we did not know about beforehand. You could donate for this contingency, or we could communicate the opportunity while we are there.



Unforgettable Picture from Girl Scout Troop 18378

Dave Tillman

On Wednesday, November 12, 2025, the girls from Girl Scout Troop 18378 took this photograph as part of earning a photography badge. They are in the 11th grade. The picture was taken with an Apple iPhone 13, using a ½ second exposure time.

Several Girl Scout troops have been using our building for their troop and planning meetings for many years. These have usually been a couple times a month on Wednesday and Sunday afternoons. However, they also schedule special activities on other dates.

The Girl Scout events are listed on the church calendar (CatchOurSpirit.org/calendar). This calendar lists all significant events that use our facilities, so check there for when some parts of the building may be in use by someone else.

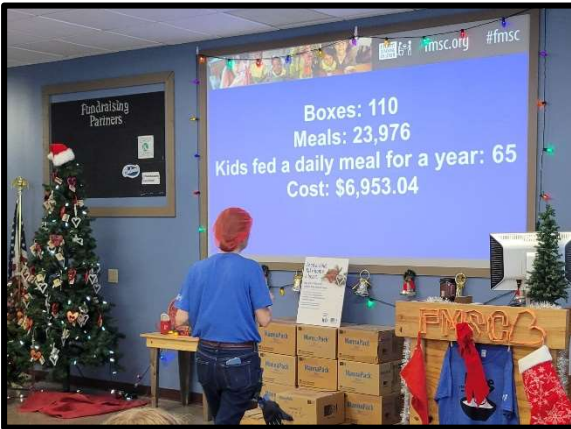


Feed My Starving Children

Dave Tillman

On Saturday, November 15th, volunteers from FPC and Calvin Presbyterian Church went to Feed My Starving Children (FMSC) in Chanhassen to assemble packages of meals for children around the world. FMSC distributes these packages to partners around the world. Each meal contains a balanced diet: carbohydrates (rice), protein (soy), dried vegetables, and vitamins. We were one of many groups and individuals that signed up for this shift. We collectively packed 110 boxes containing almost 24 thousand meals. The cost of the materials was almost \$7000.

For more information about this organization, or to sign up to volunteer visit fmsc.org.



December 2025

Worship Assistants

Coffee & Fellowship

7	Jill & Kyle Schmidt
14	Wally & Heather Baker
21	Sue & Jeff Potter
28	

Liturgist

7	
14	Mark Prok
21	Jeff Potter
24	Christmas Eve @ 4pm: Natalie Voigt
28	

Usher/Greeters

7	Dana Jensen
14	
21	Sue Prok
24	
28	

Tech Team

7	Julie Lokken
14	
21	
24	
28	Mark Prok

Communion: December 24: Christmas Eve

Communion Prep:

Communion Servers:

If you can help on Sundays, find the sign-up sheets in the fellowship hall.

Sunday School

December 7	
December 14	Sue Potter
December 21	
December 28	



BIRTHDAYS




10	Jim Lokken	25	Sue Prok
13	Bih Nde	30	Aloysius Che
19	Robbie Lokken	30	Bill Clark
20	Aki Yonehara	31	Dana Jensen

ANNIVERSARIES - none that we are aware of

ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF DEATH

6	Cathy Trowbridge
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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 30 9:30am Worship 10:30am Fellowship 10:50am Christian Ed 3:00pm - 9:00pm Girl Scouts	1 11:00am - 7:00pm Children's Music Academy	2 10:00am Holy Yoga, in-person & streaming on Zoom	3 9:00am - 3:00pm West Village Homeschool Co-op 7:00pm Contemplative Worship Service 7:45pm Choir Practice	4 9:00am - 3:00pm West Village Home-school Co-op	5	6
 7 9:30am Worship 10:30am Fellowship 10:50am Christian Ed 3:00pm - 9:00pm Girl Scouts	8 11:00am - 7:00pm Children's Music Academy	9 10:00am Holy Yoga, in-person & streaming on Zoom	10 9:00am - 3:00pm West Village Homeschool Co-op 6:00pm Cookies, Carols & Crafts  8:00pm Choir Practice	11 9:00am - 3:00pm West Village Home-school Co-op 6:30pm - 8:00pm Girl Scout Leader Meetings	12	13 8:00am Men's Breakfast  4:30pm Christmas Caroling
 14 9:30am Worship 10:30am Fellowship 10:50am Christian Ed 3:00pm - 9:00pm Girl Scouts	15 11:00am - 7:00pm Children's Music Academy	16 10:00am Holy Yoga, in-person & streaming on Zoom 6:00pm Session Meeting	17 9:00am - 3:00pm West Village Homeschool Co-op 4:30pm - 6:30pm Girl Scouts Meeting 7:00pm Choir Practice	18 9:00am - 3:00pm West Village Home-school Co-op	19	20
 21 Maple Leaf Articles Due 9:30am Worship 10:30am Fellowship 3:00pm - 9:00pm Girl Scouts	22 11:00am - 7:00pm Children's Music Academy	23 10:00am Holy Yoga, in-person & streaming on Zoom	 24 4:00pm Christmas Eve Worship	25	26	27
28 9:30am Worship 10:30am Fellowship 10:50am Christian Ed 3:00pm - 9:00pm Girl Scouts	29 11:00am - 7:00pm Children's Music Academy	30 10:00am Holy Yoga, in-person & streaming on Zoom	31	1	2	3

The latest calendar is available at:
CatchOurSpirit.org/calendar



First Presbyterian Church
558 County Road 110
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Address correction requested.



December 2025

First Presbyterian Church of Maple Plain

763-479-2158

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Wednesdays 9am – 2pm
Thursdays 9am – 2pm

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