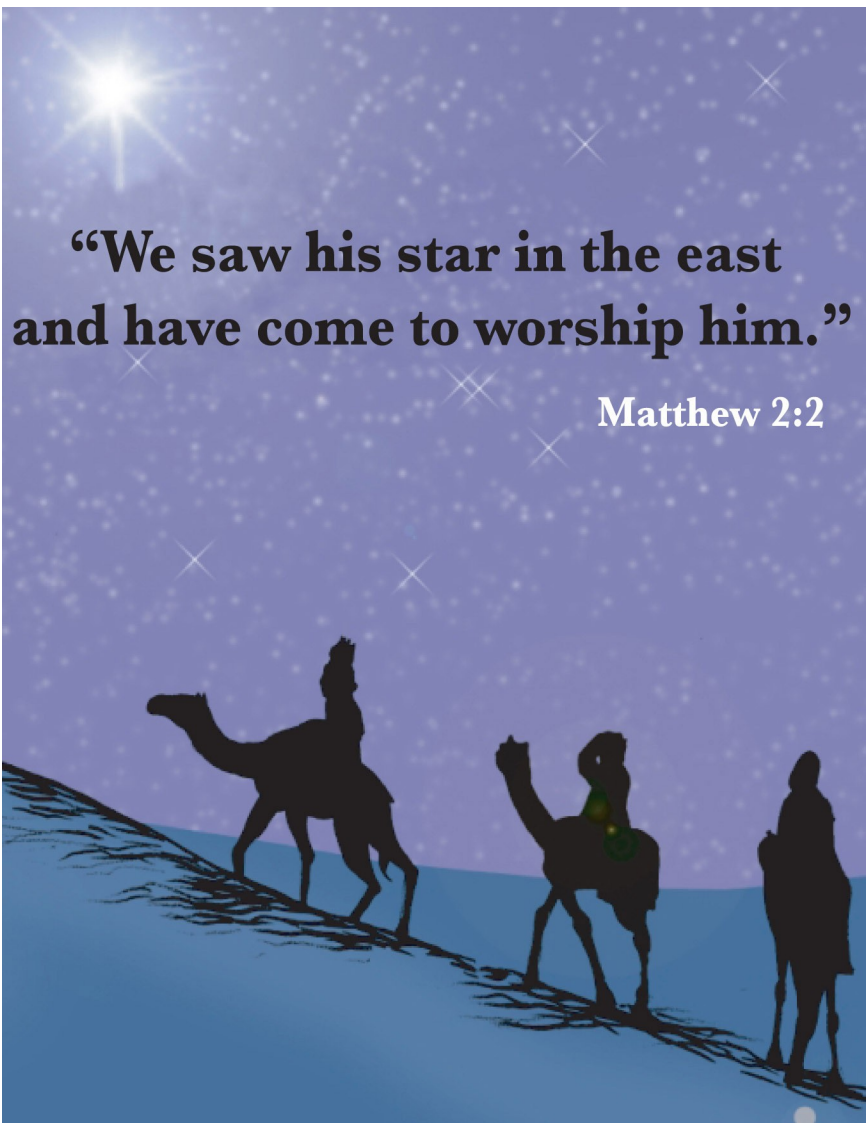




*A Publication of
The Presbyterian Church of La Porte*

January 2012



**“We saw his star in the east
and have come to worship him.”**

Matthew 2:2



**THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
OF LA PORTE**

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Happy New Year!

Yes, indeed! New Year's Day falls on a Sunday this year. So... because we know it will be a little harder dragging your body out of bed on Sunday, January 1st, we will have *one* worship service on this day at 10:00 AM. It will be a blended worship service, and we will focus our attention on living God's life in 2012! What a great way to begin the new year!



Dear Friends,

Wow! Where did 2011 go? I remember just yesterday having turned the calendar to January 2011 and being thankful to start a new year. (2010 had not been particularly wonderful for the Wicks.) 2011 was much calmer for our family and I

believe has been very good to our church.

I am grateful for the many changes that have come about in the past year in the Presbyterian Church of La Porte. I am still amazed at the grace members of this congregation have shown one another in their willingness to make room for a new worship service and a different worship style. I continue to be in awe of the hard work and commitment of our members. I rejoice in the compassionate care you all extend to one another. These characteristics of this congregation do not seem to change. They are forged in the identity of the Presbyterians of La Porte.

The writer to the Hebrews has a good word for us as we chart our path into yet another new year. He says Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. That's good! The one who loves us, and is willing to give all things for us doesn't change. Our relationship with God is rock solid and certain. I believe it is on this solid rock that this church is built, and even the waters of the swamp cannot overwhelm that rock.

In the coming year it is my hope that we will spend a good deal of time living into the many changes of 2012 and finding to our joy that our feet are still firmly fixed on the rock of Christ, even if we have put on new shoes.

Peace to you in 2012,
Sally

Sunday School News:

Preschoolers are beginning their faith journey under the caring watch of teaching team Carol Koenemann and Nancy Nibert. Their room is a flurry of activity as the children move from learning station to learning station, growing their faith and relationship with Jesus. If you peek through their classroom window, you can watch them laugh, learn and grow!

Elementary School children continue into the New Year with "Kid Connection" curriculum with their teaching team Melissa Bangs and Loretta Cooper. Using Bible stories, instant dramas and crafts, they are connecting to each other and building a relationship with God.

Middle School youth will be exploring the "Middle school survival series, My Faith" by Kurt Johnston and Mark Oestereicher. Lead by Marilyn Belkewitz and David Hay, this semester's lessons are comprised of small learning units on real life topics such as: "How to bounce back when I've really messed up?", "What difference do my friends make?" and "What does God want outta me?" to just name a few. This is a study of how God loves us and cares for us, and how to navigate the Middle School challenges using faith.

High School youth will be working with leader, Jim Friend as they watch and discuss Rob Bell's "Nooma" DVD series. This is a collection of short films that leads the viewer through an array of topics with a Christian perspective. The films have a Christian perspective that challenges the audience and student to think through a variety of life applications. This is a must see opportunity for our youth!

The Fellowship Committee wishes to thank you for supporting the new coffee kiosk. It is well-used!

The donations collected furnish the general supplies, and condiments, as well as the coffee. We will still need your assistance to provide staffing and the snacks of your choice.

Julie Kessler will be contacting volunteer's soon.



Thank you Elizabeth Bowen

Elizabeth has been volunteering her time for the “Healthy Choice” program of Thursday Nite Live. Elizabeth, a member of our church, is a certified personal trainer. Benefiting from her guidance to stay fit (or in some cases to get fit) are regulars: Johnna Belkiewitz, Tony Bowen, Joe Dzwonar, Ross Lawrence, Mark Jacobi, Adi Veenendaal, Terry Wicks, Melissa & Doug Beck.

Sessions have included instruction in: “Silver Sneakers” (a program for the more mature members of our church), Kick Boxing and “Wii Fit”.

Elizabeth does provide her services for private individual sessions for a fee (sorry you missed the free sessions at Thursday Nite Live) and may be contacted at: ebbowen20@gmail.com or call 363-4953.

We are delighted to welcome new staff to our Church family.

Jennifer Tucker began work with us in early November of 2011 as our new Worship Band Leader. She is the fabulous bundle of energy directing the great work being done by our worship band at Cross Connection. Jennifer is a native of the area having lived in Michigan City and La Porte most of her life. She has her BA in Music Therapy from University of Evansville and a Secondary Music Educator's License from Indiana Wesleyan University. She is presently working on her School Administrator's License and teaches choral music full time at Kesling Middle School. Jennifer also brings her three daughters with her. We welcome Keziah, Seraphina and Genevieve.

It is also with great joy that we welcome **Jill Kitowski** to our staff in a new capacity as Pastoral Assistant. Jill has recently completed her Certified Lay Pastor Training, and has been looking for a way to serve her church family. Although Jill cannot be commissioned to serve this particular congregation in an official capacity as a lay pastor because of restrictions in Wabash Valley Presbytery, she is certainly allowed to be of assistance to the Pastor. Jill will be doing some shut in visitation, arranging for monthly services at Brentwood, resourcing the Deacons, assisting in worship, preaching once a quarter and continuing her work with VIPS. Thank you Jill, for sharing your gifts with your church family!



The New Year brings a fresh start as our family ministry continues to grow with fun for everyone. Children and youth activities, food and Bible study are planned.

Check out the schedule below!

For Children:

5:30-6:00pm - Supper

6:00-6:30pm - Children's Music Time with Tammy Jacobi

6:30-7:30pm - “Faithweaver Friends” with Melissa Bangs

For Youth:

5:30-6:00pm - Supper

6:00-6:30pm - Youth games and mixers

6:30-7:00pm - “Youth to Youth” Bible study

7:00-7:30pm - Youth Worship Jam Session starting after Jan. 15th

For Adults:

5:30-6:30pm - Supper and coffee hour

6:30-7:30pm - Bible study with Pastor Sally, “The Gospel of Mark”

7:30pm Worship Band – Open to all who wish to share their gifts of music!



Youth Schedule

January 15th

January 28-29th

February 12th

February 26th

Snow Sculptures, 2 to 4pm

“Mission Possible” overnight retreat, 5pm

Movie night, 4 to 6pm

Shadow Drama Youth Video Production

*Birthdays
to
Celebrate*



January

1/01 Gene Burrows	1/11 Beth Magnuson
1/02 Norm Duerr	1/11 Karen Bjonback
1/02 Tom Thode	1/12 Dick Emmons
1/02 Holly Keller	1/12 Alicia Szaday
1/03 Becky Larson	1/12 Matthew Miller
1/03 Brian Forsgard	1/17 Carolyn Dadlow
1/03 Maggie Vanes	1/18 Emmy LeDonne
1/04 Ruth Beattie	1/18 Austin Belkiewitz
1/04 Sandy Severs	1/20 Julie Cassidy
1/04 Austin Alcorn	1/20 Alicia Lee
1/05 Harry Medlock	1/20 William Mikula
1/05 Bill Mitchell	1/23 Linda Bitterle
1/06 Ralph Jones	1/23 Emily Link
01/08 Janice Cassidy	1/25 Tom Boyd
01/09 Emily MacSwiney	1/27 Hershel Henson
	1/27 Alexandria Cooper
	1/28 Randi White
	1/29 Jack Beck
	1/29 Erin Pickford
	1/30 Kyle Moelker
	1/30 Eric Graf

The Board of Deacons would like to thank all the members/friends who donated food and helped at the Funeral Receptions in 2011. We could not have done it without your help.

“News from the Circle!”
Happy New Year!

Shortly after noon on Saturday, December 3rd, all was well and peaceful at the Presbyterian Church of LaPorte. The lights were off, the doors were closed as if the building was taking a nap on a lazy, cloudy afternoon. Suddenly, the doors came open, the lights went on, and the shades went up as the sleepy building was awoken from its nap! It was time for the “Circle of Friendship” Christmas party gathering!

We enjoyed, for our entertainment, the wonderful choral music performed by the LaPorte High School Show Choir. There were 24 guests in attendance for this very special gathering! Door prizes were awarded, gifts for all were handed out and great food was served. A special thanks to Debra Birkholz and Marcia Morris for volunteering extra food.

2011 was a great beginning for this very special ministry, and we hope 2012 will be even better!

Sandy and Tom Severs



How many times has God surprised ordinary men and women with extraordinary gifts and abilities? How many times has God called people from all walks of life to do amazing things? Think about Moses, David, Mary, ... what would it be like to be called in this way now?

Youth: renew, refresh and refuel your faith with an overnight experience as we explore “Mission Possible”, an overnight retreat. Starting January 28th, enjoy an evening of EPIC proportions!

Register forms are available with Tammy Jacobi. Share your faith and bring a friend!

Congratulations to Nancy and Jill

On Saturday, November 12, 2011, Nancy Brinklow and Jill Kitowski graduated from the Certified Lay Pastor Training Program of the Synod of the Lincoln Trails. This course of study takes two years to complete and includes studies in Bible, Theology, Church History and Practical studies in ministry. Nancy and Jill have been reading tomes, writing tons and attending lectures every six weeks. Word has it they were star students! No surprise, there.

Lay Pastor Training prepares one to accept a call to a congregation to become a Commissioned Lay Pastor. Nancy is hoping to receive such a call and is presently searching for a congregation she might serve. Where as we would be so very sorry to say good bye to Nancy, we pray for God's leading in her future. Jill has chosen not to seek a call to a congregation but to invest her energies and new education in this congregation, though she cannot be commissioned. We celebrate with both Nancy and Jill in their accomplishment and their desire to serve Christ' church in this new way.



Explore Membership in the Presbyterian Church

Pastor Sally will be offering a class for Membership in January, meeting on Sunday, January 15th and Sunday, January 22nd at 12:30 PM. Lunch will be served and babysitting provided!

The class will explore what is Christian faith and what does it mean to be Presbyterian. The group will also talk a little about this particular church and how to dig in and get involved. Anyone is welcome to attend this class. Those wishing to join the church at the conclusion of the class may do so.



Pastor's Bible Study takes on Mark

Pastor Sally's Bible study will be starting work on the Gospel of Mark beginning Thursday, January 5th during Thursday Nite Live. The Gospel of Mark is the shortest of the Gospels and was probably the first to be written, probably only 30 years after Jesus' death and resurrection. It is a fast paced, action packed gospel without a lot of theological discourse. It is also the gospel for the coming church year.

You will likely hear more sermons from Mark than the other gospels this year. So you may as well get a jump on the lessons!

Join us at 6:30 PM for "The Gospel of Mark" or come early for dinner with Thursday Nite live at 5:30 PM.



ANNUAL MEETING JANUARY 26, 2012

This year the Annual meeting will be on a Thursday evening! Because of the new worship schedule the Session has decided to try a new approach. Adult Classes for Thursday Nite Live will be cancelled on Thursday, January 26th to allow for the meeting.

Supper will still be served at 5:30 PM with children and youth offerings beginning at 6:00 PM. The meeting for adults begins at 6:30 PM.

Watch for a special sign up page so you can register to come to dinner! It should be a fun night.