



THE CARILLON

Monthly Newsletter
January 2021

First Presbyterian Church
Rev. Dudley Elvery, Transitional Pastor
Vol. 56 No. 1
Web Site: www.fpchw.org

P. O. Box 1519
Homewood, Illinois
708-798-0490
E-mail: fpchw@sbcglobal.net



WHERE ARE WE IN 2021?

It is the week before Christmas in the late 1940's in a first and second-generation European immigrant neighborhood on the south side of Chicago, an Irish Catholic parish to the north and an Italian Catholic parish to the south. The kindergarten through eighth grade two-story yellow brick public school, built in the twenties, is blessed to have both a full gym and a full auditorium with a stage, complete with a velvet curtain and a projection booth with lighting. The school has a full-time art teacher and two dedicated art rooms, as well as two full-time music teachers. This afternoon, every seat in the auditorium is taken with parents and neighbors who have come to see the school's annual Christmas program

The younger children have all sung their well-prepared Christmas carols with Mrs. Thomas at the piano. Now the auditorium darkens as an eighth grade girl enters stage right—a single spotlight highlights her long white dress, her long dark hair. In the audience a girl, two years younger, is spellbound by her beauty as she begins to sing, unaccompanied, the Italian carol by Pietro Yon:

*When blossoms flowered amid the snows
Upon the winter night
Was born the child, the Christmas rose,
The King of Love and Light...
and then in Italian, Gesu Bambino*

—and seventy years later that girl in the audience is still moved to tears by the memory.

Seventy years...what are we awake to now that we were not awake to then? We'd had for almost two thousand years Jesus' command about loving God, neighbor, and self and were beginning to apply that to White neighbors—though our Catholic playmates were being taught that the minority Protestants would go to hell. We'd had the Declaration of Independence for almost 200 years without seeing "men" as including women. And, significant to this story, though we were grounded in the Biblical teachings of "created in God's image" and being children of God, that did not include those Black folks moving north in the Great Migration. It did include red-lining, covenants, and other strategies to keep God's children from getting to know one another.

We believed then that we lived in a Christian country and are now awakening to living with many kinds of diversity. The Christmas program and its beloved memory would still be appropriate in a private school where assumptions could be made about a shared faith. But now, we are—perhaps grudgingly—awake to the rightness of December school programs including music for families of Christian, Jewish, Hindu backgrounds, those seeking faith as well as the secular traditions, and those

celebrating seasonal changes in the natural world as well as atheists rejecting religious faith. School is about learning. And that gives communities of faith a big responsibility: to do what that 1940's public school did so well—to sing about the King of Love and Light—and so to follow where He leads.

Karen Maurer December 2020



COMMUNION SCHEDULE

January 3 10:30 a.m. virtual worship
Epiphany



SESSION REPORT

Special Congregational Meeting – December 13, 2020
Edward Wahl was nominated and elected to fill a vacancy in the Session Class of 2022. Douglas Bonthron, Karen Maurer, and Lauren Ulrich were nominated and elected to the Session Class of 2023. Rod Dunlap, Jay Ruklic, Paul Tufts, and Susan Zorns were nominated and elected to the Trustee Class of 2023.

Regular Session Meeting- December 21, 2020

On Sunday, January 17, 2021, the new church officers elected at the Special Congregational Meeting will be installed during the worship service. This part of the worship service will be on Zoom because of the need for the electees and congregation to answer questions publicly before they are formally installed. Details on how this will work (it's another "something new") will be provided.

Another "something new" is the distribution of 2021 offering envelope boxes, 2020 end-of-year giving statements, and 2021 pledge letters and envelopes. On Sunday afternoon, January 24, 2021, our members will be invited to drive to the church and receive these items without getting out of the car. Details will follow.

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation and Annual Meeting of the Corporation were called for Sunday, February 21, 2021, on Zoom at 11:30 a.m. after worship.

The Annual Reports for 2020 are due to the Church Secretary Debra Campbell late in January to permit the assembly of the report file(s) and booklets.

Rev. Elvery led a Special Service for Healing and Wholeness on December 21 just before the beginning of this Session meeting. There will another Special Service on Christmas Eve, December 24, 2020, posted on the church's website at 7 p.m.

Rev. Elvery, who works with our congregation on a part-time (75%) covenant basis shared the news that he will be devoting the remaining 25% with Calvary United Protestant Church, Park Forest, beginning January 15, 2021. Calvary's Stated Supply Pastor has ended his time with that church, and they need part-time pastoral leadership and care as our Joint Yoking Team and respective Pastoral Nominating Committees work toward finding a new pastor to lead our two churches.

The two Yoking Teams are preparing to draft a formal Yoking Agreement to submit to Presbytery of Chicago. The two Ministerial Information Forms need to be coordinated and approved before the final information can be submitted to the Presbyterian Church (USA) data system and be made available to prospective pastoral candidates.

Session received notice of the death of Terry Ann Foster, niece of Elder Betty Owens, on Wednesday, December 16, 2020. No other plans were announced.

Session made annual appointments for the following:

-  Janet Wahl—Editor of *The Carillon*
-  Linda Daanen—Church Treasurer
-  Melodee Leimnetzer—Financial Recording Secretary
-  Phillip Dillman—Church Historian
-  Paul Gerrish—Church Librarian
-  Edward and Janet Wahl—Recorders of Rolls and Registers
-  Edward Wahl—Chair of Gifts and Memorials

The last item of business was an IRS requirement to designate a portion of the Pastor's salary as his housing allowance for 2021. This action must occur before the new year begins.

Session thanked Elder Kathleen O'Hanlon for her outstanding leadership of the Personnel & Administration Ministry Team for the last six years. She completed her term on Session at the end of this meeting. Elder Ed Wahl and Elder Karen Maurer will begin new terms on Session beginning in January 2021.

Respectfully submitted,
Edward C. Wahl, Clerk of Session



FLOWERS FOR THE SANCTUARY

Because poinsettias were not purchased this year to decorate the sanctuary, members were given the option to donate to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance with these gifts to be given in celebration/memory/gratitude of others. See the list on the next page:

Earl Anker and Jan Bunker:

In memory of Jonna James and Larry Leonard
In honor of the Church Staff
In celebration of our church family
In gratitude to God

Marilyn Austin:

In memory of Marvin and Danny Austin

Marilyn Dolci:

In memory of Jim Dolci *Presbyterian*

Eleanor Steiner:

In memory of Bill Steiner *Disaster*

Karen Maurer: (no dedication)

Edward and Janet Wahl:

In celebration of our extended families past,
present, and future

CHURCH OFFICERS 2021

SESSION

Class of 2021

Kathie Hazlett 471-3626 Sylvia Tufts 799-7606
Jay Webster 224-234-7244

Class of 2022

Shirley Armistead 798-4697 Ed Wahl 957-3643
Kathie Darman 207-2813

Class of 2023

Doug Bonthron 219-545-4432 Laurie Ulrich 957-8048
Karen Maurer 630-690-6097
The Rev. Dudley Elvery, Moderator

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Class of 2021

Nancy Beaudoin 334-5023 Vern Moore 436-1100
Eleanor Steiner 798-6082 R. Shropshire 798-8755

Class of 2022

Laura Dillman 890-4425 Paul Gerrish 205-5478
Phil Dillman 799-8486 Earl Anker 815-469-4770

Class of 2023

Rod Dunlap 799-2681 Jay Ruklic 672-4053
Paul Tufts 799-7606 Susan Zorns 957-7816



ANNUAL REPORTS



Annual Reports are due **Friday, January 22!** If you are a Ministry chairperson, president/organizer, or other such leader of a group/board or other entity, you need to get your Annual Report for 2020 to the church "office." E-mail in Word (preferred) to Debra at

fpchw@sbcglobal.net clearly labeled. Please be sure to **sign** your report so she knows whom to contact if there are questions. If you need a sample from last year, email Debra, and she can make a copy for you.

FROM THE PASTOR

Our Session, in order to move toward calling a pastor who works full time in ministry, has been in conversation with Calvary United Protestant Church, a Presbyterian church in Park Forest, about sharing a pastor. The terms of yoking are being worked out. The search for a shared pastor should be able to begin in earnest this January.



I, also, have been in conversation with Calvary, whose temporary pastor leaves December 31. With Presbytery's concurrence, I will



become their ¼ time pastor beginning sometime in January. This allows the two congregations to live into yoking. Hopefully, any unanticipated bumps can be worked out so that when the two congregations do call an installed pastor, you both can move forward with fewer challenges and greater clarity and energy.

The first call I had as a young pastor right out of seminary was a yoked or shared situation. From 2003 to 2013, I was pastor at Calvary, which will help me serve the nascent yoking relationship, and Calvary, as I continue to serve you. My commitment is to journey with each congregation as they move to a new phase in their lives.

When I told my oldest son about this, he said, "Dad, what happened to this retirement thing?" To which I replied, "It's just around the corner."

Dudley Elvery

Lee Hilario – Reflection for the New Year

The year 2020 is gone. The year that changed the way we live. The time that brought chaos, despair, and silenced our hopes and desires. We experienced many inconveniences and disrupted our lives. The pandemic took lives and left us numb for how much it affected us.

Our church closed and many establishments, too, denying social contacts and freedom of movement. We were taken aback and overwhelmed by the situations around us.

Yet, as I pondered these circumstances, I thought of Jesus' suffering on that cross in Calvary in order to bring us redemption and salvation. As I reflect the past, I recall the verse in 2 Cor. 5:17 that says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come, the old is gone, and the new is here." What a wonderful word of promise as we welcome a new year.

So this New Year, I pray this to our Lord and Savior:

Oh Lord, grant us peace and contentment, embolden our spirit and uphold your word.

Help us to use our shortcomings to build our reliance on you and strengthen our faith.

You came to earth to lay the foundation for us to follow, for service and devotion to the truth.

Open our eyes and gladden our hearts for all the blessings we received. Restore our anxious minds and give us hope in the knowledge that you are always with us.

No burdens or obstacles are greater than the sacrifice you did for us. Help us to trust you more each day.

Help us to commit our lives to thy service and glory. A new beginning, a new joy and hope in you, Oh Lord, in this New Year.

In Jesus' name we pray, Hallelujah! Amen

Happy New Year! Lee and Emmanuel Hilario



TRUSTEE REPORT

In December, the Trustees had a Zoom meeting! Here are the highlights:

Johnnie Dorsey had tested positive for the Covid-19 virus in October and was told not to return to work pending further tests. After an inconclusive test in early November, a subsequent test came back negative, and he returned to work on November 18.

Several thermostats' batteries died during November. They were replaced, and all thermostats in the C.E. building were reset to 62 or 65 degrees.

Several D-Con packets have been eaten, but no signs of any mice have been found in any of the traps in the kitchen, boiler room, or restrooms. Treatments have been applied for drain flies.

The urinal in the Westminster Hall men's room had to have the flush valve cleaned out due to calcium and lime buildup.

A wire basket was purchased and hung to catch mail from the office door mail slot. (The mail slot had been



installed earlier in the year to replace the outdoor mailbox for security.)

The lawn mowing contractor did a season final cleanup that included trimming and cutting the perennials along the fence line. That chore would normally have been done at the annual fall work-day that was canceled this year due to Covid-19 protocols.

High winds a few weeks ago blew loose a couple pieces of soffit from the C.E. building. Repairs are on hold pending safe weather.

The organ did not get its normal service due to Covid. Because of its unuse, it will need to be checked one month before resuming use.

The elevator passed inspection in late October. A regular pressure test will be scheduled, probably in January.

The sanctuary air conditioner stopped working during the summer. Extensive repairs were needed and have been made.

The copier contract has been renewed at no cost increase. At the recommendation of the pastor, the Trustees approved the purchase of a laptop computer for use by the Clerk and *Carillon* editor. Rod Dunlap



STEWARDSHIP/FINANCE MINISTRY TEAM

Thank you for showing How Great Is Your Faithfulness!

- ✚ Thank you for supporting our Missional Venture of Monday Night Community Dinners until they ended in March 2020.
- ✚ Thank you for the direct donation of Required Minimum Distributions in support of our 2020 Church Budget.
- ✚ Thank you for your faith formation activities at Panera Bread on Tuesday mornings and Adult Bible Class on Sunday mornings.
- ✚ Thank you for your participation in the virtual Christian Education on Tuesday mornings, Tuesday evenings, and Wednesday evenings and to their leaders who give the programs such wonderful meaning.
- ✚ Thank you for your donations to the Memorial Fund in memory of our departed saints in 2020.
- ✚ Thank you for your mission giving in support of local agencies and denominational programs, including your Per Capita offerings to support our higher levels of church organization.
- ✚ Thank you for the dedication of our members who served on the weekly counting teams into March until we closed and to Church Treasurer Linda Daanen thereafter, and for the dedication of our Financial Recording Secretary in keeping track of everything.



- Your 2021 Church Pledge Envelopes will also be handed out on Sunday, January 24, 2021. You may return your pledge envelope by mail.

The summary of receipts and disbursements for the First Presbyterian Church of Homewood for the month ending November 30, 2020, is in the following chart:

	<u>Through November</u>	<u>2020 Budget</u>
General Fund Income		
Identified Giving	\$111,680	\$130,000
Loose Offering	211	1,500
Initial Offering	413	500
Required Min. Dist./Stock Sale	8,266	5,000
Community Dinners Donations	770	3,000
Other Income	16,149	3,000
Dividends & Capital Gains	1,552	14,000
Sale of Investment Shares	0	37,400
Endowment Fund Distributions	0	9,000
Transfer from Designated Fund	<u>1,250</u>	<u>0</u>
Total General Fund Income	140,291	203,400
General Fund Expenses		
Missional Ventures	\$1,194	6,500
Faith Formation	242	1,800
Facilities	35,857	51,500
Staff	68,915	82,000
Transition	37,500	54,300
Administrative Support	4,027	7,300
Purchase of Investment Shares	0	0
Transfer to Designated Fund	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total General Fund Expenses	147,735	203,400
Designated Fund Income	\$11,587	
Designated Fund Expenses	15,776	
Total Active Members—November 30, 2020 106		
Average Sunday Attendance—August 2020		0
Average Sunday Attendance—September 2020		0
Average Sunday Attendance—October 2020		0
Average Sunday Attendance—November 2020		0
Summary through November 2020 (11/12 of Budget):		
Income Over/(Under) 2020 Budget		(\$46,159)
Expenses Over/(Under) 2020 Budget		(38,715)
2020 Total Net Income (Loss) to Date		(7,444)

To help small businesses and non-profit organizations meet payrolls, the first round of stimulus from last spring determined our church was eligible for a Payroll Protection Program loan of \$14,855. To convert this loan to a grant required filing for loan forgiveness. In December 2020 we were officially notified our loan forgiveness application was approved by our bank.

- Thank you for your financial commitment as well as your greatly-appreciated commitment of time and effort in maintaining an award winning beautiful church property and building.
- Thank you for your support of our dedicated church staff—Interim Pastor, Director of Music/Organist, Sexton, Secretary, and Treasurer.
- Thank you for your service as church Elders, Trustees, worship planners, liturgists, singers and ringers, ushers, greeters, Communion servers to shut-ins, and volunteers in times of need.
- Thank you to all who are serving on the Pastoral Nominating Committee and on the Joint Yoking Team in these extraordinary times.
- Finally, prayerfully consider how you can assist the S&FMT. In this fourth year of transition, ask not what your church can do for you, but what you can do for your church.

Through our collective efforts, our congregation will show How Great Is Our Faithfulness! **THANKS BE TO GOD!**

The 2021 Per Capita Apportionment is \$36.00 for each member of the congregation on the church's Active Member Roll on December 31, 2019. Based on 111 active members on this date, we will be asked to pay \$3,996.00 in 2021 to support the three higher levels of the Presbyreian Church—Presbytery of Chicago, Synod of Lincoln Trails, and Presbyterian Church (USA).

With the church closed, the Stewardship and Finance Ministry Team is facing a new challenge in providing statements, envelopes, and pledge forms to you. Normally you would receive them in church, but not this year. **To distribute as many of these sets of materials to you as possible, we are going to try a drive-through pickup opportunity at the church on Sunday afternoon, January 24, 2021, between 2:00 – 5:00 p.m.** You will remain in your car, and the following materials will be handed to you:

- Church Financial Recording Secretary Melodee Leimnetzer will prepare final 2020 Year-End Statements that will be distributed on Sunday, January 24, 2021, or mailed on January 25, 2021. These statements will include all of your regular and special offerings, Per Capita payments, special gifts, required minimum distributions, and memorial gifts.
- The boxes of 2021 offering envelopes will be distributed on Sunday, January 24, 2021. Your box number will not change for 2021. Please do not use your old 2020 envelopes (to avoid confusion).

We need an average income of **\$4,000** each week to fund our mission and operate our church. This is inclusive of pledges and identified giving as well as other income sources. So, how are we doing?

- Weekly average for January (4) \$3,526
- Weekly average for February (4) \$3,646
- Weekly average for March (5) \$2,161
- Weekly average for April (4) \$2,880
- Weekly average for May (5) \$3,265
- Weekly average for June (4) \$5,820
- Weekly average for July (4) \$1,856
- Weekly average for August (5) \$1,549
- Weekly average for September (4) \$3,465
- Weekly average for October (4) \$1,776
- Weekly average for November (5) \$2,665
- **Weekly average for 2020 (48) \$2,923**

Laura Dilman

Hello to all,
I had a nice Thanksgiving with Paul Gerrish. It was so different than previous holidays. I missed spending time with Joan Gettings and family. I will be spending Christmas with Paul, and I'm sure it will be a beautiful day celebrating the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

I will be looking forward to another exciting year on the Board of Trustees with Paul and my brother Phil and all of our wonderful board members. I so enjoyed our first Zoom meeting since March. It was so good to see faces and just be with each other.

It will be different not to have our Women's Association board meetings this year. I will make myself available for any and all questions and concerns applying to the women of the church and will be doing a retrospect of all of our 100 year history. My new title will be President Emeritus. It does give me so much pride to have been able to serve my church and to have been the third generation of the Buss and Dillman family in the church. My grandmother Helen Irene Chezem Buss was very involved with the Women's Association and my mother Glenda Sue Buss Dillman, too. I became the vice president when there was no one else available to take the position and was humbled to be considered. Then came 2008 when my mom had taken very ill and I stepped up to be the acting president, not realizing that she would pass away in October 2008. With my strong faith in God and Jesus, I assumed the position of president and did the best that I could to carry on as she would. I want to take this time to personally thank the Christian ladies whom I gladly served with: Charlene Hansen, Auntie

Eleanor Steiner, Marilyn Austin, Pat Steiner, Betty Owens, Kathie Hazlett, and all of the ladies of our church. I am glad that Rebecca Circle will be able to go on. I'm hoping to get a Zoom meeting in January. I will be in touch with the ushers of our church real soon as well.

I did have a couple more photos that were shared by WGN 9 Tom Skilling during his weathercast photo time at the end of the 7-day forecast. I was so excited to see it live one evening. I will keep on sharing my photos.

I am still enjoying our Panera Bread Bible Study Zoom class on Tuesday morning and the Adult Bible Zoom class with Tim VanNasdale as well. Great opportunities to grow in our faith! I have been a help to all of Paul's co-workers when they had a bad day or just wanted to talk to me.

I'm sending you all love, prayers, and blessings for a wonderful year ahead.

 **VIRTUAL WORSHIP SERVICES**



Sunday virtual worship services can be found on the church web site **fpchw.org**. Join at 10:30 a.m. to be "together" for a service. The last ten Sunday services are stored there, too.

 **FAITH FORMATION MINISTRY**

WEDNESDAY NIGHT ZOOM CLASS WITH TIM

Our new course is *Jesus Among Secular Gods* by Ravi Zacharias and Vince Vitale. There is a subtitle of *The Questions of Culture and the Invitation of Christ*. Class is held weekly on Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m. on Zoom. For a copy of the Zoom link to join the class, please contact tlvannasdale@gmail.com or use the link on the web site (preferred).

Class Schedule: may be subject to change

- Jan. 6 Humanism and Relativism (Part 3)
- Jan. 13 Hedonism (Part 1)
- Jan. 20 Hedonism (Part 2)
- Jan. 27 Hedonism (Part 3)
- Feb. 3 Conversations That Count (Part 1)
- Feb. 10 Conversations That Count (Part 2)
- Feb. 17 Conversations That Count (Part 3)
- Feb. 24 *Jesus Among Secular Gods* Review & Discuss



All worldviews attempt to answer some of the deepest questions in life. *What's the meaning of life? What is my purpose? What will happen to me when I die?* In this class, we will explore the most successful and popu-

lar secular responses to these challenging questions and compare them with the answers provided in Christianity. Knowing what these competing philosophical concepts involve and what challenges they pose to the teachings of Jesus can be super helpful in evaluating and strengthening our own beliefs as well as helping us to address questions when the opportunity arises to give reasons for the hope within us (1 Peter 3:15). Tim VanNasdale

 **PRAYER CARDS**

The following members, friends, and staff of First Presbyterian Church of Homewood will receive a card telling them that the church is praying for them. Please pray for those listed each week. Kathie Darman

Week of January 3

Ian Bonthron
Leslie Bonthron
Michael Bonthron
Natalie & James Calderone
Debra Campbell

Week of January 10

Mary Cantway
Jean & David Conover
Linda & Bob Cook
James Daanen
Linda Daanen

Week of January 17

Kathie Darman
Dee Delaney
Debbie Dennis
Laura Dillman
Phil & Amy Dillman

Week of January 24

Evelyn Dixon
Marilyn Dolci
Johnnie & NeNe Dorsey
Patty Dunlap
Rod Dunlap

Week of January 31

Rev. Dudley & Glenna Elvery
Marge Errant
Mae Evert
Barbara Foerch
Jim Foster



 **HOSPITALIZED**



In the hospital during the last month were Debra Ruklic, Paul Tufts, Laurie Ulrich.

 **NURSING HOME / REHAB**

Mae Evert, Lemont Center Rehab; Pat Steiner, Plymouth Place, LaGrange Park.

 **GIFTS AND MEMORIALS**

The following have been recorded in the Memorial Book in the Narthex: Jonna James and Tim Noetzle.



 **SYMPATHY**

Church sympathy is extended to Betty Owens on the death of her niece, Terry Ann Foster.



I am the Resurrection and the Life saith the Lord: he that believeth in me though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.

 **FEBRUARY CARILLON**

The deadline for having articles placed in the February Carillon is **Wednesday, January 20**. Please turn in all materials in writing and email the Editor at ewahl@sbcglobal.net. The Editor thanks all of the January reporters for their assistance. J C =W=

Birthday Greetings to our church family:

January	January
1 Nancy Jo Dederer	24 Doug Bonthron
11 Melodee Leimnetzer	25 Karen Allison
20 Shirley Armistead	27 Donna Anderson
21 Danny Hamilton	31 Debbie Way

May God grant birthday blessings to you all this coming year.



 **CHRISTMAS BOOKENDS**

Karen Maurer began this newsletter with a Christmas memory in order to muse whether or not our nation or our churches have moved forward under “the King of Love and Light.”

Kathie Hazlett closes this newsletter with a Christmas memory that fits with our current financial distress from Covid 19. “The King of Love and Light” teaches us to help our neighbors. May it be so.

Many years ago we had no money. We had no job. How much longer we would have a house to put our home in was in doubt. My husband had left his job of 23 years with a Fortune 500 company after it had been sold and was being relocated two states away for the second time in two years, but he couldn’t find anything else in his profession due to a recession. I, however, still had my job—being a full-time mom to four of our

five children. Our oldest son was shaken loose when we had to make the move from Ohio to Indiana so he could stay at the college he had been attending. The downside of my job was that it produced no income. And now Christmas was approaching.

We had our health, friends, and family, but there was just plain no money and no way of getting any. This year Christmas would definitely be different. After playing the Christmas morning scenario over and over in my head and picturing the bleakness of no presents, I decided that it was a scene that I would not accept.

One by one, I began to picture the children individually and what might please them most. My oldest daughter was 16 and in high school. What did I have that she might like? Jewelry. She had always enjoyed my Black Hills Gold earrings. I felt certain she would appreciate them, but it was a little hard giving them because they were the only earrings I had that had cost more than \$4.99 and were really special to me. I rationalized that sacrifice made the gift even more special because then it really did *cost me* something.

Letting go made easier the decision to give five-year-old Sara my bed bunny. Earlier in the year, a friend made me a muslin bunny and had created a very special handmade dress and pantaloons for it. Until then, I had let Sara only “visit” the bunny on the bed, but I knew she coveted it. The two boys were harder, though. Harder, because I really didn’t want to let go of my *Gameboy*. Mostly, because I knew I would probably never see it again. The *Gameboy* had been a “funny” anniversary present from my husband the previous year (which is another story). I pried my fingers off—and wrapped it for them. I had only one, so they would have to share. That was the best I could do. I recorded books on tape for my grandchildren and gave my daughter-in-law the treasured baby ring that her husband had worn as a baby. Finishing up, I don’t ever remember being better pleased with my gift-giving decisions.

But *I* got the best present of all. My family gave in to a request I had made previous Christmases. They agreed to go caroling. They thought it was hokey and stupid but would give it a try—their sacrifice! We practiced three songs: *Jingle Bells*, *Oh, Come All Ye Faithful*, and *We Wish You a Merry Christmas*. We went to the homes of neighbors, friends that the boys had made on their paper routes, and an elderly woman from our church. They enjoyed it so much they didn’t want to quit. On the way home, we drank hot chocolate from a thermos, ate Christmas cookies, and sang some more.

But wait; there’s more! When we got home—about 10 p.m.—there was a huge box on the front porch, which contained a wrapped present for each child, a large basket of fruit, and a gift certificate for a local grocery store. To this day, I have no idea where the box came from, but our then seven-year-old son said a curious thing: “Wow! There really is a God!”

And even that is not the end. We have been caroling for thirty-plus years. We have added new in-laws and lots of additional grandchildren to our “choir.” Every year our itinerary and choir make-up changes—but the songs and the fun stay the same. It is awesome to me to think that our favorite tradition came from one of the worst, scariest, and most insecure times in our lives! Today we realize we weren’t really poor—we just didn’t have any money.

Update: December 21, 2020, we caroled again. All familiar faces now from Indiana, Illinois, and Canada, Scotland, and Texas—sons, daughters, grands and friends, gathered together and sang to each other the familiar songs on a Zoom conference call.

Kathie Pontinen Hazlett



JANUARY 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
3 10:30 Virtual Worship on the Website Communion-Epiphany Heavenly Perks on Website	4	5 10:30 Tuesday Bible Study on Zoom	6 EPIPHANY 7:00 Wednesday Bible Study w/ Tim on Zoom	7	8	9
10 10:30 Virtual Worship on the Website Heavenly Perks on Website	11 Stewardship Team on Zoom	12 10:30 Tuesday Bible Study on Zoom 7:00 Trustees on Zoom	13 7:00 Wednesday Bible Study w/ Tim on Zoom	14	15	16
17 10:30 Virtual Worship on the Website Installation of Officers Heavenly Perks on Website	18 MLK DAY 7:00 Session on Zoom	19 10:30 Tuesday Bible Study on Zoom	20 INAUGURATION DAY Carillon DEADLINE 7:00 Wednesday Bible Study w/ Tim on Zoom	21	22 ANNUAL REPORTS ARE DUE	23 
24 10:30 Virtual Worship on the Website Heavenly Perks on Website 2 – 5 pm DriveBy church to pick up envelopes, etc	25	26 10:30 Tuesday Bible Study on Zoom	27 7:00 Wednesday Bible Study w/ Tim on Zoom	28	29	30
31 10:30 Virtual Worship on the Website Heavenly Perks on Website						