



# This Week @ First

## Worship & Music

To watch our Sunday worship at 11 AM, connect with us on [YouTube](#) (find the bulletin [here](#))!

## Compassion and Social Justice

To assist with our ongoing Snack Pack and Laundry ministries on Wednesdays, please contact Debbie Gibson. We will offer these services every Wednesday in December except Christmas Day.

Second Harvest of the Big Bend will be closed on our regularly scheduled date for bread boxing in January so, just for the month of January, we will gather at Second Harvest on January 10 at 9:45 (the second Friday). You can sign up to join the fun with us [here](#).

## Spiritual Formation

### Sunday School—Youth

All youth are invited at 9:30 AM each week! Grades K-5 in room 306. Middle and High School Students in room 301. A nursery will be available starting at 9:15 AM.

The Spiritual Formation Team is in need of volunteers to assist our teachers in the Elementary and Middle/High School classes, and to assist in our nursery. You can volunteer to help weekly, monthly or occasionally. Please contact Mary Kutter at [mykutter@gmail.com](mailto:mykutter@gmail.com) to find out more.

### “Feasting on the Word” Lectionary-Based Bible Study

Calvin Room and via [Zoom](#), 9:30 AM – 10:30 AM.

Each week this class will gather to engage and discuss selected texts from our Lectionary readings.

**Guided Meditation** continues on Sunday mornings at 10:30 in the Calvin Room.

## Elder Elves



*Presbyterian Women collected gifts for several seniors served by Elder Care Services and delivered them this week, with help from the middle school youth. These are just some of the gifts they were able to deliver to ECS. Thank you to everyone who helped with this annual project!*



## Chili and Caroling This Sunday

Care and Outreach will host our annual caroling event on Sunday, December 15, immediately after worship. We will have a quick chili lunch in the Westminster Room and proceed to the Pub at Westminster Oaks. To get to the Pub, which adjoins the Oak Room, go to the Parry Center and enter through the front door. Turn left, and you will see the doors to the Oak Room.



## Fellowship Opportunity

On Monday, December 16, Trinity UMC will host our unhoused neighbors for some food and conversation between 9 AM and 11 AM. Visitors are invited and encouraged to drop in. Trinity would also welcome volunteers to help set up and clean up on Monday morning.

**To submit information to be included in the newsletter and/or the Sunday bulletin (as space permits), please use [this link](#), which will take you to an online form. Thank you!**

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# Pastoral Note

Our interpretation of this Sunday’s Advent wreath candle lighting varies because it is Gaudete (“rejoice!”) Sunday. This Sunday offers a break and a reprise in the Advent observances to offer joy’s glimmer of light. The Latin word Gaudete reminds us that we are called to rejoice. This is why we light a pink candle, the color of joy. Our sense of extreme joy and well-being is rooted in scripture. “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.” (Philippians 4:4.) Knowing God’s actions and love for us in Jesus Christ gives us joy.

Christ draws nearer as we rejoice. The joy of knowing Christ sustains us in all circumstances. Joy is a gift that comes from Jesus. In Jesus Christ, the church and its members experience all the joys and benefits of Christian life and existence. According to the Heidelberg Catechism, as the community of the faithful, we share in Christ and all his treasures and gifts.” (BC 4.055) The church is to share gifts that are given joyfully in the service of others. “Each member should consider it a duty to use these gifts readily and joyfully for the service and enrichment of the other members.” (BC 4.055). The joy we celebrate today is anchored not in bright circumstances, but in the Christ-aided direction of our minds toward God and others.

Rev. Glenn Hodges

“*The meek shall obtain fresh joy in the Lord, and the neediest people shall exult in the Holy One of Israel.*”  
(Isaiah 29:19)



## Elders Joining Session

At the congregational meeting on December 8, the congregation elected the new class of elders as well as one elder to fill an existing vacancy. As a result, Eleanor Cleveland, Jon Dodrill, and Caitlin James will be ordained and installed; Kay Crowell, Mary Kutter, and Deb Whisnant, who have previously been ordained, will be installed to active service. Pictured below, left to right, are Eleanor, Jon, Caitlin, Kay, and Deb.



## Office Volunteers

We are in need of additional office volunteers to check mail, relay messages, and assist with other routine office tasks. If you can help for two to four hours on a weekday, fill out this [form](#) or email Glenn Hodges, [glenn@oldfirstchurch.org](mailto:glenn@oldfirstchurch.org), and indicate what day(s) you would like to volunteer.