



"THE STARTER"

December 2021

Rev. Brian Beck

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First Congregational Church of Peru Welcomes New Pastor

It is with God's grace and guidance that we announce Reverend Brian Beck has accepted the position of full-time pastor at First Congregational Church of Peru. Pastor Beck hails from Pennsylvania and more recently Scotland, South Dakota where he has been ministering God's word. He has been a faithful servant of God for over 15 years. Pastor Beck graduated from Geneva College in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania with a Bachelors in Christian Ministries and Biblical Studies. His seminary classes were through Lamp Theological Seminary in Pembroke Pines, Florida. He also attended Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. His ministry is conservative and straightforward Biblically held doctrines and scripture.

Pastor Beck and his mother Barbara will be moving to the Illinois Valley in the coming weeks. He will begin his ministry on Sunday November 28. First Congregational Church is an independent church. All are welcome to join in the Sunday adult bible study at 9 a.m. and worship service at 10:30. Children's church will also be held Sundays during worship. Communion will be hosted the first Sunday of each month and is open to all who have accept Christ as their savior. All are welcome to worship with us.



The Meaning of the Christmas Wreath

Every Christmas wreath is
More than just a decoration,
It's a special reminder of Jesus,
The reason for our celebration.
The circle of a Christmas wreath
Is a never-ending ring,
A reminder of eternal love
From our Lord and King.
The Christmas wreath is a sign of welcome,
Inviting all to enter in....
A reminder of Christ's invitation
For all to come to Him.
The middle of a Christmas wreath
Is a bare and empty space,
A reminder of what life would be
Without Christ's love and grace.
So each time you see a Christmas wreath
Hanging from a door,
May your heart rejoice in the One
That Christmas is truly for!



A Year of Thanks

Thank you to all who have shared your time and talents with the church this year: Our teachers, the choir members, those who bake, those who volunteer to participate in the worship service, those who repair broken items, those who serve on our boards, those who visit and pray for our shut-ins, those who go quietly unnoticed as they serve our God wherever they are needed. First Congregational Church is so blessed to have you.



Are you Willing to Serve?

Is the Lord leading you to serve on Sunday Mornings? There are many ways you can volunteer. Liturgists, ushers, children sermons, board members, are all needed. Please prayerfully consider signing up on the welcome table.



Christmas Eve Service

You're invited to celebrate the birth of our Savior at our special music filled candlelight Christmas Eve service at 11:00p.m.



Only Wreaths

We have lovely garland on the ledge which leaves no room for poinsettias. However, if you wish to donate \$10 for one of our four door wreathes for Advent, please sign up on the welcome table.



Covid Vaccination Clinic

Illinois Department Public Health Vaccination Program will be having a COVID-19 vaccine clinic here on Friday Dec. 3 from 10-1 p.m.



Trustees Report

The board of Trustees has had a busy quarter. A new upstairs air conditioner has been put in at the parsonage. Carpets at the parsonage and the church lounge were shampooed. New signs were purchased and placed on the north doors to identify the sanctuary entrance versus the office. Parsonage cleaned in preparation for our new minister. Thank you to all who helped. Plans had been made to paint the sanctuary when paint chips began falling from the ceiling again... which means we have another water leak. But the Lord's timing was perfect for that to show up.



Christmas is the only holiday we sit around looking at a dead tree and eating candy out of our socks!!

The Forgotten Man of Christmas

Amid all the Christmas activities, one man is often forgotten. NO, I don't mean the person whose birthday we're celebrating. Although we often fail to give Jesus first place as He deserves, we don't usually forget Him. I'm talking about Joseph- the man God trusted so much that He placed His Son in his home to love and nurture. What a responsibility!

Joseph truly is the forgotten man in the Christmas story. Yet his task was an important component of God's incredible plan. As we read the story of the birth of Jesus, we find that Joseph was just, righteous, merciful, protective and courageous. But most of all, he was obedient. When the angel told him to take Mary as his wife, he obeyed. (Matt.1:24) And when the angel told him to flee to Egypt with Mary and Jesus, he did (Matt 2:13-14).

Just as Mary was carefully chosen to bear the Son of God, Joseph was deliberately chosen to provide for his young wife and the Christ child. Trusting God, Joseph followed through on everything God asked him to do.

What is God asking of you today? Are you willing to commit yourself to do whatever He wants you to do? We can learn much about obedience from Joseph, the forgotten man of Christmas.



Christmas Greetings

We give you greetings at this time of this holy holiday, and pray the loving Father, God, to guide you on your way. May his sweet presence overspread; the year, His goodness bless. In His mercy, grant you good health, wealth and much happiness. God has helped us day by day, supplies our every need, so may he all your wants supply, and your petitions heed. Let's recall the scripture story, telling of God's great love, then our happy celebrations will be blessed from above. Though the world this feast may keep and Christmas carols sing, May we remember this day is the birthday of our King.

Candy Cane Story

I am only a candymaker," he thought sadly. "No one eill listen to me when I tell the wondrous love of my Lord, about how and why God entered our world, born as a baby in Bethlehem."

"How can I tell children about the love of Jesus?" he wondered.

Then he smiled. "I will make them some candy. I will begin with pure white for the virgin birth of Jesus and his sinlessness. It will be hard and pure. I will make it into the letter 'J' so that all may be reminded that it is by the name of Jesus that we are saved from our sins. It will also look like a shepherd's staff, so that we may know Jeusu is our shepherd, our Savior and Lord."

"To remember the awful price of Jesus' love for me, I shall include red to tell of the blood he shed to save me from my sins. Three small stripes to show his scourging, and a large red stripe for his blood shed on the cross by nails and spear"

And so the candy cane was made: crafted in love, and made to help us remember the costly love of Jesus.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish but have everlasting life.

John 3:16



**Pray for the health of Jane McClintock, Char & Pete Belski, Marilyn Cobb, Rita Tieman, Dawn's parents & Dawn Tieman.*

***Please pray for daily grace for our shut-ins:*

*Myrle Sapienza Carol Edgcomb
Don Walker Jane McClintock
Lillian Mini Daryl & Lin Stuhr*

*** Pray for Pastor Roy Jacob & Peace Mission in India caring for children and widows*

*** Pray for Jews for Jesus*

*** Pray for the Surbers and Supply & Multiply*

*** Pray for Abigail Women's Clinic*

*** Pray for Cup of Cold Water Ministries*

*** Pray for Transport for Christ*

*** Pray for PADS providing shelter to the Homeless*



Christmas Carol

There is one Christmas Carol that has always baffled us. What in the world do leaping lords, French hens, swimming swans, and especially the partridge who won't come out of the pear tree have to do with Christmas?

From 1558 until 1829, Roman Catholics in England were not permitted to practice their faith openly. Someone during that era wrote this carol as a catechism song for young Catholics.

It has two levels of meaning: the surface meaning plus a hidden meaning known only to members of their church. Each element in the carol has a code word for a religious reality which the children could remember.

THE PARTRIDGE IN A PEAR TREE WAS JESUS CHRIST.

Two turtle doves were the Old and New Testaments.

Three French hens stood for faith, hope and love.

Four calling birds were the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Five golden rings recalled the Torah or Law, the first five books of the Old Testament.

Six geese a-laying stood for the six days of creation.

Seven swans a-swimming represented the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit – Prophecy, Serving, Teaching, Exhortation, Contribution, Leadership and Mercy.

Eight maids a-milking were the eight beatitudes.

Nine ladies dancing were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit – Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self-control

Ten lords a-leaping were the ten commandments.

The eleven pipers piping stood for the eleven faithful disciples.

The twelve drummers drumming symbolized the twelve points of belief in the Apostles' Creed

So there is your history for today.