

The Peoria Christian

December 2025
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The time of holy preparation is upon us. Advent begins November 30th with the Hanging of the Greens. We will begin our preparations by adorning our sanctuary with symbols of the season. Evergreens being the primary symbol, representing the everlasting life that is ahead of us in the realm of God.

Most of the upcoming Advent season schedule is the same as we are used to. There is a schedule of the entire Advent season in this newsletter, but rest assured we will continue traditions with a Moravian Love Feast, a Cantata, and of course we will gather on

Christmas Eve at 6pm for that special service. There is one offering this Advent that is new to this congregation.

On Monday, December 22nd, at 6pm we will host a Blue Christmas service in the sanctuary. Blue Christmas is a service for those who struggle during the holiday season. There are lots of reasons that people have negative associations with Christmastime, but rarely are there spaces at church made just for those complicated feelings. We will make the space, honor the hard feelings, and remind folks that God stays with us through our traumas and hardships - even when we feel so alone.

Throughout the Advent season, our theme will be asking us to consider the messengers of the Lord. Angels are those which carry word of God's good news, and sometimes we experience them in traditional ways and sometimes it isn't as clear when a messenger of God has crossed our path.

The Church looks forward to hosting you for Advent celebrations, as we prepare our congregation for the coming of the Lord! If you would like Pastor Adam to make a visit to you in the coming weeks, please reach out to the church office or send a note to me directly (adam@fccpeoria.org) and we will arrange it!

Please save the date of December 14th, as that will be our Congregational Meeting. This year, in addition to approving the new board officers & ministry leaders, and the 2026 fiscal budget, the congregation is also being asked to review and approve by-law updates the board has approved and recommended to the congregation. If you do not communicate digitally, please call the church office and a physical copy of the by-law revisions (or any meeting-related documents) will be sent to you via USPS to review.

I am so grateful for your faithfulness to First Christian Church, and so excited to prepare for the birth again of the Christ child. May hope, joy, peace, and love be yours this Christmas season. And, may you always know you are In the Company of Angels.



Food Pantry

In November, items donated will be going to St. Thomas Church. Any non-perishable items are much needed.

Thank you!



November Giving

DMF	\$1258.33
Midwest Food Bank	\$1350
Sofia's Kitchen	\$500
Friendship House	\$500



Stewardship

Stewardship is the art of gratitude in action; what we cherish, we sustain.

- Aloo Denish Obiero



Creation Care Tip

Our mission is to celebrate the greatness of Creation and connect it again to the Core where it came from and to where it will go.

- Leonardo Boff



December 7, 2025

In the Company of Angels

Scripture: Mathew 1:18-21

Rev. Adam Bradley, preaching

Peace Sunday invites us into Matthew 1:18–21, where an angel meets Joseph in the tension of fear and uncertainty and speaks calm into chaos. In the company of angels, we lean into a peace that steadies us, surprises us, and prepares us for what God is bringing to birth.

Jubilate Ringers: *Still, Still, Still* arr. Jason W. Krug



December 14, 2025

In the Company of Angels

Scripture: Mathew 2:13-15a

Rev. Mason Fitch, preaching

Love Sunday draws us into Matthew 2:13–15a, where an angel's warning becomes an act of fierce, protective love that carries a vulnerable family to safety. In the spirit of the Moravian Love Feast, we gather in that same sheltering love—shared, embodied, and made real among us.

Jubilate Ringers: *Adeste Fideles* arr. Jason W. Krug



December 21, 2025

In the Company of Angels

Scripture: Luke 1:26-30a

Rev. Adam Bradley, presiding

Cantata Sunday brings us into Luke 1:26–30a, where an angel's greeting meets Mary's fear with grace and courage. Surrounded by music and the company of angels, we listen for that same invitation to trust what God is bringing to life.

Sanctuary Choir: *He Shall Reign Forevermore* by Jay Rouse



December 22, 2025

In the Company of Angels

Rev. Adam Bradley, presiding

CA Service for the Weary offers space to breathe, grieve, and be held by God's quiet compassion. In the soft company of angels, we honor the shadows we carry and trust that even weary hearts can find a glimmer of light.



December 24, 2025 - Christmas Eve

In the Company of Angels

Scripture: Luke 2

Revs. Adam Bradley & Mason Fitch, presiding

Christmas Eve gathers us around scripture and song, weaving the story of Christ's birth through light, melody, and wonder. In the company of angels, we rejoice at the good news that still breaks into the world—tender, disruptive, and full of promise.

Sanctuary Choir by our Sanctuary Choir



December 28, 2025

In the Company of Angels

Scripture: Luke 2:21-38

Revs. Adam Bradley, preaching

Christmastide leads us into Luke 2:21–38, where Simeon and Anna recognize God's promise taking flesh in an ordinary moment. In the lingering glow of Christmas, we gather with them in gratitude, wonder, and the quiet joy of seeing hope arrive.

Sunday Morning Study - December led by Randy & Linda Williams (begins November 30th)



This year Randy and Linda Williams will be using Christmas in the Four Gospel Homes for our Advent Study. How might a house look for Christmas based on what each Gospel says about it? We will reflect on the distinctive perspective of the birth of Jesus offered by each Gospel. It creatively reimagines the season and inspires new and exciting reflection for Advent.

Responders Class led by Becky Sisk



In the Responders adult Sunday School class, we use Wired Word lessons each

Sunday, 9-10 am. We examine current events from the point of view of the Bible and our faith. Our topics are current and often challenge us in new ways. Come join us!

Weekly Bible Study



In the month of November, Pastor Adam will be leading a study and deep dive into the book of Romans. All are welcome to join!

Love Offering



Personnel committee is asking that all love offering gifts be turned in by December 7th.

This is a great way to show our love and support for our staff members in the Christmas season.

2026 Lay Readers & Greeters



We are looking to expand our team of Lay Readers and Greeters! Do you have a friendly face (which all of you do!)? You can greet!!

Are you at least a little comfortable with being in front of people? You can lay read! If you have any questions about either of these opportunities, please reach out to Debra Kreps or Mason Fitch. Sign up at the information desk!

Gently Used Coats Needed

Through the end of the year, we will be collecting gently used coats FOR ALL AGES for the Salvation Army. There is a barrel next to the information desk to receive your coats.



Homemade Christmas Cookie and Candy Exchange



On Sunday, December 21 (the same day as the cantata), there will be a Homemade Christmas Cookie and Candy Exchange. All are invited to bring several dozen of your favorite Christmas cookies or candy to share. After worship, everyone can go to the fellowship hall and pick up a take-home container to fill with cookies and candy. There will be folks ready to help everyone. Please bring cookies that morning to the fellowship hall. If for whatever reason you are unable to bring cookies/candy, please plan to come and receive some to take home.

Kiwanis Cheese Orders



Order cheese for the Holidays from a Kiwanis member. Order for Thanksgiving by November 17th. Order for Christmas by December 15th.

Variety #1: Longhorn, Muenster, Swiss & Mild Cheddar \$25

Variety #2 Longhorn, Swiss, Mild Cheddar & 10 oz Sausage \$25

Three in One Boxes: Assorted (1lb. Colby, 1lb. Mild Cheddar, 1lb. Swiss) \$25

Cheese Spread 1lb. \$10

Contact Jerry Hornbacker to order: 309-267-0220

Christmas Trivia

Join us on Saturday, December 13th at 2pm for a fun-filled afternoon of Christmas Trivia. Sign up at the information desk and bring a Christmas snack to share!



BAPTIZING AMERICA
How Mainline Protestants Helped Build Christian Nationalism
Brian Kaylor & Beau Underwood
Foreword by Adrienne Thorne
Senior Minister of The Riverside Church

CONGREGATIONAL BOOK STUDY
with Pastor Adam

Coming in January!!
New Year, New Learnings!
One Class, two ways to attend!
Tuesdays @ 10:30a - in person!
Thursdays @ 6:30p - on Zoom!
Sign Up Today!!

December Birthdays

Ann Parrett	12/5
Vickie Baker	12/7
Beth Smittkamp	12/8
David Hale	12/12
Dan Pemberton	12/13
Marilyn Wood	12/16
Margaret Goulden	12/17
Connie Sinn	12/19
Dorothy Clark	12/26
Kevin Cheatham	12/28
Randy Williams	12/30
Mason Fitch	12/31



December Anniversaries

Randy & Linda Williams	12/29
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Disciple Women

December 9th @ 12pm

This month we will be enjoying a Christmas Appetizer Buffet Potluck. Bring your your best appetizer and your joyful spirit!



Tasting Peoria

One World Café

December 11th @ 6pm

They offer traditional favorites like burgers, pizzas, chicken tenders and much more. Additionally, it remains a priority to always offer vegetarian, vegan and gluten free options. Their team works hard to have delicious offerings that can satisfy all of their guests.



Movie Night

White Christmas

December 17th @ 6pm

Bob Wallace and Phil Davis, two army buddies, become a top-notch musical comedy team after the war and are now the toast of Broadway. While on the road in Florida, the stars become involved with two aspiring singers, the sister act of Betty and Judy. Despite some romantic complications between the couples, everything ends on a happy note when Christmas Eve brings rave reviews for the show and much-needed snowfall!



Book Club

Secret Daughter

December 18th @ 3pm

A Great Country by Shilpi Somaya Gowda follows the Shah family, Indian immigrants who achieve the American

Dream only to have it shattered when their twelve-year-old son, Ajay, is arrested after flying a homemade drone near an airport. The novel explores the aftermath of the arrest, forcing the family to confront systemic racism, the complexities of their own identities and relationships, and their conflicting ideas about success, justice, and belonging in America



Holiday Potluck - December 7th

Please sign up if you can help with prep and/or cleanup. Bring your own tableware to help reduce waste.



SERVING SCHEDULES

Date	Elders	Deacons	Lay Reader	Acolyte	Greeters	Counters
12/7/25	Mike Buckley Becky Sisk	Monica Hinrichs Steve Hinrichs Connie Julien Larry Weber	Kevin Wolfe	Natalie Woods	Sandy Surface Chris Carrico	Mike & Laura Buckley
12/14/25	Vickie Baker Roger Baker	Monica Hinrichs Steve Hinrichs Connie Julien Larry Weber	Sandy Surface	Natalie Woods	Sandy Surface Chris Carrico	John & Lisa Best
12/21/25	Sandy Surface Carmen Nicoll	Monica Hinrichs Steve Hinrichs Connie Julien Larry Weber	Laura Cohen	Natalie Woods	Sandy Surface Chris Carrico	Steve & Monica Hinrichs
12/28/25	Kathleen Wheeler Frank Wheeler	Monica Hinrichs Steve Hinrichs Connie Julien Larry Weber	Larry Weber	Natalie Woods	Sandy Surface Chris Carrico	Jim & Beth Smittkamp

Date	Friends with Jesus	Growing Disciples	The Open Table
12/7/25	Jenny Tripses	N/A	Randy & Linda Williams
12/14/25	Chere Peters	N/A	Randy & Linda Williams
12/21/25	Jenny Tripses	N/A	Randy & Linda Williams
12/28/25	Linda Rex	N/A	Randy & Linda Williams

The Illinois Valley Cluster Council and the Cluster Welcome Task Force invite you to a showing of the 2021 movie ...

PEACE BY



CHOCOLATE

...the story of a Syrian refugee family, their dream of preserving their chocolate-making legacy; and the town in Nova Scotia that opened its heart to them.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 3, 2025. 6:00 PM
FIRST CHRISTIAN - PEORIA

COME ENJOY A FUN EVENING TOGETHER AND SOME SPECIAL TREATS...

POPCORN, CIDER, COOKIES, AND, OF COURSE,
CHOCOLATE FROM *PEACE BY CHOCOLATE*.

PEACE BY
CHOCOLATE

A SYRIAN FAMILY TRADITION®