

December 2019

Our JOYFUL Noise

The Monthly Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church of Britton SD
Pastor Donald Buck – 605.551.9001; Church 605.448.2460



The Bucks' Blog:

Endings and beginnings... it's what life is all about, isn't it?

I can hear someone saying, "No, it's about beginnings and endings."

Of course there is no right or wrong. It's mainly your perspective, your view.

November was the end of the Western church liturgical year.

December 1st was the beginning of Advent, the anticipated coming of Jesus.

And, for Christians, Christ followers, what an anticipation it is! The coming of Christ Jesus was the end of the Old Testament Law and the beginning of a movement, a new way of living that involved love, grace, mercy, and forgiveness. Advent... the coming... the beginning of the beginning of a movement, a way of life, a freedom from judgement that would change the world forever, especially for those who believed and lived the radical message of Love. It was, and is, nothing short of revolutionary.

It was, and is, a movement and way of living whose core is: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Those of us who believe and live it, to the best of our ability, experience the liberation of the end of guilt and penalty for our sin life and the beginning of being clean, guiltless, and free to start again.

When we lay our heads to rest each night, we cannot change what happened during

the day just past; however, when we awaken to the next morning, we have a fresh opportunity to live the day better than before. It's a clean slate upon which we can write our life for that day. In fact, if you come right down to it, you don't have to wait till the end of the day to determine you'll "do it better" tomorrow. This wonderful way of living the way of Christ Jesus makes each of us only one decision away, one decision, from "doing it better" than before. The old way is the end, and the new way, the new decision, is the beginning. Why, I submit to you that if you have to make the "do it better" decision several times in one day, Christ Jesus by his Holy Spirit is right there with you cheering you on. You see, it's not about how many times you make the "do it better" decision. It's about ever so slowly and gradually making progress in "doing it better" with the help of the Holy Spirit within you.

Friends, this Advent season, remember this... Christ Jesus is not a scorekeeper of the failings of your life. Christ Jesus, by his Holy Spirit within you, is the ultimate Coach of your life. And he's coaching you, cheering you on, to "do it better" each step of your way. Today, why not stop for a coaching session with Christ Jesus? You'll be amazed at the results! May your Christmas be filled with love for yourself and for others!!

Pastor Donald and Mindi



PW Hope Circle held their Christmas Luncheon on Wednesday, December 4th at 12:00 noon. A short program followed the delicious luncheon. Team 1 provided the lunch and Team 3 gave the program.





Group # 4 is the serving group this month. This group consists of:

Leah Luitjens, leader 448.5623, Shari Menning, Norma Schumaker & Judy Pfitzer.

They will also serve at the manor on **Sunday, December 29th**.



Ladies' Sewing Group will not be meeting in December, but much has been accomplished during the three days they met in November.



The Sunday School Youth will be giving their program on Sunday, December 15th, with cookies and beverages served in the fellowship hall following the worship service.

Come join us!!!!

Christmas Eve Services
Will be Wednesday, December 24th,
at 5:00 PM.

Sunday, December 1st was the first Sunday of Advent.



Session Notes:

- Approved the 2020 church budget.
- The church website is being updated and will be ready in December.
- The next communion is December 1st, 2019.
- Approved January 19th, 2020 as the annual congregation meeting.
- The nominating committee has been working on finding nominees for elders and trustees.

Next meeting of the Session will be Wednesday, December 18th, at 6:00 PM



We will be having communion every Sunday during Advent.

What It Really Means to Pray 'Bless This Food'

When sitting down at the table to say grace before a meal, explore the intentions behind the words.

Saying “grace” before a meal is a common practice, even for people who seldom attend worship services or who rarely pray at other times. Some repeat a traditional prayer such as, “Bless us, O Lord, and these Thy gifts, which we are about to receive from Thy bounty, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, amen.” Others intone, “Come Lord Jesus, be our guest, and let these gifts to us be blest. Amen.” Or, “God is great, God is good. Let us thank Him for our food. By His hand, we all are fed, Give us, Lord, our daily bread. Amen.”

Most table graces include a request for God to “bless” the food. But have you ever stopped to

think, *What do we mean when we say “bless this food”?* Didn’t God already bless it when He sent the rain to grow the corn and the sun to ripen the fruit? Are we asking Him to make the food tastier or more nutritious than the food our pagan neighbors are eating? Are we requesting protection against the ill effects of a cook’s poor skills?

It’s true that, in many respects, God has already blessed the food by the time we sit down to say grace—in most cases, anyway. In my case, He blesses it again through the expert work of my wife, whose skillful and loving efforts keep me roughly 20 pounds overweight.

But I still pray “bless this food” at times. Why? What do I mean? I can’t speak for anyone else, but I say it as an acknowledgment that it comes from God and that even after He has blessed it with sun, rain, soil and loving preparations, He can bless it further as I eat it with gratitude, good manners and possibly a little bit of moderation.

He can “bless this food” with the company and conversation that accompanies its consumption. He can bless it to me by helping me to stop eating when I’ve had enough and save what’s left for later instead of gorging myself or throwing it away. He can bless it still further if I find ways to reuse it or to share it with others.

He can even bless it by reminding me that I don’t eat only for the enjoyment of tasty food but also for the nutrition that keeps me alive and supplies energy and health. And, as long as I don’t over-indulge, He blesses the food by using it to fuel activity—such as work, exercise or playing with a grandchild—that honors Him and helps others.

What about you? What do you really mean when you pray, “Bless this food?”

Sunday, December 8th is the date set for our Congregational Mtg. at which time we will vote on new officers of the church and present the 2020 budget.



Be sure to pay special attention to the new 'gift boxes' presented to the church on behalf of Leah Luitjens and Shari & Virgil Menning.

In addition, Paul Symens created the Christmas 'creche' to be used with the lighted figures in the stable.

The ladies of the church finished decorating this past week, also. We at First Presbyterian, have much to be grateful for. We have wonderful members who are willing to make our Holidays special. Be sure to thank them!!!



**The church's
ANNUAL MEETING
will be January 19th**

***New Website
COMING SOON!!!***



Our New Website should be up and running in December and will be available to everyone at:

fpcbritton.com



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804 5th Street, Box 127, Phone: 605.448.2460

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