

SECOND'S MATTERS

December 1, 2021



**Second Church
of Fremont**

Knowing Christ, Making Christ Known

A Call to Prayer in the Wake of Another Moment of Violence

This week we again grieve the effects of the brokenness of our world. It is right to feel all kinds of emotions in moments like this and to turn to Lord in prayer. Let us start this newsletter today by going to the Lord in prayer for all involved in the shooting at Oxford High School.

"Be present in the midst of this far-reaching pain, O Lord, for we are reeling again, at news of another loss of life that touches us all; news of flourishing diminished; of individuals harmed; of pain imposed, not only upon victims and their families who bear now the immediate brunt of it – but also upon our nation. For we are connected as a people, and this hurt, this grief, touches us all.

Engage our imaginations and move our hearts to compassion, O Lord, that we would interact with these casualties, not as news stories or statistics, but as our own sisters and brothers, flesh and blood, diving image-bearers, irreplaceable individuals whose losses will leave gaping holes in homes, friendships, workplaces, churches, schools, organizations, and neighborhoods. ...

From the chaos of this tragedy call forth new life and order and flourishing. Take even what our adversary might have meant for evil, and from it bring forth eternal good. You alone have the strength to carry this people... You alone have compassion enough to enter our widespread grief, and turn it to hope... Amen."

- From "A Liturgy for Grieving a National Tragedy" pg. 148-151
of *Every Moment Holy: Vol II – Death, Grief, and Hope* by Douglas Kaine McKelvey

From Your Student Ministries Director's Desk

This last week was a whirlwind. It felt a bit chaotic at times between travel, a canceled family meal, an impromptu meal, decorating for Christmas, serving, shopping, laughing, and reuniting. Sunday night, I was lying on my parent's living room floor by the light of the Christmas tree, looking for a moment of peace. Instead, I could hear my mom in the kitchen doing dishes, I listened to my siblings loudly laughing with my dad and grandma over a card game, and there was the high-pitched squeal of my youngest niece as she beat her sisters and Lizzie in Uno. The world was definitely still chaotic around me, but at that moment, it felt right, and good, and most importantly, peaceful. I found the peace I was looking for, but not in the way I was expecting.

When you walked into church on Sunday, you probably noticed that there weren't as many Christmas decorations as you might be used to seeing. The team didn't forget, and they weren't lazy; they were intentional. You see, Advent is a time of waiting, and in different traditions, that waiting manifests through varied practices. Originally, Advent was a time of preparation for baptism. For many Christians, it is a solemn and serious time of waiting for the birth of Christ. For many others, it is a time of expectant joy and Christmas carols. And for others, it is a time focused on getting and giving just the right gifts. This year as we focus as a church on the coming light, we are intentionally preparing our hearts for what is coming. And each week, as we light another candle and a little more light breaks into the darkness of our world, our sanctuary will become a little more decorated.

Our world, our church, and each of us has seen darkness this year. We remember the effects of this kind of systematic brokenness all too well. If I can be honest for a moment, I'll admit many of the worst moments of this year continue to weigh heavy on me. I'm sure many of you could say the same. This is why we are waiting for the coming light. This is why we celebrate Advent. The light of the world came to Earth, humbling himself as a human so that we could know that the everlasting light of the Lord shines into even the darkest of moments. The world around us may be chaotic and loud, but if we let ourselves find the light of Christ, we can find a peace that transcends all understanding because "the hopes and fears of all the years are met in [him] tonight."

Sunday Worship, December 5: The Second Sunday of Advent

Pastor Dan's sermon "Mary's Celebration of God's Goodness" is based on Luke 1:39-56.

Sunday Worship, December 12: The Third Sunday of Advent

Pastor Dan Brouwer will be leading us in worship. His sermon "The Darkness Fights to Extinguish the Light" is based on Revelation 12.

Congregational News

Reading the Book of Luke in December

Beginning **TODAY**, you and your family are encouraged to read one chapter in the book of Luke each day. There are 24 chapters. By the time you reach Christmas Eve, you will have read the entire account of Jesus's life on this Earth. You will wake up on Christmas morning knowing WHY and WHO we celebrate. Spend some time on Christmas Day in prayer, thanking God for sending the priceless gift of His Son for our redemption.

Love Offering

An envelope has been placed in your church mailbox labeled "Love Offering" to show our goodwill and appreciation for our church staff this Christmas season. If you would like to participate, please return your envelope in the offering plate on Sunday morning, to Audra Powell, or the church office by December 12. Please specify how you intend your gift to be dispersed. Please Note: any late offerings that come in following December 12 will be added to the General Fund.

32ND Annual Gift Fair, December 4

The Women's Fellowship of the First Congregational Church of Fremont will be having their 32nd Annual Christmas Gift Fair (formerly Christmas Shopping & Home Tour - no Home Tour this year). Come to fellowship hall on Saturday, December 4, from 10:00 am - 3 pm, and check out the Christmas Crafts and Plum Pudding Shoppe (holiday foods) for purchase. For more information, call the church at 924-4710 or Gail Cooper at 924-2126.

WMC Chamber Choir at First CRC

The Western Michigan Christian High School Chamber Choir, under the direction of Kathryn Becksvoort, will be singing as part of the Community Evening Worship at First CRC, 721 Hillcrest. The worship service will begin at 5 pm.

2022 Giving Envelopes

2022 giving envelopes have been placed in mailboxes. If you have any questions, please get in touch with Valerie in the office.

Update from Karin Medical Clinic

Dear friends and supporters of the *Karin Medical Clinics*,

Joan and I wish to express our appreciation to all of you during this season of Thanksgiving. This year we have so much to be thankful for despite the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic. Covid has hit northern Uganda particularly hard, with many serious illnesses and deaths among the population. Villagers had no personal protective equipment initially and (still) virtually no access to vaccines. Yet God has spared Hope (she did battle through a very bad case of Covid) and her staff and allowed them to continue their ministry among some of the poorest people in East-Central Africa.

Additionally, projects such as two new wells (the Unyama clinic and the Agape Christian School), the completion of the new laboratory at the Unyama Clinic, and partnership with [AquaClara](#) to provide large water filtration stations/systems at all three wellheads have been completed. These stations will provide clean, pure water sources for many surrounding villages at each of these locations. God has blessed richly even during this difficult time. Thanks to an NGO from Belgium, a new maternity center has been constructed at the Agonga Clinic. Maternity centers are now open at both clinics! Thank you very much for partnering with us in this work of Christian mercy and compassion. - Rog and Joan Sikkenga

District #10 Health Department COVID Reminder

Due to an increase in the current COVID positivity rate in Newaygo County, the Newaygo County Health Department and the CDC recommend using masks in indoor spaces.

Offering Information

Our Deacons encourage our support to our congregation's financial obligations through our offerings. Donations can be mailed to the church at 600 Apache Drive or submitted online via bank account or card at this link: [Online Giving](#). If you wish to give to Christian Education or Faith Promise online, then download the "GivePlus" app.

*Special envelope offerings are: December 5 – Fremont Young Life
December 12 – Karin Medical Clinic
December 19 – True North*

Stock the Pantry

For December, the requested food items are soup and crackers. Donations can be dropped off at church or directly at TrueNorth.

SECOND CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

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(231) 924-0170

[WEBSITE](#) | [FACEBOOK](#)