

THE LINK



*GLORY to god in the HIGHEST,
and on earth,
peace and goodwill
towards men.*

LUKE 2:14

DECEMBER 2023

CONGREGATIONAL-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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A total of 80 shoeboxes were filled by our congregation so the love of Christ may be shared with children in third world countries. Thank you to all who participated in Operation Shoe Box this year!

To my new friends at Congo Pres,

Grace and peace! I am so grateful for such a joyous and good start as we begin this new season together. From our first worship services to the Installation Service, to the different groups I've been privileged to visit, I am so grateful for these first steps together as your pastor as we enter into the next season of ministry at Congo Pres.

I know that this church, and perhaps each of you, has been in some period of waiting. Maybe it is waiting on news about loved ones, or your health, or just wondering about the next pastor. I bet you're also waiting on what will this church be and do in the future. You're well-suited for this next season of the Church calendar. In December, we will be waiting just a little bit longer, for Advent is the season of waiting on God. As God's people awaited their Messiah (think: "Chosen One"), God showed up in the unexpected, helpless baby born to an unmarried, teenage girl in a little town that wasn't known for much. (As the sarcastic disciple Nathaniel put it: "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" John 1:46)

Advent is that season where God's people remember that as much as we are called to worship, to pray, to serve, to love or to follow, we are called to wait, and to wait for the unexpected. When we start to feel a little restless, or bored, or angry, or whatever comes to the surface when we stay still, in this season we wait. We wait for many things: joy, hope, peace, love. And in this season, we confess that God is the one who gives these (and more), and that the gifts of God cannot be forced. We wait for these things to be given by the God who promises to be with us (Emmanuel), to save us (Savior), to help us (Prince of Peace), and to be faithful to us (the Son of God).

You are a people practiced in waiting, and I now wait with you as your pastor. As these days get darker, we will wait together. We wait until that day when we celebrate that beautiful mystery of God being made human among us in the Incarnation, when curiously, after the light of Christ is born to us, the days start to get a little bit lighter.

As I'm new, feel free to reach out. I'd love to meet at church, or over coffee, or on a walk to get to know one another and hear your story. My email is adam@congopreschurch.org, and you're always invited to call the office to set something up. I look forward to meeting with you.

With hope, joy, peace, and love,
Pastor Adam Ogg

Donate a Poinsettia in Honor of a Loved One

Poinsettias add so much beauty to the Christmas Season. If you would like to donate or lend a poinsettia to help beautify our sanctuary, please bring it to the church the week of December 11th.

To help our Worship Ministry plan, please fill out this form, detach it and bring it or mail it to the church office, or leave it in the church offering plate on Sunday. You also may call the church office (208) 743-4444 and let us know you are bringing a poinsettia to church.

Please check the boxes that apply:

___ I am enclosing \$ _____ so that one can be purchased.

(\$15 suggested donation for each poinsettia)

___ I will bring my poinsettia

After Christmas Eve Worship:

___ I want my poinsettia to be given to a homebound member

___ I will take my poinsettia home after Christmas Eve Worship

I give my poinsettia in memory of: _____

Your name & phone number: _____



HOLIDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE
DECEMBER 24TH
10AM

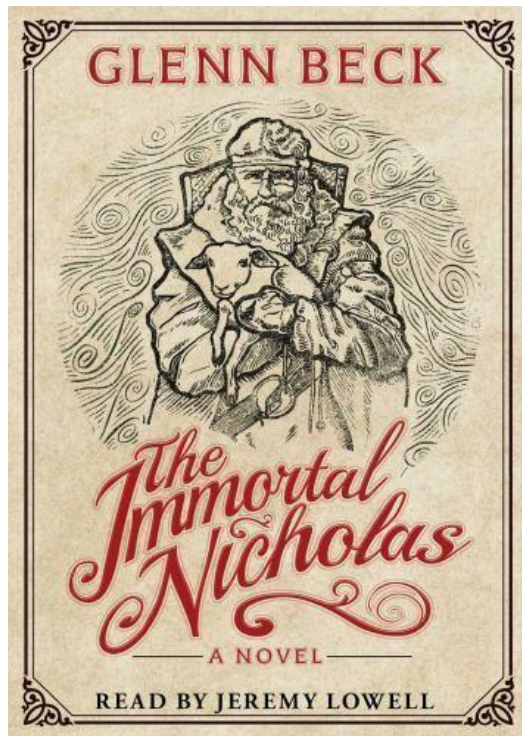
CHRISTMAS FAMILY SERVICE
DECEMBER 24TH
4PM

LESSONS & CAROL SERVICE
DECEMBER 24TH
7PM

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE
DECEMBER 31ST
10AM

Merry Christmas

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THESE BOOKS WERE
RECOMMENDED BY THE CPC
CHRISTIAN BOOK CLUB
MEMBERS.



Before he was Father Christmas... he was simply a father.

Thirteen-time #1 national bestselling author Glenn Beck realized years ago that somewhere along the way, his four children had become more focused on Santa than the meaning of Christmas. No matter how he tried, he could not redirect their attention away from presents and elves to the manger instead.

Glenn didn't want to be the Grinch who spoiled the magic of Kris Kringle, so he had to find a unique way to turn his kids back toward the true meaning of Christmas. He decided the best place to start was by first turning Santa himself back toward Christ.

That was when one of America's best storytellers began to craft a tale that would change everything his kids thought they knew about Santa—the incredible story he went on to tell them that Christmas Eve spans over a thousand years and explains the meaning behind the immortality and generosity of the man named Claus.

The Immortal Nicholas has now been expanded and reimagined into this novel for adults; a novel full of drama, history, legend, and heart. From the snowy mountains of Western Asia, to the deserts of Egypt, to Yemen's elusive frankincense-bearing boswellia trees, this is an epic tale that gives the legend of Santa a long overdue Christ-centered mission.

OTHER GREAT READS



A Quilt for Christmas
by Melody Carlson



Sarah's Song
by Karen Kingsbury

Mark your Calendars: December 3rd

Join us monthly as we celebrate with cake during Fellowship Hour for a special Happy Birthday Celebration for our Friends and Members! Stop by this month for some cake, coffee & conversation for your special birthday month!



December Birthdays

1st	John Baskin & Max McKarcher
2nd	Addy Paynter
3rd	John Rusche, Rob Devleming & John Williams
5th	Debbie Deibel
6th	Marilou Dietz
7th	Jace Paynter
8th	Jerry Gossage & Kinsey Brinegar
10th	Jim Osborn & Mike Gabby
12th	Nick Hardin & Chris Shaw
13th	Susie Ashburn & Scott Trotter
14th	Cedar Betzold
15th	Roberta Hobbs & Breanna Ramsey
16th	John Vornholt & Alan Johnson
17th	Jacqueline Wagner
18th	Jamie Williams, Josh McKarcher & Peyton Ely
21st	Marilyn Hinman
22nd	AJ Barndt & Bob Emerich
23rd	Jeff Nester
24th	Niki Breazeal & Kathy Schroeder
27th	Jamie King
28th	Marianne McIntosh & Nick Quarry
29th	Zachary Dilling
30th	Dave Williams & Nikko Vega
31st	Laureen Trail



**MAY GOD BLESS YOU WITH
JOY, HAPPINESS, GOOD
HEALTH AND PEACE OF MIND**

WWW.CONGOPRES.ORG

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS



Women's Christian Book Club will be taking some time off from meeting and discussing books. Please watch the monthly newsletters and Sunday Bulletins for information as to when they will be starting to meet again. In the meantime please check out our Tales From The Library page in the December LINK for great book recommendations.

Men's Bible Study - This Bible study and discussion meets every Wednesday morning, 6:45-7:45am - we are currently in the book of Matthew. Enjoy coffee and donuts, and experience great fellowship with men of the church.

The Friday Morning Women's Bible Study meets weekly from September thru May at 10am in the chapel. We are studying Hebrews this fall. Study guides are available and will cost \$7. There is a Scholarship Fund available for anyone needing assistance with the price of this guide, Please contact Gayle Beck at (509) 751-9981 for more information. Please leave a message.

If you are interested in our Divorce Care class please contact John or Loa Vornholt for more information.



Deep Roots: Theology for Today Deep Roots is a weekly conversation on Tuesdays, 3-4pm in the Chapel, is coordinated by Tom Boubel and facilitated by Tom and other members of the group. All are welcome to join us for the reading of important Christian texts aimed at enriching our lives today.

Monday Night Ladies' Bible Study meets on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month (September through May) at 6:45 pm in the Conference Room. This month's bible study will be held on December 11th. Please contact Rona Meske for more information.

Women's Association meets on the second Monday of the month at 10am in Fellowship Hall for fellowship, prayer, support and education. At our December meeting, Jacki Ficker and Nell Bice will be our hostesses. Peggy Fulton will be presenting the devotions; and Nell Bice and Program. You won't want to miss our monthly get together. See you on the 11th.

Reconnect is a group formed by our Women's Ministry. Reconnect meets the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of each month from 10 am ~ 12pm in the basement of the Admin. Building. They meet during the months of September ~ May. In December ladies will meet December 7th and 21st. Please bring your crafts to work on or just come and visit with the ladies of our church and community. Bring a friend for some fun and fellowship.



If you are interested in learning more about the CPC Online Alpha Course please contact Cliff or Bobbi Matousek.

DECEMBER LINK DEADLINE MONDAY DECEMBER 18TH

Articles may be sent via email to annab@congopres.org or brought to the church office. Articles received past the deadline will not be guaranteed submission.



Volunteers are currently meeting on the 4th Tuesday at 9am in the church office Conference Room. Due to the holidays we will meet for LINK assembly in December on Thursday December 28th.

Food Bank Sunday December 17th

This month's needs:

- ♦ Fruit
- ♦ Pudding
- ♦ Juices
- ♦ Snacks
- ♦ Eating Utensils
- ♦ Zip Lock Baggies
- ♦ Peanut Butter
- ♦ Top Ramen
- ♦ Noodles
- ♦ Rice
- ♦ Dry Beans
- ♦ Jams
- ♦ Jelly
- ♦ Coffee



These items may be brought to Fellowship Hall and deposited in the grocery cart. Donations are taken to the Community Action Partnership Food Bank. Thank you!



The Fellowship committee is looking for volunteers to setup for coffee hour fellowship before the 10:00 service, and to serve refreshments and clean up after the service. If you're interested, please sign up on the sign up sheet in the Fellowship Hall. Thanks!

Sharon Damon, Fellowship Chair

During this time of Thanksgiving, I'd like to say a big THANK YOU to all the wonderful volunteers that have helped with all the Fellowship events this year. It wouldn't happen without you!

The Red Cross blood drive will be on December 27th from 12:00-6:30pm in Fellowship Hall. We will have room for around 24 donors during that time. Please sign up online through the Red Cross donor web site, or contact Jim Schroeder at (208) 553-1112, and he will get you scheduled.

Blood supplies are typically at their lowest point of the year during the holidays. The need is great, so please consider giving to help save a life at this holiday time.



Dear friends of Literacy for Haiti,

Last May I wrote to you about the horrible conditions in Haiti. I wish I could say that things have improved, but if I did, I would be lying. The government remains both illegitimate and impotent, violent gangs do as they please; committing atrocities daily, and disrupting the flow of all goods, services, and cash throughout the nation. Prices are too high for the very poor to afford what they need.

The United Nations has approved sending in troops to help with stability, under the leadership of the Kenyan government. But this has yet to materialize.

In the meantime LFH does what it always does- jump start commerce with micro loans in the name of Christ, support literacy in our local school, support evangelism on the mountain, and help with medical care for the people God has given to us.



Manno continues to keep all of our ministries operating although he experiences delays and challenges daily. He says he is safe as long as he is in his village high in the impoverished mountains where there is very little to interest the gangs. However, he and his family have made a decision.

In good faith, many mountain people like Manno and his wife Dieudimene put confidence in education for their children. The parents sacrificed for many years in order to send all three kids through the rigorous Haitian school system with the hope that they would one day find jobs good enough to support themselves and their extended family. This is a common hope among the mountain people and for some, it has worked out well enough.

But the turmoil of these last several years has cut off that hope. This long term plan cannot succeed in a country where everyone lives in fear because there is no law, order, or safety.

So the family agreed to sacrifice once again and put their hope in immigration for the 3 oldest children. Manno's son Kevin (age mid twenties) and daughter Sophia (age early twenties) and daughter Sophonie (age 14) are now in Mexico trying to follow the immigration process outlined by President Biden, wherein a limited number of asylum seekers from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela can obtain asylum status visas in the US. Thirty thousand people are permitted to enter the US per month under this program, but millions of people apply. There are no guarantees that these kids will be selected, but we pray they will be.



Bobbi and I, along with my son's family are supporting them in Mexico City as they attempt to navigate this process. There is no telling how long it will take. People in this position are vulnerable. We hope and pray for God's protection upon them. We trust that if and when they arrive in Spokane, we can plug them into the many fine organizations that help people in their situation here in Washington State. LFH and Manno have supported each other for several decades, but we believe the day will come when the financial support for him and his wife will come from these children. May the Lord provide as he always has.

There are some bright spots for this update. One of them is the progress made by the surgery program administered by Dr. Alexi Matousek through Literacy for Haiti Inc. Alexi has trained several Haitian workers to identify mountain people who need surgery, guide them through the confusing hospital process to get it, and follow them up at their homes after the surgeries are completed. The workers use cell phones to send photos of their follow-up visits to Alexi in Spokane. Surgeries are performed at Hospital Albert Schweitzer at the base of our mountain and they are paid for by the social services program at that same Hospital. The health workers are paid through LFH but so far Dr. Alexi himself is the primary donor for this growing project.

The data from this program shows that the health workers are getting more skilled at finding people who need a surgical consultation. And they are guiding many more patients through the surgery process. Before Dr. Alexi began this program surgeries were quite rare in the mountain region where we live.

A second bright spot is church growth. Manno's church is full each Sunday as are many other churches in the mountain regions. People are looking for hope and now many of them are looking in the right place.

In closing let me say that it is getting harder to sustain momentum for all ministries in Haiti. Many organizations have pulled out due to the difficulties. It has not been possible to travel to Haiti to encourage the people there and our routine stops at churches to encourage their support have stopped as a result. Inflation is high in our country and money doesn't buy what it used to only a few months ago. For these and other reasons, financial support for LFH has been waning a bit. Even churches have cut back their giving, some as much as 63% less than what they once gave. I don't blame anyone. It's just the way it is right now.

But I thought it wise to make you aware, because I know that many of you will want to help us meet any shortfall, now that you know there is one.

There has never been a shortage of crises in this world and Haiti has always shouldered more than their fair share. Of course, now is no exception. This could both depress and discourage us, or we can choose to take advantage of the crisis and allow it to make us into what Christ wants us to be, as the passage from Galatians at left reminds us.

Sincerely,

Cliff and Bobbi Matousek



Year	Medical Evaluations of Mountain People	Operations Performed on Mountain People
2019	53	58
2020	221	131
2021	328	193
2022	765	261
2023	698	287
Total	2065	930

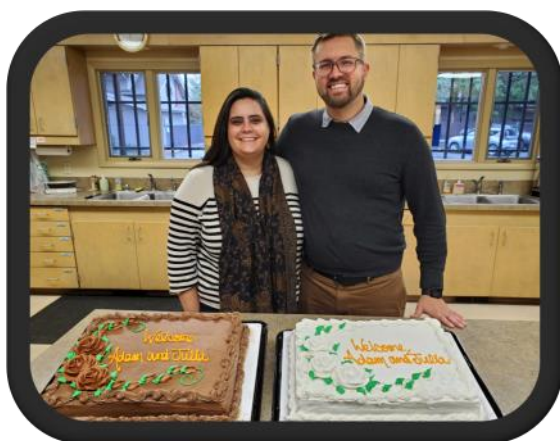
If you would like a copy of the *January /February Upper Room* they will be available in Fellowship Hall and the church office on Sunday December 17th.

Church Office Closed:

Monday December 25th

Tuesday December 26th

Monday January 2nd



These pictures were taken at the brunch where the CPC staff was given the opportunity to meet Pastor Adam Ogg.

Worship With Us

10:00am Combined Worship

The service will combine elements of our 9:00am Contemporary Service and our 11:00am Traditional Service. The question of returning to our 9:00am and 11:00am Sunday format will be addressed when our new pastor arrives.

10:00am Livestream

Each Worship Service is livestreamed on our website: www.congopres.org, and can be viewed any time during the following three months.

10:00am Parking

As the entire congregation gathers to worship together, parking will be a bit tight in our church parking lot. Please *do not* park in the church parking lot unless you need close-in access to the church, reserving our parking lot spaces for those with physical limitations. There is plenty of parking on the side streets around the church (which is unrestricted on Sundays), and in the LCSC parking lot across from the Activities Center.

Wise Men
Seek Him Still



FIT & FALL PROOF

(SENIOR EXERCISE)



JOIN US EVERY
MONDAY, WEDNESDAY & FRIDAY
AT 9AM
IN FELLOWSHIP HALL

No Class:

Monday December 11th
Monday December 25th
Monday January 2nd

Pageant & Pie



On Thursday, December 14th at 10:15 am we are gathering in Fellowship Hall to make the short trek to attend the Christmas Program at Cornerstone Christian School. After the matinee performance, we will return to our church for pie and other desserts. Please call the office at (208) 743-4444 to sign up for this activity or sign up in Fellowship Hall.

Angel Tree Christmas is here!

If you have not already adopted an angel, please do so. We will be set up in Fellowship Hall for sign-ups on Sundays, Nov. 26 and Dec. 3. We are supporting 25 children. Each child receives 2 wrapped gifts: one new toy or fun gift, and one new article of clothing, each with a \$25-\$30 value. The caregivers will each receive a gift card.

Please select an "angel" from the tree and return the wrapped gift by December 17 to allow plenty of time for delivery before Christmas.

If you have any questions, please contact Patti Mann at 208-790-0693, Kate Nowlin at 208-816-9565 or Diane Waldemarson at 208-305-1402.



DECEMBER

ALL CHURCH CALENDAR

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 9a Sr. Exercise 10a Women's Bible Study	2 9a Rake 'em Up
3 BIRTHDAY SUNDAY 10a Worship 10a Children's Church 10a Angel Tree Gift Selection 11a Fellowship 6:30p Youth Group	4 9a Sr. Exercise	5 10:30a Staff Mtg 3p Deep Roots 5p Worship Mtg. 6p Trustee Mtg. 7p Mission Mtg.	6 6:45a M/en's Bible Study 9a Senior Exercise 5p Choir Practice 7p Membership & Evangelism Mtg	7 10a Reconnect 5:15 Bell Choir	8 9a Sr. Exercise 10a Womens Bible Study	9
10 10a Worship 10a Children's Church 11a Fellowship 6:30p Youth Group	11 10a Women's Association 6:45p Women's Bible Study	12 10:30a Staff Mtg 3p Deep Roots 6:30p Board Mtg.	13 6:45a M/en's Bible Study 9a Senior Exercise 10:30a Sr. Ministry Mtg. 5p Choir Practice	14 10:15 Sr. Ministry Christmas Program @ Cornerstone 5:15p Bell Choir	15 9a Sr. Exercise 10a Women's Bible Study	16
17 FOOD BANK SUNDAY 10a Worship 10a Children's Church 11a Fellowship 6:30p Youth Group	18 LINK DEADLINE 9a Sr. Exercise	19 10:30a Staff Mtg 3p Deep Roots	20 6:45a M/en's Bible Study 9a Senior Exercise 5p Choir Practice	21 10a Reconnect 5:15 Bell Choir	22 9a Sr. Exercise 10a Women's Bible Study	23
24 10a Worship 10a Children's Church 11a Fellowship 4p Christmas Eve Service 7p Christmas Eve Service	25 OFFICE CLOSED	26 OFFICE CLOSED	27 6:45a M/en's Bible Study 9a Senior Exercise 12p Blood Drive 5p Choir Practice	28 9a LINK Assembly	29 9a Sr. Exercise	30
31 COMMUNION 10a Worship 10a Children's Church 11a Fellowship						

INSTALLATION FOR PASTOR ADAM

Pastor Search
Committee Members with
Pastor Adam.



Pastor Adam Ogg &
Pastor McLane Stone





Congregational-Presbyterian Church
709 6th Street
Lewiston, Idaho 83501

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Find us on
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adamo@congopres.org

MINISTRY TEAM

Jamie Williams..... Children's Ministry
Beth Katzenberger. Clerk
Lori Holder CPC Fund Ministry
Sharon Damon..... Fellowship
Bobbi Matousek Membership & Evangelism
Patti Mann. Mission
Laureen Trail..... Senior Adult Ministry
Mike Holder Service
Vicky Boubel..... Stewardship
Pat Lindquist-Hulett. Worship
Keesje Mills Youth Ministry

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OFFICE HOURS:

M-F: 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.