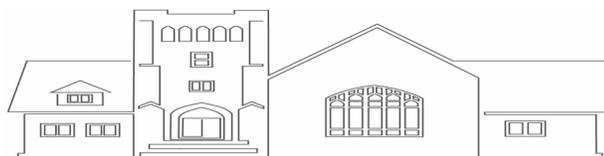


FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
NEWTON, IOWA
641-792-2790

“The Mission of First Presbyterian Church of Newton, Iowa is to share the love of God and grow the body of Christ through joyful worship and fellowship, devoted prayer and study, and humble service in our community and world.”

THE
MESSENGER



December
2020

Meghan's Musings

Happy New (Liturgical) Year!

Dear Church Family,

November 29 marked the beginning of Advent and therefore the beginning of the new liturgical year. So: Happy New Year!

Of course, due to the coronavirus pandemic, this Advent will be unlike any other. We won't be able to gather together for Advent worship or holiday parties or caroling or Christmas Eve candle light service as we are accustomed, but we will have opportunities to "Worship Together, Apart" in new ways with as much familiarity as possible.

Here are some of the things we have planned for this year:

- 1) Advent Devotional Booklet: Hopefully by the time you receive this Messenger you will have received our annual Advent devotional booklet. (If you haven't please contact the office or me so we can get you one as soon as possible!) This year, we're adding an online component with people recording their entries to be posted on Facebook each day.
- 2) Advent Candle Wreath: Also, I hope everyone who wanted a home Advent wreath has gotten one. If not, again, please let me or the office know. The idea is for you to be able to light your own candles at home as you worship each week and/or use the wreath for your own Advent devotions as you wish.
- 3) Sanctuary Tree: This year I'm inviting church members to bring a piece of yourselves to our sanctuary tree. Please arrange a time with me to come in and add an ornament from your home and/or let me take a picture of you in front of our tree (from which I will make an ornament) so we can have you and your family "present" in our sanctuary throughout Advent and Christmastide.
- 4) Nativities: I'm also inviting you to send me pictures of your nativity set. I'll be sharing these with the church family on Facebook and perhaps find other ways to incorporate them into our online worship as well. Another way to be together while apart.
- 5) Guess what? We'll be having a Baptism this Advent! On the second Sunday of Advent (December 6) Samantha and Brandon Jackson will be presenting their newest family member, Jett, for baptism. Make sure to tune in to see how on earth we'll do it giving the challenges of the pandemic. (Hint: there may or may not be a water gun involved.) (just kidding, Jacksons! There will be no water gun!)
- 6) Christmas pageant: the wheels are still turning in my head but I'm working on figuring out a way to have a Zoom pageant this year, incorporating all our fabulous kids (hopefully even the babies).
- 7) Blue Christmas and Christmas Eve Services will be happening as close to "normal" as possible. The services will be filled with the candlelight beauty, music and scripture we all know and love, the only difference is, it will be online instead of in person.
- 8) A new tradition: Finally, this year I'd like to bring a piece of my personal background to our Newton Christmas Eve service. As many of you know, I grew up in Taos, New Mexico where there is a Christmas tradition of *faralitos* (the little brown paper sandwich bags with sand and a candles, often referred to as "luminaries" outside of NM). This year—weather permitting—I will be setting up *faralitos* along our church walkway and steps and will be inviting you all to write a special message—a hope, a prayer or a Christmas greeting—on the bags in the days leading up to Christmas Eve. *(Continued page 3)*



Forrest Wayne Rusk of Newton passed away peacefully on Tuesday evening, November 10, 2020 at the age of 95. Forrest was born in Truro, Iowa on April 1, 1925.

He grew up in Newton and graduated from Newton High School in 1943. After graduating, he worked on the family farms, including during WWII, when he was asked to remain while his brothers were called to military service.

Forrest met Mary Lee Phillips at the Iowa State Fair through their Iowa 4-H affiliations, which were a lifetime commitment for both. Forrest and Mary Lee were married on February 20, 1949. They settled on a farm near Newton and raised four children: Linda, Deborah, Cheryl and Steve. Forrest was proud of and devoted to his family all through his life, and a source of strength for them after his wife Mary Lee passed away tragically in 1991.

Forrest farmed full or part-time his entire life, but in the mid 1960's entered the insurance business as an independent agent, ultimately owning his own successful agency, Rusk Insurance of Reasnor, Iowa. He was active in Farm Bureau, Jasper County 4-H, Newton Kiwanis and the First Christian Church.

In 1995, Forrest married Joan (Palmer) Rusk and they lived many years in their home in Newton before both moving to Park Centre in 2019.

Forrest was preceded in death by his parents; wife Mary Lee; a sister, and four brothers. Those left to honor Forrest's memory include: daughters Linda (Mike) DiGiacomo, Deborah (Kevin) Cox, Cheryl (Lyle) Wedemeyer and son Steve Rusk; Joan (Palmer) Rusk; a brother, his 5 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren and many other family and friends.

A private graveside service was held Saturday, November 14, 2020, at Newton Union Cemetery, with Rev. Meghan Davis-Brass officiating.



Betty Jeanne Jochems, mother of Bev Rossow, died on Friday, November 13, 2020 at The Cottages in Pella two days prior to her 91st birthday. She was born on a farm west of Peoria, Iowa. Betty attended the Peoria Christian School in Peoria and Pella Christian High School in Pella, Iowa graduating in 1947. On February 4, 1954, she was united in marriage to Peter Richard Jochems at the Peoria Christian Reformed Church in Peoria and to this union three children were born: Gary John, James Alan, and Beverly LuAnn. Betty and Pete made their first home east of Newton, Iowa where Betty worked at the Jasper County Bank. They later moved to a rental farm southeast of Peoria, close to New Sharon, Iowa where they raised grain crops, pigs, chickens, milked cows and had several litters of Spitz puppies. In the mid 1960's, they moved to another rental farm northwest of Peoria which they later purchased. They made their home there the next 40+ years where they were living when Pete passed away on January 22, 2017. Betty had many blessings during her life and in addition to the loss of her husband, Pete, endured the sad loss of her son, Jim, at the age of 49 years in 2006.

She was survived by her two children Gary (Carol) Jochems of Sully and Beverly Rossow of Newton, her daughter-in-law Barbara of Pella, her 6 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren. Also surviving Betty are her brother and his wife, and a sister-in-law. In addition to her husband and son, she was preceded in death by her parents, her sister, a sister-in-law, a brother-in-law and her parents-in-law. Interment followed in the Peoria Cemetery, Peoria, Iowa.

Continued on page 3

Continued from page 1

OK, I think that's all for Advent but wait! There's more!

For many years I have had an idea on the back burner to read the Bible in a year along with the congregation. I have decided that 2021 is the year! You'll find the schedule elsewhere in this Messenger and the idea is we will all read through the Bible together, there will be a Bible Study time for all who wish to join together to discuss the readings and Sunday worship will be based on that week's readings. (Caveat, for special holy days we will stick to the lectionary. In other words: come Easter, worship will be based on the Easter texts no matter where we are in our Bible reading.) I hope you all will be as excited about this endeavor as I am. It will be a wonderful opportunity for spiritual growth and Biblical learning.

Beloveds, to state the obvious, this has been a rough year. This has been a year full of surprises and "firsts" most of them unpleasant. But as I look back on the year, I see God's fingerprints throughout. I am grateful for each of you, for our ability to adapt and recalibrate as necessary, for this church family sticking together while staying apart. I cannot express how grateful I am that our church family has thus far been relatively unscathed—at least health wise—by this terrible virus, and I pray that we will continue to be so fortunate. However, I know that if tragedy does strike, we will continue to adapt and recalibrate. I know that, with God's help, we will get through this.

Happy New (Liturgical) Year!

In Christ,
Meghan

Continued from page 2

Janet Rae Kingery, aunt of Matt Illingworth and sister to Matt's mom, Kim Hunter, died on Wednesday, November 11, 2020, at Accura of Newton East. She was 81 years old. Janet was born May 8, 1939 in Milan, Missouri. On April 3, 1958, Janet was united in marriage with Carroll Eugene Kingery in Monroe, Iowa. Janet dedicated her life to her husband and family. She was very crafty and enjoyed creating ceramics of all types and traveling to area craft shows to sell them. In her earlier years, she enjoyed being a part of the local bowling association.

Janet was preceded in death by her parents; her husband, Carroll, on January 20, 2015; and her brother, William McEwen. Those left to honor Janet's memory include her sons, Larry (Cynthia) Kingery Fojtik and Dustin (Samantha) Kingery; her 4 grandchildren and her sister, Kim Hunter. Her funeral service was held virtually on Monday, November 16, 2020. A private gravesite service followed. The family will be planning a public Celebration of Life at a later date.



Donald Blaker, brother of Sharon Black, died Friday, November 20, 2020 at his home near Arlington, Iowa. He was diagnosed with stage four melanoma in mid-October. Don taught for more than 30 years in several area schools; including Central Community in Elkader; Valley of Clermont, Elgin, and Wadena; and Starmont Community Schools. He also enjoyed working on his small farm near Fayette. He turned one of his hobbies into a thriving photography business.

Don is survived by Anita, his wife of 60 years, his three sons, Jeff (Diane) of Fayette, Mark (Laura) of Independence, and Craig (Geri) of Ankeny, and three grandchildren, Rachel, Carson, and Ava. He is also survived by one sister, Sharon (Don) Black of Newton, and many nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents as well as a sister and brother-in-law, Joanna and Ron Kocher, and their son, Garth.

There will be no funeral service at this time, but a memorial service will be held at a later date.

Reading the Bible in the Year 2021

Below is the schedule for the month of January. In subsequent editions, we'll feature that month's readings and the readings for the following month.. If you would like a copy of the schedule for the entire year, please contact Meghan or the church office.

Friday, January 1, 2021 [Day 1 - Genesis 1-4](#)

Saturday, January 2, 2021 [Day 2 - Genesis 5-8](#)

Sunday, January 3, 2021 Day 3 - Genesis 9-12

Monday, January 4, 2021 Day 4 - Genesis 13-17

Tuesday, January 5, 2021 Day 5 - Genesis 18-20

Wednesday, January 6, 2021 Day 6 - Genesis 21-23

Thursday, January 7, 2021 Day 7 - Genesis 24-25

Friday, January 8, 2021 Day 8 - Genesis 26-28

Saturday, January 9, 2021 Day 9 - Genesis 29-31

Sunday, January 10, 2021 [Day 10 - Genesis 32-35](#)

Monday, January 11, 2021 [Day 11 - Genesis 36-38](#)

Tuesday, January 12, 2021 [Day 12 - Genesis 39-41](#)

Wednesday, January 13, 2021 [Day 13 - Genesis 42-43](#)

Thursday, January 14, 2021 [Day 14 - Genesis 44-46](#)

Friday, January 15, 2021 [Day 15 - Genesis 47-50](#)

Saturday, January 16, 2021 [Day 16 - Exodus 1-4](#)

Sunday, January 17, 2021 Day 17 - Exodus 5-7

Monday, January 18, 2021 Day 18 - Exodus 8-10

Tuesday, January 19, 2021 Day 19 - Exodus 11-13

Wednesday, January 20, 2021 Day 20 - Exodus 14-16

Thursday, January 21, 2021 Day 21 - Exodus 17-20

Friday, January 22, 2021 Day 22 - Exodus 21-23

Saturday, January 23, 2021 Day 23 - Exodus 24-27

Sunday, January 24, 2021 [Day 24 - Exodus 28-30](#)

Monday, January 25, 2021 [Day 25 - Exodus 31-34](#)

Tuesday, January 26, 2021 [Day 26 - Exodus 35-37](#)

Wednesday, January 27, 2021 [Day 27 - Exodus 38-40](#)

Thursday, January 28, 2021 [Day 28 - Leviticus 1-4](#)

Friday, January 29, 2021 [Day 29 - Leviticus 5-7](#)

Saturday, January 30, 2021 [Day 30 - Leviticus 8-10](#)

Sunday, January 31, 2021 Day 31 - Leviticus 11-13



Kay Parsons, as she is dealing with a knee infection and will be having antibiotic infusion treatments for the next 30-45 days (every day) at MercyOne Newton Medical Center.

Kevin Parsons who tested positive for COVID. His systems are mild.

Matthew Gehling is having to take respiratory therapy for help with the results from having COVID and some of his underlying medical conditions.

Randy Camp who will be having surgery this month which will be on his neck and similar to what Norm Grimm had.

Randy & Carol Camp and family for the recent death of Randy's dad. There are no immediate plans for a funeral/memorial service.

Patients and their families who are suffering from COVID.

Doctors, nurses, LPNs and aides who treat those with COVID, requiring long shifts.

Those with other medical conditions or needing surgery, but are declined as our hospitals continue to be full.

Students, teachers, administrators, and other staff who have gone from in-class school to all virtual.

Those who are saddened by the Holidays as they face celebrating without loved ones, perhaps for the first time or from years ago but the emptiness still is felt.

People around the world who are still trying to recover from the effects of fires, the derecho, hurricanes, tornadoes, and other forms of destruction by Mother Nature.

For nations who suffer from wars and other unrest. May they find peace.

Reminders

- The church office is now open from 1 pm to 5 pm on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons.
- Even though the building is closed for in-person worship, meetings and other activities, the sanctuary is still in use multiple times throughout the week. Please make sure to check with Meghan and/or Mickey if you need to be in the sanctuary for any reason for musical practice, maintenance or otherwise so we can make sure it's available for you at the time you want.
Most weeks, the sanctuary is unavailable:
 - Wednesday 10:45 am-12:15 pm (when Meghan teaches Gentle Yoga via Zoom)
 - Thursday 2:45 pm-5:30 pm (Chair Yoga followed by recording worship)
 - Additionally, special music is usually recorded on Thursday mornings.

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding in this matter.

Zoom Happy Hour Open House

In an effort to stay connected (or get connected!) in this unprecedented time, the Membership Committee and I would like to invite you to a social gathering we're calling "Happy Hour Open House". These will be Wednesdays from 6pm-8pm but the idea is people should feel free to drop in and out as works best for you and your schedule. Bring a snack and/or beverage of choice and just enjoy the company of one another. Hope to see many of you there!

Meghan Davis-Brass is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Happy Hour Open House
Time: Wednesdays 6-8pm

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86377811346>

Gifts of Love

In the past several of our First Presbyterian Church members have donated yarn to our Prayer Shawl Ministry. During covid-19, I decided I wanted to crochet some items for “Mimi’s kids”. I conferred with Linda Curtis-Stolper to determine an approximate size since I had not been able to see the children for sometime. On November 9, 2020 I was able to give the kids the items I made. Benila received a pink and purple shawl with a matching purse. Godspell received a navy blue and burgundy vest (which is long) and a matching stocking hat. Regina received a variegated pink and burgundy shawl with a matching heart shaped purse. I just wanted you to know how some of your yarn has been used. I enjoy crocheting and had fun making these items. Thank you to all of you who donated yarn. Your donations are greatly appreciated as several of us have either crocheted or knitted prayer shawls and lap blankets for various members of our congregation over the years. Thanks again. Jane Repp



Mission Committee

Larry Anderson, Chair

Mission Committee met via Zoom Nov. 3. At that point donations had been received for the CROP Walk totaling \$370 and for One Great Hour of Sharing totaling \$645. About 14 letters had been collected for the Bread for the World Offering of Letters. All these totals are well below those of last year, representing impacts of the pandemic and our not meeting in person. But many thanks to those who donated and who advocated through the letters!

Upcoming opportunities for giving include the Harvest Offering (Thanksgiving), the Presbyterian Gift Catalog (Advent), the Christmas Joy Offering (Christmas), the Salvation Army Angel Tree, and the Progress Industries client gifts. Details for how you can take these opportunities will be given elsewhere in the Messenger, (see page 7), as well as in the weekly Church Happenings emails.

As we weather this pandemic and its consequences, let us take care of one another and continue to be the body of Christ in our community, in whatever ways we can!

Larry Anderson, Mission Committee chair

Worship and Music

Jeanette Shannon, Chairperson



The Advent Booklets are printed. Proofreading has been done. The coffee group has assembled them. Due to postage and an opportunity to touch base with families, Meghan delivered them. (Meghan thanks Linda Curtis-Stolper and Dave Stolper for helping in this endeavor). She also took an Advent Wreath to those families requesting one. She has contacted contributors about reading or having her read their writing so that each day during Advent the writing for that day is read on Facebook.



November 29th is the beginning of Advent. Bob VanderVeer, our custodian, will have the Advent Wreath set up, along with putting out the Poinsettias. Linda Kirchhoff has contacted members to come in to be taped lighting candle/s for the Advent wreath. We are having a baptism on the second Sunday of Advent (December 6). The family will light the candles that day.



The Salvation Army angel tree will be set up outside each day so people can come and pick off a Salvation Army angel starting Monday, November 30. Families are asked to either bring in an ornament from home and/or have a picture taken by the tree to be made into an ornament. The traditional Chrismons will also be on the tree. There will be appointment times set up so people will not be there at the same time.



The Blue Christmas service will be pre-recorded and will be aired on December 17th. Meghan is going to make a slideshow of people's nativity scenes to put on Facebook. The logistics of sharing these will be communicated through the weekly happenings.



Christmas Eve will follow the same format as usual with parts pre-recorded. The choir is going to sing an anthem and lead the singing of the hymns. Luminaries, depending on weather, will be set up on the sidewalk and steps leading up to the church. People can see them and potentially write a prayer or a Christmas wish. Linda Gehling is looking into the possibility of a live nativity scene.



Luminaries



Advent Mission Opportunities

Linda Curtis-Stolper, Mission Committee

Mission Coalition is not coordinating bell ringers for the **Salvation Army Red Kettle campaign** this year. If you want to do this, you can contact the Salvation Army directly and arrange a time and location by going to registertoring.com.

The **Salvation Army Christmas Angel tree** will be back this year, with some changes in response to pandemic precautions. Starting at the beginning of Advent, (Monday, Nov. 30), the tree will be placed (weather allowing) outside the main door into the church, at the top of the steps, Monday-Thursday from 9am-5pm. You might want to call the church to ensure that the tree is available before coming to collect an angel (or more). After you have finished shopping for gift(s) for your angel(s), you will need to deliver the unwrapped present(s) with the angel tag(s) attached directly to the Salvation Army office (301 N 2nd Ave E). All presents should be delivered no later than Dec. 15.

A few **Progress Industries group home residents** who might not otherwise receive Christmas gifts will be providing suggestions for gifts they would like. Please call Linda Curtis-Stolper (641-840-2417) to learn the names and possible presents. After you have purchased your gift(s), you will need to deliver the wrapped and labeled present directly to the Progress Industries office (202 N 3rd Ave W) no later than Dec. 15.

Thank you for sharing some Christmas cheer with others!



Merry Christmas
&
Happy New Year!

from the Church Staff

Meghan, Mickey, Bob, Larry and Sandy

Presbytery Meeting

Mickey Van Baale, Commissioner to Presbytery

521st Presbytery Meeting Report
November 10, 2020
Held virtually by Zoom

Rev. Meghan Davis-Brass and I attended the virtual meeting. Meghan was in Newton and I participated in most of it from Michigan. There are only 100 spots available, so minister members and ruling elder commissioners have to make reservations ahead of time, as they are given first priority. Also given priority are guests who may be part of the worship service or meeting and committee members required to be at the meeting. If there are spots left over, these are given to observers and guests on a first-come, first-served basis.

- ◆ An extremely moving service. There were two guests who lead all facets of the service, except reading of the scripture. Rather than having any congregational singing of hymns, all music was provided by Dr. Simon Estes (need I say more?). The sermon was given by Dr. Jacqueline Thompson. Dr. Thompson is an ordained Elder in the Iowa Conference of the United Methodist Church. She earned the Master of Divinity from the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary. She currently pastors both the Burns and the St. John's United Methodist Churches in Des Moines. Dr. Thompson's message was entitled "In Between Times", based on the Deuteronomy 34:1-12 scripture. Just prior to communion, the group returned to the business meeting. At the end of the meeting, communion, installation of officers, the closing prayer and benediction were done.
- ◆ Among other committee reports received, we were presented with the financial report, as well as the budget for next year from Budget and Finance. Many things looked different than in the past, since we are going through the transition of the Tri-Presbytery group. The per capita for 2021 will remain the same as this year, \$45.00 per person. The breakdown of this money is \$5.50 goes to Synod, \$8.98 goes to General Assembly and the remaining amount (\$30.52) to our Presbytery. All positions, except 7, have been filled. Meghan is leaving the Compassion, Peace & Justice committee and will be on the Committee on Ministry (COM). Mickey is on the Personnel committee. Since there will not be personnel in any of the three presbyteries, some of the members of each Personnel will make up a new Personnel Commission for the Tri-Presbytery staff. Mickey will be one of these.
- ◆ The Crisis Team, a newly formed group to help handle issues during the pandemic, recommended that churches go back to virtual services and meetings, that everyone is encouraged to wear masks, and that we pray for ministers, as 2 have been infective with the COVID virus while doing funerals/gravesite services.
- ◆ New officers were installed. The new Moderator is Rev. Lynne Hanna, Teaching Elder from Perry and the Vice Moderator is David Boyd, Ruling Elder from Des Moines Central.
- ◆ The next meeting will be in February.



Proposed schedule to resume when deemed safe to do so.

December 2020 **BIRTHDAYS & EVENTS**

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thur

Fri

Sat

		1 4p Worship & Music	2 Karen Quinn 9:30a—WBS 11a Gentle Yoga 6:00p-8:00p Zoom Happy Hour Open	3 6:30a Early Men's Group 9a Men's Group 3p Chair Yoga	4	5 Pete Van Elswyk
6 10:30a Zoom worship 11:30a Zoom Fellowship	7	8 3p Mission	9 9:30a—WBS 11a Gentle Yoga 6:00p-8:00p Zoom Happy Hour Open	10 Shirley Stevens 3p Chair Yoga	11 Joan Tyler	12
13 9a Deacons 10:30a Zoom worship 11:30a Zoom Fellowship	14	15 7p Session	16 9:30a—WBS 11a Gentle Yoga 6:00p-8:00p Zoom Happy Hour Open	17 6:30a Early Men's Group 9a Men's Group 3p Chair Yoga 7p Blue Christmas	18	19 Amy Doerring
20 10:30a Zoom worship 11:30a Zoom Fellowship	21	22	23 9:30a—WBS 11a Gentle Yoga 6:00p-8:00p Zoom Happy Hour Open	24 7p - Christmas Eve Service	25  CHRISTMAS DAY	26
27 10:30a Zoom worship 11:30a Zoom Fellowship	28 Linda Kirchoff Office Closed	29 Office Closed	30 Toni Peska Office Closed	31 Office Closed		

Regular Worship Schedule
10:30a Worship 11:30a Fellowship
We will continue these hours as long we are on-line.

All meetings, fellowship and yoga are via Zoom. Worship services, including Blue Christmas and Christmas Eve are posted online and/or available via Zoom at the times indicated.

First Presbyterian Church
220 N 2nd Ave E
Newton, Iowa 50208

641-792-2790

Return Service Requested

Lectionary —

December, 2020

December 6 - 2nd Sunday of Advent

Isa. 40: 1-11 *and* Ps. 85:1-2, 8-13;
2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8

December 13 - 3rd Sunday of Advent

Isa. 61:1-4, 8-11 *and* Ps. 126 *or*
Luke 1:46b-55; 1 Thess. 5:16-24;
John 1:6-8, 19-28

December 20 - 4th Sunday of Advent

2 Sam. 7:1-11, 16 *and* *Luke 1:46b-55* *or*
Ps. 89:1-4, 19-26; Rom. 16:25-27;
Luke 1:26-38

December 27 - 1st Sunday of Christmas

Isa. 61:10-62:3 *and* Ps. 148; Gal. 4:4-7
Luke 2:22-40

January, 2021

January 3 - 2nd Sunday of Christmas

Jer. 31:7-14 *and* Ps. 147:12-20,
Eph. 1:3-14; John 1:(1-9) 10-18

January 10 - Baptism of the Lord

Gen. 1:1-5 *and* Ps. 29; Acts 19:1-7;
Mark 1:4-11

January 17 - 2nd Sunday after Epiphany

1 Sam. 3:1-10 (11-20) *and* Ps. 139: 1-6,
13-18; 1 Cor. 6:12-20; John 1:43-51

January 24 - 3rd Sunday after Epiphany

Jonah 3:1-5, 10 *and* Ps. 62:5-12;
1 Cor. 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20

January 31 - 4th Sunday after Epiphany

Deut. 18:15-20, 10 *and* Ps. 111;
1 Cor. 8:1-13; Mark 1:21-28