

# The SHOPPER

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You are cordially invited to join Pastor Nord and the other members of First Lutheran Church at the following Advent & Christmas events:

Sunday, December 2	First Sunday of Advent
Sunday, December 9	Second Sunday of Advent ~ Special music by THEN & NOW FRIENDS FOREVER and our Choir as we celebrate "Commitment Sunday" Then join us at 3:30 pm for Christmas Caroling. Old-fashioned hayride will take us around town.
Sunday, December 16	Third Sunday of Advent ~ Crowning of St. Lucia and Children's Christmas Program
Sunday, December 23	Fourth Sunday of Advent
Monday, December 24	Festive Christmas Eve Service with special Choir music at 4 pm



**A D V E N T**

**Middle Creek Presbyterian Church**  
**At 12473 Montague Road**

**INVITES YOU TO COME JOIN US**

**Services of Lessons and Carols**  
**December 23**  
**8:30 and 10:20am**

**A Family Christmas Eve Service**  
**December 24**  
**4:00pm**

**"Happy Birthday, Jesus!"**



## In my opinion

# Dreams, large and small, keep coming true

I used to say that I manifested my husband, my dream man, and I suppose I did, and we have manifested a lovely life together. The bucket list has been checked off and we are not really bucket list people. Future dreams are more general – like a fulfilling, adventurous life in all the ways that can happen.

We have taken the trips, bought the convertible, the joy house, and all the “material” items. Check. We do fun experiences, like hang gliding, zip lining, sky diving, hot air balloon. Check. Now we just want to play.

Hike, bike, kayak. Paint, write, create. Explore and discover. Life keeps expanding and we are along for the ride.

We love deep chats on all kinds of subjects. We recently played a round of Vertillis (a Dutch card deck game that prompts conversation; the word vertillis means “tell me more”) and one question asked what musical artist you still wish to see.

My husband replied Michael Buble.

I saw Michael in 2009 and the show was phenomenal. After my Prince mentioned his desire, I started checking the Michael Buble website and within a week,

Michael’s new tour (after several year hiatus) was announced. I joined the fan club to get presale tickets, and my sweetheart and I will be swooning for Mr. Buble when he is in Chicago this March.

If that counts as a bucket list item, then check.

My list of concerts I have been to is long, long, long. I have seen all my beloveds. The only person still on my dream list is Robbie Williams. I became a Robbie devotee when I lived in France way back in 2005 and 2006. He’s not famous in America, but is the most celebrated pop icon across the world, and a national treasure of the UK. I have followed his tours and life over the years online and never pulled the trigger to travel overseas for a huge stadium concert.

And now I don’t have to. Robbie will be in Las Vegas for a handful of shows in 2019. His first, and I just got tickets. Even though he is not known in the states, the shows sold out in a flash. The British are coming. They love Vegas, and they love Robbie.

My point: things keep falling into place. Dreams keep coming true. I follow my soul nudges, the little niggles in my heart. And not just for concert tickets. For all



By  
**KELLY  
SIMMONS**  
Columnist

things. Invitations to accept and those to decline. What to write and what to save for later. What to read or watch or attend. What to do next.

As we approach another new year, once again I am in awe of how fast the calendar pages turn. The passing of time no longer makes me feel a tinge of sadness or bittersweetness. It’s simply a reminder to be grateful for every day past and for all those that lie ahead.

My Prince Charming and I just turned 54. We, in theory, have 40 more years ahead of us. FORTY YEARS! That’s a long time. That excites me, thrills me, delights me. Oh the plans and ideas we have! Oh the magic that is still to come!

We are planning the year ahead, in some small ways, and also being open to the miracles yet to be revealed. Do you look at life that way? Do you believe that the things you want, material or

otherwise, (like concert tickets) will come to you? Do you follow the whisper inside that guides you, in all ways, large and small?

Will you let 2019 be the year you start?

*Kelly JOY Simmons believes in magic and miracles, and uses practical and mystical exercises*

*to realize her dreams. Kelly is hosting a VISION YOUR LIFE workshop on January 5, 2019, at her Joy House. Spots are limited. Register today at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/vision-your-life-workshop-tickets-53110722601>.*

*Write Kelly at [kellyjoysimmons@gmail.com](mailto:kellyjoysimmons@gmail.com).*

## Slices of life

# When life isn’t a bummer – not really

It’s such a bummer when on a normal day when you have nothing else planned you get a phone call from your daughter asking if you can babysit your granddaughter for an hour or two and you of course say yes then proceed to spend that babysitting time just cuddling and listening to her coo and giggle. My day was a bummer.

It’s such a drag when a friend from out of town calls unexpectedly telling you they are in town and want to have lunch in an hour and you have to quit folding laundry to go and meet the friend and have a nice lunch with them spent catching up and sharing some laughs. Today was a major drag.

It’s such drudgery when you have a big grocery list and you have to go to the store and fill your cart with food and other goodies and it’s such a hassle to pack it all up, bring it home and then put it all away because that is time-consuming and time is money baby and at the end of it all you don’t even really think about the fact that you were able to pay for food for your family for the entire week without going into debt or scrimping on something. Today was filled with drudgery and hassles.

It’s bothersome and downright exasperating when, in the middle of the night, the dog or cat or maybe both want to cuddle with you in bed and they take up space



By  
**JILL  
PERTLER**  
Contributor

and their fur gets in your face and one of them even snores, but they love you unconditionally so you make room and indulge in a little snuggling. Last night was bothersome and downright exasperating.

It’s such a pain, early in the morning, when you half-wake up and want to go back to that really great dream you were having but you peek at the clock and it’s just about time for the alarm to go off and you are still tired and don’t want to start your day just yet and then you remember it’s Saturday and you don’t have to get up and you can sleep in for another hour or two and you pull up the covers and go right back to that great dream. Last Saturday morning was a pain.

It’s irksome when the day is short but activities are long and you have to hop from one thing to the next because you are pulled in at least two but probably three or even four different directions and you have to leave one game early to make it to the last half of another scrimmage and all this is before the choir or band concert and you are tempted to skip

something but then one kid might feel shorted so you go and find yourself enjoying the game and the scrimmage and the music – each at its own pace and you realize these days are fleeting and there will come a time when you have an entire unencumbered day and evening and you will look back and remember these busy times with fondness. Many of my days are irksome.

It can be easy, or maybe better put, lazy, to live our days, our hours, our moments with blinders on. To be focused on our present situation and find a change to our routine as an annoying disruption to the important ho hum of our day. Or we embrace our normal routine as mundane without appreciating all it holds.

It’s easy to get into a tizzy or fret about a particular situation. I often do. But then when I convince myself to take the blinders off the big picture comes into view and I see the scope of it all and that realization is like a warm blanket unfolding over top of me. There is much to fret about. Always will be. But there is much, much more to not fret about. I choose door number two.

*Jill Pertler is an award-winning syndicated columnist, published playwright, author and member of the National Society of Newspaper Columnists. Don’t miss a slice; follow the Slices of Life page on Facebook.*

## Fire calls

### Harlem-Roscoe

The Harlem-Roscoe Fire Dept. responded to the following calls on Nov. 23 to 30. They also responded to 46 medical calls.

#### Nov. 23

8400 block of McCurry Road – carbon monoxide alarm

#### Nov. 25

6800 block of Prairie Flower – smoke scare

1500 block of West Lane Road – lock out

7500 block of Grace Dr. – garage

#### Nov. 26

4300 block of Prairie Hill Road – moving vehicle accident

7700 block of Cannellwood Dr. – fire alarm

#### Nov. 27

North of Forest Hills on 251 South bound lane – moving vehicle accident

7100 block of Greenlee Dr. – fire alarm

200 block of Hononegah – moving vehicle accident

5500 block of Hodges Run –

smoke alarm

I-90 mile marker 11, eastbound – mutual aid

#### Nov. 28

7300 block of Chandan Blvd. – carbon monoxide alarm

9600 block of Forest Hills Road – gas odor

#### Nov. 29

Skyview/Hamboro – moving vehicle accident

10100 block of N. 2nd St. – moving vehicle accident

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Gingerbread Men Cookies

# Twice-As-Nice Holiday Treats

FAMILY FEATURES

With 334 days leading up to December, make the most of the season by enjoying the holiday’s quintessential flavors like gingerbread, peppermint and cinnamon – with double the festive treats to please every taste.

Transform one vibrant holiday flavor into two festive treats that family and friends are sure to love. Nothing signals the holiday season like the sweet and spicy snap of gingerbread. Enjoy this must-have flavor in freshly baked Gingerbread Men Cookies or a Triple Chocolate Gingerbread cake.

Peppermint offers a refreshing, sweet taste that’s perfect for gifted treats like Peppermint Crunch Popcorn and Peppermint Bars. Also, cinnamon stars twice as nice in a Peanut Butter Snickerdoodle Tart with Cinnamon Peanut Crust and decadent Cinnamon Caramel Swirl Bars.

Find more gingerbread, peppermint and cinnamon treats at McCormick.com.



Peppermint Bars

## Peppermint Crunch Popcorn

Prep time: 10 minutes  
Servings: 16

- 6 cups plain popped popcorn
- 1 bag (12 ounces) candy-coated chocolate pieces
- 12 ounces white baking chocolate, chopped
- 1 teaspoon McCormick Pure Peppermint Extract
- 1 tablespoon red and green sprinkles

In large bowl, mix popcorn and candy-coated pieces. Line large, shallow baking pan with wax paper. Set aside.

Melt white chocolate according to package instructions. Stir in peppermint extract. Pour over popcorn mixture. Toss to coat evenly. Spread in single layer on prepared pan. Sprinkle evenly with red and green sprinkles.

Let chocolate cool and harden completely. Gently break into clusters. Package in cellophane bags with ribbons for holiday gifting.



Peppermint Crunch Popcorn



Triple Chocolate Gingerbread

## Peppermint Bars

Prep time: 15 minutes  
Cook time: 15 minutes  
Servings: 36

### Brownies:

- 1 family-size package fudge brownie mix

### Peppermint Filling:

- 5 cups confectioners’ sugar
- 14 tablespoons butter, melted
- 2 tablespoons heavy cream
- 1 teaspoon McCormick Pure Peppermint Extract
- 1/8 teaspoon McCormick Food Color & Egg Dye, Red

### Chocolate Glaze:

- 12 ounces semi-sweet baking chocolate, coarsely chopped
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) butter crushed peppermint candies (optional)

To make Brownies: Heat oven to 350 F. Prepare brownie mix according to package instructions. Spread on greased, foil-lined, 15-by-10-by-1-inch baking pan.

Bake 15 minutes, or until toothpick inserted in center comes out almost clean. Cool in pan on wire rack.

To make Peppermint Filling: In large bowl, using electric mixer on medium speed, beat confectioners’ sugar, melted butter, cream, peppermint extract and food coloring until well blended and smooth. Spread evenly over cooled brownies. Refrigerate 30 minutes.

To make Chocolate Glaze: In large, microwavable bowl, microwave chocolate and butter on high 2 minutes, until butter is melted. Stir until chocolate is completely melted. Spread over top of chilled brownies. Sprinkle with crushed peppermint candies, if desired. Cut into bars.



Cinnamon Caramel Swirl Bars

## Cinnamon Caramel Swirl Bars

Prep time: 25 minutes  
Cook time: 35 minutes  
Servings: 24

- 1 1/2 cups flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 teaspoons McCormick Ground Cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

- 1 1/2 cups firmly packed brown sugar
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, melted
- 2 eggs
- 1 tablespoon McCormick Pure Vanilla Extract
- 1 cup coarsely chopped pecans
- 1 package (14 ounces) caramels, unwrapped
- 1/4 cup milk

## Gingerbread Men Cookies

Prep time: 20 minutes  
Cook time: 8 minutes  
Servings: 24

- 3 cups flour
- 2 teaspoons McCormick Ground Ginger
- 1 teaspoon McCormick Ground Cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon McCormick Ground Nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup (1 1/2 sticks) butter, softened
- 3/4 cup firmly packed brown sugar
- 1/2 cup molasses
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon McCormick Pure Vanilla Extract

In large bowl, mix flour, ginger, cinnamon, baking soda, nutmeg and salt. Set aside.

In separate large bowl, using electric mixer on medium speed, beat butter and brown sugar until light and fluffy. Add molasses, egg and vanilla; mix well. Gradually beat in flour mixture on low speed until well mixed. Press dough into thick, flat disk. Wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate 4 hours or overnight.

Heat oven to 350 F. Roll out dough to 1/4-inch thickness on lightly floured work surface. Cut into gingerbread men shapes with 5-inch cookie cutter. Place 1 inch apart on ungreased baking sheets.

Bake 8-10 minutes, or until edges of cookies are set and just begin to brown. Cool on baking sheets 1-2 minutes. Remove to wire racks; cool completely. Decorate as desired.

## Triple Chocolate Gingerbread

Prep time: 10 minutes  
Cook time: 50 minutes  
Servings: 16

- 1 package (2-layer size) chocolate cake mix
- 1 package (4-serving size) chocolate instant pudding mix
- 4 eggs
- 1 tablespoon McCormick Ground Ginger
- 1 teaspoon McCormick Ground Cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon McCormick Ground Allspice
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup molasses
- 1/2 cup water

- 1 cup miniature chocolate chips
- nonstick baking spray with flour

Heat oven to 350 F. In large bowl, using electric mixer on low speed, beat cake mix, pudding mix, eggs, ginger, cinnamon, allspice, sour cream, vegetable oil, molasses and water until moistened, scraping sides of bowl frequently. Beat on medium speed 2 minutes until well blended. Stir in chocolate chips.

Pour into 10-cup Bundt pan prepared with nonstick spray.

Bake 50 minutes, or until cake pulls away from sides of pan and springs back when touched lightly. Cool in pan 15 minutes. Invert cake onto wire rack. Cool completely.



Peanut Butter Snickerdoodle Tart with Cinnamon Peanut Crust

## Peanut Butter Snickerdoodle Tart with Cinnamon Peanut Crust

Prep time: 30 minutes  
Cook time: 8 minutes  
Servings: 8

- 1 1/2 cups lightly salted roasted peanuts, lightly crushed
- 3 tablespoons packed brown sugar
- 3 tablespoons butter, melted
- 1 teaspoon McCormick Ground Cinnamon, divided
- 3 tablespoons chocolate milk
- 4 ounces semi-sweet chocolate, coarsely chopped
- 1/2 cup creamy peanut butter
- 2 tablespoons sweetened condensed milk
- 1 teaspoon McCormick Pure Vanilla Extract
- 1/2 cup heavy cream

Heat oven to 350 F. In medium bowl, mix flour, baking powder, cinnamon and salt. Set aside.

In large bowl, mix brown sugar, butter, eggs, vanilla and pecans until well blended. Add flour mixture; mix well. Reserve 1 cup batter. Spread remaining batter into lightly greased, foil-lined, 13-by-9-inch baking pan. Bake 15 minutes, or until firm.

In microwavable bowl, microwave caramels and milk on high 2-3

minutes, or until caramels are completely melted, stirring after each minute. Cool 5 minutes, or until slightly thickened. Pour over baked layer in pan, spreading to within 1/2 inch of edges. Drop reserved batter by spoonfuls over caramel layer. With knife, cut through batter several times for marble effect.

Bake 15-20 minutes, or until center is set. Cool in pan on wire rack. Lift from pan. Cut into bars.



## Northern Illinois &amp; Southern Wisconsin

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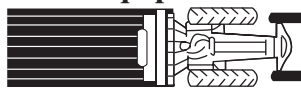
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Applications for a cook position are available on the school website ([www.pecschools.com](http://www.pecschools.com)) or may be picked up at the District Office, 1300 Main Street, between the hours of 7:00 am and 3:30 pm Monday through Thursday.

Begin on January 7, 2019, 6 hours per day on days when student lunch is served.

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