

La Palabra

November 2020

www.fpcmesa.org

480-964-8606

A Message from Ann

“O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!”

~ Psalm 136:1

While it may not come as naturally as at other times in our lives due to the difficulties of living life during a pandemic, we are entering the season of Thanksgiving, reminding us that it is always appropriate and important to give thanks to the Lord! Even in these tough times, there is a lot for which to be thankful. We belong to a good and gracious God, we have a wonderful faith family, and we are able to worship together online and in-person, brought together by amazing advances in technology! Thanks be to God!

There is a recent movement known at the Gratitude Project. Based on the notion that gratitude not only helps us feel good, but also improves our well-being in many ways, the Gratitude Project explores the transformative impact practicing gratitude has on creating a meaningful life and a better world.

We have nothing to lose, so let's be grateful together! 'Tis the season! Author Kelly McGonigal writes this: “*The Gratitude Project* is a practical and thoughtful exploration of how appreciation can help us find hope and strengthen our most important relationships. Gratitude is a mind-set that does far more than make you feel good; it can help you be your best self, connect with others, and see the good in the world.”

In the coming days and weeks, I want to encourage us all to be intentional about calling to mind the people, experiences, and things for which you are grateful. Do this as you rise in the morning, throughout the day, and as you lay your head upon your pillow to rest. Keep a journal, draw pictures, offer prayers of thanksgiving, rehearse your list in your head, send Thanksgiving cards in addition to (or instead of) Christmas cards, sing songs or hymns of thanksgiving as you go about your day. Practice gratitude in whatever way best fits your circumstances and personality. Be Grateful! Live with Gratitude! Observe how it might change your perspective and outlook on life.

I came across this quote again recently which contains deep wisdom by theologian, mystic, poet, and scholar Thomas Merton who writes: “To be grateful is to recognize the Love of God in everything. Every breath we draw is a gift of God's love, every moment of existence is a grace...Gratitude therefore takes nothing for granted, is never unresponsive, is constantly awakening to new wonder and to praise of the goodness of God. For the grateful human knows that God is good, not by hearsay but by experience.”

May we all experience God's goodness and respond faithfully by giving thanks!

~ Ann

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WORSHIP

Worship (E) – Dan Reeves
Dir. Of Music Ministries (Chair) – Mark Ramsey
Prayer Chain (D) — Joy Schulz

Funerals/Memorials (D) — Renita Jurgensen
Worship (D) — David Miller

Mark's Remarks

(480) 964-8606, EXT. 103; MUSIC@FPCMESA.ORG

"The final aim and reason of all music is nothing other than the glorification of God and the refreshment of the spirit." - Johann Sebastian Bach

"Be thankful unto him, and speak good of his Name. For the Lord is gracious, his mercy is everlasting: and his truth endureth from generation to generation" (Psalm 100:3b-4). Even through our pandemic, we are to be thankful. Through mourning and loss, through joy and thanksgiving, we have so much for which to be thankful. Thanks be to God who walks with us through it all!

I am thankful that we are able to open our Sanctuary and worship again in person. The first Sunday of our opening was like a family reunion. It was such a blessing to see each other again. Even though we had our masks on, we could see the smiles radiating on each other's faces. This being said, the crowd was not as large as we remember, with many of our church family understandably making the decision to worship from home. I am thankful for the gifts we received these past several months that allowed us to install our new equipment so that those at home are able to participate in real time. I am thankful that God has provided us with personnel who are able to work with the new equipment and committed to offering their talents so that First Presbyterian Church of Mesa is able to continue to serve. I look forward to the day when we can join together without fear and welcome everyone back. Until then we will need to don our masks, observe social distancing, and follow the directions of our ushers as we enter and exit the sanctuary.

Poinsettias will be displayed in our Sanctuary during the Advent season; however, with Covid-19 safety concerns and to avoid the passing of paper forms and plants, we have made a couple of changes. We will be using only silk poinsettias this season. You are invited to order a *silk* poinsettia, and they are \$10 apiece. Please use this [FORM](#) for each poinsettia ordered, and send a check to the church (payable to "First Presbyterian Church," with memo notation "Poinsettias") or contribute via our [online giving](#), using the category "Worship Supplies/Decorations." Your poinsettia(s) may be left with the church to be reused each year or may be taken following the December 20th worship service. The deadline for orders is December 14th.



Our church website includes a large list of worship resources, including devotionals, virtual anthems by several of our choirs, and other liturgical resources. May these [worship resources](#) remind us to be thankful unto Him even amidst the storms of life.

Coming Events

- 11/8 Stewardship Dedication Sunday - Online and In-Person!
- ~~Carols by Candlelight Advent Decorating~~
- 11/26 Happy Thanksgiving
- 12/20 Music Sunday
- 2/14 Worship led by The Blackwood Quartet, 10AM
- 2/20 Concert with Tenor Dr. Glenn Bennett & Organist Dr. Mark Ramsey, 4:00 p.m.

Humoresque

"The One whose throne is in heaven sits laughing." - Psalm 2:4

Mrs. Lonefold's dishwasher quit working, so she called a repairman. He couldn't accommodate her with an evening appointment, and, since she had to go to work the next day, she told him: "I'll leave the key under the mat. Fix the dishwasher, leave the bill on the counter, and I'll mail you the check. By the way, don't worry about my Rottweiler. He won't bother you. But, whatever you do, do not under *any* circumstances talk to my parrot!" When the repairman arrived at Mrs. Lonefold's apartment the next day, he discovered the biggest and meanest looking Rottweiler he had ever seen. But, just like she had said, the dog just lay there on the carpet, watching the repairman go about his business. However, the whole time he was there, the parrot drove him nuts with incessant yelling and name-calling. Finally, the repairman couldn't contain himself any longer and yelled: "Shut up, you stupid ugly bird!!" To which the parrot replied: "GET HIM, Brutus!!!"



Sue Eisenklam and Carol Anderson led us through an insightful Bible study at October's Circle Zoom on individual and community lament: "You don't know what you've got 'till it's gone," "I'm so lonesome I could cry." November's lesson #3 will focus on women, how we teach our children lament and trust in the God of hope. Anyone interested is invited to attend this study by contacting Circle leader Suzi Payton or Jo Throckmorton.

Following the October meeting, Sara McWhorter was installed as moderator of FPC-PW. We all offered our sincerest thanks and best wishes to outgoing moderator, Suzanne Engman, for a job well done as she passed the gavel and shared plans for moving on to future challenges. We will miss you, Suzanne.

FPC Staff emails are listed below. Staff cell phone numbers are listed in the church directory.

Ann Conklin: pastor@fpcmesa.org
Mark Ramsey: choirs@cox.net
Chris McKee: chris@fpcmesa.org
Linda Reeves: pubs@fpcmesa.org
Don Krill: buildings@fpcmesa.org

DISCIPLESHIP

Min. of Faith Formation — Chris McKee
Adult (E) — Karen Rudin
Discipleship (D) — Anita Ramsey

Children's Ministries (E) — Stephanie Gerlach
Family Ministries (E) — Kristen Hull

Youth/Young Adult (E) — Kyle Harding
Youth Elder — Ben Gerlach

November Faith Formation Happenings

WRAPPY Hour on Pause Until January 2021. Discipleship Commission and staff have decided to pause online WRAPPY Hour until we can return to in-person gatherings at church come January. After the first block, we have determined we lacked the online participants. A big thank you for those who participated online. In the meantime, we are gearing up to launch an exciting new version of WRAP in January 2021. Please stay tuned as the details unfold.

Faith Formation Resources: During this time of physical distancing we have provided numerous resources including written and video devotions for all ages to enjoy on our church's website: <https://fpcmesa.org/discipleship>.

Sunday Youth Gathering. Our FPC youth ministry is back to in-person gatherings most Sundays at 11:15 a.m., in the Youth Room. The weekly gathering is for Junior and Senior High students and is time to check in with new and old friends, play fun games, talk God stuff and prayer. For the time being, we will be practicing physical distancing and wearing a mask to keep safe.



Youth Welcome Back Pizza Party on 10/18

Christmas Gift Wrapping Fundraiser: The Annual Youth Christmas Gift Wrapping Fundraiser is around the corner. FPC Youth will be gift wrapping to support our youth ministry program on November 29, December 6, and December 13. To be mindful of physical distancing we are requesting gifts to be dropped off at the designated table in front of the sanctuary and picked up by 12:15 p.m. at the youth room.

Montlure Leadership Development Program. Montlure has launched their first mentorship leadership development program for older youth (Juniors and Seniors in high school) and college-aged participants. This is a 6-month program that will challenge our emerging leaders to discover who God created them to be, to grow in their gifts, and find practical application. The program is a combination of one-on-one meetings along with self-guided reflection and learning opportunities. Montlure is accepting a limited number of participants, so please *encourage your young leaders to apply as soon as possible as the program will be late next month*. More details and link to application is at montlure.org/leadership

In Christ,

Chris McKee
Minister of Faith Formation
chris@fpcmesa.org



Hello FPC friends!

The preschool has been busy with the start of the new school year and welcoming families back after the LONG closure due to the COVID19 Pandemic. We are so blessed to have 15 children in our care, and we love hearing their laughter, watching them discover new things and make life-long friendships again!

Our start has been pretty smooth so far, but we have now implemented new health and safety protocols that make the day just a little bit different than we're used to. We wash our hands more often (if that is possible 😊), clean more frequently and wear our masks from CAR to CUBBY and back again. It has worked out well for all of us, but it cannot be understated how important each one of us is to the entire process to move through and past this phase in history. We are very aware of the real and present health concerns in our community, and we are focused on doing our part to welcome families to a healthy and safe environment.

During November we will be continuing some of our Preschool Traditions by hosting some fun things for the families like having our Thanksgiving Family Feast on November 24th @ 10:45 a.m. or getting our school pictures taken as a class, too! We hope to welcome many more families into our program in the coming months as the Mesa community At-Large rebuilds their trust in bringing children back to school. Please help us get the word out and share our information with others who have preschool-aged children who could benefit. Scholarships are still available, too!

I am so thankful for all of your prayers and support for the preschool!

Happy Thanksgiving!
Shiloh Murillo, Director

Just for Laughs!

A couple lived near the ocean and used to walk the beach a lot. One summer they noticed a girl who was at the beach almost every day. She wasn't unusual, nor was the travel bag she carried, except for one thing; she would approach people who were sitting on the beach, glance around, and then speak to them. Generally, the people would respond negatively, and she would wander off, but occasionally someone would nod, and there would be a quick exchange of money and something that she carried in her bag. The couple assumed that she was selling drugs, but since they didn't know for sure, they decided to just continue watching her. After a couple of weeks the wife said, 'Honey, have you ever noticed that she only goes up to people with boom boxes and other electronic devices? Tomorrow I want you to get a towel and our big radio and go lie out on the beach, then we can find out what she's really doing.' Well, the plan went off without a hitch, and the wife was almost hopping up and down with anticipation when she saw the girl talk to her husband and then leave. The man then walked up the beach and met his wife at the road. 'Well, is she selling drugs?' she asked excitedly. 'No, she's not,' he said, enjoying this probably more than he should have. 'Well, what is it then? What does she do?' his wife fairly shrieked. The man grinned and said, 'She's a battery salesperson.' 'Batteries?' cried the wife. 'Yes!' he replied. 'She Sells C Cells by the Seashore!'

MISSION

Mission (E) (Chair) — Shelley Cronenberg
Pastor – Ann Conklin
Hunger Action (D) — Sandra Clark
Assimilation (D) — Deborah Rosen

Fellowship (D) – Carol Strouse
Seasonal Ministries (D) — Dale Gibson
Mission (D) – Sue Eisenklam

Virtual Crop Walk for World Hunger 2020 is going to be Sunday, November 1st, at 2:00 p.m. First Presbyterian Church of Peoria with Church World Services is hoping people will participate and help walk for hunger wherever you are and wherever you would like. 25% of the money raised will go to the HART Pantry which is an organization that packs weekend meals for at-risk teens in the West valley. You can get on to the Phoenix Crop Hunger Walk Facebook page at 2:00 p.m. for a short introduction, prayer, and sendoff. They ask that you walk 1 – 3 miles to represent the distance women walk in some countries to bring water back to their village, but you can set your own goals. Donations can be sent via check to First Presbyterian Church of Peoria (10236 N. 83rd Ave. Peoria, AZ 85345) with “Church World Services” in the memo line or on the Church World Services website - crophungerwalk.org/phoenixaz and click on donate.

Christmas Angel Tree will be a little different this year, but we hope that you can still help some families in need. To allow access to everyone, we are going to be using a website for the Christmas Angel tree this year. To make things as easy as possible, you can either look online yourself and choose a gift to purchase or you can call Shelley Cronenberg at 480-239-1289 and she can help you pick an angel “virtually.” We have two families that we are supporting this year. Once you have selected a present, please wrap the gift and note somewhere which Christmas Angel number you chose (the website or Shelley can help you find this information). Please have your presents back to church by Sunday, December 13th. You can also call Shelley, and she will gladly come pick up the gift if you are staying at home. The website is called www.giftster.com where you can search FPC Mesa and click on FPC Mesa’s View Details and then View Lists. You do not need to sign in or create an account. You can also type in the full website address which is <https://www.giftster.com/gift/public/zSjL2/> Please call Shelley with any questions (480)-239-1289. Thank you for your support of this long-standing Christmas tradition.



The Food Pantry continues each week to provide food bags to the people who come on Fridays. We still need cereals and canned meats (chili, ravioli, Spam, chicken). We have plenty of tuna, pasta and sauce. Thank you for your donations and prayers.

~Sandy Clark



Native American COVID-19 Relief Project

Click the link above to find out more!

November Birthdays



Aaron Frederick	1st
Steve Muth	2nd
Jane Potyka	2nd
Rosa Befidi-Mengue	3rd
Scot Logan	3rd
Chris McKee	5th
Jack Fitzpatrick	6th
Carol Gerlach	6th
William Letizia	11th
Kay Harding	12th
Erin Skarphol	14th
Ethan Couillard	22nd
Lubna Dent	22nd
Ainslie Read	22nd
Gail Wylie	23rd
Lois Hildenbrand	26th
Flinn Lund	26th
John John Schlak	26th
Karyn Weaver	27th
Jade Fleener	29th
Bob Free	29th
Arlene Wagner	29th

Editor's Note: If your birthday is missing or we have the wrong date, please call the office so we can update our records. We wish a special day to anyone we have missed.

ADDRESS CHANGES/CORRECTIONS

Goings, Jack & Rosemary 5402 E. McKellips Rd., #118 Mesa, AZ 85215 Same phone #	McKee, Chris, Heather & Matthew 3645 E. Warbler Rd. Gilbert, AZ 85297
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Calendar Notes

Other than worship Sundays at 10:00 a.m., there are no events scheduled on our campus. If this changes, we will let you know as quickly as possible. Please read the Weekly Update or listen to the announcements at worship.



IN MEMORIAM

Rosemary Chisnall — October 9, 2020
Rev. Frank White — October 11, 2020



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Rob Kjar, Bookkeeper
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