

La Palabra — 2023 Annual Report Edition

February 2024

www.fpcmesa.org

480-964-8606

Annual Report for First Presbyterian Church of Mesa

A Message from Christian

Greetings! As the new pastor that started mid-January 2024, there are only a few things that I can say about ministry here at FPC Mesa in 2023.

During the interview process this past fall, I did get the chance to visit, incognito, the Trunk-R-Treat event. It was a joy to see church members hosting the wider community at that event. I saw lots of smiles and there was a positive spirit throughout the event.



I also had the chance to preach the first Sunday of Advent, and it was a joy to share the word and participate in communion that day, in addition to receiving a call from you to be your new pastor.

It was also a delight to interact with the Pastor Nominating Committee last year. They represented the church well in many different ways. They, and by extension the church, intrigued me. I was excited to see how Jesus has been active in you and through you, impacting lives and eternity. Consider this annual report an opportunity to count the blessings of last year, as well as a prompting to pray for continued blessings in 2024 and beyond.

I am excited to see what Jesus has in store for us in 2024. I am praying for a flourishing on all levels.

Many blessings,
Pastor Christian Johnson

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Worship

- With Dr. Mark Ramsey's partial retirement, Dan Reeves was appointed new chairperson.
- We welcomed Don Wilson back as Head of Ushers, and new Member-at-Large Gail Soderquist.
- We thanked Sandy Clark (Sanctuary Decorations) and Verna Green (Communion) for their many devoted years of service as they stepped down for some well-deserved rest.
- Cheryl Gregory assumed the combined responsibilities of Sanctuary Decorations and Communion.
- Gail Soderquist stepped in as the new website manager.
- We were blessed with a beautiful and unique new Baptismal Font from the hands of Jack Oliver. Paul Carlson handcrafted the crosses adorning the Font, and Barbara Walker generously gave the unique bowl atop the Font.
- The Sanctuary audio-visual modifications and upgrades were completed with the addition of a stage box for our Chancel and an advanced ethernet cable connection from the soundbooth to the Chancel and sound room.
- We continued our audio-visual and online ministries.



- We once again hosted the January Series conducted by Calvin University.

- Church members and friends enjoyed a Singing Waiters Broadway Dinner-Theater.
- We planned for special offerings during the church year: One Great Hour of Sharing - Easter; Pentecost; Mesa Presbyterian Ministries - World Communion Sunday; Joy Gift - Christmas Eve.
- We planned for Women's Sunday, Mothers' and Fathers' Day celebrations, a Ministry Fair, and a Season of Stewardship.
- Our Choir participated in the Fourth Biennial Mesa Interfaith Choral Festival.
- The musical and spiritual gifts of Dr. Glenn Bennett and Jeff Harris greatly enriched the choral life of FPC.
- The Southwest Chamber Choral concerts were once again hosted on our campus.



- We had the opportunity to participate in a combined worship service with the Garden City congregation. Matthew Gibson delivered the day's message, with Jake Augeri as Worship Leader.
- We hosted a Jazz Piano and Percussion Concert with Dr. Mark Ramsey on keyboard and Rev. Dr. Paul Soderquist on drums, featuring the music of Dave Brubeck and our recently restored 1932 Steinway & Sons Baby Grand Piano!
- We celebrated a Worship-Concert with our dear friend Dr. Glenn Bennett.
- HolyGrounds Praise Band and Dei Gloriam Bells played for our Neighborhood Family Fun Event.
- Traditional Easter Lilies and Poinsettias adorned our Sanctuary during the seasons.
- The first ever Clean & Greens event had many hands helping with campus clean-up, but also allowed for joyous fellowship as the Sanctuary Christmas decorations were set.
- Special worship services were offered for Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday.



- Our Christmas Eve worship and celebration was a single Candlelight Service at 3:00 p.m. The service was not only well attended, but feedback regarding the time, as well as the format, was overwhelmingly enthusiastic!

- We supported the families and friends of our members who passed away during 2023, and we also celebrated with the birth of new life within our church family.

Respectfully submitted:

Dan Reeves, Worship Elder Class of 2024 (Chair)

Mark Ramsey, Director of Music Ministries

Cheryl Gregory, Worship Deacon Class of 2024

Joy Schulz, Prayer Chain Coordinator

Renita Jurgensen, Liturgists and Funeral/Memorial Reception Coordinator

Don Wilson, Head of Ushers

Susan Durand, Greeters

Gail Soderquist, Website Manager

Fellowship



Mission

I-Help - For the year 2023, FPC hosts approximately 10 women four/five Sundays per month. This includes dinner, showers, a safe place to sleep and a sack lunch for the next day. Based on the yearly report from Lutheran Social Services (July 2022-June 2023) New Guests = 58, Moved into housing = 9, Found Employment = 18, Enrolled in school = 5, Shelter Bed Nights = 4,703. I want to thank our current FPC host volunteers, this program could not continue without your years of dedication! We are always looking for additional FPC host volunteers to provide dinner, which can be store bought or prepared at home and can be reimbursed thanks to generous contributions from members of FPC. The women are so grateful! The approximate time commitment is 2-4 hours Sundays 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. If you are interested in participating, please contact Janet Verch.

Seasonal Ministries – Angel Tree: We sponsored three families this year, all from the Preschool. Additionally, we also gave each family a frozen turkey, food boxes, cleaning items, paper items and gift cards. Everything was delivered on Sunday, December, 17, 2023. A big thanks to everyone who participated.



Special Offerings – Thank you for your continued generosity! One Great Hour of Sharing was \$3,125, Pentecost Offering was \$1,355, Global Peace and Witness Offering was \$1,308, and Christmas Joy Offering was \$1,905.

Mission Trip – In July, 7 church members went to Tseyi Bidaa Presbyterian Church in Del Muerto, Arizona. We partnered with Montlure camp counselors to have Bible school for 10-15 children per day Monday-Friday. We held VBS in the morning and finished each session with a mid-day meal together.





Mesa Presbyterian Ministries (MPM) – Mesa Presbyterian Ministries, started by Bob Gerlach, is a qualified charitable organization with the mission to keep families in their homes. Congregational members Jack and Yvonne Oliver, and Brent Gregory volunteer to call and interview clients who need help paying their rent and utilities. Over 100 families received a total of \$44,890.

Café Justo – We are continuing our partnership with Frontera de Cristo. We try to order coffee each quarter. By buying coffee from them, we are helping the farmers to earn a living wage.



Community Outreach – We began having community events to bring families and neighbors together. Thank you to everyone who has helped to make these events a success! In March, we had a Family Fun Day with games, food, musical groups, and a petting zoo. There were about 200 in attendance.



In October, we had a Fall Festival with games, food, Arizona Rick, the balloon cowboy, a photo booth and trunk or treat. We had about 400 in attendance.



We began monthly community dinners in September on the first Wednesday of the month with an activity to let families enjoy a meal and fellowship with others from the community. We averaged 45 each dinner.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Chesko

Discipleship

Discipleship 2023

We continued 2023's Wednesday WRAP curriculum of "Follow Me, Biblical Practices for Faithful Living" series focused on forgiveness, living in community, loving God, neighbors and enemies, as well as other adult education programs. The Koinonia Women's Bible Study met on Thursday afternoons. Women's Bible Study met on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month in the Parlor, as well as the Men's Fellowship, which met Tuesdays at 7:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall or on Zoom. As February drew to a close, Rev. Paul Soderquist began his own Sunday Morning Adult Lenten Study written by him, titled, "The 'I Am' Sayings of Jesus: 50 Days of Spiritual Exercises – A Guide for Lent."

We took some major steps in community outreach this year, especially with the highly successful Neighborhood Family Fun Day on March 25th, coordinated and organized by Susan Chesko, with games, activities, arts and crafts, snacks, and more! We also held the community Easter Egg Hunt on April 9th.

To close out the educational year, on April 16th, Chris McKee headed the Children's & Youth Sunday Service with his sermon, "Is Seeing Believing?" We wrapped up Wednesday WRAP with an end of the year party at Organ Stop Pizza on April 26th. We also presented Ayden Hickey with his graduation Bible on May 14th.

During the summer, Montlure's Traveling Day Camp was held at Mission Del Sol on June 26th-30th, as well as overnight camps, the Senior High camp on June 20-25, Junior High on June 27-July 1, and Grades 4-6 on July 5-9.

Children & Family Ministries / Youth & Young Adult Committees

With the new school year came many new changes, the first of which was the transition of the commissions into committees. As Chris McKee stepped into his new role as Director of Operations, the Discipleship Commission was broken down into three separate committees. The first of which is the Children & Family Ministries Committee, run by Kyle Harding, who stepped in as the new Elder. The Youth & Young Adult Committee was headed by new Elder Ian Harding. Both of these Committees were run together, with their meetings on the 2nd Sunday of each month in the Youth Room. Finally, the 3rd committee, Adult Education, was headed by Elder Carol Anderson.

One of the biggest changes we made was how we conducted the worship service's Time With Our Children. Inspired by Karelle Reidhoefer stepping up a couple of times, we decided to move it to a more open time where any of our congregants could volunteer to share their wisdom, talents, and stories with the children. Since then, our participants have been Kyle Harding, Anita Ramsey, Lois Hildenbrand, and Kate McMichael, bringing back with her one of Ellen Gillespie's beloved puppets.

We kicked off the new Sunday School year with Children's Ed Sunday on September 10th, where Brielle Reeves and Lucas Mallia were presented with their 3rd grade Bibles, and continued with our curriculum of "Growing in Grace & Gratitude" for Sunday School. We retained much of our current teacher's rotations, with Chris McKee on the 1st Sunday of the month, Stephanie Gerlach and Jeff Seehorn on the 2nd Sunday, Heather McKee on the 3rd, and Kyle Harding and Bonnie Seehorn on the 4th. Though we are still using the weekly rotations, our overall goal is to eventually move to a 2 or 3-month rotation, as long as we can get enough volunteers.

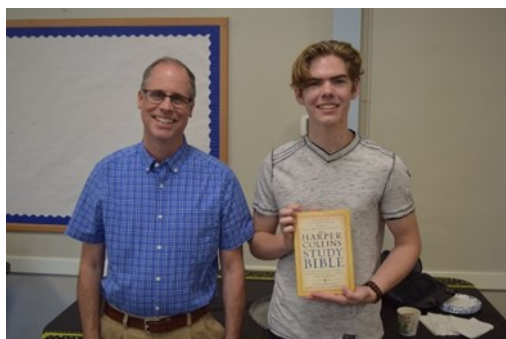
October 28th was the Fall Festival, much like the Neighborhood Family Fun Day (also coordinated and organized by Susan Chesko), where there were games, food, crafts, a balloon animal show, and a Trunk or Treat contest to cap it all off!

As our youth class has all graduated, we have shifted our focus more on the Young Adults group, and have been playing with the idea of transforming them into a generational bridge group, where we can conduct events that bring together both the children and the longer-standing congregants alike. This is more in the works for 2024, but the group was more or less established with a thrilling Mario Kart tournament on November 18th, which saw a turnout of 8 participants! There was food and prizes for the winners!

Finally, to cap the year off, we had a wildly successful Christmas Eve service on December 24th, which was held at 3:00 p.m. in order for people to be able to drive home while there was still daylight and participate in Christmas Eve festivities with their families. Anita Ramsey conducted "Away in a Manger" on bells featuring the children, which received much praise.

Overall, with all the changes, we are hoping to see a more homegrown effort to educate and lead our children through their faith journeys rather than relying on a more centralized approach with just one or two people leading the charge. With the highly-anticipated arrival of our new pastor, Rev. Christian Johnson, we are excited to see what the future has in store for us and will be making new plans *very* soon!

Respectfully Submitted,
Kyle Harding, Elder of Children & Family Ministries



Ayden Hickey Receiving his Graduation Bible – 5/14



Lucas & Brielle Receiving their 3rd Grade Bibles – 9/10



Mario Kart Tournament Winners Ian Harding, Andrew & Aaron Fredericks – 11/18



Trunk or Treat at Fall Fest – 10/28



Christmas Eve Service



Easter Egg Hunt — 4/9



We had many great blessings and a few challenges at the preschool this past year, but God is good and has helped us along the way! We honor the preschool's 36th year with very cherished and fond memories! In January 2023 we had 23 children enrolled. These families were consistent and enjoyed having fun events



like the Mesa Fire Department visit as well as celebrating Valentine's Day with us. We also enjoyed our family Carnival Day and were able to bring in Carter's Petting Zoo and pony ride for the kids. What fun! We started a parenting series with Anita Ramsey and Susan Chesko teaching the parents how to work with their preschoolers and get them ready for kindergarten. The program is growing and the parents really enjoy being together.

Our children were blessed with the weekly preschool chapel with Interim Pastor David Hodgson, Dr. Mark Ramsey (Director of Music Ministry) and Chris McKee (Director of Faith Formation). Each week the children learned about God's great love for them and the importance of sharing that great love with others. They learned many Bible stories and sang beautifully to the music that was shared with them. They just love being in chapel! Thank you to our FPC team for making this a special time for the children and teachers.



We have seen many children come to our school with challenging behaviors, family issues, developmental delays and personal problems that have needed additional support from our Quality First Coach and our Mental Health consultant for early childhood. Their support is immeasurable and helped navigate so many unknowns that we face with these families. With these challenges, one of our teachers left the program, so we were on the search for a new assistant teacher in the PreK classroom. In January 2023 we welcomed Ms. Cece Forbes to work with Ms. Nicki, and they made a great pair to finish out the 2022-2023 school year! There were many challenges of finding a classroom teacher permanently for the 3's classroom, and thus our long-term sub, Chantel Campbell, remained with us through the 2022-2023 school year with Ms. Sara Wheat.

The opening of the 2023-2024 school year in August was so exciting! We had 27 kids on the roster! The three teachers (Nicki McInelly, Sara Wheat & Cece Forbes) were thrilled to start back in August 2023. And we hired two new teachers as well: Ellyn Gilbert for the 3s classroom & Azucena Murillo as a floater teacher. The school year started out strong, and we quickly found our rhythm with the children and routines. It has been a good fit!



In early March 2023 we were awarded a large federal grant from Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) for infrastructure projects valued at \$253,770.87. This grant was made possible through the Federal ARPA COVID funding that was allocated to Arizona from the federal government. Many of the changes that had to be made around the preschool were met with grace and some hiccups along the way! All projects were completed by the end of October 2023. The major projects included remodeling the outside playground bathrooms, shared funding with FPC for the parking lot resurfacing and replacement, removing asbestos in the Jackson Education Building and remodeling the utility work room with new appliances, tile, paint, water heater, plumbing and floor drain and



adding new storage shelves, replacing two HVAC units, removing all old wall paper and repainting the entire school inside and out, upgrading the security of the school with a new security gate entrance, five cameras installed and four new emergency fire doors, new lighting inside the hallways, bathrooms, office and outside signage, new 20-ft tree planted with concrete removal, new classroom cabinets and granite countertops, dumpster rental, storage rental, AED machine, new ice machine, new campus signage and so much more!

We also received the Arizona DES Workforce Grant from the Department of Economic Security for \$133,000, funds that were only allowed to be allocated to Preschool Personnel payroll, training, materials, supplies, classroom resources, books, playground equipment and physical upgrades to the preschool environment. All funds were spent in these areas and reported monthly with the final spending completed in September 2023.

During all of the renovation projects we still managed to earn our highest distinction from the Quality First rating assessment. In May we received a 5-Star rating from First Things First, Quality First – Arizona’s signature Early Childhood program! This achievement came from many hours of training, observations, assessments, coaching, technical assistance and the deep love and compassion from our teachers. A huge shout out goes to the teachers for making their love of children come alive showing the assessors the true heart of our program! This is so well-deserved and an honor to hold this achievement.



With this, I want to celebrate the Preschool Board. We thank all our representatives who serve: Pam Godfrey-Robles (Chair), Anita Ramsey (Secretary), David Frederick (Member at Large) Nicki McInelly, Kyle Harding (Discipleship Elder) & Chris McKee (Staff Member) and two Parent Reps, Bonnie Castillo & RaShawna Downing and outgoing member Susan Chesko. All nine members have been instrumental in helping navigate the challenges that faced the preschool this year. They helped to prioritize the LISC Infrastructure grant budget, as well as the DES Workforce grant budget. It is such a blessing to have this group of individuals who represent the voice of the community and give weight and knowledge to the issues at hand. Thank you!

As we look forward to 2024, we are hopeful that the Lord will continue to bless us by bringing the children of this community to our program. We know that He is present in all that we do here, especially in the hearts of these little children! Lastly, we appreciate all your love and your willingness to continue to make the Preschool a ministry of the church. We recognize that you are an integral part to the success of our program, especially through prayer and with the school supply drive in the summer each year! Thank you!

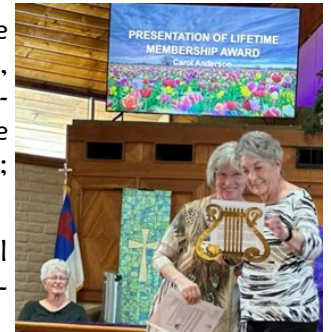
Respectfully submitted,
Shiloh Murillo





FPC Presbyterian Women had an inspirational and productive year. Our hearts are rooted in our monthly Circle meetings, where we discuss business, learn about an important PCUSA mission story, focus on the Horizons Bible study lesson for the month, and most of all, share each others' fellowship, support and joys. From January to May, we enjoyed Carol Bechtal's study, Celebrating Sabbath, Accepting God's Gift of Rest and Delight. Some of us had been privileged to spend time with the author at the previous Synod Fall Gathering, too. The new study we have enjoyed from September to December (and beyond) is Sacred Encounters, The Power and Presence of Jesus Christ in Luke-Acts by Olive Mahabir. Our three Circles, Deborah, Eve and Rachel, meet monthly in the Parlor from September through May. Our Coordinating Team also meets monthly for planning and business concerns.

Our first major event for 2023 was Women's Gifts Sunday in March. We were grateful to welcome Rev. Deanne Hodgson to our pulpit to deliver the message, "Embodied Faith." Worship was inspiring from the music to scriptures and prayers, contributed by many. An important part of this annual service is awarding the Lifetime Membership Award to a church member whose contributions are noted and appreciated; this year's recipient was Sara McWhorter!



We welcomed guests to our Spring Luncheon in May to hear Joan Campbell from the Maricopa County Attorney's Office give the guest message, "Protect Yourself from Fraud and Scams," a relevant and informative presentation.



Perhaps our biggest undertaking of the year was hosting the Presbytery's Fall Gathering, "Mission Possible." Gratitude overflows for all the staff and congregants who helped us welcome about 100 guests and several speakers and workshop leaders to our campus. It was a wonderful event and many visitors commented on the beauty of our campus and sanctuary. PWP's special guest speaker was Peacemaker, Angie Wuysang, who also assisted Pastor David Hodgson in conducting a beautiful worship service, including Communion.

The pre-Thanksgiving Bake Sale, our annual fundraiser, also offered quilts to shoppers and was a profitable venture. FPC PW contributes to nine mission projects, as well as supporting attendance to the Churchwide Gathering every three years. In addition to annual pledge contributions, ladies support two special offerings, Birthday Offering and Thanksgiving Offering, and the PW Fellowship of the Least Coin. Our PW Mission Sewing group have made many quilted projects to be sold or given; a new project replaced the quilting projects for next year called Sew Powerful, which presents personal hygiene items to underprivileged young ladies, while also creating jobs for adult women. Sara McWhorter can share more information, if interested. Thanks to her and Suzi Payton for their dedication.



Our final special event of the year was our Holiday Luncheon which included several guests and great food in our potluck lunch. The program for this joyful occasion was "Busted Broads," ladies who take donated costume jewelry, craft supplies and almost anything else that can be repurposed into gifts for the nongifted, especially those often overlooked by other charity groups. These two ladies have found themselves unable to physically participate in active charities, and have created their own charity that they can conduct in the comfort of their homes making a huge variety of gifts. Guests brought many contributions for their projects.



FPC PW is grateful for all the love we experience through Bible study, mission projects, special events and never-ending fellowship. We welcome all ladies to any Circle any time; watch the Friday Update, worship bulletins and La Palabra for upcoming meetings and events.

Digital Communications and Marketing Volunteer Report

First Presbyterian utilizes various tools to get the word out about the good things that are happening in our church family. This past year a Digital Communications and Marketing Volunteer position was created to help do just that. Some of the ways events and activities have been communicated/marketed include the following: Using online programs to create banners for the Neighborhood Fun Day, the monthly Community Dinners, the Fall Festival, the Christmas Eve service, and the worship time banners facing Mesa Drive. Sandwich board signs were created for the Food Pantry and Clothing Closet, as well as a “welcome” sign to display in front of the sanctuary every Sunday. Other digital communication tools being used on a regular basis to convey important information to our church family and our community include the Weekly Update emails and regular posts to social media such as Facebook and Instagram. Some of the events from the past year have been advertised to the wider Mesa community on these resources as well. Other materials such as special bulletins and flyers have been digitally created and used during the year, and updates were made to the FPC and Preschool website.

Respectfully Submitted,
Gail Soderquist

Director of Music Ministries – part-time position

Job Description – Plan and organize the adult vocal musical ministries of the church which includes selection of music, conducting various adult musical groups and working with the Associate Director of Music Ministries on other music groups. Oversee the children’s music groups/programs. Work with the Pastor on selection of music for worship services.

Requirements:

- Experience in working with musical groups
- Knowledge of church music appropriate for FPC
- Available on Wednesday evening and Sunday morning or as needed

Desired experience/requirements

- Under graduate or graduate degree in music
- Experience in working with or participating in a church music program
- Experience in conducting a choral group
- Available to attend staff meetings

Accountability: Reports to the Pastor/Head of Staff and Personnel Committee

Start Date – March 1, 2024

Salary – based on previous experience

Application process. **Application must be received in the Church Office by February 23, 2024**

Submit a letter of interest and resume to:
Personnel Committee
First Presbyterian Church
161 N. Mesa Drive
Mesa, Arizona 85201



Thank you all very much for the remembrance day and the beautiful quilt. It will be in our family forever and will remind me of all the wonderful times we have shared over the years.

Sandy Clark

Administration

Dave Frederick

PROPERTY

Important organizational changes which affect the Property Committee

- Our Direction of Operations, Chris McKee, replaced Don Krill as the staff member responsible for day-to-day maintenance.
- Session issued temporary approval for the formation of a Board of Trustees. This body reviews property, financial, insurance, and other business topics that arise. A vote to formalize this arrangement will take place at the Congregational meeting.

The property Committee completed several capital improvement projects.

- New roof on Fellowship Hall, Chapel, office, and education wing.
- New air conditioning units installed on education wing roof. This involved a complete replacement of the building electrical service pane, and removing the old storeroom a/c unit.
- New parking lot surface. This included removing the worn blacktop, grading it for proper rain runoff, additional lighting for improved safety, applying blacktop, and parking line striping.
- New landscaper, EZ Landscape, was chosen to provide better service and make repairs to the watering system
- Preschool remodeling. Grant money from the State of Arizona helped fund several projects. Remodeled boys/girls restrooms, paint, new air conditioning units, classroom cabinets, new security classroom doors, additional storage shed.
- A breezeway gate was installed near the office door to improve security and safety.
- Replacement of a malfunctioning exit door in Fellowship hall
- The clothing closet has moved into the old Laubach room
- Defibrillators have been installed in Fellowship Hall, Sanctuary, and Preschool
- Cox fiber optic was installed for Head start
- An arborist trimmed and treated our courtyard pine and trees along Mesa Dr.

We share the campus with several churches and community groups who lease our facilities.

- Ghana Presbyterian worships in the Choir Room
- Iglesia Gran Pastor worships in the Chapel
- Garden City Church worships in the Chapel
- Preschool classes in the Jackson rooms
- Early Head Start in the nursery
- Head Start hold class in the Head Start rooms
- Alcoholics Anonymous is using the Parlor
- Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) holds classes in Fellowship Hall

Items anticipated for next year are

- Cox fiber optic installation to the church.
- Replacement of the security alarm system.
- Fellowship Hall restroom remodel.
- Flood irrigation, berms, repair gate

Dave Frederick, Property Elder

CLERK OF SESSION

Carol Gerlach

The Book of Order defines the duties of the Clerk of Session: . . . a clerk shall record the transactions of the council, keep its rolls of membership and attendance, maintain any required registers, preserve its records and furnish extracts from them when required by another council of the church.

Meetings – we meet in-person in the Library with a Zoom option

- We met 11 times for regular Stated Meetings (no July meeting)
- The Annual Congregational Meeting and Corporation Meeting was held in February
- There were 3 Called Session Meetings
- There were 2 Called Congregational Meetings
- There was 1 Officer/Staff Retreat

Rolls and Registers –

- On January 1 our membership was 240
- We added 1 new (returning) member
- 9 members joined the Church Triumphant
- We removed 38 from our Active Membership Roll
- On December 31 our membership was 194 (122 females)
- We have 6 Affiliate Members
- There were 4 Baptisms
- There was 1 Marriage
- Our Average Weekly Attendance was 89 in-person and 80 online for a total average weekly attendance of 169

STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCE

Brent Gregory

The members of the Finance Committee are Stewardship Elder Brent Gregory, Property Elder Dave Frederick, Clerk of Session Carol Gerlach, Endowment Committee chair Jack Gunter, and at-large members Carolyn Barber, Peter Eisenklam, Bob Gerlach, Jan Montgomery and Jeff Seehorn. Pastor David Hodgson and bookkeeper Rob Kjar also attended meetings. The committee met monthly to review the church's financial reports and has undertaken the following actions in 2023:

- Recommended the 2023 budget to the Session
- Completed a financial review for the year ending 12/31/2022.
- Completed a stewardship campaign with pledges and prepaids totaling \$213,432 for the general fund and \$24,490 for the capital fund.

ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

Brent Gregory

The members of the Endowment Committee are Dave Frederick, Jack Gunter, Renita Jurgensen, Ron Payton, and Todd Ramsey, with Brent Gregory, Stewardship and Finance Elder serving as an ex-officio member. The committee met three times during 2023 and has undertaken the following actions:

- Continued oversight of the Endowment Funds investment with a 2023 beginning balance of \$497,946 and a year-end balance of \$414,285.
- Disbursed \$58,052 for the parking lot project from various endowments.
- Loaned \$90,000 for the parking lot project from the General Endowment.
- Disbursed \$875 for camperships from the Montlure Endowment.
- Continued to interpret the endowment concept to the congregation through the Endowment Funds brochure.

2024 Per Capita Apportionment:

General Assembly:	\$ 9.80
Synod of the Southwest:	5.00
Presbytery of Grand Canyon:	<u>23.71</u>
Total —	\$38.51

Per capita is a set amount of money per member local PC(USA) churches pay each year to support the governing bodies of the larger church. Please consider a contribution toward your share of the per capita apportionment.

Deacons

As always, the work of the Deacons is that of compassion and connection. Deacons have been contacting people on their care list through phone calls, text messages, letters, cards and visits throughout the year. For the first half of 2023, Deacons all participated in a commission, as well as maintaining contact with their flock. Mid-year, there was an organizational change in the church from commissions to committees. Most of the Deacons continued serving on committees. In addition, the Deacons took on the responsibility of the Clothing Closet and the Food Pantry. Cheryl Gregory has been the liaison with both. There have been changes in both. Attached are reports from each. One of the big changes, is that after 30 years of dedicated service to the Food Pantry, Sandy Clark retired. Betty Jean and Karelle Reid-Hoefer are now managing those services. Volunteers are needed and encouraged to serve in this vital mission of serving our community.

Clothes Closet Annual Report

We had a successful year of growth in the Clothes Closet! During the summer, the clothes were moved to a larger room. A big thank you goes out to the church members who were able to help move fixtures, paint and set up the new space. This allowed us to collect more clothing and have space for several shoppers at a time to move around. Our clientele is very appreciative of the upgrades to the closet.

On average we serve 15-20 people each time. Just recently we have noticed new people coming to shop. Word is starting to get around our community!

- We are open the first and third Fridays of each month from 8:00-9:00 a.m. and the first Wednesday 4:30-5:30 p.m.
- Clothing donations are collected on the first and third Sundays of each month. Unfortunately, we don't have room to store out of season clothing. Anything we can't use will be taken to a thrift store or the fabric recycling center.
- Donations should be gently used, clean and free from damage.

The closet is mostly filled by donations of church members and their friends. We are so thankful for having such a loving and caring congregation! If you haven't seen the new closet, we welcome visitors anytime! We also welcome volunteers!

Food Pantry Annual Report

The best word for the food pantry in 2023 was change! After 30 years of faithful service, Sandy Clark retired from the food pantry. Karelle and I have stepped into her position.

Generous church members donated two freezers and a refrigerator so we can offer cold foods. We now get food from Midwest Food Bank. Midwest gives great food but the food needs to go out quickly as we get food very close to "best by dates." We also get random items from Midwest. Our amazing church members also donate staples to our food pantry weekly. Food Pantry needs are posted in FPC Weekly Update. We serve 7-40 shoppers approximately four bags of food biweekly. We are changing that to every Friday 8:00-9:00 a.m. and the first Wednesday at 4:30-5:30 p.m. This required a change in bagging food. We now invite each shopper to come in and pick their items with a volunteer shopper. This has changed the jobs for volunteers. On Fridays we need volunteers to greet shoppers and escort shoppers through the food pantry. Every other Wednesday, we need a driver with a vehicle to pick up items from Midwest and people to help carry and stock the food pantry. If you would like to volunteer, please come by!

We are starting 2024 with even more changes! We are hoping to become a little more earth friendly. We are looking at purchasing reusable grocery bags and special groceries as an incentive to keep bringing the bags back. If you would like to help with this endeavor, we need monetary donations to purchase bags and sweet or salty treats for our incentive shelves. Many changes over the year, but we are doing what the Bible asks in Mathew 25:31-46. Please read complete passage.

³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

³⁷ "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?' ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you?' ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?"

⁴⁰ "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

Faithfully Submitted, Betty Jean Reid

February Birthdays



Peggy Anderson	1st
Will Snitzer	2nd
Jean Chappell	9th
Aaron Chesko	10th
Ginny Mallia	11th
Kate Buck	14th
John Peterson	15th
Bob Schulz	15th
Jack Goings	16th
Sharon Brause	19th
Richard Schroeder	19th
Bryan Hickey	25th
Elly Weinel	26th
Matthew McKee	27th
Linda Free	28th

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.

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

- Christian Johnson: pastor@fpcmesa.org
- Mark Ramsey: music@fpcmesa.org
- Chris McKee: chris@fpcmesa.org
- Linda Reeves: pubs@fpcmesa.org
- Rob Kjar: business@fpcmesa.org
- Shiloh Murillo: preschool@fpcmesa.org

Financial Reports are not published but are available for pick up in the Sanctuary or church office later this month.

Calendar Notes

February

Worship every Sunday at 10:00 a.m.
In person or online

Christian Education:
Children at 11:20 a.m.
Adults at 11:30 a.m.

Food Donations taken every Sunday

Clothing Closet donations taken 1st and 3rd Sunday

February

Men's Fellowship Tuesdays at noon
Fellowship Hall and via ZOOM

February 10

Jo Godfrey Memorial Service

February 12 & 13

Circles meet

February 14

Ash Wednesday

February 17

Church Clean-up Day

February 18

Session meets

February 19

President's Day — Office closed

February 21

Women's Bible Study

February 24

Pat Mills Memorial Service

February 25

Annual Congregational Meeting
Chili Cookoff



IN MEMORIAM

Pat Mills — January 14, 2024

Jo Godfrey — February 1, 2024



SCENES FROM 2023!



Spring Luncheon
Hosted by FPC Presbyterian Women
May 13, 2023
Lunch - 11:30 Program - 12:15
161 N. Mesa Drive Mesa, AZ 85201
Special Presentation
Protect Yourself from Fraud and Scams!
By Joan Campbell, Coordinator of Community Affairs
Maricopa County Attorney's Office
You are invited to bring a salad or dessert to share.
Everyone is welcome!
Reservations by phone, text, or voicemail 480-272-5517
joananderson@gmail.com



montlure TRAVELING DAY CAMP
 JUNE 26-30
 @ MISSION DEL SOL
 9am - 3pm*
 *FRIDAY 9:00-12:30
\$125 USE CODE **FPC2023**
 FOR **\$75 OFF**
 FOR CAMPERS
 ENTERING 1-6TH GRADES
REGISTER NOW
 Montlure.org



You are invited to
Potluck Sunday!
 Following worship
Enjoy great food and a discussion
about Missions
 Bring a dish to share if able



ZACH WILLIAMS
FAITH & FAMILY NIGHT
 AUGUST 25



See you on Sunday!
 10:00 a.m.
 in the
Sanctuary & Livestreaming
All are welcome!
 fpcmesa.org



HOLIDAY LUNCHEON
 First Presbyterian Church 161 N. Mesa Dr., Mesa
 featuring the
Busted Broads
 new life for old jewelry

Presbyterian Women Invite You
 Saturday, December 9, 2023
 Fellowship Hall
 11:00 Meet & Greet
 11:30 Lunch Served
 12:15 Program

Bring: *a salad or dessert to share
 **Please let us know who will come by December 4.
 ***zachwilliams@fpcmesa.org or text/VW to (480) 272-5517



Pre-School
 LEARN
 LOVE
 LIVE



Celebrate with us!
CHRISTMAS EVE
3:00 PM
CHOIRS CANDLELIGHT
COMMUNION & BELLS

First Presbyterian Church
161 N. Mesa Drive
Mesa, AZ 85201

LA PALABRA

A publication for members and friends, published monthly.

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Website: www.fpcmesa.org

**Office Hours: Monday - Thursday 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Closed Friday**

**Christian Johnson, Pastor
Mark Ramsey, Director of Music Ministries
Chris McKee, Director of Operations
Linda Reeves, Office Manager/Publications
Shiloh Murillo, Preschool Director
Rob Kjar, Bookkeeper**