

La Palabra

January 2021

www.fpcmesa.org

480-964-8606

A Message from Ann

As we look towards the beginning of a New Year, I think we all are hoping for more peace and joy in our world and in our lives. This begins, as we know, with what Jesus called the greatest commandment: loving God and loving others. Jesus IS God's love incarnate ~ in the flesh ~ and we are called to spread that love (faster and farther than the spread of the corona virus in 2020!). God has chosen to show forth God's love and light that was made known to the world in Jesus Christ through those who love and follow Christ. This is our calling as the Church, as the gathered people of God. Let us do so with joy and exuberance in 2021!

As we gather for worship on December 27th, we will hear from some members of our congregation what Christ's birth means to them. If you would also like to share briefly about what Christmas, God coming into the world in Christ, means to you, you will be invited to do so during worship that morning.

The new year then begins with Epiphany which means "manifestation" or "appearance." For our Christian faith, epiphany refers to God appearing in flesh in Jesus and, over the years, has become connected with the visit from the Magi. The feast of Epiphany (January 6th) also marks the close of the season of Christmas, the Twelve Days of Christmas.

To begin the year, we will have a guest preacher on Sunday, January 3rd. I met and heard Dr. Matthew Whitaker speak at a Presbytery-sponsored event at Chandler Presbyterian Church on the topic of racism, an ongoing reality that has resurfaced and been brought to our attention this past year in multiple ways. Dr. Whitaker founded the Arizona State University Center for the Study of Race and Democracy where he was a professor of history for 15 years. He co-founded the Healing Racism Dialogue Series and has written extensively on this topic. Dr. Whitaker will be preaching on leadership in difficult times, and I look forward to leading worship with him and hope to have him return to FPC Mesa when he can lead a class for us on the topic of racism.

I wish you all the many, many blessings of God throughout the season of Christmas and in the coming year. Know that you are loved deeply by our good and gracious God!

Grace & peace in Christ our Lord ~ Ann

P.S. In addition to the Drive-In Christmas Eve service at 5:00 p.m., we will also have an online Christmas Eve worship service that will "premiere" at 8:30 p.m. and feature organ music, traditional carols, and communion.

INDEX

<i>A Message from Ann</i>	1
<i>Mark's Remarks (Worship)</i>	2
<i>Presbyterian Women</i>	3
<i>Discipleship</i>	4
<i>Mission</i>	5
<i>January Birthdays</i>	6
<i>Calendar Notes</i>	6
<i>Address Changes</i>	6

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

Happy New Year! Our great Visser-Rowland organ was installed in 1991, and this year we mark the beginning of its 30th season. If you'd like to learn more about the organ, Daniel Burton's *Rex: The King of the Instruments*, performed on our mighty Visser, is posted at <https://vimeo.com/478311458>. Using a narrator and live music, the piece describes the majesty and mystery of the organ and its music.

Our FPC Artist Series will present the Fabulous Blackwood Quartet during worship on Sunday, February 14th, at 10:00 a.m. The Quartet has the distinction of being the best-known name in Gospel Music history! Join us online and in-person on February 14th as the Fabulous Blackwood Quartet leads us in worship!



BLACKWOOD BROTHERS

IN CONCERT

Sunday Morning Worship
First Presbyterian Church
Mesa, AZ

February 14, 2021
10AM

P.O. Box 280932 Memphis Tennessee 38168 • 1-800-476-7749 • www.blackwoodbrothers.com

Coming Events

- 2/14 Worship led by The Blackwood Quartet, 10:00 a.m.
- 2/17 Ash Wednesday
- 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

The old Scot calls his son in London the day before Christmas Eve and says, "I hate to ruin your day, but I have to tell you that your mother and I are divorcing; forty-five years of misery is enough." "Dad, what are you talking about?" the son gasps. "We can't stand the sight of each other any longer," the father says. "We're sick of each other, and I'm sick of talking about this, so you call your sister in Leeds and tell her." In panic the son calls his sister, who explodes on the phone. "Over my dead body they're getting divorced!" she shouts. "I'll take care of this!" She calls Scotland immediately, and admonishes her father. "You are NOT getting divorced," she says. "Don't do a single thing until I get there. I'm calling my brother back, and we'll both be there tomorrow. Until then, don't do a thing, DO YOU HEAR ME?" and hangs up. The old man hangs up his phone and turns to his wife. "Sorted! They're coming for Christmas – and they're paying their own way."



We invite you to enjoy our offering of books we have placed in a basket in the church office. Selections are from the Grand Canyon PW Reading List, 2020-2021. We only ask that you sign them out on the cards provided and return in a timely manner for others to enjoy.

Our Circles continue to meet in a variety of ways (at church, in homes, or by Zoom), and we welcome new members. We invite you to join our Bible Study and mission by attending one of the gatherings on the second Monday or Tuesday of the month. You may contact Sara at 480-844-8174 if you are interested.

In January's lesson, author P. Lynn Miller guides us in the Lament of Life through the eyes of Job and his friend, Eliphaz. We then explore how we may practice this lament in our daily lives and how we can "rephrase" our personal list of burdens to fully live the abundant life God offers us.

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

January Faith Formation Happenings

Christmas Pageant Thank you! On Sunday, December 13th, twelve children and youth participated with recording our Online Christmas Pageant "O Zoom All Ye Faithful." Thank you to our young people who had a part, along with the parents and other adults who made it happen. Please join us at our Drive-In Christmas Eve Service for the premiere of the Zoom Pageant on **December 24th at 5:00 p.m.** The pageant will be replayed during the 8:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Online worship.

Montlure Traveling Day Camp Summer 2021 Tentative Dates. Families with children completing K-5th grades: Mark your calendars now and **SAVE THESE DATES!** JUNE 21-25, 2021. FPC Mesa is planning to host and partnering with other East Valley Presbyterian congregations to bring Montlure to the Valley! Please understand these dates are dependent upon the stabilization of the pandemic. Watch the bulletins and La Palabra for more information and registration information as it becomes available.



Montlure Overnight Camp Tentative Dates Summer 2021:

Senior High: June 6-11

Junior High: June 13-18

Juniors: (grades 4-6) July 5-9

Please understand these dates are dependent upon the stabilization of the pandemic. Stay tune for further details.



Souper Bowl of Caring Collection. Our youth will be collecting funds for the Souper Bowl of Caring on Sunday February 7, 2021 following worship.

Weekly Youth Gatherings. Our junior high and high school teens gather most Sundays at 11:15 a.m. in the youth room. Our Sunday Youth Gathering is a time to check in with new and old friends, play fun games, God talk and prayer.



God Bless & Happy New Year!

Chris McKee

Minister of Faith Formation

chris@fpcmesa.org



Happy New Year from our little Preschool! We hope that you and your family were able to celebrate the grace of our Lord's birth together. It has been a beautiful time for year to share our joy with you and the families of the preschool. We were able to bring Mrs. Claus in to read the story of Jesus' birth to the children during our chapel time. The kids really enjoyed that!

Since the weather has been so fabulous, we have been very engaged in imaginative play outside! This month we will learn about Transportation, Community Helpers, the Ocean, and the Farm. We usually welcome visits from Mesa Police Department and Mesa Fire Department in January, but we have to skip this year because of COVID. We will still have a busy month!

We want to thank all of the families for their sweet gifts that helped to make the teachers feel special. We feel blessed to have such a wonderful community here at First Presbyterian Church. We love being with all of you! Happy New Year!

Sincerely,
Shiloh Murillo, Director

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

Christmas Angel Tree – Thank you for your generosity with gifts for these families. Packages were picked up by the families on December 20th. The generosity of this church never ceases to amaze me!

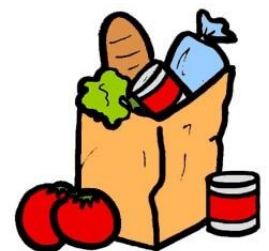


SPECIAL OFFERINGS

Christmas Joy Offering – Thank you so much for your support of the leaders and church workers of the past, present and for the leaders of the future!

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



January Birthdays



Stephanie Gerlach	1st
Ryan Posthumus	2nd
Miron Webster	7th
Joan Still-Woods	8th
Nate Robinson	9th
Kelly Woods	10th
Lois Boese	13th
Susan Logan	14th
Stan Snitzer	15th
Jan Montgomery	16th
Glenn Bennett	17th
Agwu Njoku	17th
Helen Letizia	18th
Sara McWhorter	18th
Bill Anderson	21st
Alice Schlak	21st
Shelley Cronenberg	23rd
Bea Towe	23rd
Ashlyn Newbry	25th
Gwendolyn Sitzler	27th
David Jurgensen	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.

Calendar Notes

January

Worship every Sunday at 10:00 a.m.
In person or online
Youth meet at 11:15 a.m.
Youth Room

January 1

Happy New Year!

January 5

PW Coordinating Team

January 6 & 20

Women's Bible Study
Fellowship Hall

January 11 & 12

Circles meet
In person or Zoom

January 17

Session meets
Zoom

January 31

Monthly Food Drive

Please join us to Celebrate the Joy of Christmas with our **Drive-In Christmas Eve worship service at 5:00 p.m. December 24th.** Here are some helpful reminders:

- Parking begins at 4:30; Worship begins at 5:00
- Tune in on your FM radio for the service
- Worship and sing Christmas Carols from the safety of your vehicle along with our Praise Band
- Enjoy a recorded children's Christmas pageant "O, Zoom All Ye Faithful" projected onto the large screen
- Parking attendants will direct you to one entrance from 2nd street and multiple exits
- Offering boxes will be available upon entrance and exit
- All are encouraged to remain in their vehicles
- Communion elements, children's activity packets, and candle shaped glow sticks for the singing of Silent Night will be distributed upon arrival!

We will also have an online Christmas Eve worship service that will "premiere" at 8:30 p.m. on December 24th and feature organ music, traditional carols, and communion.

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

LA PALABRA

A publication for members and friends, published monthly.

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Mesa, AZ 85201
Phone: 480-964-8606**

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Website: www.fpcmesa.org

**Office Hours: Monday - Thursday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Friday 8:30 - 12:00 noon**

**Ann Conklin, Pastor
Mark Ramsey, Director of Music Ministries
Chris McKee, Minister of Faith Formation
Linda Reeves, Office Manager/Publications
Shiloh Murillo, Preschool Director
Don Krill, Buildings Supervisor
Rob Kjar, Bookkeeper
James R. Bruening, Pastor Emeritus**