

La Palabra

January 2022

www.fpcmesa.org

480-964-8606

A Message from Ann

I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. (Isaiah 43:19)

Trusting in God can be hard, especially during times of change. I take heart in knowing that God is always creating and continually making all things new! At this time of year, the image of birthing pangs is poignant. It's easier to imagine birthing pangs for someone else (Mary!) than it is for ourselves. However, I think we will all experience some pain as God births something new in my life and ministry and in the life of First Presbyterian Church of Mesa.

It has truly been an honor and privilege to serve among you. I have learned a great deal in my time with you and grown in many ways I didn't anticipate. I hope you feel the same. God brought us together for a season, and it has surely been a season to be remembered and treasured. As I wrote in my letter to you, we have done some very meaningful ministry together! We have served the underserved and brought hope and love to many in our midst. We have spread the good news of great joy for all people that was born for all the world at Christmas. I am confident that you will continue in your ministry for many years to come!

As I prepare to depart and answer God's call to serve another congregation, I truly hope you know how much I love you. I believe that I have been faithful to my call to love you deeply and well. I appreciate your support and prayers during this time of transition. Please know that I will be praying for you as you enter into God's good future from a place of strength and resiliency. Know that God has already gone before you to prepare the way, and also that God goes with you to support and encourage you on your journey.

In the words of A.A Milne and Winnie the Pooh: "How blessed I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard."

I will leave you with this beautiful blessing:

"May the road rise up to meet you, may the wind be ever at your back. May the sun shine warm upon your face and the rain fall softly on your fields. And until we meet again, may God hold you in the hollow of his hand." – Irish Blessing

You will remain forever in my heart.

~ 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) — Cheryl Gregory
Worship (D) – Sheilah Dye

Mark's Remarks

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

**"Next to the Word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world.
It controls our thoughts, minds, hearts, and spirits." - Martin Luther**

Happy New Year! It will be a bitter sweet start to 2022, as we say goodbye to Pastor Ann and the Conklin family. It has been a blessing to work with Ann, to share her friendship, and to be guided by her ministry. The Good Lord works beautifully through Ann, and I know that her new congregation will be blessed indeed. *Soli Deo gloria!* Thank you, Ann, for your superb leadership, particularly through the challenging waters of the pandemic and into the fresh new challenges of online ministry. You didn't want to be on camera, Ann, but we wouldn't know that now!!

Thank you to those who enjoyed the Dei Gloriam performances at the Desert Botanical Garden *Las Noches De Las Luminarias* and during their extended prelude on Christmas Eve. It was wonderful to be playing again and to have many of our choirs participate in our "Celebrate the Day" Music Sunday!

Bookplates are still being offered for our Glory to God hymnals and may be given in honor or memory of a loved one. Donation information is included on the bookplate forms, which are available on the Sanctuary tables and may be downloaded [here](#) or completed [online!](#)

Our FPC Artist Series will present the Fabulous Blackwood Quartet during worship on Sunday, February 13th, 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 13th as the Fabulous Blackwood Quartet leads us in worship!

Barb Walker, Bea Towe, and I will present a couple of SIX-HAND piano pieces for the January 29th meeting of our combined Presbyteries (at FPC). If you will be unable to attend, the music will be repeated during our morning worship service on Sunday, January 30th!

Coming Events

- 1/2/2021 Reception for Pastor Ann, 11:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall
- 2/13/2022 Worship led by The Blackwood Quartet, 10:00 a.m.
- 2/27/2022 Celebrating Black History Month with Special Music from Gospel Artists Derek Rushing, Piano and Audrey Rushing, Soprano, 10:00 a.m.
- 4/9/2022 & Palm Sunday 4/10/2022 - 75th Anniversary Celebrations of FPC!

Humoresque

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

One more caroling session has passed with the sopranos getting all the glory. As though to hit high C were singing! It's always like this, however. The soprano, without lifting a finger or (frequently) singing on key, is worshipped by an ignorant public. The alto - the stable, reliable, on-pitch alto - invariably is ignored. Perhaps this happens because the basic listener can always hear those sopranos wailing around in the upper octaves. People know they're singing and not just faking it with the lips. Altos tend to blend in. They are the drudges of the chorus. Getting the leftover notes of the scale, picking them out of what's left from the mangle the sopranos are making of the G clef. Altos don't even get full sentences to sing. Rarely a grammatical phrase. Mostly it's nonsensical filler, "My tree ummmm, what ahhhh to go" or the occasional mystic syllable. Sopranos sing the highest part, which is, of course, the easiest. After all, they can hear themselves above the rest. Their part is always printed on the top; not for them the laborious task of finding a note in the middle

of four other ones on the score. Anyway, sopranos almost always get the melody. As for the others in the chorus...well, the bass is just the soprano in reverse. He's so low it becomes immaterial whether he's on key or not. And, faith, who could ever criticize that fine ol' tenor? You can't lend money to a soprano, either. She's flighty and she'll never pay it back. A tenor will pay back a loan by taking you out for drinks. A bass will repay you and make it sound like he's doing you a favor. Altos never borrow money. They arrive on time for rehearsal. They have always studied their music in advance. They don't fuss about seating. Sopranos don't see the point to all that. They're temperamental. When they cause a scene, the world stops. If an alto causes a scene, everyone thinks she's kidding. You can't criticize a soprano, however. Tenors think they're soul mates (something about singing up where the angels are), and basses worship sopranos - from afar. Sopranos sing solos. Altos sing lead-ins. The most praise an alto hears is "Oh, what a lovely duet you and that soprano sang. "Does anyone ever ask an alto if she's had voice lessons? Most non-altos think being an alto is like having a lisp or growing too tall. Some people even think you are doing it on purpose and if you'd only try, you could sound as nice as that soprano. For your mother, it's a failure second only to not having you married yet. Oh, I can sing in the soprano range all right, but I won't - I have too many principles. So, during the holidays, we were singing carols at work. Along came the typical soprano. She trilled her way in, hummed most of the words and invented her version of the tunes. An octave lower, on pitch, I sang out each word, pure and clear. At the end, the others said to me, "How nice you know all the words. But what a voice that Mary has!" "The off-key creep couldn't hold a note in a catcher's mitt," I almost said. But instead, I did what altos always do: I smiled, harmoniously.

MISSION

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

Mission (D) — Sue Eisenklam
Mission (D) — Robert Harding
Seasonal Ministries (D) — Dale Gibson
Youth Elder — Aaron Chesko



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!

Christmas Angel Tree - We helped three families this year have a very Merry Christmas. Gifts were delivered on Sunday, December 19th. Thank you so much for your generosity.



DISCIPLESHIP

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

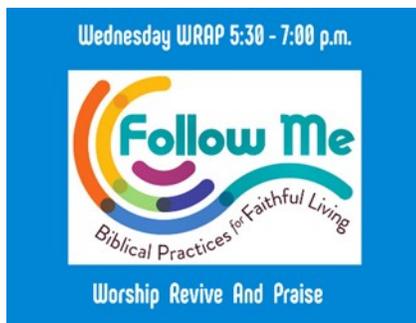
Children's Ministries (E) — Susan Chesko
Family Ministries (E) — Kristen Hull

Youth/Young Adult (E) — Kyle Harding

January Faith Formation Happenings

No Sunday School on January 2, 2022

There will be no children, youth and adult Sunday school on January 2nd since we will be celebrating Rev. Ann's ministry at First Presbyterian Church Mesa. Come join us in Fellowship Hall to wish Ann and Peter well.



Wednesday WRAP

To spiritually recharge yourself into the new year, consider joining Wednesday WRAP. WRAP is dinner, worship and Bible study for children, youth and adults. Our curriculum is "Follow Me, Biblical Practices for Faithful Living." These are practices Jesus did and taught. Our next unit is on Baptism and starts on **Wednesday, January 5th, at 5:30 p.m.** in Fellowship Hall. Simply sign-up at the door and enjoy an evening of worship, revive and praise.

Souper Bowl of Caring Collection

Our youth will be collecting funds for the Souper Bowl of Caring on Sunday, February 13, 2022, following worship. The Souper Bowl of Caring is a nationwide movement which empowers youth and unites communities of faith to tackle hunger. The funds collected will help those within the East Valley.



Weekly Youth Gatherings

Our junior high and high school teens gather most Sundays at 11:20 a.m. in the youth room. Our Sunday Youth Gathering is a time to check in with new and old friends, God talk and prayer. There will be no Sunday School on January 2nd because of the reception we are having for Rev. Ann.

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 of year to share our joy with you and the families of the preschool. We want to thank all of the families for their sweet gifts that helped to make the teachers feel special. 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!

This month we will be learning about Transportation, Community Helpers, the Ocean, and the Farm. We will be welcoming Officer Camberg into the classroom to talk about bike safety and showing us her uniform gear. We will also be welcoming the Mesa Fire Department as they bring their fire truck for the kids to explore, too. The kids love having visitors that teach them about new and different things. What a busy month!

We feel blessed to have such a wonderful community here at First Presbyterian Church. We love being with all of you! Happy New Year!

Shiloh Murillo, Director





New Year, new Hope, and the new beginnings are blessings God gives us every day: we are so very blessed! Our bake sale was the best ever thanks to those who baked and donated their creations, thanks to those who purchased the delectable offerings (often with a “keep the change” donation), and thanks to those who gave of their time to work and make the sale possible. The proceeds will support missions and gifts in our church and beyond. Items not sold were donated to I-Help and much appreciated by the ladies.

In early December, we kicked off the Holiday Season with a delightful luncheon and another luscious table full of food which we thoroughly enjoyed. We collected clothing and donations for the FPC Clothes Closet, sang Christmas Carols and enjoyed the premier presentation of The Stockings Danced. Thank you to Joyce, Mark, Barbara, Renita, Carol and Susan for your special talents and time. The “Fashion Show” was a hoot with surprise dancers Chelsea, Maggie and Jeff! The Clothing Closet needs men’s belts and can use cash donations for things like socks, underwire and diapers.

Circles continue to study the greatest story ever told, the story of salvation, through the women in Jesus’ family line. As Meryl Blair, the author writes: in lesson five, Ruth and Naomi, who started out empty and bereft, are filled and redeemed through the honesty and care they show one another. The foreign daughter-in-law is praised for her faithfulness, and Ruth is shown to be the main reason King David’s family line can continue. We are guided to search for the truth in people’s character, rather than seeing them for their financial status, immigrant status, sex, or race. God not only protects the “least of these” but works through them to enable the story of our salvation to continue.

Circle meetings are held once a month at the church and generally last 1-1/2 to 2 hours. Some circles include eating together in their gatherings. Circle members discuss missions and plan their annual events, those being Women’s Sunday, two luncheons and the Bake Sale. We welcome new and old members alike to join us in our purpose. The purpose of Presbyterian Women: Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves; to nurture our faith through Bible study; to support the mission of the church worldwide; to work for justice and peace; and to build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (USA) and witnesses to God’s kingdom.



Huge, Enormous, Giant THANKS to our Super Fabulous Church Family for supporting your PW’s Bake Sale with baked goods, cash donations, and purchases (which we hope you enjoyed). You are all SO AWESOME! May God bless you each and every one.

January Birthdays



Stephanie Gerlach	1st
Ryan Posthumus	2nd
Miron Webster	7th
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

January 2

Ann and Peter's last Sunday
Goodbye gathering in Fellowship Hall

January 3

Deacons meet

January 5, 12, 19, 26

Men's Fellowship

January 5 & 19

Women's Bible Study

January 10 & 11

Circles meet

January 16

Session meets

January 29

Combined Presbytery Meeting

January 30

Monthly Food Drive

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

Mark Ramsey: music@fpcmesa.org

Chris McKee: chris@fpcmesa.org

Linda Reeves: pubs@fpcmesa.org

Don Krill: buildings@fpcmesa.org

Rob Kjar: business@fpcmesa.org

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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**