

# La Palabra

January 2024

www.fpcmesa.org

480-964-8606

## A Message from Brooks Newbry



This is certainly a month of change! We say goodbye to David with our heart-felt “thank you” and send him, with our continued prayers, to the next adventure God has in store for him. And then we welcome Christian and Kristen with boundless joy, excitement, and anticipation! We know that God has great things in store for FPC, working through them and all of us.

The PNC shared some of the excitement we felt when we introduced Christian and Kristen to the congregation in early December. When we started our search, we had no idea where it would take us.

So, when it led us to Christian, we didn’t realize we were done. But God persisted, and it became clear to us that “this is the one.”

The Mission Study revealed things that are most important to our community of faith. We want to build on those things that are FPC’s legacy and heritage. Even more importantly, we want to engage with our community. We want to reach out to our neighbors. We welcome all ages, of course, but we are sorely underrepresented in the younger age groups. We want to reach out to young families and to young adults to make them feel welcome and to offer them a church home.

Christian spent his formative adult years working with young people. He has created community outreach events that have touched large parts of the communities he has served. He is as excited as we are about reaching out to our community!

As Christian has phrased it, community outreach is about “winning the right to be heard.” Now we are challenged to come together, in the unity of faith, and enthusiastically support Christian as he helps us all discern what is next for FPC. We will need to look outward, inward, to the past and to the future.

Change is happening and it is exciting!

Blessings,  
Brooks Newbry

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## From the Clerk's Desk

News from the **DECEMBER** Session meeting.

### Clerk's Statistics for November

- No weddings, births or baptisms
- Dr. Glenn Bennett died on November 19th. His memorial service will be Saturday, January 13, at 1:00 p.m., Pastor David officiating
- Membership 234
- Avg. Attendance 84 in-person & 71 online = 155



*Carol Gerlach, Clerk*

### Committee Motions

Finance	The November Financial Reports were approved by Session
Personnel	Session approved two updated music job descriptions to the Personnel Handbook

### Other Motions

Session set January 7th as Pastor David's last Sunday and January 21st as Pastor Johnson's first Sunday
Session approved February 26th for the Annual Meeting/Chili Cookoff
Session approved removing 38 inactive members from our rolls. All of these people were contacted by phone and/or email. Some responded it was OK to remove their name, some could not be located or they had moved out of our area and some did not respond at all. We were advised that Affiliate Member Tom Enck died on August 1st.

### Other Business

A letter from presbytery saying <b>PER CAPITA for 2024</b> is \$38.51 (unchanged from 2023). \$23.71 for GC Presbytery, \$5.00 for the Synod of the SW and \$9.80 for the GA. Our amount, based on our 12/31/22 membership of 240, is \$9,242.40 and is due on January 1, 2024.
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### Monthly Potluck



### Fellowship

Everyone is invited to a potluck lunch after worship on January 28th! Please bring a dish to share. A good time will be had by all!

## Worship

While the holiday season may be over, hopefully the spirit remains with you and yours! Our Advent and Christmas Eve worship experiences were enhanced by beautiful greenery and decorations that wouldn't have been possible without everyone who helped out during our first ever "All Church Clean & Greens Day." And with the addition of poinsettias before Christmas Eve, beautiful became spectacular! Thank you to everyone whose planning, decorating and participation made this a memorable season celebrating the anticipation and birth of Jesus. It all culminated in a Christmas Eve service that many have described as "The most exciting and meaningful worship service I've attended in years!" What better way could we have offered up our praise and thanks to our Lord! In His name and to His glory, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



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## Mission

The next community dinner will be on Wednesday, February 7th, at 5:30 p.m. Spaghetti will be served.

Mark your calendars! The spring festival is Saturday, March 16th, from 4:00-7:00 p.m. in the church parking lot. If you have never been to one yet, you will be amazed! It is a great event to bring our church family together with the community. If you would like to help with the planning, let Susan Chesko know.

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## Discipleship

**Sunday School Opportunities:** Children meet at 11:20 a.m. in Jackson B; Adults meet at 11:30 a.m. in the Library to discuss the sermon topic.



**The January Series**, by Calvin University, will again be simulcast weekdays from January 15th through February 2nd at 10:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. This award-winning series is one of the leading lecture and cultural arts series in the country. They have been in operation for 38 years to provide a free liberal arts education for 15 weekdays in January.

Come every day or select the lectures that interest you. Schedules are available in the church office.

The highlight of December for FPC PW was our holiday luncheon on December 9th. We continued to welcome in the season of Advent with fellowship, food and faith. The ladies decorated beautifully, tagging on to existing beautiful decorations! Our salad and dessert (and more) potluck is always a perfect selection of everyone's favorites. We welcomed guests from Mission del Sol, Church of the Master, and a variety of friends and relatives. Most of all, we are so grateful when our sisters (and brothers) in Christ from the congregation join us, too.



Our special program was shared by two new friends who call their charity Busted Broads; their physical limitations have led them to alternate mission works. They accept donations of almost any discarded but adaptable materials which they transform into gifts for the typically "ungifted," overlooked, non-children, underserved individuals or for children who need distractions with craft projects in situations that might be stressful for them. We may continue to collect items that would be useful to them. It is a worthy and blessed charity. They also left gifts for our I-HELP ladies.

We continue our Bible study of Luke-Acts; our January lesson is "A Person with Leprosy Encounters Jesus." The current November/December issue of Horizons magazine will be of interest to many of our congregation. The focus of this issue is the USA Mission Experience, 18 Presbyterian women from multiple synods, who traveled in Mexico and Arizona to learn about life in the borderlands. Articles are included throughout the issue which were contributed by some of our friends: Christine Casanova, our synod representative, Dodie Weiland, our PWP moderator and synod representative, and Carolyn McBurney, a representative of Rocky Mountain Synod and our previous presbytery office manager. The articles are not only interesting but also very informative about the humanitarian aspect of borderland issues. Rev. Mark Adams, U.S. Coordinator of Frontera de Cristo, also has an in-depth article about the history and current status of mission work on the border. Anyone who would like to explore this publication can ask any PW friend, and we will get one to you!

#### January Circles:

- Eve – January 8, 4:00 p.m. in the Parlor
- Deborah – January 9, 9:30 a.m. in the Parlor
- Rachel -January 9, 1:00 p.m. in the Parlor



I wonder if it is just me or is everyone feeling a little bit run over by what feels like a tornado (figuratively) peeling through our FPC neighborhood? The Christmas season came and went so fast this year! With that feeling still lingering, I just wanted to slow down and take a minute to say "Thank you." I realize that life can feel really frantic and overwhelming at times. For me that is what 2023 felt like because of all the amazing things we were able to accomplish in such a short time. I thank you for being a big supporter of those changes for the preschool, and I thank you for believing in me to lead the charge. Sometimes God has amazing things in store for us that seem so impossible to fathom on our own. That was how I felt when I realized just how truly enormous those changes for the preschool were going to be. But God's wisdom far surpasses my own understanding, and He made straight the path for these things to come to fruition.

I know that it was not possible without the help and support of all of you at First Presbyterian Church. I believe that God stretched each one of us to reach outside of our comfort zone and grow in our faith in Him for these things. I appreciate each one of your prayers and encouragement that I know God planted in you to share during this past year. These two simple words: Thank You, are not adequate to fill the depth of my gratitude, but it is my way of expressing my sincere appreciation for your love and support this year.

I pray that God will continue to bring us together as a congregation of faith to walk in His will for our preschool and the church as we welcome our new pastor and family here. I know that God is continually moving FPC in a positive direction of renewed hope for the future.

Thank you!  
Shiloh Murillo, Director

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### *Just for Laughs*

A man was riding his Harley along a beach when suddenly the sky clouded above his head and, in a booming voice, the Lord said, "Because you have tried to be faithful to me in all ways, I will grant you one wish." The biker pulled over and said, "Build a bridge to Hawaii so I can ride over anytime I want." The Lord said, "Your request is materialistic. Think of the enormous challenges for that kind of undertaking, the supports required to reach the bottom of the Pacific, and the concrete and steel it would take! It will nearly exhaust several natural resources. I can do it, but it is hard for me to justify your desire for worldly things. Take a little more time and think of something that could possibly help mankind." The biker thought about it for a long time. Finally, he said, "Lord, I wish that I and all men could understand women; I want to know how she feels inside, what she's thinking when she gives me the silent treatment, why she cries, what she means when she says nothing's wrong, and how I can make a woman truly happy." The Lord replied, "You want two lanes or four on that bridge?"

# January Birthdays



<i>Stephanie Gerlach</i>	<i>1st</i>
<i>Ryan Posthumus</i>	<i>2nd</i>
<i>Miron Webster</i>	<i>7th</i>
<i>Lois Boese</i>	<i>13th</i>
<i>Susan Logan</i>	<i>14th</i>
<i>Stan Snitzer</i>	<i>15th</i>
<i>Jan Montgomery</i>	<i>16th</i>
<i>Agwu Njoku</i>	<i>17th</i>
<i>Sara McWhorter</i>	<i>18th</i>
<i>Bill Anderson</i>	<i>21st</i>
<i>Alice Schlak</i>	<i>21st</i>
<i>Shelley Cronenberg</i>	<i>23rd</i>
<i>Bea Towe</i>	<i>23rd</i>
<i>Ashlyn Newbry</i>	<i>25th</i>
<i>David Jurgensen</i>	<i>29th</i>

**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.



## IN MEMORIAM

Glenn Bennett — November 19, 2023  
 Paul Harding — December 8, 2023  
 Fernande Anderson — December 29, 2023



## Calendar Notes

### January

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

Christian Education at 11:20 a.m.

Food Donations taken every Sunday

Clothing Closet donations taken first Sunday

### January 8 & 9

Circles meet

### January 14

Sandra Clark Recognition

### January 15—February 2

The January Series (in Fellowship Hall & online)

### January 17

Women's Bible Study

### January 28

Potluck Sunday

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

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



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

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**First Presbyterian Church**  
**161 North Mesa Drive**  
**Mesa, AZ 85201**

**Phone: 480-964-8606**

**E-mail: [pubs@fpcmesa.org](mailto:pubs@fpcmesa.org)**

**Website: [www.fpcmesa.org](http://www.fpcmesa.org)**

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

**Christian Johnson, Pastor (January 15, 2024)**  
**Mark Ramsey, Director of Music Ministries**  
**Chris McKee, Director of Operations**  
**Linda Reeves, Office Manager/Publications**  
**Shiloh Murillo, Preschool Director**  
**Rob Kjar, Bookkeeper**