

# La Palabra — 2020 Annual Report Edition

February 2021

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

480-964-8606

## Annual Report for First Presbyterian Church of Mesa Rev. Ann Conklin

*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. (Psalm 46:1)*

2020 was certainly a year to lean in to one of my favorite Scripture passages above from Psalm 46. Indeed, the whole Psalm is very relevant to our current situation, and I give thanks for the steadfast nature of God's Word and God's love.

This past year brought challenges for all of us: as individuals, as a congregation, as a community, and as a country. God has been with us through every decision, meeting, and gathering. I am grateful for God's guidance and trust God will see us through to the other side of this pandemic.

I was at Austin Seminary in Austin, Texas, when the pandemic became a reality for us and its far-reaching effects began to impact our congregation. During phone and text conversations with Elders and staff, we pondered the possibility of postponing and even canceling programs. As I sat on the plane to return to Mesa on a Thursday afternoon, I hit "send" on an email to our Clerk of Session calling for a special session meeting that Saturday.

Your faithful and wise Elders gathered in Fellowship Hall so we could remain physically distanced (this new term we were learning about and to which we were just beginning to accommodate) as we shared what we had learned and knew about this novel virus and global pandemic. Together, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we cautiously and regretfully determined that we needed to cancel worship the following day in order to do our best to protect the safety and health of our vulnerable congregation. It was also consistent with what we were seeing around the country and being advised by our Presbytery and denominational leaders. At the time, we thought this would extend through the month of March! How very much we had to learn in the coming days, weeks, and months!

That's exactly what I spent the majority of my time doing for the next several weeks – learning. I poured over the CARES Act and learned everything I could about the PPP (Paycheck Protection Program), even as I researched and read best practices from a variety of sources. I passed PPP information along to our Finance Elder who then worked diligently to secure grant funds which enabled us to keep both our church and preschool staff employed during this time when not everyone was able to continue doing their typical work. Indeed, nothing was typical about this strange new time we had entered. Much guidance was given by our Presbytery and PC(USA) leaders, and I am so very grateful for that shared wisdom and compassion. I am also grateful for the many webinars and other conversations via ZOOM that helped with discernment around issues such as celebrating the Lord's Supper online during this time.

Within a week, we had quickly pivoted to online worship which seemed so very odd at first and has now become our norm. Preaching into the small lens of a cell phone took some adjustment, but knowing I was able to reach you all this way with God's

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Encouraging and eternal Word helped ease the transition and calm my spirit. Gratitude abounds also for your faithful and very generous response to our request for funds for cameras and displays so that we could eventually, in the early fall, provide both online/livestreamed worship as well as in-person worship with COVID-19 precautions such as masks, physical distancing, and (regrettably) no congregational singing.

Though I enjoyed connecting with you by whatever means possible, I have to admit that making daily or weekly devotional videos was new to me and stretched the capacity of your introverted pastor! I pray these were meaningful and provided much needed connection with the congregation!

Throughout the spring, summer, and fall, we explored a variety of online options and experimented with ZOOM book studies, prayer and devotional gatherings, as well as fellowship/coffee time following worship. Clearly, none of these are an adequate substitute for seeing your smiling faces and being with you in person! However, the ability to “see” you online during this time was a gift and grace from God for which I am very grateful!

In this midst of all of this, I served as a commissioner representing the Presbytery of Grand Canyon to the 224th General Assembly of the PC(USA). This was the first ever completely online GA, and it was quite an experience. I was incredibly impressed with all of the technology and platforms that allowed us to gather from all parts of the world to deliberate the business of our denomination. Sitting at a computer for days on end in my home office was not nearly as much fun nor interesting as gathering in person and meeting new Presbyterians from all over, but in these pandemic times, it was the next best option, and I give thanks for the opportunity to participate.

I also give thanks for the Church Re-opening Task Force appointed by Session and their diligent and faithful discernment in terms of when we could safely gather again in person. Delving through data and responsive to many questions and concerns, this group prioritized the most vulnerable among us as well as the ability to provide in-person and online worship concurrently. It was a joy to serve with such faithful and conscientious leaders.

I am so very grateful for the many gifts and talents of our staff and congregation, and the beautiful way God weaves them all together to meet the needs of the day. The technology and the people who run it all have enabled us to continue our worship seamlessly, both in person and online. We are now reaching more people with the message of God’s love for all the world made known in Jesus Christ our Lord. I am certain, as are the leaders of our congregation, that online worship is here to stay! At the same time, I look forward with great joy to that time when more of us can safely gather together in our beautiful sanctuary to praise and worship our good and gracious God!

2020 will be remembered as a year of trial and growth, a year of frustration and faith, and a year of beautiful blessings bestowed by God on the congregation of First Presbyterian Church of Mesa, which I am privileged to serve as pastor.

To God be the glory!  
Rev. Ann Conklin



# 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

## Annual Reports 2020: Staff DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRIES

Reflecting on 2020, we lift prayers for the families of all who have suffered greatly from the effects of the coronavirus. We greatly miss friends and family members and pray that they rest in the Hands of God as we continue to carry forward their light and love. As we navigate new ways of ministry, our congregation has come together in person and online to lift God's light. With the superb guidance of our Presbytery leadership, Rev. Ann, and our Church Session, highlights during our year together included:

- Preschool Chapels, with Rev. Ann, Chris McKee, and Preschool Director Shiloh Murillo.
- A new virtual Sanctuary Choir rehearsal (though sound delays prevented future attempts!).



- Numerous virtual solos and choirs.
- In-Person Worship soloists as we looked toward the phasing-in of choirs and bands for rehearsals and worship.
- New keyboard and software for virtual choir arrangements.
- Gifts of new anthems, from Barb & Graham Walker and Linda Swaney.
- New choral library shelving unit, from Shirley Martz.
- Youth/Young Adults singing in worship!
- Recorded services in advance and later, livestreamed!
- With Dan Reeves, Co-Chaired a Campus Reopening Task Force (Ann Conklin, Sue Eisenklam, Chris McKee, Jeanne Partida, Mark Ramsey, Dan Reeves, Karen Rudin, and Dennis Sitzler), to plan for and facilitate the safe reopening of our campus.

- Received a donation of the Alice and Norm Peterson family piano, now at home in our Bell Room.



- Our 24th annual theater production, *Singin' in the Rain*, was placed on hold as we approached showtime! The generosity of Music Theatre International made possible preserved licensing and royalties until new production dates are set.
- Concert, Friendship Village Nunnenkamp Center, with Joan White and Anita Ramsey.
- Trip to Green Valley to pick up 300 new hymnals!
- Paul Carlson hand-crafted a new pulpit for our Sanctuary. The pulpit is absolutely beautiful!



- All-Church Game Afternoon, hosted with Chris McKee and Dennis Sitzler, played via ZOOM.
- Karen Rudin Studio Recital, with Pure Praise Singers.
- Video Hymn Devotionals with Rev. Ann, Paul Green, Jan Peterson, and Sandra Clark, available on the new Worship Resources page of our church website. The page also includes each of our virtual anthems.
- Online [Hymn Festival](#).
- Piano-organ duets with Bea Towe.
- Music Sunday, with 4 virtual groups in 3 videos; HolyGrounds band, bells, and pianists in-person.
- Christmas Eve Drive-in Service, with cellist Ben Gerlach, the HolyGrounds Band, Dei Gloriam Handbell Choir, Virtual Sanctuary Choir and One Voice, and a virtual children's pageant. With a space bedecked with luminarias and festive tinsel, we gathered online and in our church parking lot to share the Christmas Message!



We continue to be blessed with faithful congregational participation in our music ministries. I am very thankful for each singer, ringer, signer, and instrumentalist, and I pray for God's richest blessings upon each of us as we share in the joy of ministry and offer our gifts of worship and music. Special thanks go to each of our choirs: **WEDNESDAY WRAP WORSHIP SKILLS**, Karen Rudin, Director; **FIRST RINGERS**, Bea Towe, Director; **HEARTS HANDS AND VOICES**, Karyn Weaver, Director; **ONE VOICE**, Anita Ramsey, Director; and the **SANCTUARY CHOIR**, Bea Towe, Accompanist. Many thanks also to our **PRAISE BANDS** for providing musical leadership for our worship services: Karen Rudin, Erin Skarphol, and Rev. Paul Soderquist (9:00 a.m.) and Preston MacDonald, Tricia MacDonald, Kevin Reeves, Dan Sitzler, and Sean Snitzer (11:00 a.m.); and to our **SOUND/VIDEO LEADERS**, Bob Schulz, Greg Gerlach, and Dan Reeves, and **ASSISTANTS**, Peter Conklin and John Couillard.

Respectfully submitted, Mark Ramsey

## Annual Reports 2020: Commissions WORSHIP

The Worship Commission serves our congregation through the planning of weekly worship services, by facilitating the church Prayer Chain, by celebrating with families as they welcome new life, and by supporting families in times of grief. Items accomplished by the Worship Commission during 2020 included:

- Planned special worship services for Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday (virtual), and Christmas Eve (5:00PM drive-in and 8:30 online)
- Planned for Special Offerings (One Great Hour of Sharing - Easter, Pentecost, Mesa Presbyterian Ministries - World Communion Sunday, and Joy Gift - Christmas Eve)
- Installation of our new Sanctuary display and camera equipment, with enormous thanks to our generous congregation members and friends and to our excellent videographer, Greg Gerlach.
- Camera network cabling supplied and installed by Dan Davenport.
- At the request of Rev. Ann, formed an AV team (Peter Conklin, John Couillard, Greg Gerlach, Todd Ramsey, Dan Reeves, Bob Schulz, Dan Sitzler, Sean Snitzer, and Gail Soderquist) to oversee the operation of our new equipment.
- A detailed letter of reopening was sent to the Congregation from Rev. Ann, the Campus Reopening Task Force, and the Session.
- Planned usher, liturgist, and communion details for reopening, and the Campus Reopening Task Force prepared our Sanctuary and Congregation for the reopening.



- We reopened our campus for worship-only, beginning Sunday, October 4th, World Communion Sunday! We held one worship service on Sundays at 10:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary.
- Dan Reeves prepared a video announcement for worship, encouraging adherence to our campus reopening guidelines.
- Easter Worship Service (virtual, with music from the HolyGrounds Praise Band and Organ).
- Mother's Day and Father's Day Celebrations (virtual, using online chat for recognition).
- World Communion Sunday, with songs and messages from around the world (virtual).
- Advent/Christmas Decorations for Sanctuary and outdoor service.
- Drive-In Christmas Eve Service, with a Hay Wagon chancel and a parking lot Sanctuary. The service was broadcast to our car radios!

- Supported the families and friends of our loved ones who passed away last year: Alma Post, John Cordray, Lynne Logan, Larry Loraditch, Tom Dye, Jack Odiorne, Marie Robb, Jackie St. Louis, Bill Smith, Rev. Frank White, Rosemary Chisnall, Sam Thielke, Carter Herrera and Lee Tobey.

Items for Session Approval

- Recommend Audio Visual Experts, Phoenix to provide and install our cameras and displays. [\$16,186.83 for two front displays and one side or rear display) and \$11,052.93 for one rear camera and one side beam or "transept balcony" camera. Total \$27,239.76, including parts and labor. [APPROVED]
- New GLORY TO GOD (red) hymnals - to be paid from worship endowment and bookplates, any additional from Bequests & Memorials [APPROVED] - \$6,360. (pending final total) for 350 hymnals.
- Purchase of additional Music Library Storage Cabinet (Wenger), gift from Shirley Martz in loving memory of Rev. Robert Martz (\$427.38 balance from acct. 22068 - Music Memorials Fund). [APPROVED]
- The Worship Commission recommends approval of the following 2021 Communion days: the first Sunday of each month plus Maundy Thursday and Christmas Eve. [APPROVED]

Respectfully Submitted,  
 Mark Ramsey, Director of Music (Chair)  
 Dan Reeves, Worship (E) 2021  
 & Worship - HolyGrounds  
 David Miller/Cheryl Gregory, Worship (D) 2022  
 Joy Schulz, Prayer Chain Coordinator  
 Sandra Clark, Food Pantry Director  
 & Worship Decorations  
 Susan Durand, Greeters  
 Renita Jurgensen, Funeral/Memorial/Reception Coordinator, and Liturgists  
 Don Wilson, Ushers

**COMING EVENTS**

- 2/17 Ash Wednesday Service, online and in our Sanctuary, 7:00 p.m.
- 2/28 Drive-In Worship Service and Annual Meeting, 10:00 a.m.
- 4/25 Worship-Concert led by Tenor Dr. Glenn Bennett & Organist Dr. Mark Ramsey, 10:00 a.m.

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

We were made to sing. If you have a good voice, sing to praise the giver. If you don't have a good voice, sing to get even.



## 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

### Discipleship Commission Annual Report Submitted By: Chris McKee, Minister of Faith Formation

There is no doubt 2020 was a very different year considering the pandemic and the challenges that it created. For the health and safety of the congregation, church programming was altered and adjusted with prayerful and careful, creative considerations. Discipleship programming was reformulated from the traditional in-person to online via the ZOOM platform. Such extreme changes created a learning curve for many and yet with the blessings of financial resources, tech savvy individuals, patience and grace of the congregation, FPC's Discipleship programming continued with various faith building opportunities in a different form, however still centering on creating and nourishing disciples of Christ.

#### Children's Ministry Highlight

Online Home-Centered Resources provided on church's website

- Recorded Children's Devotions by Chris
- Bible Gateway Family Devotions
- Faith based Coloring Activities



Printed Children's Activity Packets

Time with Young Disciples in Worship

Printed Advent Children's Activity Packets

Children's Activity Bags for Drive-in Christmas Eve

Online Christmas Pageant via ZOOM

#### Wednesday WRAPPY Hour

WRAPPY Hour was an online intergenerational gathering for all ages with fun games, songs, God talk and prayer in a family-friendly format. We met Wednesday evenings (via ZOOM) in September with the themes: Don't Freak Out, Lost and Found, Don't Fear Just Love, Trust, Joy and Laughter. WRAPPY Hour was a test pilot program and was discontinued because of the lack of online participation.

**Adult:** FPC is blessed to have over ten adult small groups. Please contact Elder of Adult Education, Karen Rudin for further information.

#### Looking Ahead at 2021

- Youth Sunday Worship, April 11, 2021
- FPC hosting Montlure Traveling Day Camp June 21-24, 2021
- Montlure Overnight Camps:
  - Senior High: June 6-11
  - Junior High: June 13-18
  - Juniors: July 5-9
- In-Person Wednesday WRAP Relaunch Fall of 2021
- Grief Group Launch Fall 2021

## Youth & Young Adults at FPC



Mini Golf February 2020

### Our 2020 Youth highlights included:

- Wednesdays & Sundays Online Youth
- Confirmation: "Big God Big Questions" Confirmands: Ben and Mihret Gerlach, Rebecca and Flora Njoku
- Youth Sunday, June 6, 2020
- Welcome Back to In-Person October 11
- Christmas Gift Wrapping Fundraiser
- Youth Christmas Party December 20



Confirmation Sunday



Youth Sunday Participants



Welcome Back in Person



Christmas Party

## Preschool Annual Report 2021

Well, what a year we've had! We are all grappling with the reality of how the COVID-19 pandemic has changed our lives over the last year. The preschool was no different. We had many challenges that were very difficult to navigate, but God is good and has helped us along the way!

We started the new year in January 2020 with 31 children enrolled! These families were consistent and enjoyed having the Mesa Fire Department visit as well as celebrating Valentine's day with us. As the news announced the COVID-



19 outbreak, the state of Arizona watched as other states shut down their movements to slow the spread. The preschool watched and waited for direction from public officials, health experts and state leadership. We enjoyed our family Carnival day just before we went on one week Spring Break in early March. On March 16, the day we were to return to class, Governor Doug Ducey gave the Stay-at-home Order. The preschool met with the Preschool Board at that time to determine what we needed to do. Utilizing the current information at the time and then meeting the needs of the greater

community, it was evident that we needed to close the preschool for at least 2 weeks, which we did. Unfortunately, that was the start of a very long closure for the preschool.

Over the course of that closure time period, the teachers and I made every effort to stay on top of the most current Public Health directive, state childcare licensing requirements, Quality First recommendations and many other things that became a daily tether of bouncing information. We attended many online ZOOM webinar trainings for COVID, best health and safety practices, changes to preschool policies and procedures, family engagement during a pandemic, maintaining emotional care for ourselves and others, and many other trainings. We also worked closely with our Quality First Nurse Health Consultant to keep us up to date on the fast-changing Health & Safety protocols needed when we did finally reopen. Their support was immeasurable and helped navigate so many unknowns for reopening. This challenging school year ended with a "Drive-Thru Goodbye" in the church parking lot in May. A very cherished and fond memory!



The Preschool Board met in the summer and decided to reopen on September 8, 2020, with the two classrooms combined into one. Teachers Nicki McInnelly, Kristy Biggs & Sara Wheat were thrilled to have the children back and welcome them to our new program. Ms. Chantal Howell is waiting and ready to return when circumstances permit.

Many changes had to be made around the preschool to reopen, too. In order to keep families safe, we met families at the front gate to drop off their child, and the teachers walked the child into classroom. The use of hand sanitizer, taking daily temperatures, more frequent washing of hands, physical distancing whenever possible and wearing face masks from their car to their cubby were all done. It has been a real challenge, but we are really making the best of it with great success! Over the course of the semester, we were able to enroll a few more children to have 15 children on the roster!



I want to celebrate the Preschool Board. We want to thank all of our representatives who serve: Ginny Mallia (Chair), Stephanie Gerlach, Pam Godfrey – Robles, Nicki McInnelly, Chris McKee, Bonnie Castillo (parent rep), and Anita Ramsey. When things have been as challenging as they have, 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. It has been my pleasure to work with each of them and know that they have the best intentions for the future of the preschool program at heart!

There have been a few exciting physical changes around the preschool. Due to the closure, one of our large trees died for lack of water and had to be removed. We also partnered with the church and the Head Start program to have two of the three slides replaced before the children returned to campus in September. We were able to share the cost through the use of the Quality First Incentive funds. It is a refreshing feeling to see the improvements and know that our children and families will be able to enjoy the benefits of that for a long time!

As we look forward to 2021, we are hopeful that the Lord will continue to bless us by bringing the children of this community to our program in spite of challenging times. We know that God has good things in store for all of us. We know that He is present in all that we do here, especially in the hearts of these little children! Lastly, we appreciate all of 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

## FELLOWSHIP

Fellowship (E) (Chair) — Dennis Sitzler  
Transportation (D) — Steve Muth  
Fellowship (D) — Jo Beth Walstrom

Fellowship Deacon — Jennifer Martin  
Fellowship Deacon — Todd Ramsey

Moderator (D) – Jack Oliver  
Liaison (D) – Jan Montgomery  
Presbyterian Women — Sara McWhorter

### Fellowship Commission Annual Report

The Fellowship Commission puts on, or assists with, many social activities during the year. This provides opportunities for our congregation to enjoy each other's' company and provides some fun events to attend. This also encourages our congregation members to invite their friends to come and meet our church family, while having fun participating in the events with us. We encourage everyone to wear NAME BADGES, which we provide upon request, so everyone can easily know/learn each other's' names. We also coordinate Coffee Hosts & Baked Goodies teams which provide refreshments during Coffee Time after first service each Sunday in Fellowship Hall.

- Fellowship sponsored a "Chili Cook-off" dinner in conjunction with the Annual Congregational Meeting on February 23rd.
- All other Fellowship activities were cancelled due to the Covid 19 pandemic.

#### Fellowship Plans for the future

Your Fellowship Commission members will be busy making plans for future events that we'll hold in 2021 once the session has authorized such activities.

LOTS of fun events will be happening at your church in the future. Are there events that you would like to see us sponsor? If so, LET US KNOW. New ideas are welcomed and needed. We are always looking for new events to provide an opportunity for our congregation and their friends to get together, socialize, and have some fun in the name of our Lord Jesus!



The New Year brings us new ideas, new plans and expectations. As we look to the coming months and pray for the past sense of "normalcy" to return to us, we are planning for the Recognition of Women service in March. Voting has closed and our Honorary Life Member has been chosen and will be awarded during this service. We also hope and expect to offer our congregation their Thanksgiving baked goods through our baked sale again this coming year.

This past month Circles met and completed the Bible study "Lamenting Life and its Challenges." In a few weeks, our focus in the meetings will turn to "Lamenting Over the City," and we will discuss the destruction of the constructed environment. Viewing the fractures of both Biblical cities and our own Mesa and how we work as both a church congregation and as PW Circles for the welfare of our environment. PW Mission Projects include New Leaf Autumn House, Child Crisis Center, Church Women United, FPC Preschool, Montlure Camp, Salvation Army, and our sewing groups contributions to various community groups.

The purpose of Presbyterian Women is: forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves; to nurture our faith through prayer and 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 the promise of God's kingdom.

Presbyterian Women of FPC is composed of four Circles with a total membership of 38 women. Throughout the year we participate in local, regional and world-wide missions, Bible study, and fellowship, supporting each other in our joys and concerns. We completed our 2019-2020 Bible study of Carved in Stone by Eugenia Gamble in May and began our 2020-2021 study of Into the Light by P. Lynn Miller in the Fall.

Meetings since May have been conducted by ZOOM and physical distancing due to the Corona virus pandemic. Most of our regular events were cancelled this year, including our 2020 Women's Sunday service, Spring Luncheon with installation ceremony, Bake Sale, and Holiday Luncheon. The Honorary Life Membership award was presented to Anita Ramsey in March during an FPC YouTube service. Our sewing group joined with other women of the church in making masks which were sent to the Navajo people. We invite all women of the church to join us by attending a circle meeting and getting involved.

Sara McWhorter, Moderator, PWFPC

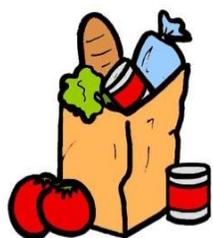
# MISSION

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

## Mission Commission Annual Report Submitted by: Shelley Cronenberg, Mission Elder

**Assimilation.** There were two new members in March and we had four confirmands for a total of six new members in 2020.



**The Food Pantry** continues to stay open and provide food to those in need every Friday. We are very proud of a special Christmas donation from Girl Scout Troop 7290. There are eleven girls in the troop, and their leaders are Darlene Sitzler and Jen Shinyeda. They provided eleven laundry baskets that were full of food and everything needed to make a Christmas dinner. Each also included a \$25 gift card for a turkey or ham. They made handmade Christmas cards that were beautifully decorated. These are special girls giving back to our community. Thank you Troop 7290! You made many people happy.

We gave out 1,260 bags that fed 4,330 people in 1,127 households.

Bag value \$35 x 1260 =	\$44,100.00
United food Bank total dollar value =	24,614.55
Congregation =	<u>9,000.00</u>
	\$77,714.55

Our numbers are lower this year because of Covid. We still have many strong workers who unload many groceries, and we are most grateful for them. Our church can be very proud of our ministry of feeding the needy. ~ Sandra Clark

**I Help.** For the year 2020, FPC volunteers have hosted 10 women two Sundays per month (approximately 10 volunteer hours per week). This includes dinner, showers, a safe place to sleep, movies and a sack lunch for the next day. Janet Verch, the program coordinator, attends ZOOM church sponsor meetings every other month (with Lutheran Social Services), where we discuss what works best and how we can improve the program at each site. Based on the yearly report from LSS (July 2019-June 2020) New Guests = 165, Participants Receiving Case Management = 147, Shelter Bed Nights = 7,323, Women Employed = 52, Moved into housing = 43

**Seasonal Ministry.** Angel Tree: We sponsored two families this year. Although it was a little different this year with the Angel Tree going online, we were able to keep the tradition and provided gifts for each family member, as well as other household items. This year the girl scouts also were involved and provided baskets with a variety of items for each family. Thank you to all who were able to help these families this year.



**Mission Co-Workers.** Rev. Mark Adams and Miriam Maldonado Escobar are our mission coworkers again this year with Frontero de Cristo. Their ministry sits on the US/Mexico border in Agua Prieta. Joca Gallegos, a coordinator at Frontero de Cristo, was scheduled to come and preach on March 15th, which as many of you may remember, was the first in-person service cancelled due to Covid. 25% of the Peace and Global Witness Offering went to our partners at Frontero de Cristo.

**Special Offerings.** Thank you for your continued generosity!

- One Great Hour of Sharing: Giving was \$2,105.00.
- Pentecost Offering: Giving was \$1,305.24 of which \$522.10 went to fix the slide for the Preschool and Head Start kids.
- Global Peace and Witness Offering: Giving was \$1,385. Of that money, \$692.50 (50%) went to the Presbyterian Mission Agency and \$346.25 (25%) went to the Grand Canyon Presbytery, and the remaining \$346.25 is going to Frontera de Cristo (our mission partners in Mexico).
- Christmas Joy Offering: Giving was \$1,449.64.



**Mission Trip.** Although our planned mission trip consisting of bringing Montlure to Tseyi Bidaa had to be cancelled, we had a lot of support sent to the Navajo Nation. We had many talented members sew masks to be sent and someone even donated a sewing machine to be sent so that they could continue sewing their own masks! Additionally, many of our members generously donated groceries and time to help our Native American brothers and sisters. A big thanks to all who pitched in!

**Café Justo.** FPC supports one of the ministries of Frontera de Cristo where our mission co-workers serve. The



ministry of Café Justo is a non-political, humane, Christian way to address immigration issues at their roots. By buying coffee from them, we not only get great coffee, but we help coffee growers to have a sustainable way to live and help their communities. The March order was done online, and the 11 bags ordered were hand delivered. The remainder of the quarterly Café Justo orders were done online with individuals ordering on their own.

**Mesa Presbyterian Ministries.** MPM is a qualified charitable organization with the mission to keep families in their homes. Congregational members Bob Gerlach, Jane Potyka, Jack and Yvonne Oliver, and Brent Gregory volunteer to call and interview clients who need help paying their rent and utilities. Over one hundred families received a total of \$42,465.00 in assistance from MPM in 2020.



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## DEACONS

Co-Moderator — Jack Oliver  
Co-Moderator — Jan Montgomery  
Transportation — Steve Muth  
Fellowship — Todd Ramsey  
Seasonal Ministries — Dale Gibson  
Worship — David Miller

Personnel — Carol Anderson  
Nominating — Michael Gerlach  
Fellowship — Jennifer Martin  
Prayer Chain — Joy Schulz  
Funerals/Memorials—Renita Jurgensen

Fellowship — Carol Strouse  
Mission --- Sue Eisenklam  
Fellowship — Anita Ramsey  
Contact Lists — Jan Montgomery  
Assimilation — Deborah Rpsen  
Fellowship — Jo Beth Walstrom

### Annual Report: Deacons

Due to Covid the Deacons have concentrated on maintaining contact with our parishioners. We had a few ZOOM meetings just to be able to see each other.

If you don't know who your Deacon is, please contact the moderator.

## ADMINISTRATION

Property (E) (Chair) — Dave Frederick  
Clerk of Session — Carol Gerlach  
Personnel (E) — Jeanne Partida

Personnel (D) — Carol Anderson  
Nominating (E) — Barbara Walker

Nominating (D) — Michael Gerlach  
Stewardship/Finance (E) — Brent Gregory

### Administration Commission Annual Report

#### PROPERTY

**Dave Frederick**

The pandemic-related shutdown of church operations for part of the year provided a scheduling window to complete some capital improvements.

Following the sanctuary roof project, unsightly “tracks” were visible on many sections. To remedy this the installer repainted the roof under warranty at no cost to the church.

In the Jackson Building, both Sunday school rooms were remodeled with all new flooring and a fresh coat of paint.

Security cameras were added to the campus exterior, and LED lighting was added to Fellowship Hall, offices, and rooms in the north wing.

Some projects began in 2020 and are still work-in-process. Several campus doors are being replaced with insulated steel doors to increase security and energy efficiency. Bathroom fixtures in the Head Start classrooms are being upgraded with touchless sinks and towel and soap dispensers. This is

done at the request of Maricopa County and will be paid for by Head Start.

For the near future, Property Committee will prioritize beautification of the exterior views of the campus from Mesa Drive and Pioneer Park, increasing FPC’s energy-efficiency, and maintaining a secure facility.



#### CLERK OF SESSION

**Carol Gerlach**

We began the year with 277 members (168 females, a statistic required by PC(USA)). We welcomed six new members into the congregation. Sadly, we removed 21 from the Rolls and lost another ten plus Rev. Frank White, who as a Pastor was a member of presbytery, not FPC, when they became members of the Church Triumphant. Our membership on December 31, 2020 was 252 (156 females). There were no marriages. Two baptisms were celebrated. We have eight Affiliate Members on our Rolls.

Before the Coronavirus hit in March and threw everyone’s lives into a cocked hat, Session met in-person in January. February was our Annual Congregational Meeting, which was also in-person. In March Session had our first ZOOM Meeting followed by more ZOOM meetings in April, May, June, July and August. In September we held our Session Meeting/Retreat in-person in Fellowship Hall with masks and physical distancing guidelines observed. In October, November and December we went back to ZOOM Meetings.

I pray that in 2021 we will see our lives return to “normal,” and that we will recognize “normal” when we see it!

#### NOMINATING

**Barbara Walker**

The Nominating Committee began its task the beginning of October via ZOOM. We met every other week seeking congregation members willing to serve as officers. You will elect those we will present at the congregation meeting this month.

Members serving on the committee are Anita Ramsey, Deacon, Helen Thielke, Allan Schultz, and Dave Jurgensen as members of the congregation at large. Tammy Miller began with us but upon her resignation, Darlene Sitzler accepted her position. Hal Engman also resigned. The committee also fills any vacancies that arise due to resignations.

We are grateful to those members of the congregation who have agreed to serve in various positions. Some candidates are upping for another three-year term while others are new and will begin their service in June.

I am grateful for the dedication of the committee members and all the work they accomplished. I was blessed to have such a committed group to work with this year.

## STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCE

**Brent Gregory**

The members of the Finance Committee are Stewardship and Finance 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 Sam Thielke. Pastor Ann Conklin and bookkeeper Rob Kjar also attend meetings. The committee met monthly to review the church's financial reports and has undertaken the following actions in 2020:

- Recommended the 2020 budget to the Session.
- Completed a financial review for the year ending 12/31/2019.
- Completed a successful stewardship campaign with pledges and prepaids totaling \$281,622 for the general fund and \$17,830 for the capital fund.

## ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

**Brent Gregory**

The members of the Endowment Committee are Dave Frederick, Jack Gunter, Renita Jurgensen, Ron Payton, and Skeets Throckmorton, with Brent Gregory, Stewardship and Finance Elder serving as an ex-officio member. The committee met once during 2020 and has undertaken the following actions:

- Continued oversight of the Endowment Funds investment with a 2020 beginning balance of \$407,409.49 and a year-end balance of \$439,160.36.
- Received gifts of \$975.00 for the General Endowment and \$186.49 for the Christian Education Endowment.
- Disbursed \$1,721.99 for new metal doors from the General Endowment.
- Disbursed \$8,770.20 for the sanctuary video equipment from the Worship Arts Endowment.
- Continued to interpret the endowment concept to the congregation through the Endowment Funds brochure.

## PERSONNEL

**Jeanne Partida**

The committee consists of Personnel Elder Jeanne Partida, Personnel Deacon Carol Anderson, and three members at-large Brent Gregory, Susan McMichael and Renita Jurgensen. At the beginning of the year we reviewed and made some minor revisions to the Child Protection Policy. Due to Covid, the only other business was the annual staff reviews. Our church is blessed with a wonderful staff and we ask for your continued prayers and support as we move forward in 2021.



Thank you to all my church friends that sent me condolences after the death of my son.

The cards, calls and emails were a great comfort. I am so thankful for my "church family."

Much love, Mary Jean Maedche

Do you want to better understand yourself, maximize your strengths, and improve your relationships? Understanding how we are wired can enrich our lives and our relationships, helping to overcome differences that can seem irreconcilable. In *Wired That Way*, Marita brings together in one book a comprehensive overview of the personality types that speaks to anyone who wants to understand and to be understood. The Koinania ZOOM Class, which meets Sundays at 3:30, will study *Wired That Way*. The class began on January 31st but feel free to join anytime. Contact Karen Rudin for more info: 480-233-1043

## February Birthdays



<i>Peggy Anderson</i>	<i>1st</i>
<i>Patty Carnes</i>	<i>1st</i>
<i>Will Snitzer</i>	<i>2nd</i>
<i>Jean Chappell</i>	<i>9th</i>
<i>Isobel Letizia</i>	<i>9th</i>
<i>Aaron Chesko</i>	<i>10th</i>
<i>Ginny Mallia</i>	<i>11th</i>
<i>Garrett Hull</i>	<i>12th</i>
<i>Kate Buck</i>	<i>14th</i>
<i>Cortney Bever</i>	<i>15th</i>
<i>John Peterson</i>	<i>15th</i>
<i>Bob Schulz</i>	<i>15th</i>
<i>John Goings, Jr.</i>	<i>16th</i>
<i>Brock Hoyman</i>	<i>16th</i>
<i>Peter Conklin</i>	<i>19th</i>
<i>Richard Schroeder</i>	<i>19th</i>
<i>Bryan Hickey</i>	<i>25th</i>
<i>Elly Weinel</i>	<i>26th</i>
<i>Matthew McKee</i>	<i>27th</i>
<i>Linda Free</i>	<i>28th</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.*

## Calendar Notes

### February

Worship every Sunday at 10:00 a.m.

In person or online

Youth meet at 11:15 a.m.

Youth Room

### February 2

PW Coordinating Team

### February

Men's Fellowship every Wednesday

ZOOM

### February 3 & 17

Women's Bible Study

### February 8 & 9

Circles meet

In person or via ZOOM

### February 14

Happy Valentine's Day!

### February 15

President's Day — Office closed

### February 17

Ash Wednesday

In person or online

### February 21

Commissions & Session meet

### February 28

Monthly Food Drive

Annual Congregational Meeting



## IN MEMORIAM

Sam Thielke — December 21, 2020

Lee Tobey — December 30, 2020

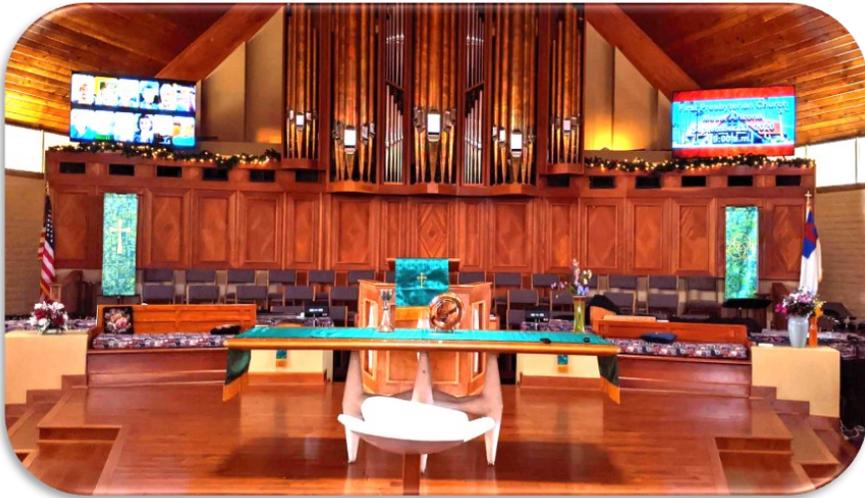
Myrna Olmstead — January 10, 2021

Carter Herrera — January 27, 2021



**Financial Reports are not published but are available for pick up at the kiosk or church office later this month.**

# SCENES FROM A VERY DIFFERENT YEAR!



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

**LA PALABRA**

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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 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**