

La Palabra

March 2024

www.fpcmesa.org

480-964-8606

A Message from Christian



I have never had a winter like this one.

I have lived in Oregon, California, Washington, Idaho, Michigan, Illinois, West Virginia, New Jersey and now Arizona. As I write this message, my exterior office door is open, and I hear birds singing in the courtyard that is filled with green grass. As I walk the mountains that surround our valley I see signs of spring, like flowers and green plants leafing out even in February. This is a different rhythm for the season than I have experienced before. It is new, exciting, and offers new opportunities.



So too is the season of Lent and the events of Holy Week. While they come annually, each appearance is an opportunity to experience Jesus in a fresh way. If God is infinite, there are never ending dimensions to plumb the depths of. May we throw open the doors of our souls to experience the joy and excitement of new rhythms Jesus has for us, whether we are new to church, or have been a life long disciple.



I look forward to worshipping with you in March as we celebrate the balance of Lent and an early Easter.

Blessings,
Pastor Christian

INDEX

<i>A Message from Christian</i>	1
<i>From the Clerk's Desk</i>	2
<i>Mission</i>	2
<i>Worship</i>	3
<i>Fellowship</i>	3
<i>Presbyterian Women</i>	4
<i>Preschool</i>	5
<i>Discipleship</i>	6
<i>March Birthdays</i>	7
<i>Address Changes</i>	7
<i>Calendar Notes</i>	7
<i>Calendar</i>	website



From the Clerk's Desk

News from the **FEBRUARY** Session meeting.

Clerk's Statistics for January

No weddings, births or baptisms

Charles (Pat) Mills died on January 14th. His memorial service was Saturday, February 24th, Pastor Christian officiating.

Membership: 191

Avg. Attendance: 105 in-person & 88 online = 193

Carol Gerlach, Clerk

Reports/Motions

Finance - Session approved the January Financial Reports and the 2024 Budget.
Session approved Lois Hildenbrand's request to sell her jellies after worship in Fellowship Hall on March 10th and 17th.
Operations – a volunteer work party cleaned out the storage shed on the 17th.
Fellowship – They are still looking for sign-ups for the chili cookoff on the 24th.
Session made a final review of the proposed changes to the Bylaws to be taken to the Annual Meeting on February 25.

Et cetera

Don't forget - PER CAPITA for 2024 is \$38.51 (unchanged from 2023). \$23.71 for GC Presbytery, \$5.00 for the Synod of the Southwest and \$9.80 for GA. The amount we owe, based on our 12/31/22 membership of 240, is \$9,242.40.
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Mission

The Spring Festival

First Presbyterian Church 161 N. Mesa Drive

Food, Games, Crafts
Bounce House & More



March 16th
Saturday 4–6 PM

Worship

Lots going on in the life of our church this very busy month of March!

- Women's Gift Sunday will be on March 10th. Rev. Joca Gallegos, co-pastor of the Douglas Presbyterian Church and coordinator at Frontera de Cristo, will be guest pastor.
- Pastor Christian's installation service will also be March 10th at 3:00 p.m. with a reception to follow in Fellowship Hall.
- Celebrate Palm Sunday with our traditional procession of palms on March 24th at 10:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary.
- We'll commemorate the Last Supper with Communion during our Maundy Thursday Service on March 28th at 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary.
 - Good Friday Prayer Vigil, March 29th.
 - Our Easter Celebration will be held on Sunday, March 31st, at 10:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary and online. The worship service will include our Sanctuary Choir, Dei Gloriam Handbell Choir, and HolyGrounds Praise Band. Join us on Easter Sunday as we gather to celebrate the Resurrection of our Eternal King!



The Artist Series presents Dotty & Tina in concert on April 14th at 3:00 in the Sanctuary. They performed for us at last year's Spring Festival. Come and enjoy an afternoon of their unique song stylings!

Monthly Potluck



Fellowship

Everyone is invited to a potluck lunch after worship on March 24th! Please bring a dish to share. A good time will be had by all!

Mesa Presbyterian Ministries

It's not too late to claim an Arizona Tax Credit for 2023!

Mesa Presbyterian Ministries is a non-profit organization that qualifies as a dollar-for-dollar tax credit with the state of Arizona. MPM originally named Christ Haven started at our church by Bob Gerlach in 2001. MPM provides rental and utility assistance for Mesa residents in need. The goal of MPM is to keep families in their current homes during financial difficulties. Nearly 100 families have been helped by MPM this year. With your contribution we could do even more in 2024! Donations up to \$400 for a single filer and \$800 for joint filers can be used as a credit on your Arizona income tax return without having to itemize. For more information, please contact Brent Gregory at 480 677-0843.



In January, PW was pleased to prepare and offer Epiphany Words to all. They are positive words of valued attributes for a person to ponder and apply throughout the year. Just as the Star led the Magi to the Christ Child, our Star Words are meant to guide a person throughout the year. We are pleased with the interest and commitment people place on their randomly chosen word. We always pray that God will guide us to our word for the year, and that we will accept and honor the concept we have chosen.

Frontera de Cristo

Women's Gifts Sunday is awarding the PW Lifetime Membership Award to a deserving church member - always a fun surprise!

The PW sewing group has been busy creating new projects on first Thursdays in Fellowship Hall. You will learn more about projects during Women's Gifts Sunday worship.

All are welcome, sewers or not! Watch the [Update](#) for more information.



Meanwhile, Circles welcome women guests at any monthly meeting for fellowship and Bible study. Our February Scared Encounters, The Power and Presence of Jesus Christ in Luke-Acts lesson focused on Peter and John healing the disabled man at the temple, as they continued Jesus' teaching and healing in the early Christian church. The lesson for March is "An Ethiopian Eunuch Encounters the Good News of Jesus."

Eve Circle meets at 4:00 p.m. on Monday, March 4; Deborah meets at 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, March 5, and Rachel meets at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 5. All Circles meet in the Parlor. Please join us!





March has come in fast, but it is such a fun time of year! We are getting more energy to be outside and play a little longer in the sun. The flowerbox is blooming and the green grass is SO inviting! The children will be focusing on pond life, insects, bugs, frogs and so much more, but our celebration this month is for the Easter blessings. We will be having a special Easter Egg hunt at the end of March, and the kids are really looking forward to it.

In other news, we just finished collecting our annual Parent Satisfaction Surveys and here are some of the things that they said:

"You guys are very patient with my son. I love the calm-down corner, and the rules and values that are instilled in him are so important. The calm environment, structure and that there is a set schedule are considered to be the strengths of the program." -Shadae Jocewicz, parent of a 3-year-old

"One way that I believe that the program is meeting my child's needs is by teaching them responsibility, care and being able to feel safe. A strength of the program is the communication." - Andrea Carreon, parent of a 3-year-old

"Our children have thrived at the preschool. The teachers are very loving and flexible and strive to really understand our children." -Carrie Nichols, parent of a 4-year-old and parent alumni of 3 other children

"The teachers have the ability to truly reach my kids with the curriculum; they're incredible at making tiny tweaks and adjustments to lessons to meet my children's needs. The humans that make this program possible and available to my children do it for ALL the right reasons. They are full of compassion and empathy. Our family has gone through huge changes out of our control in the last year. The new routine they've worked into with the help of all of their teachers is truly a gift to our children and us as parents." - Lauren Foerstner, parent of a 3-year-old and a 4-year-old.

We are so blessed by our families, and I am so proud of our teachers and all of the hard work they do for our school and community!

Sincerely,

Just for Laughs

A Hindu priest, a Jewish rabbi, and a televangelist were on a trip when their car broke down. They went to a nearby farmhouse and asked the farmer if they could spend the night in his house. The farmer told them that he only had room for two of them, and that one person would have to sleep in the barn behind the house. The Hindu priest volunteered to sleep in the barn, and they all went to bed. Five minutes later, there was a knock on the back door. It was the priest. He explained that he hadn't known that there was a cow in the barn, and that as a Hindu he couldn't sleep with a cow. The rabbi told him that a cow wouldn't bother him, and he volunteered to take his place in the barn. Everybody went to bed, but five minutes later, there was a knock on the back door. It was the rabbi. He explained that he hadn't known that there was a pig in the barn, and there was no way he could sleep with a pig. The televangelist told everyone that neither a cow nor a pig would bother him, and he volunteered to take the rabbi's place. Everybody went to bed and five minutes later, there was a knock at the back door. It was the cow and the pig.

Discipleship



One Great Hour of Sharing Offering



At Eastertime, FPC participates in “One Great Hour of Sharing” (OGHS). This special offering supports three wonderful Presbyterian efforts:

- Self-Development of People
- Presbyterian Hunger Program
- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance

Kids are encouraged to pick-up a Fish Bank during worship to decorate and collect coins and dollars for this wonderful ministry. Fish Banks to be returned on Easter Sunday to be dedicated.

Montlure Summer Camps

Overnight:

Senior High Camp June 2-7, 2024
 Junior High Camp June 10-15, 2024
 4-6 Grades June 25-29, 2024

Traveling Day Camp

June 10-14, Mission del Sol Church, Tempe
 Register at Montlure.org. Partial campership available on our church website for Overnight and Traveling Day Camp. \$75 off TDC w/ code FPC2024.



montlure
Traveling Day Camp

June 10-14

Monday - Thursday
9am to 3pm
Friday 9am to 12:30pm
 Extended Care Mon-Thur until 5pm

\$75 off with Code FPC2024
 Lunch is included

March Birthdays



Adam Cronenberg	1st
Joyce Baum	6th
Sean Snitzer	6th
Darlene Sitzler	7th
Dennis Sitzler	9th
Helen Lents	11th
Marilu Thompson	12th
Pam Robles	16th
Dick Baird	18th
Nelly Nobis	19th
Peter Eisenklam	20th
Marilyn Uithoven	20th
Caroline Cline	25th
Joshua Anderson	29th
Kyle Posthumus	29th
Frances Kaufmann	31st
Bill Lents	31st

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.

ADDRESS CHANGES/CORRECTIONS

Boese, Lois 3655 N. Alpine Rd., Apt. B315 Rockford, IL 61114	McNary, John 946 S. Tigres Trail Cottonwood, AZ 85326
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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

Calendar Notes

March

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

March 3

Deacons meet

March 6

Preschool Carnival

March 6 & 20

Women's Bible Study

March 10

Women's Gift Sunday
Pastor Christian's Installation

March 11 & 12

Circles meet

March 16

FPC Spring Carnival

March 17

Session meets

March 24

Palm Sunday
Potluck Sunday

March 28

Maundy Thursday
Service at 7:00 in Sanctuary

March 29

Good Friday

March 31

Happy Easter!
Easter Egg Hunt after worship

*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

E-mail: pubs@fpcmesa.org

Website: 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**