

La Palabra

August 2023

www.fpcmesa.org

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A Message from David

Of Pavement and Possibilities

Even though the electronic sign in front of the church posts positive messages to all who pass by, the vast parking lot on two sides of the church has been broadcasting to the neighborhood a message that is discouraging. In its disrepair, the message to the neighborhood affirms their worst suspicions, that we are an older congregation, frail and falling apart, with diminished capacity to respond to the needs of our neighborhood.

I know that sounds a bit harsh, but that huge expanse of pavement ~ broken up and pot-holed ~ has been broadcasting a message about the church. It has been a paradigm of the fact that the church of the past is crumbling, and that message has sabotaged our public image and undermined our best marketing strategies.



Now, however, a freshly repaved and restriped lot sends out a different message, one that declares that we are relevant and vibrant, welcoming and inclusive, and that we are preparing for a bright and prosperous future! That message will do more to convince them of our saving purpose than all the promotions we can generate.

Having said that, however, it also needs to be said that even a repaved and restriped parking lot can send out an unintended message when it is empty on a Sunday morning. The time has come to fill the pews with faith-filled people even as the parking lot will receive the cars of all who come.

The message our new parking lot reveals is critical, and our great work now is to share the message of God's extravagant welcome and redeeming love to our neighbors! And I am certain that when they respond to our welcome, we will discover that a certain emptiness within has been filled, and that a quiet confidence in God's redeeming love has settled in for all that God intends to accomplish among us.

With every blessing,
David

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Preschool

Things are moving along very nicely on many of our projects!

The interior painting project is now complete and looks so fresh and new! It was a good decision to take down the wallpaper. The teachers returned on July 24th to start to put everything back together again. It will be a lot of work but worth it. School starts back with kids on August 7th. Also, the painters finished ahead of schedule on the interior, so they started the exterior painting before their mid-August start date. They made a good start, and will be back to finish in early August.



After many attempts to get shade for the playground over the large slab of concrete, it has finally come to fruition with the installation of a boxed 20ft+ Indian Laurel Ficus Tree. When Moon Valley Nursery brought it they transplanted it into a much larger box. The environment already looks beautiful and will be able to grow into the bigger box that it is in now. They say that it can live in that box for at least 15 more years. In the future, the Church can decide if it wants to transport it to another location on the campus to have it planted into the ground as another option.

On July 19th the preschool refrigerator room (the room that has our refrigerator, hot water heater, washer/dryer and storage cabinets with the electrical access) got new tile, paint, appliances and storage cabinets. Part of this project included the removal of asbestos that was discovered in the bidding process. Because of this, the removal was done in mid-July, and it was contained without interrupting any of Head Start's class time with children.



Our teachers returned to the work on July 24th, and we have one new teacher who started that day too. The teachers will begin to empty out the storage which house all of our preschool equipment and new classroom resources that were part of the Quality First incentives purchase. The classrooms had new countertops, sinks and faucets installed.



The new security fire doors for the hallways were installed, and they are exactly the way we wanted them to be. We are still waiting for the new office door to be installed, which should be any day now. We also anticipate that the

Security Access Control remote access system will be installed in August. That will further our efforts for safety and security. We are having a new metal sign made to be hung next to the entrance gate to indicate how to get into the Preschool/Head Start. We also purchased a "Knox Box" which gives the Fire Department access to this area as well. That will be installed with the sign once the Access Control System is installed. The print shop who is making the metal sign is also making window decals that will cover the windows to our hallways. They will be fun ocean themes that make it so that people cannot see inside the building. All of these things are a huge safety upgrade for the school, staff and families/students that we serve.



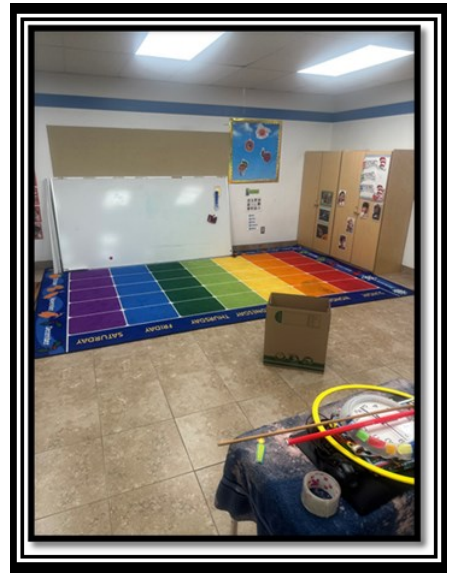


The Church parking lot project wrapped up. The process included removing the entire parking surface area, resurfacing it and then paint striping it again. It looks wonderful!

At the beginning of July we purchased the new software program called ProCare. I am in the middle of the 10 hours of training videos now and hope to have some of it implemented for the start of the new school year. There is a pretty big learning curve, so it may have a slower roll out but it will be integrated over the next couple of weeks and months for sure.

With all of these changes and getting ready for the new school year, we are working on updating our preschool website. This is also taking up some time to give it a much needed refresh. Little by little it is getting there! 😊

God is so good!
Shiloh Murillo, Director



School Classroom & Supply Wish List

- 64 oz Bottle of Bubbles
- 5oz paper Dixie Cups
- Snacks - individually wrapped & healthy
- Small Paper bowls
- Small Paper plates
- Old Newspapers
- Sidewalk Chalk
- Paper towels
- Glue sticks
- White school glue
- Card stock (white or colored)
- 8x11 white copy paper
- Magic Eraser Sponges
- Colored pencils
- Colored Dry-erase markers
- Watercolor paint trays
- Facial tissues

MISSION COMMITTEE



Our Mission Trip this year was an answer to prayers after three years of hoping to go, but not being able due to Covid. First Presbyterian Church of Mesa partnered with Montlure to bring a fun Vacation Bible School (VBS) to Tseyi Bidaa Presbyterian Church in the Navajo Nation. We left early Sunday, July 2nd, and the VBS was Monday – Friday, July 3rd – 7th from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. The topic of the week was Fruits of the Spirit, and the Spirit was definitely with us that week. On Monday we had 9 children and as the week went on and more people heard about it, it grew to 16. This is better than expected since we have not been there the past four years (2019 for an international trip and 2020, 2021, and 2022 due to Covid).

Each day we started with an energizer where we sang songs and got pumped up for the day. Next, we read a Bible story and discussed how it tied into the fruits of the spirit and had time to write or draw in our prayer journals. Later we had a snack, then did a couple



crafts or games. Then we had a skit about the Bible verse that we read that day. Lastly, we ate lunch and then went to the Chapel for worship where we sang songs and discussed the fruits of the spirit that we learned that day. Sue and Robert enjoyed seeing the kids and families that they had seen in previous years and getting to continue their relationship where they left off. The rest of the group (Susan Chesko, Susan Durand, Aaron Chesko, Adam, Shelley, Chelsea and Maggie Cronenberg) hadn't been on the Chinle

Mission Trip before and enjoyed building relationships with the amazing kids. It was wonderful to see the kids who were very quiet on the first day of Vacation Bible School get more comfortable and really start having fun each day that went by. We played, we learned, we worshipped, and we made friends.

After the VBS finished each day, we were able to see some sights and bond as a group. We did a jeep ride into Canyon de Chelly, got a tour from Mildred Kimbrough's granddaughter at the visitor center, visited breathtaking overlooks of the canyon, played croquet, and had dinner together each night. A few of us even drove a few miles out to go star gazing one night and it was amazing how many stars we could see without city lights.





Thank you to everyone who came and volunteered their different talents. Thank you to Danny and Virginia and Tseyi Bidaa Presbyterian Church for hosting the VBS and for their wonderful hospitality. Thank you to the children for coming each day, eager to learn about God. And thank you for the ability to serve and teach the youth

about the Bible and God, and that we the volunteers got back even more than we gave through the amazing experience.



Fellowship

Join us for Faith & Family Night with the Arizona Diamondbacks on August 25th at 6:40 p.m. The D'Backs will be playing the Cincinnati Reds. Then stay for a post-game concert featuring Zach Williams! Mark your calendar and invite your friends! Sign up during coffee time in Fellowship Hall! Questions? See Erin Skarphol, Fellowship Elder.



Worship



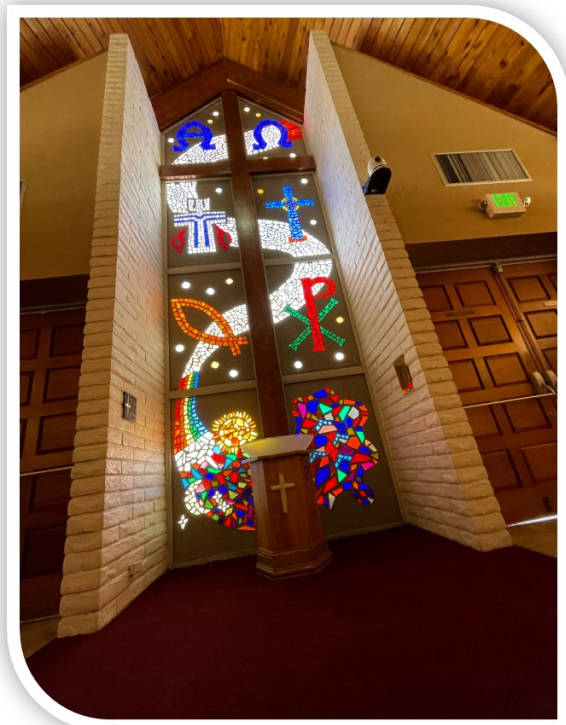
The Worship Committee is both pleased and excited to highlight the newest addition to our Sanctuary, in case you haven't already seen it. Over the past couple years we've been working to find a suitable replacement for our previous baptismal font. About nine months ago, we unanimously agreed that we'd found "the one" in a series of photos found when we searched for Baptismal Font. Our recommendation to Session was met with another resoundingly unanimous approval. We only THOUGHT the hard work was done!

Contacting the company whose name was in the photograph, revealed that the beautiful bowl was available from them but that the base had been custom made for the congregation who had allowed publication of their photo. When asked if they might share that congregation's contact information, we were advised that was not possible for confidentiality considerations. (Sigh!)

Enter Jack Oliver who said he thought he could design and build a suitable base for the bowl, which had been graciously given by Barbara Walker in memory of Graham Walker. When asked, Paul Carlson agreed he would happily provide the hand-carved cross to match the Pulpit he designed and built several years prior.

Together they – Jack, Paul and Barbara – knocked it out of the park! Their collective end product turned out so much more beautiful than the mere photo we'd all seen and approved.

The new font is currently positioned under the stained glass window in the back of the Sanctuary so if you haven't already seen it, make it a point to give it a look next time you're there. And also please be sure to thank Barbara Walker, Jack Oliver and Paul Carlson for their respective and generous contributions.



Clothing Closet Work Day will be August 12th at 8:00 a.m. Come help us move into our new larger location (the former Laubach Library). Many hands make light work!

August Birthdays



Frank Thompson	1st
Charlotte Roberts	3rd
Gordon Letizia	4th
Verna Green	5th
Todd Verch	6th
Susan McMichael	7th
Ayden Hickey	8th
Mike Chesko	10th
Jo Beth Walstrom	11th
Carol Webster	12th
Susan Chesko	14th
Eliana Couillard	19th
Declynn Reeves	19th
Lynette Belew	20th
Robert Gerlach	20th
Tricia MacDonald	25th
Doug McInelly	26th
Angelina Waters	26th
Evangelina Couillard	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.

Calendar Notes

August

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

August 3

Preschool Meet the Teacher Night

August 6

Deacons meet

August 7

First Day of Preschool

August 12

Clothing Closet Work Day

August 16

Officer Retreat

August 20

Session meets

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Chris McKee, Director of Operations
Linda Reeves, Office Manager/Publications
Shiloh Murillo, Preschool Director
Rob Kjar, Bookkeeper**