

# La Palabra

December 2021

www.fpcmesa.org

480-964-8606

## *A Message from Ann*

### **Bethlehem-Bound!**

Angels are messengers from God. The Advent Scriptures are full of divine messages from these angelic messengers! As we enter into this holy season of expectant waiting, of hopeful anticipation, we will listen to the words of the angels as they guide us on our way to Bethlehem to welcome the Christ child.

I pray we will all make time for prayer, silence, reflection, and rest so that we can truly take in the fullness of the season. Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love are the gifts given to us by our good and gracious God! Let us receive them with open hearts!

I offer to you these words from poet Ann Weems as each of us seeks our own “kneeling places” this Advent.

#### *In Search of Our Kneeling Places*

~ by Ann Weems

In each heart lies a Bethlehem,  
an inn where we must ultimately answer  
whether there is room or not.

When we are Bethlehem-bound  
we experience our own Advent in his.

When we are Bethlehem-bound  
we can no longer look the other way  
conveniently not seeing stars  
not hearing angel voices.

We can no longer excuse ourselves by busily  
tending our sheep or our kingdoms.

This Advent, let's go to Bethlehem  
and see this thing the Lord has made known to us.

In the midst of shopping sprees  
let's ponder in our hearts the Gift of Gifts.

Through the tinsel  
let's look for the gold of the Christmas star.

In the excitement and confusion, in the merry chaos,  
let's listen for the brush of angels' wings.

This Advent, let's go to Bethlehem  
and find our kneeling places.

*A blessed Advent to us all!*

~ 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**



The Gospel According to Scrooge will be presented in our Sanctuary on Sunday, December 12th, at 2:00 p.m. It will feature Dr. Glenn Bennett as Jacob Marley! The performance is produced by Galen Gallegos of Theatrical Ministries Inc. and is offered free of charge as a gift from our Church Artist Series Patrons. Please note that the performance will include unmasked singing and will be presented to a potentially larger group than we currently have in worship. To address these issues, every other pew will remain cordoned off, so there will be added

space between audience rows. The audience will also be invited to remain masked and will not sing. We pray that we will be offering a safe environment for all to enjoy the performance, but if the setting remains of concern, please watch our Sunday services for information regarding a limited number of performance recordings. Livestreaming of the concert will not be available.

Join us for Music Sunday: "Celebrate the Day!" Our choirs will present their annual music celebration on Sunday, December 19th, as a part of our 10:00 a.m. worship service. The Sanctuary Choir and One Voice will combine for virtual anthems, and we will have live music from Hearts Hands and Voices, Dei Gloriam Handbell Choir, First Ringers, and the HolyGrounds Praise Band.

Dei Gloriam Handbell Choir will ring for *Las Noches de las Luminarias 2021* at the Desert Botanical Garden on Wednesday, December 22nd, between 5:30 and 9:30 p.m. For information and tickets, please visit the [Garden website](#).

The traditional Candlelight Communion Services of Lessons & Carols will be offered on Christmas Eve at 5:30 & 8:00 p.m. (new earlier time for second service). The services will feature a "Celebration of Gifts" prelude, including instrumentals, signing, ringing, masked singing, or virtual! Please contact Mark if you would like to participate. If possible, prepare pieces based on Christmas carols.

Poinsettias will be displayed in our Sanctuary during the Advent season, and this year, we will be ordering only live poinsettias. Each plant will be offered for a donation of \$10. Please use this [FORM](#) for each poinsettia ordered (printed forms will be available in the Sanctuary). Send a check to the church (payable to "First Presbyterian Church," with memo notation "Poinsettias") or contribute via our [online giving](#). For online giving, use the category "Worship Supplies/Decorations." Your poinsettia(s) may be left with the church or taken following the second service on Christmas Eve. The deadline for orders is December 13th.

### Coming Events

- 1/10-29 Free Simulcast (10:30 a.m. Weekdays in our Sanctuary): [Calvin University "The January Series"](#)
- 1/29 Combined Presbyteries at FPC
- 2/13 Worship led by The Blackwood Quartet, 10:00 a.m.
- 2/27 Celebrating Black History Month with Special Music from Gospel Artists
- 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

Two young boys were spending the night with their grandparents the week before Christmas. At bedtime, the two boys knelt beside their beds to say their prayers when the youngest one began praying at the top of his lungs. "I PRAY FOR A NEW BICYCLE..." "I PRAY FOR A NEW NINTENDO..." "I PRAY FOR A NEW VCR..." His older brother leaned over and nudged the younger brother and said, "Why are you shouting your prayers? God isn't deaf." To which the little brother replied, "No, but Grandma is!"



Here is a virtual hug and a huge "Thank You" to everyone who made our Bake Sale a success! The bakers and cooks, the helping hands, and the congregation shoppers all contributed in a wonderful way to support our mission and purpose. We hope we were able to lighten your load as you prepared for your Thanksgiving.

We continue to study Matthew's lineage of Jesus through Tamar, Rehab and now Ruth. In Lesson four, author Meryl Blair demonstrates how "God works through ordinary people who act with godly characteristics. God is present in the everyday lives of people when they act towards each other with loyal love." We learn how God led these women, who in apparently powerless situations, to use their intelligence, inventiveness, and determination as strengths to survive and succeed. Ruth shows us steadfast love, loyalty to God and Naomi, and goodness and compassion in the face of loss, grief and famine. You are invited to join us in this study by attending one of our Circle gatherings. For more information on Luncheon and/or Circles, please call or text.

Sara McWhorter, PW Moderator

In true PW spirit, as we live out the word of Matthew 25, First Presbyterian Church of Mesa Presbyterian Women invite you to join us in sharing food and clothing with each other and with those in need. Our Holiday Luncheon will be held on December 4, at 11:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. This year, the luncheon is a participatory event. Men, women, and children are all welcome to join in the fun!

You are invited to choose an outfit or piece of clothing from your closet to model in our "fashion show" and then donate to FPC's Clothing Closet. You may either bring a change of clothes to go home in and leave the clothing you modeled on Saturday, OR return Sunday morning for the service and bring your donation at that time and leave the clothing in the collection area outside the sanctuary.

We also invite you to bring a salad or dessert to share, as we nourish each other both physically and spiritually during this time of fellowship and laughter. If you feel moved to bring a different type of pot-luck dish, I doubt anyone will mind.

To close our time together, we will be sharing our voices in songs of the season and caroling in praise of our Savior's birth. We hope and pray you will join us in this celebration.

Please RSVP by November 30 by calling or texting Sara McWhorter at 480-844-8174. Participation is encouraged, but not required.



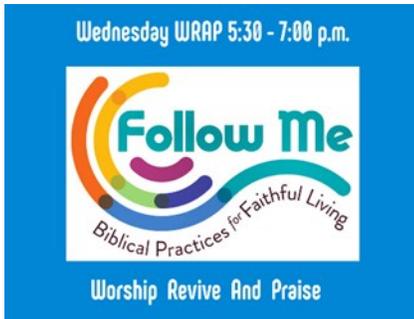
## DISCIPLESHIP

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

### December Faith Formation Happenings



**Wednesday WRAP Holiday Edition.** WRAP returns Wednesday, December 1st, for a special Advent Edition. Join us at 5:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. (December 1, 8, 15) Come enjoy festive holiday fellowship, dinner, worship, Christmas crafts and an interactive Advent study for the entire family. Simply sign-up at the door and enjoy an evening of worship, revive and praise with a Christmas twist.

**Christmas Through the Eyes of a Child.** At FPC Mesa we love to have the children participate in worship, especially at Christmastime. During our Christmas Eve worships we plan on showing video snippets of the kiddos sharing their family's nativity set, their favorite nativity character, share their favorite Christmas tradition, as well as tell us why we celebrate Christmas. We are requesting videos to be shared through Goggle and completed by Sunday, December 19th. Please contact Chris McKee for complete details.



**Advent Themed Children's Packets Available.** One of the joys of the Christmas season is enjoying holiday themed activities with the kids. Advent activity packets including Advent calendars are now available. Please pick one up at the Pray & Play area during worship.



**Advent Bedtime Stories.** Bedtime Stories with Chris is back with a special Advent Edition. Have your kids wind down their day with a bedtime story and a goodnight prayer with Chris. We will reflect upon the true meaning of Christmas by sharing excerpts from "The Way to the Manger" by Jeff & Abbey Land. Kid friendly devotions will be posted Sunday evenings throughout Advent on FPC's website and Facebook page.

**Youth Triennium 2022 Scholarships.** Triennium is a special event for youth entering or graduating high school that gathers every three years. Triennium is scheduled for next summer, July 24-27, 2022, in Indianapolis, Indiana. The Presbytery of Grand Canyon is in the process of forming their 2022 youth delegation. First Presbyterian Church of Mesa would like to help send up to two active youth members. The cost for Triennium will be shared between the Presbytery, FPC of Mesa and the youth family. Scholarship forms are now available at the church office and are due by **Sunday, December 5, 2021 at noon**. Please contact Chris McKee for further details at [chris@fpcmesa.org](mailto:chris@fpcmesa.org).

#### **Weekly Youth Gatherings**

Our junior high and high school teens gather most Sundays at 11:20 a.m. in the youth room. Join us for pray, play and God talk.



**Christmas Gift Wrapping Fundraiser.** The Youth will be gift wrapping to support their youth ministry program on December 5, and December 12. Please drop off your labeled unwrapped gifts at the designated cart in front of the sanctuary before worship and pick up your wrapped gift by 12:15 p.m. at the youth room.

**Youth Christmas Party 2021.** Oh, What Fun we will have at the 2021 Youth Christmas party. Join us on Sunday, December 19th, at 11:30 a.m. in the youth room for a jolly time. Enjoy a festive afternoon of holiday fun, incredible food and good friends. Please bring a white elephant gift under \$20, your favorite dish to share, and friends! Pizza and drinks provided.

Have a blessed Christmas Season!

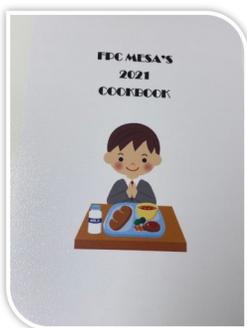
Chris McKee  
Minister of Faith Formation



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### FPC Cookbook Now Available

The FPC cookbook is available now for only \$10, just in time for the holidays! You can buy them after church each week during December in Fellowship Hall. You can also stop by the church office during the week to pick one up or let the office know if you need it delivered to your house. The proceeds will go to I-Help and the Food Pantry.



It's time to order poinsettias for Christmas. If you are interested in ordering a live poinsettia in honor or memory of a loved one to be used in the Sanctuary during the Advent season, order forms are available in the Sanctuary, the church office or can be ordered online using this [FORM](#). The poinsettias are \$10 apiece. Please return the form, with payment attached, to the church office. Deadline for response is December 13th.

## 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.** During this Advent Season, we celebrate leadership: past, present and future through support of this offering. We do so because church leaders greatly impact our lives of faith, walking with us down the path to be more like Jesus. The funds go to support the Board of Pensions which honors the faithful-

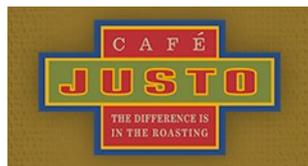
ness of current and retired church workers and their families in need. Another way our contributions work is to prepare the way for future leaders. The PC(USA) has long promoted education and leadership development through the establishment and support of Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. The Christmas Joy Offering supports Menaul School in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Presbyterian Pan American School in Kingsville Texas, and Stillman college in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. The offering will be received from November 28th – December 19th. December 19th is when we will gather our gifts, but you are welcome to give your gift earlier if you know you won't be in town.

**Christmas Angel Tree:** FPC is sponsoring three neighborhood families in need this Christmas. We will be providing gifts and a holiday meal for each family. The Christmas Angel Tree is set up in the Sanctuary now, and decorated with paper angel ornaments labeled with family names and designated gift items. Please take an angel from the tree and purchase the gift requested. Wrap your gift with holiday paper and attach the angel on the outside of the gift. Gifts and food will be delivered on Sunday, December 19th. Thank you for your support of this long-standing Christmas tradition.

**Household and personal care items** for families on the Christmas Angel Tree are also needed. There will be a collection box in the church office to receive toilet paper, shampoo, laundry detergent, light bulbs, Kleenex, dish detergent and bath soap. We appreciate all contributions to this project.



**Café Justo** What is the perfect gift for all of your coffee loving friends and family? Café Justo coffee of course! They will enjoy the coffee and you will enjoy knowing that you purchased delicious coffee for a good cause. Sign Ups for Café Justo are on a bulletin board in Fellowship Hall. The last day to order will be December 5th, and the coffee will be available for pickup in Fellowship Hall after church on December 19th.



Giving to FPC Mesa directly from an IRA can be beneficial for both you and your church. If you are at least 70 1/2, your gift can be sent without paying federal income tax on the amount donated. If you are at least 72, your contribution can apply toward your annual required minimum distribution. Please consult a tax professional about a Qualified Charitable Donation. If you need FPC Mesa's EIN number, contact me at 480 677-0843.

Thank you,  
Brent Gregory, Stewardship and Finance Elder

## December Birthdays



Denver Wyse	1st
Sheilah Dye	2nd
Linda Reeves	4th
Kay Herrera	5th
Sophia Letizia	5th
Karen Rudin	6th
Anita Ramsey	9th
Nancy Tordai	10th
Carolyn Barber	14th
Lucy MacDonald	15th
Gana Martin	16th
Janice Williamson	16th
Bob Leonard	17th
Carole Baird	18th
Laura Bruening	19th
Barbara Walker	20th
Maurice Belew	21st
Jon Martin	21st
Virginia Perkins	21st
Steve Durand	23rd
Katie Masterson	24th
John Schlak	27th
Mirasol Bronola	29th
Rosemary Goings	29th
Nicki McInnelly	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.

Merry  
Christmas

## ADDRESS CHANGES/CORRECTIONS

Leigh, Virginia  
American Groves, #101  
941 E. Elliot Rd.  
Gilbert, AZ 85234

### Calendar Notes

#### December

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

#### December 1 & 15

Women's Bible Study

#### December 1, 8 & 15

WRAP Advent Block

#### December 4

Men's Breakfast  
PW Holiday Luncheon

#### December 12

Gospel According to Scrooge

#### December 13 & 14

Circles meet

#### December 19

Music Sunday

#### December 24

Christmas Eve: Family Service (5:30)  
Traditional Service (8:00)

#### December 25

*Merry Christmas!*

#### December 26

Monthly Food Drive  
Hymn Sing during worship

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

Ann Conklin: [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)  
Don Krill: [buildings@fpcmesa.org](mailto:buildings@fpcmesa.org)  
Rob Kjar: [business@fpcmesa.org](mailto:business@fpcmesa.org)

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**LA PALABRA**

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

**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**