

La Palabra

December 2022

www.fpcmesa.org

480-964-8606

A Message from David

Have you ever noticed how every Christmas celebration has levels of nostalgia from other Christmas celebrations you have known? Perhaps it's the ornaments and decorations that touch the mind into remembering, or the sounds of Christmas carols that stir the heart with fondness, but each Christmas seems to me to hold sacred the treasures of all previous celebrations.



Perhaps it is just because I'm in that nostalgic stage of life, but it is a time for remembering with gratitude the extended family that gathered, the sacramental nature of the Christmas dinner, the quiet conversations and family laughter, the aroma of scented candles and of a pine log burning in the hearth, and through it all the sound of Christmas music.

If you've ever tried to sing Christmas carols in August, you know it's possible but never quite the same. The tunes are the same, but the sense of spiritual kinship that stirs our common humanity, the spirit of generosity that inspires our gift giving, the belief that peace on earth is possible at last ~ all of them only seem to come together when we celebrate Christ at Christmas.

Is it possible that it is our celebration of Christ's birth and life among us that actually draws the Spirit of Christ to us in very public ways!

Wherever you are on Christmas, let's make it a point to be together ~ whether in person or online. We celebrate on Christmas Eve at 6:00 p.m., and on Christmas Day at 10:00 a.m.; and the nice thing about our online feature is that we can share the same worship experience at different times, when it fits conveniently into our schedules.

So let's gather together to celebrate the birth and life of Christ, and bring with us all the cherished memories of Christmases that we have known.

With love and gratitude,
David

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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

“Everything must be possible.” - J. S. Bach

Christmas morning worship at FPC will include a choral setting of “The Stockings Danced.” The special Christmas story has been passed down through the generations of one of our church families and is dedicated to our online families tuning-in while opening presents and stockings. Join us on campus or online!



Music Sunday: "Following Yonder Star"

Sunday, December 18

in our Sanctuary at 10:00 a.m.

Celebrate Christmas Music at FPC! Music will feature Children's Ensembles, Vocal Choirs, Bell Choirs, Signing Choir, Piano, Organ, Praise Band, and Congregational Carols!

THE SOUTHWEST CHAMBER CHORALE
PRESENTS:
**SING WE NOW OF
CHRISTMAS**
Sunday December 18, 2022
7:00 pm
First Presbyterian Church
161 N. Mesa Drive
Free Admission
(Donations accepted and appreciated)
Selections by: John Rutter, Dan
Forrest, Kirby Shaw, and many more.

Humoresque

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

Giving a man his physical, a doctor noticed several dark, ugly bruises on his shins, so he asked, "Do you play hockey, soccer, or any physical sport?"
"Not at all. I just play bridge with my wife." [from Anita Ramsey]



Gail Soderquist correctly guessed last month's band member of note, Dave Woods! Congratulations, Gail! Here is this month's mystery member. Send guesses to music@fpcmesa.org. If you would like to be included in a future issue, please send to the same email address a photo of you in your band uniform.

Thank you to the Cast & Crew of *Singin' in the Rain* for terrific performances of our 24th Annual First Players Production. Thank you also to the congregation for supporting not only the First Players but also each of our [Artist Series](#) events, through your donations and faithful attendance.

Poinsettias will be displayed in our Sanctuary during the Advent season. Each plant will be offered for a donation of \$10. Please use this [FORM](#) for each poinsettia ordered (printed forms are 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](#) (category: "Worship Supplies/Decorations"). Your poinsettia(s) may be left with the church or taken following worship on

Coming Events

- 12/24 Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service of Lessons and Carols, 6:00 p.m.
- 12/25 (Sunday), Christmas Day Worship, 10:00 a.m.



So much gratitude...

Thanks to all the generous patrons who made the PW Bake Sale for missions a success; we know you enjoyed your purchases!

Thanks to ALL who contributed delectable items to sell. PW feels so supported by those outside of Circles who participate in many ways!

Thanks to the PW members for their tireless and talented efforts that make our events possible!

See page 7 for a special announcement about the Christmas Luncheon!

There is a need this year for additional financial gifts to the General Fund. Our church is currently running about a month behind in our giving income. With an average of an extra \$200 in giving per member, we can overcome this shortfall. Please prayerfully consider an additional gift to the General Fund. Thank you to those who have already responded to this need.

Brent Gregory, Stewardship & Finance Elder

DISCIPLESHIP

Min. of Faith Formation — Chris McKee
 Adult (E) — Karen Rudin
 Discipleship (D) – Anita Ramsey

Children’s Ministries (E) — Susan Chesko
 Youth/Young Adult (E) — Ian Harding

December Faith Formation Happenings

Christmas Through the Eyes of a Child. Seeing Christmas through the eyes of our children is precious and enduring. We will be providing an opportunity for our children and grandchildren to tell us what Christmas means to them and what they like most about Christmas? We will share their special thoughts during our Christmas Eve worship. Please record your kiddo’s candid response and send via Google Drive to ccmckee@gmail.com. Please send by Sunday, December 18th. Feel free to contact Chris with any questions.



Christmas Bedtime Stories. Bedtime Stories with Chris is back for the Christmas Season. Kids or those who are a kid at heart can wind down their day with a bedtime story and a special goodnight Christmas prayer. We will reflect upon the true meaning of Christmas by sharing Christmas themed storybooks. Bedtime Stories will be published weekly on Monday evenings on FPC’s website and Facebook page.

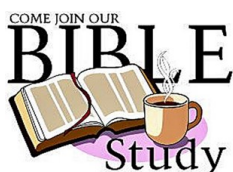
Advent Themed Children’s Packets Available. One of the joys of the Christmas season is enjoying Christmas-themed activities with the kids. Advent activity packets including Advent calendars are now available. Please pick one up at the Pray & Play area during worship. Also, during worship, we will have special Christmas themed activities at Pray & Play.

Sunday School Opportunities. Most Sundays at 11:20 a.m. (September through May) **No Sunday School on December 25th or January 1st.**

AGE	LOCATION	CURRICULUM
Children	Jackson	Growing in Grace & Gratitude
Youth (Jr. High & Sr. High)	Youth Room	God Talk with Chris
Adults	Library	Bible Discussion

Children’s Choirs Rehearsals for Christmas. Our two children’s choirs are getting ready for Christmas by rehearsing “Joy to the World” and “Silent Night” in preparation for Music Sunday, December 18th, and Christmas Eve. Kids Praise Singers meet the first 10 minutes of Sunday School in Jackson and Pure Praise Voices rehearse on Wednesdays at 4:45 p.m. in the Choir Room.

Men’s Fellowship Group. Men’s Fellowship is meeting in Fellowship Hall on Tuesdays at 7:30 a.m. An online Zoom option is also available. Please email Paul Soderquist pfsod77@gmail.com for the details.



Koinonia Women’s Bible Study. The Koinonia Women’s Bible Study meets via Zoom on Thursdays from 2:30 -4:00 p.m. Their current study is “Help is Here” by Max Lucado. Please contact Karen Rudin at 480-233-1043 for more information.

Wednesday WRAP



Wednesdays
5:30-7:00 p.m.
Fellowship Hall
Advent Edition: "Go Tell"

Wednesday WRAP Advent Edition. WRAP returns Wednesday, November 30th, for a special Advent Edition, "Go Tell." Join us at 5:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall November 30th, December 7th and 14th. Come enjoy festive holiday fellowship, dinner, worship and an Advent study for children & adults. Discover the reason of the season at WRAP.

Christmas Blessings!

Chris McKee
 Minister of Faith Formation
chris@fpcmesa.org



We recognize that we are so blessed and thankful for the gifts that this Christmas Season brings, and we know that we are loved abundantly by our Lord! May the joy of Christmas fill your homes with love and laughter!

Merry Christmas!
 Shiloh Murillo, Director



November was a fast and fun month at the preschool! We welcomed the Arizona Puppet Theater when they came to present a show on Dental Health and Hygiene. We also celebrated Thanksgiving with our Family Feast on November 22nd with many families joining us for our sit-down, kid-friendly meal (chicken nuggets, cheese sticks, tangerines and cupcakes 😊LOL). Many of you know that the last two years we have been unable to host this festive event due to COVID. So, this year was that much more special!

We are looking forward to celebrating many fun things during this month including the Birth of our Savior, Jesus! We will welcome the families once again, to come to our Christmas Program on December 14th at 10:30 and invite you too! We will be singing Christmas songs and enjoying cookies and milk afterwards. It should be a fabulous time!



FPC Mesa Family,

The Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) is being formed. The PNC will be tasked with preparing the mission study that will be viewed by candidates, and to identify and interview prospective pastors. If you are interested in being considered for this opportunity, please contact Marcy Snitzer at marcy.snitzer@gmail.com or 480-510-7939. The FPC Nominating Committee will review all submissions with the goal of creating a PNC that consists of seven individuals who represent the diverse viewpoints and demographics of our church.

Marcy Snitzer, Nominating Elder

MISSION

Mission (E) (Chair) — Shelley Cronenberg
Pastor – David Hodgson
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 is being received November 27th – December 18th. “God has blessed the Church with incredible leadership in every time and place, but those leaders often need to be supported by their communities as well. This Offering addresses the support needed by some of our leaders, including supporting leadership development for communities of color, and providing support for Presbyterian church workers in their time of need (PC USA).” Your offering supports the past, present, and future leaders. Please prayerfully consider a donation for this special offering.

Christmas Angel Tree: FPC is sponsoring three needy neighborhood families this Christmas. We will be providing gifts and a holiday meal for each family. The Christmas Angel Tree is set up in the Sanctuary 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 18th. If you would like to help deliver the gifts and food, contact: Dale Gibson. Thank you for your support of this longstanding 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.

Clothing Closet now open Mondays and needs volunteers - The Clothing Closet team is excited to announce that they are adding an additional day that the Clothing Closet will be open. In addition to Fridays from 8:00-9:00 a.m. they will now be open Mondays from 8:00-9:00 a.m. as well. There is a core of experienced volunteers that are looking for extra hands to help during these hours. Volunteering couldn't be easier because you will be paired with a more experienced volunteer. There is no need to RSVP, just show up on the day that you are available, and the team will gladly accept any help that they can get. The current volunteers have wonderful stories that they can share where they have had the privilege of being Jesus's hands and helping serve the community. If you have any questions, you can reach out to Renita Jurgensen.

Mission Trip Planning Team – We are starting the planning process for our 2023 Mission Trip. We are planning to take Montlure to Tseyi Bidaa Presbyterian Church in Del Muerto, Arizona. More information will be coming soon, but if you are interested in and willing to be a part of the mission trip planning team, Please talk to Shelley Cronenberg (480-239-1289).

The Food Pantry needs your continued help! In the past, United Food Bank helped us source most of the donations needed to help us run our Food Pantry. We recently lost these food donations and could really use your help. If you prefer to donate money instead, please make sure to put Food Pantry in the memo line. Please feel free to bring with you the following items which are collected every Sunday:

- Cereal
- Canned Veggies
- Canned Fruit
- Pasta
- Spaghetti Sauce
- Peanut butter
- A protein (canned chicken, tuna, chili, etc.)
- Toilet Paper is also requested regularly



Special December Happenings!



You are invited to
Art Night@FPC

Join us for fun & fellowship while
we create a Christmas painting!
All supplies provided

December 12th, 6:00 p.m.
in the Parlor



Holiday Luncheon

Please join us!

FPC Mesa Presbyterian Women invites you to enjoy
food, festivities, and inspiration!

December 10, 2022 11:30 a.m.
161 N Mesa Drive, Mesa 85201

Salad, dessert, or chef's choice Potluck!

Program: "Lord, Let It Be According to Your Word" by Juliana Leshar, M. Div., Ph.D., a Bible-based speaker and published Christian author who has ministered extensively.

Please RSVP names attending by December 7th to Carol Anderson:
Text, VM or call 480.272.5517 or carolboydanderson@gmail.com

We hope you can come!

Merry Christmas to all!



CHRISTMAS WORSHIP

Christmas Eve, December 24, 6:00 p.m.
Carols, Stories, Communion, Candlelight

Christmas Day, December 25, 10:00 a.m.
Wear Your Christmas Pajamas!

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
161 N. MESA, DRIVE
MESA, AZ 85201
FPCMESA.ORG

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
Pat Mills	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
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.



IN MEMORIAM

Gary Marshall — October 6, 2022
 Jeff McMichael — November 16, 2022



ADDRESS CHANGES/CORRECTIONS

Peterson, Jan & John 2645 E. Southern Ave., #A690 Tempe AZ 85282 (480) 756-4311	Weinel, Elly 4562 E. Farmdale Circle Mesa, AZ 85206
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Calendar Notes

December

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

Youth meet at 11:20 a.m.
 Youth Room

Christian Education at 11:20 a.m.

Food Donations taken every Sunday
 Clothing Closet donations taken first Sunday

November 30, December 7 & 14

WRAP meets

December 4

Deacons meet
 Singin' in the Rain Cast Party

December 7 & 21

Women's Bible Study

December 10

PW Holiday Luncheon

December 12 & 13

Circles meet

December 17

Jeff McMichael Memorial Service

December 18

Music Sunday

December 24

Christmas Eve Service — 6:00 p.m.

December 25

Merry Christmas!
 10:00 service in person and online

Merry Christmas!

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

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A publication for members and friends, published monthly.

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161 North Mesa Drive
Mesa, AZ 85201**

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Website: www.fpcmesa.org

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

**David Hodgson, Interim 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**