

La Palabra

December 2023

www.fpcmesa.org

480-964-8606

A Message from David

As I mentioned in a recent sermon, Advent is both a season for remembering how the Life of Christ first came to us, and a season for anticipating how He will come again to us. In the meantime, we celebrate His influence within us and among us.

Therefore, it seems appropriate to me that the person our pastoral search committee will introduce to us on December 3rd will be preaching his candidate sermon on the first Sunday of Advent. It will begin our season of remembering and anticipating ~ a time to reflect upon where



the Lord has been with us, and a time to anticipate with joy what the Lord will reveal in the future for us.

As for my remembrances, they include the many experiences we have shared in our interim transition. And my anticipations are high for all that God will accomplish in the next season of congregational life with your new pastor. I am certain, by the way, the Lord brought us to this special time, that He has great things to accomplish among us.

You will always have a special place in my heart as I continue to hold you in my prayers. To God be all the Glory and Praise!

With love and gratitude,

David

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From the Clerk's Desk

News from the OCTOBER Session meeting.

Clerk's Statistics for October

- Philip Douglas was born October 20 to Michael & Ines McGrath
- No weddings, baptisms or deaths
- Membership 235
- Avg. Attendance 86 in-person & 83 online = 169

Carol Gerlach, Clerk

Committee Motions

Finance	The October Financial Reports were approved by the Board of Trustees.
Personnel	Approved the updates made to the Personnel Handbook
Worship	The 2024 Communion dates were approved

Other Motions

Session approved a motion to call a Congregational Meeting on Sunday, December 3, to vote on the candidate recommended by the PNC to be our new Pastor

Southwest
CHAMBER
CHORALE

PRESENTS
GAUDETE

WITH MUSIC FROM DAN FORREST,
JOHN RUTTER, MACK WILBERG,
AND MORE

SATURDAY DEC 16TH -
7:00PM
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
161 N MESA DR

\$5.00 DONATION PER PERSON REQUESTED

Worship

With Christmas Eve falling on a Sunday this year, the Worship Committee and Session have agreed to try something different by combining the regular Sunday morning and evening services into one afternoon service. We hope you'll agree this will leave the morning free for any last minute and Christmas day preparations you may have, and the evening free for those of you who have special dinner or other evening traditions for Christmas Eve. We also know that some find it difficult to drive in the twilight or nighttime hours and hope this will alleviate those concerns as well. Please plan to join us for this year's Christmas Eve service of traditional readings, carols, candlelight and bells at 3:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary.



Monthly Potluck



Fellowship

There will be **no monthly potluck** in December since the fourth Sunday is Christmas Eve. Have a very Merry Christmas!

Discipleship

Youth and Young Adults will be doing a gift-wrapping drive in Fellowship Hall on December 10th and 17th following worship. They will be wrapping Christmas gifts and taking donations.



Mesa Presbyterian Ministries

Help families in need now and pay less income tax in April!

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.



A huge thank you goes out to all who contributed to our PW Thanksgiving Bake Sale! We are grateful to those who baked, canned, and prepared the lovely items, and equally grateful to all who shopped. The quilts were a great addition this year; Sara and Suzi are amazing seamstresses! The PW ladies did a wonderful job setting up and cleaning up!

ALL ARE INVITED! Our traditional Holiday Luncheon is December 9th, such a perfect way to continue embracing the season of Jesus' birth!

Our lunch buffet is always delightful; the fellowship with FPC women and others from the Presbytery is a highlight, and we will have a most interesting program by two ladies who founded a wonderful charity to exemplify the spirit of giving through recycling jewelry, craft items, fabric and more to create gifts that appeal to adult demographics who typically are not considered through gift donations. You must hear their stories about their love of the Lord and their desire to give to others. If you have such items (cleaned out your jewelry drawer lately?) and would like to recycle them, there will be a donation box in Fellowship Hall now through the day of the luncheon.

See the invitation for details and invite some friends! Please let us know you're coming – how many and first name(s). We hope to see you there!

	<h2>HOLIDAY LUNCHEON</h2> <p>First Presbyterian Church 161 N. Mesa Dr., Mesa</p>
<p>featuring the</p> <h3>Busted Broads</h3> <p>new life for old jewelry</p>	
	
<p>Presbyterian Women Invite You</p> <p>Saturday, December 9, 2023</p> <p>Fellowship Hall</p> <p>11:00 Meet & Greet</p> <p>11:30 Lunch Served</p> <p>12:15 Program</p>	
<p>Bring: **a salad or dessert to share</p> <p>**donation to Busted Broads Charity - recyclable costume jewelry.</p>	<p>RSVP: **Please let us know who will come by December 4.</p> <p>**carolboydanderson@gmail.com or text/VM to (480) 272-5517</p>

December Circle meetings – All ladies are welcome!
 This month's encounter involves Mary, Martha and Jesus.
 Eve – December 12, 4:00 p.m.
 Deborah – December 13, 9:30 a.m.
 Rachel – December 13, 1:00 p.m.
 All circles meet in the parlor. Please join us!





Merry Christmas! The spirit of the season is upon us and it feels so special! 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! 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 14 at 10:30 and invite you too! We will be singing Christmas songs and enjoying cookies & milk afterwards. It should be a fabulous time!

In November we welcomed the Preschool's very first program director, Debbie Balmer, back to the school for a special tour and visit. She shared with us the many great memories, walking us down memory lane. 37 years ago, she and many other members of the First Presbyterian Church community worked so hard to bring the vision and mission of the church to life by welcoming the first families to our program. We have been celebrating the fruits of this legacy ever since. We look forward to having her back in the near future.

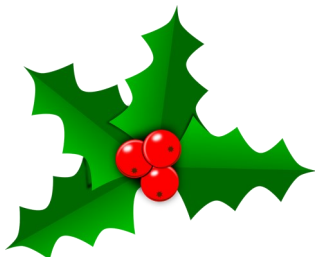


Please help to get the word out that we have many scholarships in the PreK classroom open ready to fill. Please share with anyone who has young children or stop by the preschool office for more information.

May the joy of Christmas fill your homes with love and laughter!

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!
Shiloh Murillo, Director

The Angel Tree will be up on Sunday, December 3rd, and decorated with angel gift ideas for the families we have chosen. Please wrap and return your gifts under the tree by Sunday, December 17th. That's only a two-week time period this year! We will be delivering them on that date.



All Church Clean & Greens Day!

On Saturday, December 2nd starting at 9:00 a.m., plan to get in the Christmas spirit by helping spruce up the church and then hang the greens to decorate for the holiday season! All are welcome and appreciated!

Mission

November has been a busy month for mission.

- We had our 3rd community dinner on November 1st. We have hosted around 150 people for the first 3 dinners!
- We had a blessing of the animals on November 4th. Pastor David, Paul Soderquist and Susan Chesko helped with the blessing of 5 dogs and a bird. Some photos of the animals blessed on November 4th are below.
- On November 11th, FPC Mesa had a car in the East Valley Veteran's Day parade to let the community know our church supports all veterans.
- The silent auction ran during the month of November, concluding on November 26th. During the silent auction over \$800 was raised to help continue mission projects in our community.

Here are some upcoming events:

- Angel tree will begin December 3rd. You can take the angel tags that will be placed on the Christmas tree at the back of the Sanctuary. The tag will let you know the gift to purchase and wrapped presents need to be returned by December 17th and put under the tree.
- Wednesday, December 6th, will be the community dinner at 5:30 in Fellowship Hall. Fried chicken will be served followed by ornament making and singing Christmas carols.
- The spring festival will be Saturday, March 16th. If you would like to be on the planning committee, let Susan Chesko know.



December Birthdays



Denver Wyse	1st
Sheilah Dye	2nd
Linda Reeves	4th
Kay Herrera	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
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.

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

David Hodgson: 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

ADDRESS CHANGES/CORRECTIONS

Brause, Eileen Fellowship Square 35 W. Brown Rd., #235F Mesa, AZ 85201	Mills, Pat & Rosie 3212 N. Miller Rd., #245 Scottsdale, AZ 85251
Dent, Lubna 43909 W. Arizona Ave. Maricopa, AZ 85138	White, Joan 2635 E. Southern Ave., #N1411 Tempe, AZ 85282

Calendar Notes

December

Worship every Sunday at 10:00 a.m.
In person or online (See Christmas Eve below)

Christian Education at 11:20 a.m.

Food Donations taken every Sunday

Clothing Closet donations taken first Sunday

December 2-3

Pastor Candidate Weekend
Clean & Greens Day (12/2)
Meet & Greet (12/2)
Pastor Candidate preaches in worship
Reception following worship (12/3)

December 6 & 20

Women's Bible Study

December 7

Sew Powerful Purse Project

December 9

PW Holiday Luncheon

December 10

Deacons meet

December 11 & 12

Circles meet

December 14

Preschool Christmas Program

December 16

Southwest Chamber Chorale

December 24

Christmas Eve — Service at 3:00 p.m.

December 25

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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Mesa, AZ 85201**

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