

La Palabra

December 2015

www.fpcmesa.org

480-964-8606



A Message from Lois

...The shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and *pondered* them in her heart. Luke 2: 15b-19

The month of December is given to waiting and watching for upcoming activities and special days. As kids our brains take in a series of coming attractions related to toys, special foods, possible visits from family and friends. The coming attractions offer clues as to their arrival; some have specific days and times, some only say, "Coming Soon." As children, we waited for the Christmas vacation from school. As we waited, we spent time thinking about the gifts we would like to receive. If we are honest, we spent more time and effort on what we wanted than what we planned to give others. While we had heard that "it was more blessed to give than to receive," in our heart of hearts, this didn't really seem true. As we grew older, we gave more time and thought to gift giving, especially as we spent time waiting and watching as romance grew. Over the years, we have waited for weddings, birth of our children, and at times watched and waited as loved ones came to the end to their appointed days with us.

Most of December is devoted to the seasons and meanings of Advent and Christmas. These seasons remind us that there was a time of waiting and wishing for God's presence in our world. The carol, "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" when translated into English has us singing, "O come, O come, God be with us!" Christmas Day and season reminds us that God became incarnate, in the flesh and lived, worked, and died among humanity.

The scripture lessons of Advent also remind us that the God we waited for, the God who lived and died among us is still with us in our everyday living and will also come again at some future time as the God who is still with us.

During this month, please, ponder all this in your heart and come celebrate the great mystery of our Christian faith, "Christ has died. Christ is risen, Christ will come again."

Advent Blessings...Lois

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WORSHIP

Dir. of Music (Chair) — Mark Ramsey
Worship (E) — Nate Robinson
Prayer Chain (D) — Bev Goff

Funerals/Memorials (D) — Karyn Weaver
Worship (D) — Carol Webster

Mark's Remarks

(480) 964-8606, EXT. 103; MUSIC@FPCMESA.ORG

“The final aim and reason of all music is nothing other than the glorification of God and the refreshment of the spirit.” - Johann Sebastian Bach

Announcements



Our Artist Series will present the Arizona Cantilena Chorale in our Sanctuary on Sunday, December 13th, at 4:00 p.m. The Chorale will perform the Bach *Magnificat* and Vivaldi *Gloria*. The Chorale was founded in 2005 and consists of seasoned musicians under the direction of Dr. Glenn Bennett and accompanied by Dr. Robert Mills, Piano. This concert will also be accompanied by Dr. Mark Ramsey, Organist.

This year's Music Sunday will include the cantata "Stars of Glory" by Tom Fettke & Thomas Grassi. It will be held on December 20th, during our 9:00 a.m. service and will feature each of our FPC choirs. The service will include choir solos, combined choirs, and congregational carols. There will be a special Music Sunday rehearsal on Wednesday, December 16th from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Following rehearsal, the Sanctuary Choir will adjourn to the Choir Room, where the choir will rehearse for Christmas Eve, from 7:00-8:00. (There will not be a Wednesday WRAP dinner that evening.)

"The Twelve Days of Christmas" will be presented by the Sanctuary Choir during Sunday Coffee Hour, also on December 20th. Join us in Fellowship Hall following 9:00 a.m. worship to enjoy this fun-filled Christmas entertainment.

A Candlelight Communion Service of Lessons, Carols & Readings will be offered on Christmas Eve at both 5:30 & 8:30 p.m. The 5:30 p.m. service will feature a "Celebration of Gifts" prelude. All of our children and youth musicians are invited to offer an instrumental or vocal solo. Please contact Mark if you would like to share your gifts! If possible, prepare pieces based on Christmas carols.

In addition, the congregational carols for the 5:30 service on Christmas Eve will be accompanied by FPC instrumentalists! If you will be available to play, please call the Church Office (480-964-8606) or send an email to music@fpcmesa.org.

The Worship Commission is raising funds to replace our stage front curtain. Amazingly enough, after 30-40 years, the curtain no longer has a fireproof rating! Half of the curtain replacement costs have been designated, and the remainder will be offset by theater program advertisement sales. If you would like to advertise in next year's *Mary Poppins* program, advertising forms will be available in the Church Office next month.



It's time to order poinsettias for Christmas. If you are interested in ordering a poinsettia in honor or memory of a loved one to be used in the Sanctuary during the Advent season, order forms are available at the kiosk or in the Church Office. The poinsettias are \$10 apiece. Please return the form, with payment attached, to the church office. There will be a sign-up table during coffee time. Deadline for response is December 14th.

Humoresque

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

Husband: I'm the man of this house, so starting tomorrow I want you to have a hot, delicious meal ready for me the second I walk through the door. Wife: ... Husband: Afterwards, while watching ESPN and relaxing in my chair, you'll bring me my slippers and then run my bath. Wife: ... Husband: And when I'm done with my bath, guess who's going to dress me and comb my hair? Wife: The funeral director? [From Anita Ramsey]

Coming Events

- February 27 (Saturday) Mesa Interfaith Choral Festival, St. Luke Lutheran Church, Mesa. Choirs from four Mesa churches: FPC, Grace UMC, St. Luke, and Mesa North Stake.
- February 28 (Sunday) Artist Series: Marcia Whitehead, Soprano (both services).

DISCIPLESHIP

Director of C.E. — Jasmine Couillard
Adult (E) — Martha Bienert

Children's Ministries (E) — Anita Ramsey
Family Ministries (E) — Alice Schlak

Youth/Young Adult (E) — Jennifer Martin
Youth Elder — Dylan Hickey

Children's Sunday School is in full swing! We meet each week on the playground at 10:25 for a sing-a-long, accompanied by the guitar. After singing a couple songs, we disperse to our classrooms. Bea Towe and Stephanie Gerlach are teaching the preschool through third grade students in Jackson B. Ruth Letizia and Deborah Rosen are teaching the fourth through sixth grade students in Jackson A. Sunday School runs until 11:20. Join us as we learn to obey God's direction because we know He keeps his promises!

Everyone is welcome and invited to join us at Wednesday WRAP! We meet in Fellowship Hall from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. for fellowship, music, dinner and Bible Study. The themes for December are:

December 2 – Winter Wonderland

December 9 – Christmas

December 16 – Music Sunday practice in Sanctuary
(no dinner or Bible study tonight!)

We will not meet for the remainder of December. Have a Merry Christmas!



The preschool is bustling with exciting things going on. What a wonderful time of year it is as we look forward to the cool weather, long winter days off and the warmth of being surrounded by our loved ones. We just celebrated our annual Thanksgiving Feast with our families. There were 28 families in attendance! How about stopping by sometime in December to see what the kids are up to? They will be making special gifts for their families and celebrating the Christmas Spirit the whole month long.

Christmas time has a magical spirit that the children love to be a part of. Christ, our Savior is born, and we are looking forward to showcasing our young stars for the Christmas Program on Thursday, December 10th, at 9:30 a.m. Please join us. You won't want to miss it! The Preschool will be closed for the Christmas holiday and New Years from December 21-January 1. School will resume on Monday, January 4, 2016.

Christmas Wish List for the Preschool: Large bottles of Bubbles, little boys & little girls underwear (size 2T, 3T or 4T), Christmas stickers, pretzels, fish crackers, cheese sticks, peanut butter or yogurt sticks. Thank you for your support and prayers for our little school!

Have a very sacred Christmas with your families!
Shiloh Murillo, Director

FELLOWSHIP

Fellowship (E) (Chair) — Dan Davenport
Cards (D) — Gretchen Frederick
Older Adult (E) — Steve Muth

Transportation (D) — Doug McInelly
Parish Deacon 1 — Mark Waters
Parish Deacon 2 — Suzanne Engman
Parish Deacon 3 — Dale Gibson

Parish Deacon 4 — Erin Skarphol
Parish Deacon 5 — Heidi Blincoe
Presbyterian Women — Susan McMichael



Presbyterian Women FPC – Holiday Luncheon

Saturday, December 12th

11:30 meet & greet

12:00 lunch

Fellowship Hall

All women of the congregation are invited to the PW Holiday Luncheon. Deborah and Rachel Circles are hostesses. Bring a festive salad or dessert to share. The Program will be Faith Stories from the Caribbean. A group of Presbyterian women traveled to the Caribbean to hear the joys and pain that our sisters there experience, and to share faith stories and ministries with one another. Bonnie Thompson, delegate

What a great **CRAFT FAIR** we had on Saturday, November 14th! Thanks to Dale Gibson, Suzanne Engman and their team of helpers who kept everything organized. We had more Craft vendors than ever before, and a good crowd of shoppers also stopped by. It was a very successful craft fair!



Christmas Chuckles

Lee, A seven-year-old boy, was asked to say thanks for the Christmas dinner. The family members bowed their heads in expectation. Lee began his prayer, thanking God for his Mommy, Daddy, brothers, sister, Grandma, and all his aunts and uncles. Then he began to thank God for the food. He gave thanks for the turkey, the stuffing, the Christmas pudding, even the cranberry sauce. Then Lee paused, and everyone waited ... and waited. After a long silence, the young fellow looked up at his mother and asked, "If I thank God for the Brussels sprouts, won't he know that I'm lying?"

It was Christmas Eve in at the meat counter and a woman was anxiously picking over the last few remaining turkeys in the hope of finding a large one. In desperation she called over a shop assistant and said, 'Excuse me. Do these turkeys get any bigger?' 'No, madam,' he replied, 'they're all dead.'

On the Sunday before Christmas Reverend Billy Graham was walking down Highland street in Mt Holly, North Carolina on his way to see a parishioner. However, he wanted to post a parcel urgently so he asked a young boy where he could find the post office. When the boy had directed him, Reverend Graham thanked him and said, 'If you'll come to the Church this evening, you can hear me telling everyone how to get to heaven.' The boy replied, 'I think I'll give your sermon a pass. If you don't even know your way to the post office, how will you lead me to heaven?'

MISSION

Pastor (Chair) — Lois Hildenbrand
Mission (E) — Sue Eisenklam
Hunger Action (D) — Sandra Clark

Assimilation (D) — Scot Logan
Evangelism (E) — Bill Anderson

Seasonal Ministries (D) — Darlene Sitzler
Mesa Presbyterian Ministries (D) — Jane Potyka

Mission Report

The mission commission leads the church in the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ in both word and deed, involving the church in local, national and worldwide mission. First Presbyterian Church has a strong commitment to many missions. Here is what is currently going on in mission with many opportunities for you to make a difference through your giving of time, talent and treasure.



FPC Mesa will once again be sponsoring three neighborhood families this Christmas season. The tree with the angels labeled with gift suggestions will be up on Sunday, November 29th. Gifts need to be back, wrapped with angel attached, by December 20th. What a lovely way to share our blessings!

This year we will again celebrate a Christmas Joy Offering. The money from this special offering will go to “Racial Ethnic Leadership” schools and colleges, specifically Menaul School in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Presbyterian Pan American School in Kingsville, Texas, and Stillman College in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Watch for envelopes which will be in the pews in December.

In November and December Bob Gerlach, Jane Potyka and Jack Oliver will be busy providing rental and mortgage assistance to the clients of Mesa Presbyterian Ministries. Don't forget your donation to MPM in December. Up to \$400 per person of that donation is a tax credit on your state tax return and is fully deductible on the federal return as a charitable deduction as MPM is a qualified charitable organization.



The Deacons Food Pantry is always in need of boxed cereal and canned meats. The last Sunday of the month is set aside as the day to bring in any contributions, however, they will be accepted any time.

I-Help can always use bottled water, **large** bottles of shampoo, conditioner and body wash. The Christmas party for the women in the program will be Sunday, December 6th. Donations for gift cards to give to the ladies are needed. Please label them FPC I-Help.



The FPC Youth have adopted Feed My Starving Children as their charity for the 2015-16 school year. They have committed to fundraising for this organization in addition to giving their time and energy to pack meals. Meals were packed throughout the summer. The youth kicked off the fall with the cookie campaign “A cookie for you, a dinner for two.” They raised \$350 by baking and selling 70 dozen cookies. Thank you to all who helped with buying cookies.

Laubach Literacy has been housed at FPC Mesa for many years. They provide a vital service to tutor new English speakers. They are in need of tutors. If you are interested in finding out more about this, call Kay Azuma at 480-813-4564.

Are you new to FPC Mesa? Are you thinking about joining our church? Are you interested in getting involved, finding out about small groups, and attending new member classes? If so, please contact Scott Logan at 480-440-0750.

December Birthdays



Frank White	1st
Denver Wyse	1st
Sheilah Dye	2nd
Linda Reeves	4th
Kay Herrera	5th
Sophia Letizia	5th
James Schwartzmann	5th
Karen Rudin	6th
Anita Ramsey	9th
Samantha Jo Woods	9th
Randy Castela	10th
Nancy Tordai	10th
Spencer Hoff	12th
Kevin Woods	13th
Carolyn Barber	14th
John Hee	14th
Myrna Olmstead	14th
Margaret Johnson	15th
Marie Robb	15th
Gana Martin	16th
Bob Leonard	17th
Julia Laneville	18th
Laura Bruening	19th
Jerry Kurtz	19th
Ruth Robinson	20th
Marlene Verch	20th
Barbara Walker	20th
Maurice Belew	21st
Jonathan Martin	21st
Virginia Perkins	21st
Michael Eberhardt	22nd
Steve Durand	23rd
Barbara Strader	25th
Herb Andreen	26th
Ruth Pomeroy	28th
Allan Chisholm	29th
Rosemary Goings	29th
Nicki McInelly	29th
Ruth Yurich	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.

Calendar Notes

December 5
Youth Day Hike

December 8 & 14
Circles meet

December 12
Preschool Babysitting Fundraiser

December 15
Befrienders meet

December 16
Music Sunday rehearsal

December 20
Music Sunday
Commissions & Session meet

December 24
Office closes at noon
Candlelight Communion Services —
5:30 Family; 8:30 Traditional

December 25
Merry Christmas!

December 27
Monthly Food Drive

December 26 & 28
Office Closed



IN MEMORIAM

Carl Jensen — November 9, 2015



See calendar on website:
<http://www.fpcmesa.org/about-us/current-events>