

La Palabra

December 2016

www.fpcmesa.org

480-964-8606

A Message from Lois

“My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name.

His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as he promised our ancestors.” Luke 1:46-56

This scripture is known as the Magnificat. It is the song Mary, the mother of Jesus, sings during her pregnancy as she prepares for the birth of Jesus. Any expectant mother will tell you pregnancy is a time of preparation. Advent is our time of preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus and the return of Jesus.

The season of Advent is now here; it started November 27th. Advent is four weeks long; four weeks every year inviting us into a season of self-examination and preparation for Jesus’ coming again. Four weeks that lead us to Christmas when we celebrate Almighty God becoming a mere human being in Jesus to be with us and save us; heal us and set us free. God, in Christ, entered the journey of a messy birth and childhood. Jesus walked into the discovery of his destiny of sacrifice and service, high adventure and humble faith, danger and rescue, and yes, of death and resurrection.

It’s easy to miss the importance of Advent. Advent means “coming” and our God is a God who has come and, yes, keeps coming to us. Why does God keep coming? Isn’t once enough? No. God keeps coming to us because God is invested in our ever-deepening spiritual encounter and conversion.

Our conversion is not a one-time event, though it does have a beginning. Our conversion is a process of growing, of turning from sin and self and toward God. It’s a journey to life; of freedom through worship, giving, and service.

As you journey through Advent, where is God calling you to turn and grow? Make this holiday season special as you examine yourself and turn more and more to the One who came and keeps coming to and for you. One tool that may be of assistance is the first, I hope annual, FPC Mesa Advent Devotional. Twenty-eight of your brothers and sisters in Christ wrote a piece on one of the daily scriptures assigned during Advent. If you have not already done so, please pick up your devotional booklet and start a daily scripture and devotion reading practice during Advent.

May God richly bless you as you prepare for Christ’s arrival. Happy Advent and Merry Christmas!

Blessings...Lois

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WORSHIP

Dir. of Music (Choir) — Mark Ramsey
Worship (E) — Nate Robinson
Prayer Chain (D) — Joy Schulz

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

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

Christmas is Comin', Let the Church Bells Ring! Join us for the all-church Christmas Caroling on Sunday, December 4th. We'll meet in the Choir Room at 5:30 p.m. and return at about 8:00. Join us for this tremendous ministry as we sing and share the message of Christmas!



Our Artist Series will present the Arizona Cantilena Chorale in our Sanctuary on Sunday, December 11th, at 4:00 p.m. The Chorale will perform a variety of Christmas choral works, including Rutter anthems and the Simeone classic *'Twas the Night Before Christmas*. 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 Mark Ramsey.

This year's Music Sunday, "That Glorious Song of Old," will be held during both services on December 18th. The HolyGrounds Praise Band will lead worshipers in high-energy settings of stories of age-old carols, and our 9:00 a.m. service will feature each of our choirs, with choir solos, combined choirs, and congregational carols. There will be a Music Sunday rehearsal for all first service choirs on Wednesday, December 14th, from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Following that rehearsal, the Sanctuary Choir will adjourn to the Choir Room and rehearse for Christmas Eve, from 7:00-8:00. (There will not be a Wednesday WRAP dinner that evening.)

The traditional Candlelight Communion Services of Lessons, Carols & Readings will be offered on Christmas Eve at 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 participate. If possible, prepare pieces based on Christmas carols. In addition, congregational carols for the 5:30 service 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. **Our congregations will join for one combined worship service on Christmas morning at 10:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary!**



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 19th.

Coming Events

- 1/1 New Year's Day Combined Worship Service at 10:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary
- 1/7 (Saturday) Peter Pan Rehearsals Begin!

Humoresque

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

While on a road trip, an elderly couple stopped at a roadside restaurant for lunch. After finishing their meal, they left the restaurant, and resumed their trip. When leaving, the elderly woman unknowingly left her glasses on the table, and she didn't miss them until they had been driving for about forty minutes. By then, to add to the aggravation, they had to travel quite a distance before they could find a place to turn around, in order to return to the restaurant to retrieve her glasses. All the way back, the elderly husband became the classic grouchy old man. He fussed and complained, and scolded his wife relentlessly during the entire return drive. The more he chided her, the more agitated he became. He just wouldn't let up for a single minute. To her relief, they finally arrived at the restaurant. As the woman got out of the car, and hurried inside to retrieve her glasses the old Geezer yelled to her, "While you're in there, you might as well get my hat and the credit card." [from Marj Burgan]

DISCIPLESHIP

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

Children's Ministries (E) — Stephanie Gerlach
Family Ministries (E) — Alice Schlak

Youth/Young Adult (E) — Bill Rummier
Youth Elder — Gregg Gerlach

Wednesday WRAP Report:

Wednesday WRAP will only meet one time in the month of December. Please join us on December 7th. Our theme will be Winter Wonderland! If you need more scheduled Bible Study time, join us at Wednesday WRAP! We meet from 5:00 — 7:00 p.m. for dinner and study. The youth group will be making sandwiches for us. Cost of dinner is only \$3 per person!

(From Mack Coulter when asked about Wednesday WRAP) "I enjoy Wednesday WRAP because it allows me to make friends and strengthen my bonds with them. It is nice to enjoy a meal together each week. In the youth room we do Bible study and games together. The program is going well, but I would like to invite those at church today that don't participate to come and join us." – From the mouth one of our youth, please come and join us.

There will be no children's Sunday School classes on December 25th or January 1st.

Merry Christmas! Happy New Year!

The preschool is bustling with exciting things going on. What a wonderful time of year as we look forward to the cool weather, long winter days off and the warmth of being surrounded by our loved ones. We celebrated our annual Thanksgiving Feast with our families. There were 29 families in attendance!

In December, we will be celebrating the Christmas Spirit the whole month long with arts & crafts, songs and a Christmas party, too. Christmas time has a magical spirit that the children love. Christ, our Savior is born, and we are looking forward to showcasing our young stars for the Christmas Program on Thursday, December 15th, at 9:00 a.m. Please join us. You won't want to miss it! The Preschool will be closed for Christmas and New Years holidays from December 21 - January 3. School will resume on Wednesday, January 4, 2017.

We are running low on a couple of things. So, if you want to help, we have put together a Christmas Wish List for the Preschool: Large bottles of Bubbles, Christmas stickers, 5 oz. paper cups, 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



MISSION

Pastor — Lois Hildenbrand
Mission (Chair--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

Big Thank You! Thank you to all who helped in any way with the community yard sale. Those of you who contributed items for us to sell have contributed to our mission trip fund. As of this writing, we don't know the details of the event but are absolutely trusting it will be a repeated success both in terms of fundraising and in terms of our community connections.

Deacon's Cupboard: Food pantry needs continue to include cans of meat like ravioli, chili, and stew, cans of fruit as well as breakfast cereals. Thank you for your ongoing support of this vital program.

Joy offering: "The Christmas Joy Offering celebrates the coming of Jesus Christ, the 'wondrous gift' of God with us. Gifts to the Christmas Joy Offering will raise up leaders from small places that are too often overlooked by the church" as half the offering will go to continue the ministry of educating and forming Christian leaders through Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges. "The other half of the offering honors those leaders who have served us well. Through the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions, current and retired church workers who experience need because of tragedy, health concerns, or financial hardship can receive assistance from the church they have served so well." Thank you for prayerfully giving in your usual generous way. God is good all the time!



Opportunity to serve as I Help Coordinator: FPC hosts the I Help ladies 3 Sunday nights a month. Meals are provided the first and third week. The second week the hostess can bring a light meal or order pizza, submitting a receipt for reimbursement. A small group also provides breakfast on Monday morning. Responsibilities of the coordinator are:

- Schedule the hostesses and volunteers for laundry pick up;
- Purchase the lunch supplies and food for the bags, generally purchased at Dollar store, submitting receipts for reimbursement;
- Make sure there are enough sheets, pillow cases, pillows and towels, and sleeping mats, all in good repair;
- Plan a minute for mission twice a year to update the congregation as to what the program does (good place to invite bedding and bath supplies as needed);
- Be sure there are La Palabra and bulletin articles periodically;
- Recruit new volunteers as necessary for laundry pick up and to hostess;
- Work with mission commission as requested;
- Attend a meeting with Lutheran Social Services every other month with the other churches involved;
- Attend volunteer appreciation luncheon the Lutheran Social Services puts on, open to all the volunteers;
- Train new volunteers.



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 will be set up in the Sanctuary the first Sunday of Advent (November 27th) 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 have a pickup or van and would like to help deliver the gifts and food, contact Darlene Sitzler at 480-833-5203 or Sandra Clark at 480-835-1338. Thank you for your support of this long-standing Christmas tradition.

Household and Personal Care Items for families on the Christmas Angel Tree are 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.

MINISTRY

Clerk of Session (Chair) — Linda Hayball
Property (E) — Allan Schultz
Personnel (E) — Kate Buck

Personnel (D) — Susan McMichael
Nominating (E) — Barbara Walker

Nominating (D) — Miki Newbry
Stewardship/Finance (E) — Bob Gerlach

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR OCTOBER 2016

	For the Month		Year to Date 2016		Year to Date
	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Budget +/-
INCOME	34,653	32,644	301,568	326,442	-25,076
EXPENSE	31,457	33,765	330,537	337,650	-7,113
DIFFERENCE	3,196		-28,969		-17,461

If you have questions regarding this report, contact Bob Gerlach at 480-458-7619.



To my Dear church family and mighty Prayer Warriors, May God bless each of you as He has blessed me!

I cannot thank you enough for all the prayers given for my successful surgery and recovery. I know that if it had not been for all of you lifting me up in prayers, I would not be recovering as rapidly as I am! A very special thank you to our precious Pastor Lois for being there with me and praying for all of us before my surgery. I "somewhat" apologize for my silliness, but a bit of laughter can be a great medicine and it kept me calm when I was so very nervous.

I love and miss all of you so much and can't wait to be back in services again, as well as leading Hearts Hands and Voices and cooking for all "my" WRAP kids! The emptiness I have had without my church family in my life is about to be filled with love, joy, and that awesome sense of fulfillment. Again, thank you all! Praise be to God!

In Christ,
Karyn Weaver

Thank you, my church friends, for the kind cards and wishes that you sent to me as I recovered from my surgeries. I was, indeed, blessed.

Susan McMichael

FELLOWSHIP

Fellowship (E) (Chair) — Dennis Sitzler
Cards (D) — Cindy Davenport
Older Adult (E) — Steve Muth

Transportation (D) — Doug McInelly
Fellowship Deacon — Mark Waters
Fellowship Deacon — Dan Sitzler
Fellowship Deacon — Dale Gibson

Fellowship Deacon — Ruth Rummler
Fellowship Deacon — Heidi Blincoe
Presbyterian Women — Suzanne Engman

UPCOMING EVENTS

Keep an eye out for more information on these upcoming Fellowship events! They are not to be missed! Make plans to attend and bring a friend!

- ❖ January - Western Hoedown. No date set as of yet
- ❖ February - Chili Cook-off. No date set as of yet



Have you ever wondered exactly what the purpose of Presbyterian Women is? Have you just assumed it is for Bible study, fellowship, and working in the kitchen? The truth is that it is so much more! The following is:

Our purpose:

Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit we commit ourselves

- ❖ To nurture our faith through prayer and Bible study,
- ❖ To support the mission of the church worldwide,
- ❖ To work for justice and peace, and
- ❖ To build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) and witness to the promise God's kingdom.

We invite all women to join us as we move forward in keeping with our purpose.

Big Thank you! Thank you to all who baked goodies for the bake sale and to all who worked it Friday, Saturday and/or Sunday. Thank you to all of you who bought all those yummy items and therefore supported the work of PW. You are all very much appreciated!

Christmas Luncheon: All are invited to join us for a potluck salad luncheon on Saturday, December 10th, at 11:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. Our guest speaker will be Mary Danforth who took part in the PW USA Mission Experience to San Francisco and San Jose. The theme of the trip was "Out of the Darkness into the Light" (John 1:15).

Report from the Pastor Nominating Committee

Your Pastor Nominating Committee has needed extra meeting times. Besides our regular Wednesday meetings, we have had quite a few Sunday afternoon meetings. Via skype, we are interviewing persons that we are interested in and meet the Mission Study requirements. We are able to listen to sermons and are checking references. The committee worked with the Finance Committee to meet the salary request of the serious contenders. We do our work confidentially, so we probably won't answer any question you may ask of us. Please keep us in your prayers as we work to choose the best candidate to become the next pastor of FPC.

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
Nancy Tordai	10th
Spencer Hoff	12th
Kevin Woods	13th
Carolyn Barber	14th
Myrna Olmstead	14th
Margaret Johnson	15th
Marie Robb	15th
Gana Martin	16th
Bob Leonard	17th
Laura Bruening	19th
Jerry Kurtz	19th
Ruth Robinson	20th
Marlene Verch	20th
Barbara Walker	20th
Maurice Belew	21st
Jon Martin	21st
Virginia Perkins	21st
Michael Eberhardt	22nd
Steve Durand	23rd
Barbara Strader	25th
Herb Andreen	26th
John Schlak	27th
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.

ADDRESS CHANGES/CORRECTIONS

Kambak, Jackie
480-486-9130

Calendar Notes

December 4

All-Church Caroling

December 10

PW Holiday Luncheon

December 12 & 13

Circles meet

December 14

Music Sunday Rehearsal

December 18

Music Sunday
Commissions & Session meet

December 23—26

Office Closed

December 24

5:30 — Family Service
8:30 — Traditional Service

December 25

Merry Christmas!
Monthly Food Drive

December 30—January 2

Office Closed



Merry Christmas

See calendar on website:

<http://www.fpcmesa.org/about-us/current-events>

LA PALABRA

A publication for members and friends, published monthly.

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Friday 8:30 - 12:00 noon

Lois Hildenbrand, Pastor

Mark D. Ramsey, Director of Music Ministries

Jasmine Couillard, Christian Education Director

Linda Reeves, Office Manager/Publications

Shiloh Murillo, Preschool Director

Don Krill, Buildings Supervisor

Kathe Patchin, Bookkeeper

Anita Ramsey, Youth Director

James R. Bruening, Pastor Emeritus

Robert Martz, Pastor Emeritus