

# La Palabra

December 2017

www.fpcmesa.org

480-964-8606

“It’s the most wonderful time of the year!” So goes the familiar Christmas song....and it is a wonderful time indeed; for Advent and Christmas are indeed full of wonder! This is a time full of the wonder of God coming to live among us in Jesus Christ. This is a time full of the wonder of the Christ child born humbly in a manger to live as a humble servant to all. This is a time full of the wonder of Christ dwelling not only among us but also within us. This is a time full of the wonder of God’s Spirit enlarging our hearts to become a dwelling place for Christ! It is wonder-full indeed!

Advent is a time of getting ready ~ getting ready for the miracle that is the birth of Christ. So how can we get ready? How can we prepare ourselves for the coming of Christ? How can we enlarge our hearts so that Christ might dwell within?

We can begin by intentionally inviting Christ into our hearts and into our lives. We can begin each day (or end each day – or both!) sitting in God’s presence, breathing in the love and grace of God shown to us in Christ and breathing out all that separates us from experiencing this deep and abiding love.

- We can invite Christ into our Advent preparations, asking for help in slowing down, paying attention, and taking in the wonder of the season.
- We can invite Christ into our expectations for the season, that they be realistic and spiritually focused.
- We can invite Christ into our waiting, that we wait expectantly and patiently; that we wait with great hope and anticipation for a birth that truly changed the world and can change our lives if we let it.
- We can invite Christ into our hospitality, as we welcome others into our lives and, possibly, into our homes.
- We can invite Christ into our receiving as we gratefully receive the many gifts of the season ~ love, joy, peace, presence, hope...
- We can invite Christ into our seeking as we seek to follow the star to Bethlehem and meet Christ anew, opening ourselves to new possibilities and wonder.
- We can invite Christ into our watching as we are attentive to the needs that surround us and listen for the ways we are called to respond.
- We can invite Christ into our caring and loving as we faithfully try to live out our call to love as Christ loves, to love sacrificially and holistically.
- We can even invite Christ into our darkness, recognizing that as the days grow ever darker during December, the darkness of our lives and world can press in on us; but our hope lies in Christ, the Light of the World!

We can invite Christ into our journey – our journey to Bethlehem where we will once again awake on Christmas morn full of the knowledge of the love of God poured out for us and for the whole world in a baby born in a manger – Jesus Christ our Lord! Halleluiah!

In Christ’s love and hope,  
Rev. Ann Conklin

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## WORSHIP

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

Funerals/Memorials (D) —  
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

The First Players will present their 22nd annual theatrical production on March 23, 24, and 25, adding at least one show on Sunday, a new matinée performance. The show will be **DISNEY'S BEAUTY AND THE BEAST**. Auditions will be held in the Choir Room on Saturday, December 2nd from 10:00 a.m. to Noon. Audition librettos and production schedules are available in the Church Office. Join the First Players this March for a *"tale as old as time!"* For production information and tickets, visit the First Players webpage, [fpcmesa.org/first-players](http://fpcmesa.org/first-players).

Be a part of this year's "Carols by Candlelight!" The event will take place on Saturday, December 2nd. We'll meet in the Sanctuary at 4:00 p.m. to hang Christmas decorations in the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall, then we'll enjoy a catered supper (5:30) followed by a brief time to sing carols in our candlelit Sanctuary (6:00). If you would like to participate, please contact Mark Ramsey ([music@fpcmesa.org](mailto:music@fpcmesa.org)).

**The Sanctuary Choir to present "Jingle Bells Through the Ages"  
Sunday, December 17th at 10:10 a.m. in Fellowship Hall.  
Plan to join us for this fun-filled Christmas entertainment!**

This year's Music Sunday, "Away in a Manger," will be held on Christmas Eve(!) at 10:00 a.m. We'll have one combined service in the Sanctuary. The service will include Christmas stories, choir solos, combined choirs, and congregational carols. There will be a Music Sunday rehearsal for all choirs on Wednesday, December 20th, from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Following the 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.) Looking ahead, our worship on New Year's Eve will also be one combined service, at 10:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall.

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](mailto:music@fpcmesa.org).

Please note this ZooLights date change: Dei Gloriam will play at ZooLights on Thursday, January 11th, from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.

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. Deadline for response is December 18th.

### Coming Events

- 1/27 (Saturday) Artist Series: Valley Chamber Chorale, under the director of Dr. Christopher Samuel, 4:00pm – 5:30pm, in the beautiful acoustics of Fox Chapel. Freewill donations to the Church Artist Series.
- 3/23-25 First Players Dinner-Theater: Disney's Beauty and the Beast. Tickets: [fpcmesa.org/first-players](http://fpcmesa.org/first-players).

## Humoresque

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

A man walked into a bar and ordered a drink. While the bartender mixed his beverage, the man heard a quiet voice say, "Nice suit." He looked around, but no one was there. Then he heard another voice say, "I really like that tie." The man wheeled all the way around but still didn't see anyone. Then a third voice said, "Nice haircut. You must have a really good barber." This time, the man jumped off the stool, wondering if he was imagining things. Just then the bartender returned with his drink. "I keep hearing voices," the man exclaimed. "Saying nice things about you?" the bartender asked. The man nodded. "Those are our peanuts," the bartender replied, pointing at the bar. "They're complimentary." [from Barbara Walker]

## FELLOWSHIP

Fellowship (E) (Chair) — Dennis Sitzler  
Cards (D) — Cindy Davenport  
Older Adult (E) — Dave Jurgensen

Transportation (D) — Doug McInelly  
Fellowship Deacon — Mark Waters  
Fellowship Deacon — Dan Sitzler  
Fellowship Deacon — Ruth Danaher

Fellowship Deacon — Ruth Rummler  
Fellowship Deacon — Kyle Harding  
Presbyterian Women — Suzanne Engman  
Youth Elder — Sedona Verch

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark your calendars for these upcoming Fellowship events! They are not to be missed! Some dates and times are to be determined, so stay tuned for further updates. Make plans to attend and bring a friend!

- January 20 — Western Hoedown & BBQ
- February 10 — Mother-Daughter Tea
- February 25 — Chili Cook-Off



**Big Thank you!** PW held their annual bake sale as part of the Community Yard Sale this year. It was a big success! 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 9th, at 11:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. Our guest speaker will be Peggy Tatum Free who took part in the PW USA Mission Experience to Indonesia. She will be sharing about her experiences there.

### Help families in need and pay less income tax!

Mesa Presbyterian Ministries is one of the non-profit organizations that qualify as a dollar for dollar tax credit with the state of Arizona. MPM formerly known as Christ Häven was started at our church by Bob Gerlach in 2001. MPM provides Mesa residents in need with rental and utility assistance. The goal of MPM is to keep families in their current homes during financial difficulties. Nearly 200 families have been helped by MPM this year. With your contribution we could do even more in 2018! 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.

## DISCIPLESHIP

Director of C.E. — Jasmine Couillard  
Adult (E) — Karen Rudin

Children's Ministries (E) — Stephanie Gerlach  
Family Ministries (E) — Ellen Hickey

Youth/Young Adult (E) — Bill Rummler

**Silent Night?** Not on December 6th at Wednesday WRAP! Good friends, Good cheer, it's the most wonderful time of year - for music, games, dinner, fellowship and Bible study. Don't miss out from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. – tis' the season to be jolly!

**Don't miss the adult Bible study** on Wednesday, December 6th, at 6:15 in the church library! Is the book of Revelation really about the end times? Adam Hamilton addresses this often misunderstood biblical theme leading readers to a deeper appreciation of the Bible so that we might hear God speak through it and find its words to be life-changing and life-giving.

**There will be no children or youth Sunday school classes** on December 24th or December 31st. Please join us when we resume on January 7, 2018!

The first weekend in November was **SuperStart Conference**. Jennifer Martin and Jasmine Couillard were privileged to escort six preteens from FPC to this amazingly fun two-day conference. We spent a total of ten hours together learning God's word, dancing and singing, watching skits, playing video games and more! We met so many great people! One of our students was invited on stage during the event to compete in the guys vs girls video game competition (and won!). A few of our students got a private backstage tour of the green room. We left the event to hang out at Golfland for a few hours where we played laser tag, miniature golf, video games and had pizza and iceberg shakes! This was such a great experience and we can't wait to have more of our kids join us next year.



**Confirmation Class:** A confirmation class will begin in January! Look for more details in the coming weeks!

**Montlure Presbyterian Church Summer Camp** has the dates published for 4th – 12th grade overnight camp in summer 2018. FPC offers a \$175 discount on camp fees for any student that attends as long as a request form is submitted.

### Senior High 1

Senior High 1 camp is designed for youth entering 9th through 12th grade. Recommended for youth 14 through 17 years of age as of June 1, 2018	Senior High	06/10/18 - 6/15/18 (Sun - Fri)
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### Junior High 1

Junior High 1 camp is designed for youth entering 6th and 8th grade. Recommended for youth 11 through 13 years of age as of June 1, 2018	Junior High	06/24/18 - 06/29/18 (Sun - Fri)
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### Juniors

Juniors camp is designed for youth entering 4th and 5th grade. Recommended for youth 9 through 11 years of age as of June 1, 2018	Juniors	06/17/18 - 6/21/18 (Sun - Thurs)
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**See Preschool Report on Page 6.**

## MISSION

Pastor — Ann Conklin  
Mission (Chair--E) — Sue Eisenklam  
Hunger Action (D) — Sandra Clark

Assimilation (D) — Alice Schlak  
Marketing (E) — Tammy Miller

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

**Mesa Make a Difference Day** was on Saturday, October 28, 2017. Eleven members of the congregation participated in this community work day by painting house numbers on curbs. A big thank you to all who participated!



**Shoe Drive** for Tseyi Bidaa Presbyterian Church was a great success! Thank you for your support of our partner church! They were well pleased and grateful!



**Community Yard Sale** was successful in raising \$440.07 for the 2018 Mission Trip. It was a beautiful morning in the parking lot of FPC on Saturday, November 11th. Many people from the neighborhood and from the Veteran's Day festivities were able to get inexpensive buys on all kinds of goods. We were treated to the fly overs of the vintage planes from the Veteran's Day Parade as an unexpected bonus! Thank you to all who donated and to those who worked!

**Food Pantry** – As always, thank you for your ongoing support and generosity to the food pantry. They continue to need canned fruits, canned vegetables (**not green beans**) and canned meats like ravioli or beef stew or chili with meat but **not tuna fish**.

**Christmas Joy Offering** celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ, the truly “incredible gift” as well as the gifts of church leaders – past, present and future. In addition to supporting the Board of Pensions which honors the faithfulness of current and retired church workers and their families in need, the Joy Offering prepares the way of future leaders. PCUSA, with its historic commitment to higher learning, has long promoted education and leadership development through the establishment and support of racial ethnic schools and colleges. The Joy Offering is one of the four special offerings we receive each year. Watch for information about this important offering in the bulletin and in Moments for Mission.



**Christmas Angel Tree:** FPC is sponsoring four needy neighborhood families this Christmas. We will be providing gifts and a holiday meal for each family. The Christmas Angel Tree is 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 17th.** Questions? Contact Darlene Sitzler or Sandy Clark. If you have a pickup or van and would like to help deliver the gifts and food, contact: Darlene Sitzler 480-833-5203 or Sandy Clark 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 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.



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 as we approach the Christmas Season. We just celebrated our annual Thanksgiving Feast with our families. There were 26 families in attendance!

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 14th, at 9:00 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 25-January 5. School will resume on Monday, January 8, 2017.

We are running low on a couple of things. 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 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

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### **Mesa Adult Literacy Council (formerly known as Laubauch Literacy)**

Many of you are aware of and have volunteered with the Laubauch Literacy Program, a wonderful and effective adult literacy program operated out of a library room on our campus at FPC. However, for those who are not familiar with this program and its need for volunteers, here is some information about it. As you are considering gifts during this season, please consider the gift of helping to change someone's life through the gift of reading! Volunteers are always needed and travel/vacations can be accommodated!

Mesa Adult Literacy Council (MALC) is an **all-volunteer** 501(c)(3) non-profit organization founded in November 1983 under the name Mesa Laubach Literacy Council. Our mission is to serve the Southeast Valley community by bringing together volunteer tutors with adult students who lack basic literacy skills and/or who are learning English as a second language.

The primary goal as a volunteer tutor is to help an adult learn English as a second language and/or acquire basic literacy skills. To do this, you'll need to build a ladder of successful learning experiences. Success helps to build the self-confidence needed by the learner to tackle more difficult material, to be willing to try something new, to risk failure, and to understand that mistakes are part of the learning process. You can relate to the learner as you build this success by developing **rapport** and by being **patient**.

Respect for and commitment to the adult learner are essential ingredients in that success-building process.

#### **Volunteer Requirements:**

- Complete the pre-service training sessions.
- Attend at least four monthly Tutor Education Meetings, held from September through April.
- Commit to tutor an individual for a minimum of 2-3 hours per week for at least 6-9 months

For further information, please contact:

**Rita Muscarello, Director**  
Email: [ritaatmalc@gmail.com](mailto:ritaatmalc@gmail.com)

**Kay Azuma, Trainer**  
Email: [mesaliteracy@yahoo.com](mailto:mesaliteracy@yahoo.com)

## An Advent Devotional from Saints Alive!

Our Presbytery Pastor has put together an Advent devotional and I encourage you to consider using this during the season of Advent to prepare for the coming of Christ. According to Rev. Brad Munroe, "This Advent devotional is a bit different from others you may have read, for it focuses not merely on the nearness of Jesus' birth but on the fullness of his life."

This devotional invites us to encounter Jesus today, in the here and now. Each day's devotion includes a gospel text and reflection as well as a prayer patterned after the "Prayer of St. Francis" and a spiritual direction for the day. Brad's prayer is that we find the pattern "easy to use, life-giving, and a bit uncomfortable."



There are three ways to access this devotional:

- A free pdf at: <http://presbyterydecristo.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Saints-Alive-Meditations-from-the-Gospels-8x14.pdf>
- Amazon/Kindle: \$1.00
- A hard copy at: CreateSpace \$2.15 + shipping or Amazon Books \$3.59 + shipping



Dear Friends,

I wanted to offer my heartfelt thanks for the great memorial service our church provided for Andrea. Her service was fantastic. My non-church friends were extremely impressed with our choir by the power and sincerity of *Chariots a Coming*. It was one of Andrea favorites. They were also very impressed with our wonderful pipe organ and its master, our director, Mark.

I am grateful for our pastor, Ann, and all she has done to lessen this burden from me and my family. Her care has been appreciated more than she will ever know.

I also want to thank those that provided the warm and friendly memorial service. It was well done and offered a place for friends and family to share with each other. And to those who took time out of their day to do this for me and my family, I am grateful for all of you. Thank you.

Once again, my thanks for being there for me and my family.

Allan Schultz

Dear FPC and Rev. Ann Conklin,

Many thanks for the beautiful flowers. They have cheered me. I appreciate your prayers and good thoughts. A very special thanks to Frank White for delivering the flowers.

Clara Padelford

This is a friendly reminder to let the church office or Pastor Ann (480-964-8606) know if you are in the hospital and would like a visit. With the new HIPPA laws, hospitals are very limited in the information that can be provided and we often don't know you are there unless you, a neighbor, or family member call to inform us. We appreciate being kept updated so that we can be in prayer for you and visit if that would be comforting to you.

# December Birthdays



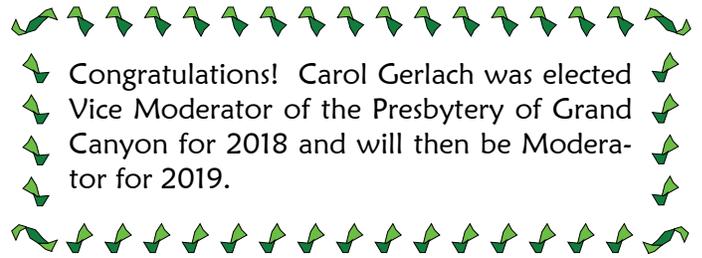
Frank White	1st
Denver Wyse	1st
Sheilah Dye	2nd
Linda Reeves	4th
Kay Herrera	5th
Sophia Letizia	5th
Karen Rudin	6th
Anita Ramsey	9th
Samantha Jo Woods	9th
Nancy Tordai	10th
Kevin Woods	13th
Carolyn Barber	14th
Myrna Olmstead	14th
Margaret Johnson	15th
Marie Robb	15th
Gana Martin	16th
Janice Williamson	16th
Bob Leonard	17th
Laura Bruening	19th
Ruth Robinson	20th
Barbara Walker	20th
Maurice Belew	21st
Jon Martin	21st
Virginia Perkins	21st
Michael Eberhardt	22nd
Steve Durand	23rd
Barbara Strader	25th
John Schlak	27th
Allan Chisholm	29th
Rosemary Goings	29th
Nicki McInelly	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

Gabe Homolya, November 5, 2017



Congratulations! Carol Gerlach was elected Vice Moderator of the Presbytery of Grand Canyon for 2018 and will then be Moderator for 2019.

## Calendar Notes

### December 2

Beauty & the Beast auditions  
Carols by Candlelight

### December 9

PW Holiday Luncheon

### December 11 & 12

Circles meet

### December 17

Commissions & Session meet

### December 22, 26, 29

Office closed

### December 24

Christmas Eve

Music Sunday — one service 10:00 in Sanctuary  
5:30 — Family Service  
8:30 — Traditional Service

### December 31

One service — 10:00 in Fellowship Hall  
Monthly Food Drive



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

See calendar on website:  
[fpcmesa.org/calendar](http://fpcmesa.org/calendar)

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A publication for members and friends, published monthly.

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