

# La Palabra

December 2018

www.fpcmesa.org

480-964-8606

## A Message from Ann

### Advent and Christmas 2018 – The Coming of the Christ Child

Make ready for the Christ  
Whose smile like lightening  
Sets free  
The song of everlasting glory  
That now sleeps  
In your paper flesh  
like dynamite!

— by Thomas Merton

#### The Mood of Christmas

by Howard Thurman

When the song of the angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the kings and princes are home,  
When the shepherds are back with their flocks;

The work of Christmas begins:

To find the lost,  
To heal the broken,  
To feed the hungry,  
To release the prisoner,  
To rebuild the nations,  
To bring peace among people,  
To make music in the heart.”

These Christmas poems remind us of the beauty and wonder of the season ~ the miracle that God has entered into human history and into our lives as the Christ child. How will you “make ready” for the coming of Christ this year? Will you sing with joy a “song of everlasting glory” that is currently laying dormant right under your own skin? Is our joy really that close? Is it hidden in plain view? How can we more fully access deep joy and live into the freedom that Christ brings?

We are also reminded that part of the beauty of the season is the work in which we are called to participate ~ the work of healing and blessing and bearing light and bringing hope. Christ’s coming calls us to the work of providing for basic needs and building up that which has been torn down – whether it’s a home or a heart. We are invited to work for peace by living into the peace that Christ brings. How will that take shape in your life in the coming year? Will you build a time of peaceful reflection into your day or your week?

These are questions to ponder as we sip tea or hot cocoa and sit by a warm fire, or as we gather together in community with our faith family to decorate our sanctuary and sing the carols of this beautiful season. May each of us take time and make moments to savor the meaning of the Savior of the world, the One who comes to us as a babe in Bethlehem. Make ready for the Christ!

May the many, many blessings of this holy season be with us all!

~ Pastor Ann

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## WORSHIP

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

Funerals/Memorials (D) — Renita Jurgensen  
Worship (D) — Gail Soderquist

### 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 23rd annual theatrical production on March 22, 23, and 24. The show will be ANNIE GET YOUR GUN. Auditions will be held in the Choir Room on Saturday, December 1st, from 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. Audition librettos and production schedules are available in the Church Office and on our website. For production information and tickets, visit [fpcmesa.org/first-players](http://fpcmesa.org/first-players).

Plan to be a part of this year's "Carols by Candlelight!" The event will take place on Saturday, December 1st. We'll meet in the Sanctuary at 4:30 p.m. to hang Christmas decorations in the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall, then we'll enjoy a catered supper (6:00) followed by a brief time to sing some carols in our candlelit Sanctuary (6:45).

The Pure Praise Singers will present Colby's Missing Memory on Sunday, April 28th. The musical features singing, choreography, humor, laughter, and biblical truths. Auditions will be held on Saturday, December 8, 10:00 a.m. - Noon in the Choir Room. Cast: male teens/men, and child singers/actors. Audition scripts are available at [fpcmesa.org](http://fpcmesa.org) and in the Church Office. Contact Karen Rudin at the Church (480-964-8606) for additional information.

This year's Music Sunday, "Christmas Glory," will be held on December 16th. 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 12th, 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 be a Wednesday WRAP dinner that evening.)

Dei Gloriam Handbell Choir will play at ZooLights on Tuesday, December 18th, 6:30-7:30 p.m. For information and tickets, visit [www.phoenixzoo.org/event-items/zoolights/](http://www.phoenixzoo.org/event-items/zoolights/).



The traditional Candlelight Communion Services of Lessons & Carols 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.

Don't miss our ONE COMBINED WORSHIP SERVICE at 10:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall on Sunday, December 30th. We'll welcome back the [Matsiko World Orphan Choir!](#)

## Coming Events

- 12/1 (Saturday) Carols by Candlelight: decorate our worship spaces, enjoy a light supper, and sing carols in our beautifully adorned and "candlelit" Sanctuary, 4:30-7:00 p.m.
- 12/16 Music Sunday, 9:00 & 11:00 a.m.
- 12/18 (Tuesday) Dei Gloriam Handbell Choir performing at Phoenix ZooLights, 6:30-7:30 p.m.
- 12/24 Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service of Lessons & Carols, 5:30 & 8:30 p.m.
- 1/25-26 FPC Hosting Combined Grand Canyon and De Cristo Presbyteries
- 2/10 The Music Ministry of Pianist Mary Beth Carlson, 9 & 11 a.m.

### Humoresque

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

A police officer called the station on his radio, "I have an interesting case here. An old lady shot her husband for stepping on the floor she'd just mopped." Operator, "Did you arrest the woman?" Officer, "No. The floor is still wet." [from Dick Baird]

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### DISCIPLESHIP

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

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

Youth/Young Adult (E) —

### Families with children completing K-5th grades:

Mark your calendars now and SAVE THESE DATES!

JUNE 10—14, 2019

You won't want to miss the Montlure Traveling Day Camp! FPC Mesa is partnering with five other East Valley Presbyterian congregations to bring Montlure to the Valley! Watch the bulletins and La Palabra for more information and registration information as it becomes available. Contact Ellen Hickey if you are interested!



**Children's Worship** ~ Beginning Sunday, December 9th, we will offer a worship time for children following the Moment with Young Disciples. Gail Soderquist and Katie Masterson will be the leaders for this child-friendly worship time, and we are looking for another couple of volunteers so that each would lead once per month. We are excited to offer this to families with children ranging from around 3 years old – 3rd grade.

**WRAP Report:** We are in need of a volunteer assistant for the 4th – 6th grades for Wednesday WRAP beginning in January. Please contact Ellen Hickey if you are able to help out and/or Darlene Sitzler for more information about what is involved. Thank you.

## MISSION

Pastor — Ann Conklin  
Mission (Chair--E) — Sue Eisenklam

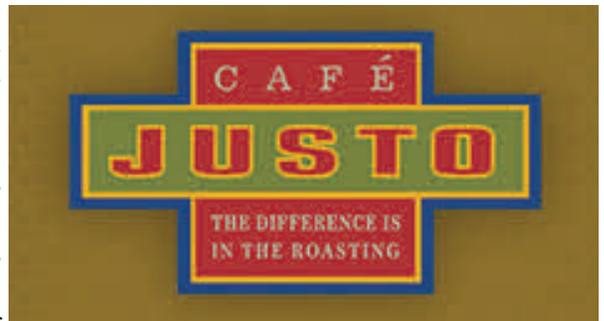
Assimilation (D) — Alice Schlak  
Marketing (E) —

Seasonal Ministries (D) — Shelley Cronenberg  
Hunger Action (D) — Sandra Clark



**Christmas Angel Tree:** Once again this year FPC Mesa is sponsoring local families in need this Christmas. We will be providing gifts for each family. The Christmas Angel Tree will be set up in the Sanctuary on Sunday, December 2nd, 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 will be delivered on Sunday, December 16th, after church. If you have any questions, please contact Shelley Cronenberg at 480-239-1289. Thank you for your support of this long-standing Christmas tradition!

**Café Justo** - Many of you are familiar with Café Justo as it has been sold at our church in the past, as well as at Presbytery and other venues. It is a part of the ministry of Frontera de Cristo where our mission co-workers are. This is a way to address immigration at its roots. The Cooperative that grows and roasts the coffee receive the full cost of the coffee returned to them. In this way farmers receive a fair price for their coffee and communities are improved. Mission Commission and Session have agreed to use the last \$400 in the Mission Budget to purchase coffee and the books that tell the story of Café Justo. We will sell both starting December 9th during coffee time. The coffee and books make great Christmas gifts. The books cost \$20. A pound of organic shade grown Arabica regular or decaf coffee costs \$10. There will be medium and dark roast, ground and whole beans. If you buy a book and a pound of coffee, you will only pay \$25. We will also have stocking stuffers of different varieties in 4-oz size for \$2.50.



**Deadline for Statement of Mission Interest is December 2nd.** The statement is due with a fully refundable \$25. This is just an indication of interest not a full commitment. The Mission Trip Planning Team is hard at work preparing for the trip and need to have an idea how many will be going. The application packet will be ready by mid-December. Watch for the bulletin announcement saying when they will be ready to be picked up.

**Christmas Joy Offering** - During this Advent Season, we celebrate leadership: past, present and future through support of this offering. We do so because church leaders greatly impact our lives of faith, walking with us down the path to be more like Jesus. The funds go to support the Board of Pensions which honors

the faithfulness of current and retired church workers and their families in need. Another way our contributions work is to prepare the way for future leaders. The PC(USA) has long promoted education and leadership development through the establishment and support of Presbyterian-related schools and colleges

equipping communities of color. The Christmas Joy Offering supports Menaul School in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Presbyterian Pan American School in Kingsville Texas, and Stillman college in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. The offering will be received from December 2nd-23rd. December 23rd is when we will gather our gifts, but you are welcome to give your gift earlier if you know you won't be in town.

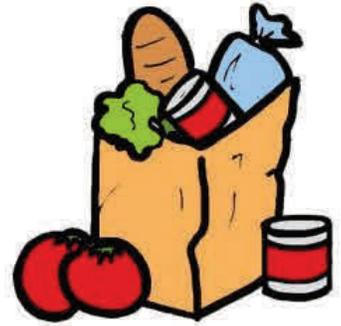


**I-Help** – Volunteers and the congregation are invited to a special Christmas Service for our I-Help ladies on Sunday, December 16th, at 7:00 p.m.

There is still a need for a laundry pickup person and a backup person once a month following the first Sunday of the month. Pick-ups are usually Wednesday or Thursday. Please see Janet Verch if you can help.

Thank you to all who have already helped with donations so sheets could be purchased for use when the ladies are at our church. We still need contributions, to allow blankets and mats to be purchased as well. This is our Christmas gift to the I-Help ladies to help them be more comfortable while at our church. Checks should be made out to FPC Mesa with designation to I-Help in the memo section.

**Food Pantry** – The food pantry continues to need cereal and meat items, such as ravioli or SpaghettiOs, as well as tuna. Fry's is now carrying cereal for \$1.49 for big boxes of cereal. If you are unable to shop but want to contribute, you can write a check to FPC Mesa with designation in memo section for food pantry. That allows Sandy to shop for specific needs. Thank you for your ongoing support. As always, thank you for support of this vital ministry!



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### FELLOWSHIP

Fellowship (E) (Chair) — Dennis Sitzler  
Cards (D) — Gretchen Frederick  
Transportation (D) — Steve Muth  
Older Adult (E) — David Jurgensen

Fellowship Deacon — Todd Ramsey  
Fellowship Deacon — Mark Waters  
Fellowship Deacon — Kyle Hardng

Fellowship Deacon — Katie Masterson  
Fellowship Deacon — Carol Strouse  
Presbyterian Women — Suzanne Engman  
Youth Elder — Ian Harding

Mark your calendars for these upcoming Fellowship events! They are not to be missed! More events are in the planning stages, so stay tuned for further updates. Make plans to attend and bring a friend!



- February 24 — Chili Cook-Off / Congregational meeting
- April 24 — Worship in the Park with BBQ to follow
- May 5th — Salsa Challenge



**December 8th will be our PW Holiday Luncheon.** The ladies who attended the Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women in Kentucky will be talking about their experiences and memories. We will gather in the Fellowship Hall at 11:30 and eat at noon. Please bring a salad or a favorite recipe to share. We will also need a few desserts. This will be a nice time of fellowship, good food and singing some favorite carols.

## ADMINISTRATION

Property (E) (Chair) — Robert Harding  
Clerk of Session — Carol Gerlach  
Personnel (E) — Jeanne Partida

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

Nominating (D) — Michael Gerlach  
Stewardship/Finance (E) — Bob Gerlach

**Did you know your purchases can make a difference?** AmazonSmile donates to First Presbyterian Church when you do your holiday shopping at [smile.amazon.com/ch/86-6007618](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/86-6007618). If you shop with Amazon, please consider setting up your account so that donations for AmazonSmile are directed to FPC Mesa!

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!** Grand Canyon and de Cristo Presbyteries will hold their joint meeting at our church on January 25th and 26th. You are invited to attend any part or all of the sessions held those two days informing you of the "workings" of our denomination at the Presbytery level. A special worship service will be held Friday evening following a meal served in Fellowship Hall. More details will be included in the January La Palabra. If you would like to volunteer to assist in any way, inform Linda in the office.

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### *Just for (Christmas) Laughs...*

The REAL Night Before Christmas (By Parents): Twas the night before Christmas when all through the house I searched for the tools to hand to my spouse. Instructions were studied, and we were inspired, in hopes we could manage "Some Assembly Required." The children were quiet (not asleep) in their beds, while Dad and I faced the evening with dread: a kitchen, two bikes, Barbie's townhouse to boot! And now, thanks to Grandpa, a train with a toot! We opened the boxes, my heart skipped a beat —let no parts be missing or parts incomplete! Too late for last-minute returns or replacement; if we can't get it right, it goes straight to the basement! When what to my worrying eyes should appear but 50 sheets of directions, concise, but not clear, With each part numbered and every slot named, so if we failed, only we could be blamed. More rapid than eagles the parts then fell out, all over the carpet they were scattered about. "Now bolt it! Now twist it! Attach it right there! Slide on the seats, and staple the stair! Hammer the shelves, and nail to the stand." "Honey," said hubby, "you just glued my hand." And then in a twinkling, I knew for a fact that all the toy dealers had indeed made a pact to keep parents busy all Christmas Eve night with "assembly required" till morning's first light. We spoke not a word, but kept bent at our work, till our eyes, they went blurry; our fingers all hurt. The coffee went cold and the night, it wore thin before we attached the last rod and last pin. Then laying the tools away in the chest, we fell into bed for a well-deserved rest. But I said to my husband just before I passed out, "This will be the best Christmas, without any doubt. Tomorrow we'll cheer, let the holiday ring, and not run to the store for one single thing! We did it! We did it! The toys are all set for the perfect, most magical, Christmas, I bet!" Then off to dreamland and sweet repose I gratefully went, though I suppose there's something to say for those self-deluded—I'd forgotten that BATTERIES are never included!

## 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
John Schlak	27th
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.

## ADDRESS CHANGES/CORRECTIONS

Landers, Ruth  
2525 E. Southern Ave.,  
#250-2E  
Tempe, AZ 85282  
480-345-3948

### Calendar Notes

#### December 1

Carols by Candlelight Advent Decorating

#### December 3

Deacons meet

#### December 8

PW Holiday Gathering

#### December 10 & 11

Circles meet

#### December 16

Music Sunday — in both services

#### December 24

Christmas Eve

(Office Closed)

5:30 Family Service

8:30 Traditional Service

#### December 24

*Merry Christmas!*

#### December 30

Monthly Food Drive

One service at 10:00

featuring Matsiko World Orphan Choir

#### December 31

New Year's Eve — Office Closed

Merry  
Christmas

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

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

**LA PALABRA**

**A publication for members and friends, published monthly.**

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Friday 8:30 - 12:00 noon**

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Linda Reeves, Office Manager/Publications  
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Rob Kjar, Bookkeeper  
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