

La Palabra

January 2019

www.fpcmesa.org

480-964-8606

A Message from Ann

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors." Luke 2:13-14

The Christmas season is filled with angels! Angels advising Mary and Joseph and announcing good news to the shepherds. An angel is a messenger of God and God has just sent us the most wonderful message of all! The good news of Christmas is the enduring message of God's immeasurable, deep, and abiding love for us which came down and became incarnate, enfleshed, in Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus is God's love in human form. Jesus is God's love made flesh and blood. Jesus is God's love made tangible, physical, and real. God came to us, to all of creation, to redeem, reconcile, and restore. God came to offer us new life in Christ.

In his book, *The God Who Comes*, Carlo Carretto, writes this of the miracle and mystery, and yet the very concrete and uniquely decisive action of God in coming into the world in Christ:

"God presents himself to us little by little. The whole story of salvation is the story of God who comes. It is always he who comes, even if he has not yet come in his fullness. But there is indeed one unique moment in his coming; the others were only preparations and announcement. The hour of his coming is the Incarnation. The Incarnation brings the world his presence. It is a presence so complete that it overshadows every presence before it. 'The invisible, intangible has made himself visible and tangible in Christ.' If Jesus is truly God, everything is clear; if I cannot believe this, everything darkens again."

My friends, everything will not darken again; for the Light has come! The Light shines in the darkness and the darkness will never overcome it.

My prayer for us all then is that we would take some time to truly dwell in Christ's Light. My prayer is that we would settle in and enjoy the Twelve Days of Christmas ~ the special time between Christmas and Epiphany when we have the opportunity to soak in the blessings of Christ's coming; to relax and unwind a bit after all of the preparations of the season; to be with those we love and love those whom we are with. It is a time to reflect, both inwardly on God's love for us and outwardly in the sense of reflecting God's love out into our world.

Know that you are deeply loved by a God who IS love! May the deep peace of Christ be with us all, now and forever.

~ 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



Minnesota Pianist Mary Beth Carlson will present worship music during our February 10th Sunday Services! If you have enjoyed hearing the breathtaking piano/orchestral music of Mary Beth Carlson on her best-selling recordings or seen her perform live in concert, you can appreciate and identify with acclaim from critics throughout the country. There is a uniquely personal story behind her music that has captured the attention and touched the hearts of countless listeners everywhere. Mary Beth has produced and recorded twenty-seven albums of piano/orchestral music. Songs from her CDs are played on radio stations worldwide. She has co-produced and performed in annual benefit concerts for Joni and Friends and has been fortunate to perform for a variety of distinguished audiences, including the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, where she presented a concert of restoration to guests from forty countries at The Cove in Asheville, NC. CDs will be available on the 10th!

The First Players invite you to their 23rd annual production, *Annie Get Your Gun*, this March 22-24. Dinner-Theater Tickets are on sale online at fpcmesa.org, and they will be available in the Church Office beginning March 1st.

When the *de Cristo* and Grand Canyon Presbyteries meet on our campus late this month, Morning Worship will be led musically by our FPC choirs. Special music will be offered by Hearts Hands and Voices, the Sanctuary Choir, and Dei Gloriam Handbell Choir, and we will be highly honored to have FPC member Carol Gerlach installed as Moderator of our Grand Canyon Presbytery. Join us for worship on Saturday, January 26th, at 9:00 a.m.!

Next month, our Sanctuary Choir will participate in the Third Biennial Mesa Interfaith Choral Festival with the choirs of FPC, Grace UMC, St Luke's Lutheran, and Mesa North Stake, all led by Guest Clinician Dr. Glenn Bennett. The massed choir will rehearse on Saturday, February 23rd, and will return that evening to present a Choral Festival at Grace United Methodist Church (2024 E. University Dr., Mesa). Great hymns of faith, readings, and massed choir anthems will combine to create an afternoon of tremendous, deep song.

Our HolyGrounds banner advertisement is somewhat misleading. We are in need of baristas to provide coffee for our coffee house service, lest the lattes contain only *leche*. Please leave a note in the Church Office if you would like to assist this ministry! On another note, the HolyGrounds congregation would especially welcome our special attention when entering and exiting Fellowship Hall during the HolyGrounds worship services. The main door likes to make its presence known, and sometimes it tends to get a little “out of hand.” Thank you for helping to maintain a spirit of worship during HolyGrounds.



Coming Events

- 1/5 (Saturday) Annie Get Your Gun, First Rehearsal, 9:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall
- 1/25-26 FPC Hosting Combined Grand Canyon and *De Cristo* Presbyteries, with a combined Festival Worship Service in our Sanctuary at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, January 26th.
- 2/10 (Sunday) The Music Ministries of Pianist Mary Beth Carlson, 9 & 11 a.m.

Humoresque

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

It was just before Christmas and the magistrate was in a happy mood. He asked the prisoner who was in the dock, 'What are you charged with?' The prisoner replied, 'Doing my Christmas shopping too early.' 'That's no crime', said the magistrate. 'Just how early were you doing this shopping?' 'Before the shop opened', answered the prisoner.

DISCIPLESHIP

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

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

Youth/Young Adult (E) —



Happy New Year from our little Preschool! We hope that you and your family were able to celebrate the grace of our Lord's birth together. It has been a beautiful time of year to share our joy with you and the families of the preschool. We were able to bring Mrs. Claus in to read the story of Jesus' birth to the children during our chapel time. The kids really enjoyed that!

Since the weather has been so fabulous, we have been very engaged in imaginative play outside! The kids are still enjoying the little garden boxes that they planted in September out on our play yard watching the seeds grow into different plants. They have really been enjoying this kind of creative fun!

This month we will be learning about Transportation, Community Helpers and the Ocean. We will be welcoming Officer Camberg into the classroom to talk about bike safety and showing us her uniform gear. We will also be welcoming the Mesa Fire Department as they bring their fire truck for the kids to explore, too. The kids love having visitors that teach them about new and different things. One of our visitors will be from the Transportation Department at Mesa Public School. They will be bringing a school bus for the children to tour and learn about. What a busy month!

We want to thank all of the families for their sweet gifts that helped to make the teachers feel special. We feel blessed to have such a wonderful community here at First Presbyterian Church. We love being with all of you! Happy New Year!

Sincerely,
Shiloh Murillo, Director

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



Café Justo – Wow! What a great response to supporting our brothers and sisters south of the border and our mission partners ministry! We sold out except for a few bags of decaf the first Sunday we offered it. Another order was immediately placed to have more available for Christmas gifts.

Christmas Angels – Thank you for being angels with your generous gifts to our three families! Packages were delivered on Sunday, December 16th.

Christmas Joy Offering – Thank you for your generous support of the leaders and church workers of the past and present and for the leaders of the future!

Mission Trip Congregational Support Survey on how church members are willing to support the trip which will be coming in January! It is an opportunity for everyone to be involved in supporting the Mission experience.

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!



I-Help – submitted by Janet Verch

First of all, a HUGE thank you to Mark and Angie Waters for their generous gift of time and talent to the I-Help program. They have been shopping, cooking and serving dinner for our clients once a month for four years! This program is entirely run on volunteers, and we could not have provided those meals without you! We have several new dinner cook teams that have come forward, which I will add to the schedule starting January 2019.

Second, a shout out of appreciation to those that support the program regularly, so that we can provide breakfast, lunch and dinner. Not all churches offer this to them, and they certainly don't leave Monday morning on an empty stomach!

I couldn't be more grateful to those that recently gave monetary donations specifically for new towels, sheets and blankets. These items have been purchased, and they were used for the first time on December 16th. The mats will be purchased soon, once we figure out space to accommodate them.

We have an excess of travel-size shampoo, conditioner and lotion. Since space is limited, I would ask that we stop accepting those donations for now. It is actually easier for them to use the larger size bottles, so we will gladly accept larger sizes of those items and thank you to whoever donated those bottles that just showed up!

Lastly, there are still volunteer opportunities for laundry pick up from Friendship Village (Dobson & Southern). This is only a once a month commitment (usually Wednesday / Thursday following 1st and 3rd Sundays). My hope is that with all the new towels, sheets and blankets it will streamline the storage process for the next Sunday. And thank you to Paul Harding for picking it all up every Monday. You're an angel!

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 Harding

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 will be held in conjunction with the annual meeting. The cook-off will be from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. with the meeting being held from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- March 22nd thru 24th — Dinner theater in Fellowship Hall
- April 14th — Worship at the Pioneer Park at 10:00 a.m. with a BBQ afterwards
- May 5th — Salsa challenge

The Fellowship Commission is looking for volunteers to serve as Coffee Hosts for the fellowship time after the first service. Anyone interested, please contact Dennis Sitzler at 602-799-9090 or you can leave a message in the church office 480-964-8606.



THANK YOU! Our Bake Sale was a big success! Thank you for your baking, buying and donations to bring us to a total of \$741. It was fun to see everyone's creations and to bring them home to enjoy with family and friends. This will help enable us to continue with the missions that rely on each dollar that is given.

On December 8th, we enjoyed the food and fellowship at our Holiday Luncheon with a fun potluck of different types of salads, homemade breads, and of course, the yummy desserts. The women who were at the Fall Gathering in Kentucky shared their experiences and special memories that touched their hearts. It was also great to hear from other women who had been there in years past, and what memories they took from their experiences.

Just for Laughs....

There was a man who wanted a job as a salesman in a men's clothing store. The owner didn't want to give the guy a job, because he didn't think he would be right for it. Yet, the man came back day after day asking for a job. One day, because of the man's persistence, the owner decided that he could use a break, and it was dinnertime – a time least likely for customers to come into the store. So, the owner told the man, "I'll give you a job on one condition: you must sell this one suit that's been hanging here on the rack for years. This suit is hideous. If you can sell this suit while I go out for dinner, I'll give you a job for life. You'll have to be a great salesman to sell it." The owner went out to dinner knowing that nothing would happen. When he arrived back at the store, the owner was shocked! There stood the man – his clothes were torn, and he had scratches on his face and his hands. He was bloody. His hair was all messed up. He looked like a wreck. The owner asked, "My goodness, what happened?" The man replied, "I sold the suit. I've sold it, so now I've got a job for life." The owner asked, "What do you mean you sold the suit, it looks like the guy didn't like it?" And the man responded, "No, no the guy loved it. But, his guide dog nearly killed me."

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



FROM THE CLERK'S DESK

News from the DECEMBER Session meeting.

A complete list of current elders and deacons and the commission they belong to can be found in the La Palabra, listed in each commission's news.

Carol Gerlach, Clerk

- We welcomed five new members to our congregation: Carole (Mrs. Dick) Baird, Cortney (Mrs. Talon) Bever, Agwu Njoku, Grace (Mrs. Agwu) Njoku and Rebecca Njoku.
- Sadly, we deleted 15 members from our rolls. Our current membership stands at 275.
- Session examined and accepted Katie Masterson and Carol Strouse as new Deacons.
- Average attendance for November 2018 was $149 + 26 = 175$
- Average attendance for November 2017 was $144 + 32 = 176$
- Session approved Communion dates for 2019 as follows: the first Sunday of every month plus Maundy-Thursdays and Christmas Eve.

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED

All are invited to attend the meeting of the Presbytery of Grand Canyon, together with de Cristo Presbytery, on Friday and Saturday, January 25th and 26th. We will be hosting it here at FPC. Business will begin on Friday afternoon at 3:00 p.m. with a dinner served at 5:00 p.m. Cost: \$10. Here is your opportunity to see the church at large at work.

Saturday begins with a continental breakfast at 8:00 a.m., served by our PW Circles. At 9:00, there will be a worship service in the Sanctuary. You will not want to miss the service. Business will follow the service with the meeting ending at approximately noon.

SPECIAL EVENT: The Presbytery meeting will be especially meaningful to the members of our congregation. Our own Carol Gerlach will be installed as the Moderator of the Presbytery of Grand Canyon for the coming year.

WANTED: We will need goodies for Friday, January 25th, to serve guests as they arrive for the meeting. If you are willing to provide cookies, rolls, muffins, fruit, etc., contact the office and leave your name. These items may be delivered Thursday afternoon, January 24th, or Friday morning. This is not for the PW continental breakfast.

January Birthdays



Stephanie Gerlach	1st
Ryan Posthumus	2nd
Miron Webster	7th
Tammy Miller	8th
Joan Still-Woods	8th
Nate Robinson	9th
Kelly Woods	10th
Susan Logan	14th
Stan Snitzer	15th
Jan Montgomery	16th
Helen Letizia	18th
Sara McWhorter	18th
Bill Anderson	21st
Alice Schlak	21st
Shelley Cronenberg	23rd
Bea Towe	23rd
Ashlyn Newbry	25th
Gwendolyn Sitzler	27th
David Jurgensen	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

January 1

Happy New Year!

(Office closed December 31 and January 1)

January 5

Annie Get Your Gun rehearsals begin

January 7

Deacons meet

January 8

Deborah, Lydia & Rachel Circles meet

January 9

Next WRAP block begins

January 13

Commission & Session meet

January 14

Eve Circle meets

January 25 & 26

FPC hosts Presbytery

January 27

Monthly Food Drive



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

See calendar on website:
fpcmesa.org/calendar

LA PALABRA

A publication for members and friends, published monthly.

**First Presbyterian Church
161 North Mesa Drive
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Phone: 480-964-8606

E-mail: pubs@fpcmesa.org

Website: www.fpcmesa.org

Office Hours: Monday - Thursday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Friday 8:30 - 12:00 noon

**Ann Conklin, Pastor
Mark Ramsey, Director of Music Ministries
Linda Reeves, Office Manager/Publications
Shiloh Murillo, Preschool Director
Don Krill, Buildings Supervisor
Rob Kjar, Bookkeeper
James R. Bruening, Pastor Emeritus
Robert Martz, Pastor Emeritus**