



## A Message from Christian

December 2025

Dear Church Family,

December is here, and our worship space has quietly become a different place. The greens are up—every wreath, garland, and swag lovingly hung by the decorating crew last week. The big Advent wreath now stands in its place of honor, its three purple oil candles, a single rose one, and waiting to be lit is the Christ candle. And thanks to the up-lights, the whole sanctuary is bathed in the rich purple of royalty and repentance. Even though the greens are artificial and the candles burn oil instead of wax, the message is unmistakable: something royal is on the way.

All through November we traced God's great rescue story:

- a perfect creation that declared God's goodness,
- a devastating fall that brought bondage,
- a promise to Abraham that would reach every family on earth,
- a breathtaking deliverance through the Red Sea that proved nothing can stop God from saving His people.

That entire story was moving toward one moment—the moment the Promise becomes a Person. This month we live in **Awaiting the Arrival: Advent's Call to Faith**. One by one, week by week, the oil candles will glow to life under the purple light:

- December 7 – Preparation: Clearing the Way
- December 14 – Transformation: Renewed by Promise – **MUSIC SUNDAY!**
- December 21 – Incarnation: God Draws Near
- December 24 – Christmas Eve: The Presence Revealed (2:00 and 6:00 p.m.)

Circle **December 14 in red**—our Music Sunday. Guest musicians will join the choir for an extended morning of song that will make the rafters ring. We'll rejoice with Isaiah's blooming desert and lift Mary's Magnificat as the good news of God's great reversal fills this purple-lit room. This is the ideal Sunday to bring someone who loves Christmas music but may not yet know the Savior the music is about. Invitation cards are on the welcome desk and in the pews—grab a handful and pray over the names God puts on your heart.

Then, on Christmas Eve, we'll light every candle, dim the lights just enough for the oil flames to dance, and hear the angels sing that the long-promised Child has finally come.

So come this Sunday. Step into the purple light. Breathe in the evergreen. Prepare your heart. The King is drawing near, and He is worth every song we have.

Walking with you toward the manger,  
Pastor Christian

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## FROM THE CLERK'S DESK

Session Meeting of November 16, 2025



### OCTOBER Statistics

Membership: 178

October 2025 Avg. Attendance: 79 in-person + 66 online = 145

October 2024 Avg. Attendance: 0 in-person + 55 online = 135

### Notice of Former Member Deaths

Bev Goff, Member from 11/86 – 5/06

Gloria Hoskins, Affiliate Member since 3/18

### OCTOBER Finance Numbers

Actual Income \$46,585	Budgeted Income \$45,177
Actual Expense \$41,366	Budgeted Expense \$44,142
YTD Actual Income \$358,209	YTD Budgeted Income \$429,937
YTD Actual Expense \$398,383	YTD Budgeted Expense \$426,831
YTD Capital Income: \$22,081	YTD Budgeted Capital Income \$17,892

### 2025 Per Capita

\$40.20 per member (\$24.36 to Presbytery, \$5.00 to Synod, \$10.84 to General Assembly) based on our 12/31/2023 membership of 194. **2026 Per Capita will be \$42.11**

### REPORTS/MOTIONS PASSED

New Members Ashley and Matthew Sweeney will be welcomed into membership on Sunday, November 23 and their baby daughter, Adeline, will be baptized.
Our church will be hosting Calvin University's January Series again in Fellowship Hall January 19th through the 30th
Our church will be hosting the Annual Combined Presbytery Meeting on our campus on Saturday, January 24th.

### ETC:

My term as Clerk ends May 31, 2027. I cannot re-up. I'm looking for someone who knows how to take meeting minutes and would like to talk to me about being a Clerk in-training to contact me. There is more to being Clerk than taking minutes and anyone interested in doing it would need to attend Session meetings well in advance of June, 2027.
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**REACH UP AND OUT IN FAITH AND LOVE**

*(Mission Statement approved by Session 8/25/2024)*

*Carol Gerlach, Clerk*

## Worship

A most blessed Christmas season to you all!

We have a lot to look forward to in the coming weeks. Advent is here, and we will be focusing on the coming arrival of the Christ child. As you already know, our annual Music Sunday on December 14th will be a wonderful morning of special music and praise. Our Christmas Eve services at 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. will be a meaningful way to celebrate Christ's birth. In between those times there will once again be a special Christmas backdrop for taking photos in the back of the sanctuary. Another project in the works is improving our sanctuary sound with a new speaker system.

Reach out to friends and family and invite them to any or all of our services this month!



**Poinsettias** will again be displayed in our Sanctuary during **Christmas**. This year we will be purchasing some new, beautiful silk ones that can be reused in the future. You are invited to help purchase new ones, and can also do so in honor or in memory of a loved one. We are suggesting a donation of \$15 to help defray the cost. Printed forms will be available in the Sanctuary and the church office. Or you may send a check payable to "First Presbyterian Church," with memo notation "Poinsettias." The deadline is December 10th.

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## Fellowship

We're hoping to arrange a Christmas Caroling outing. Watch for information and contact Brooks Newbry if interested.



### Monthly Potluck

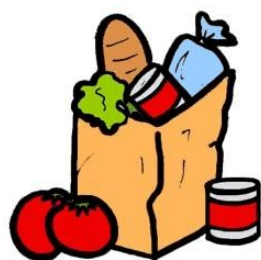


Everyone is invited to a potluck lunch after worship December 28th! Please bring a dish to share. A good time will be had by all!



PW Circles met individually in November and studied Lesson 3, "Jesus is Tested." Our members donated many items to the church auction, representing hours of time and talent.

We look forward to our annual holiday luncheon on Tuesday, December 9th, at 11:30 a.m. We will be learning some healing and awakening Qigong Tai Chi with Rev. Deanne Hodgson, RN. We will also be pledging, voting and offering items to Control-Alt-Delete's efforts in rescuing victims of domestic violence. Lesson 4 will be introduced with a video of Rev. Hunter discussing The Prodigal Child, the Eldest Child, and the Devoted Parent.



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Dear FPC Mesa Family,

Thank you for the ongoing support of the Food Pantry and Clothing Closet. We are serving more clients than ever and appreciate your contributions.

Please consider bringing in items from our priority list: **Cereal, Granola Bars, Dry or Canned Milk, Oatmeal (individual packets), Canned Meat, Beans (dry or canned), Peanut Butter, Spaghetti Sauce, Canned Vegetables, Canned Fruit, Boxed or Canned Potatoes, Rice (small bags), Noodles & Pasta, Macaroni & Cheese, Soup, Sugar (small bags), Flour (small bags), Ramen Noodles, Crackers, and Jell-O (boxed mix).**

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## Mission

The next Community Dinner will be Wednesday, December 3rd, at 5:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. It will be a spaghetti dinner.

Thank you to all who made the Mission Commission's Silent Auction a great success. You helped raise \$948 to support upcoming events.



The Christmas Tree, in the back of the sanctuary, is filled with angels so that we can support three families this year. After you take a tag and buy the gift, please wrap it up and put it back under the tree with the tag on top by December 14th. Presents and food will be delivered to the three families on December 21st after church. Thank you for all your help with the mission of angel tree this year!



## Music

Dear Friends,

As we enter the sacred and joy-filled season of Advent, I'm delighted to share the exciting musical offerings we have planned for the coming weeks. Advent invites us to pause, reflect, and prepare our hearts—and music has a beautiful way of guiding us into that spirit of anticipation.

### Music Sunday – December 14

Mark your calendars! On December 14th we will celebrate *Music Sunday*, a highlight of our Advent season. This year, we are thrilled to welcome a brass quintet to join our choirs and congregation in worship. Their bright, festive sound will bring extra warmth and energy to our service, lifting our voices and spirits as we draw closer to Christmas. This service promises to be a joyful and moving experience for all ages. It's truly one of the best Sundays of the year to bring someone along—**so please invite your friends, family, and neighbors** to join us for this special morning of music and praise!



As always, thank you for supporting the music ministry with your enthusiasm, presence, and singing voices. I look forward to celebrating Advent with you in song.

With gratitude and joy,  
Bridget Mitchell  
Director of Music Ministries



## **First Presbyterian Church of Mesa announces its Capital fundraising campaign.**

### **Who we are:**

FPC Mesa has a 75-year history of supporting the community with education and economic mobility. We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with several ministries working to fulfill our role as a pillar of refuge for the downtown Mesa community.

Our church's mission is to help people in the local and global community. All contributions designated for assistance go toward giving, and not to administration or overhead. Our faithful congregation takes care of that part however; we need your help with some capital needs (more on that later).

### **What we do:**

FPC volunteers interact daily with the community providing direct assistance to people in need. We actively give our time, talent, and treasure to promote education and social mobility. Some of these programs have reached their sunset while others have just started. Our commitment to these areas remains.

#### **Education for children of all ages**

- **Head Start.** Every child deserves a strong start, and every family deserves the support they need to thrive. We believe in the potential of every child and the power of early childhood education to shape a brighter future for all.
- **Urban Promise Honduras.** Sustains Christian-based youth development organizations and to seed their new ministries as they serve vulnerable children and teens in our world's most under-resourced communities

#### **Economic Mobility**

- **Mesa Presbyterian Ministries.** Providing direct financial grants to working parents who need help paying for rent, food, and utilities.
- **FPC Mesa Deacon's Food Bank.** Weekly food distribution to families to ease the worry of food insecurity
- **FPC Mesa Deacon's Clothing Closet.** A free store where needy families can select from a wide range of season-appropriate clothing.
- **MADD** works with the courts to offer information seminars to convicted drivers which lower the incidence of drunk driving.

### **How You Can Help**

FPC is blessed with contributions from our members that are sufficient to cover daily needs. This year our capital funding goal is to raise \$100,000 for repairs and improvements to our facilities to ensure the long-term success of our mission. Here are some areas needing improvement or repair.

- Air conditioning units for our music and childcare building: \$15,000
- New roof for our music and childcare building: \$35,000
- Remodel men's and women's restrooms, adding handicap accessibility: \$25,000
- Repairs to our commercial kitchen: \$5,000
- Sail shades for patio area to make outside gatherings more comfortable: \$5,000
- Concrete repairs to sidewalks and building foundation: \$15,000

You can help with these items by donating money, time, or skills. Or, you can donate items for our annual silent auction. Or, you can sponsor our next neighborhood festival.

### **Before You Go**

We are a pillar for the spiritual, cultural, and economic benefit of our southeast valley neighbors. Our campus may have a few scrapes and bruises but, with your help, we can fulfill our mission to the community. You can boldly deploy philanthropy to make a lasting impact on children's education and economic mobility with FPC.

## Bring a Friend This Christmas Season!

The holidays are all about gathering with loved ones—and what better way to share the joy than inviting them to worship with us? As you chat over dinner or bump into neighbors at the holiday lights, here are two can't-miss opportunities to extend a warm invitation:

- **Music Sunday – December 14** (during our regular worship time)  
Experience an extra-special service filled with the sounds of the season! We'll welcome guest musicians and feature extended Christmas music that will lift your spirits and warm your heart. It's the perfect low-pressure invite for friends or family who might already have Christmas Eve plans—this is a beautiful way to share the hope of Advent together.
- **Christmas Eve Worship (2:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m.)**  
Join us for a candlelit service of carols, Scripture, and the timeless story of Christ's birth. With special music and a welcoming atmosphere (already in the works by our dedicated staff), it's an ideal, low-threshold event to bring someone who's curious about faith or simply longing for the peace of the season.

Both services are designed to be joyful, meaningful, and open to all. Share the word—your personal invite makes all the difference!

The Congregations of FPC & GPC are Invited to

**Bridget Mitchell's**

# FAREWELL

## Party

As she embarks on a new journey, let's gather to wish her all the best in her future endeavors.

**Sunday**  
14 DECEMBER 2025  
11:45 AM

**First Presbyterian Church**  
161 N. Mesa Dr.  
FELLOWSHIP HALL

One cannot have too large a party. -Jane Austen, *Emma*, 1815

## December Birthdays



Denver Wyse	1st
Sheilah Dye	2nd
Linda Reeves	4th
Karen Rudin	6th
Anita Ramsey	9th
Carolyn Barber	14th
Bridget Mitchell	14th
Lucy MacDonald	15th
Janice Williamson	16th
Bob Leonard	17th
Carole Baird	18th
Laura Bruening	19th
Barbara Walker	20th
Maurice Belew	21st
Jon Martin	21st
Mirasol Bronola	29th
Rosemary Goings	29th
Christian Johnson	30th

**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.

FPC Staff emails are listed below. Staff cell phone numbers are listed in the church directory.

Christian Johnson: [pastor@fpcmesa.org](mailto:pastor@fpcmesa.org)  
 Bridget Mitchell: [musicdirector@fpcmesa.org](mailto:musicdirector@fpcmesa.org)  
 Mark Ramsey: [music@fpcmesa.org](mailto:music@fpcmesa.org)  
 Chris McKee: [chris@fpcmesa.org](mailto:chris@fpcmesa.org)  
 Linda Reeves: [pubs@fpcmesa.org](mailto:pubs@fpcmesa.org)  
 Rob Kjar: [business@fpcmesa.org](mailto:business@fpcmesa.org)



## NEW MEMBER INFO

Matthew & Ashley Sweeney & Adeline  
 351 E. Civic Center Dr., Apt. 1056  
 Gilbert, AZ 85296  
 Matthew: 480-299-0325  
 Ashley: 480-851-8981

### Calendar Notes

#### December

Worship every Sunday at 10:30 a.m.  
 in the Sanctuary or online

Adult Christian Education at 9:30 a.m., Library

Food donations taken every Sunday

Clothing Closet donations taken every Sunday

Food Pantry & Clothing Closet open every Friday  
 between 8:00 and 9:00 a.m.

#### December 3 & 17

Women's Bible Study

#### December 3

Community Dinner

#### December 7

Deacons meet

#### December 9

PW Holiday Luncheon

#### December 14

Music Sunday

#### December 20

SW Chamber Chorale

#### December 24

Christmas Eve Services at 2:00 & 6:00 p.m.

#### December 25

*Merry Christmas!*

#### December 28

Potluck Sunday

#### December 31

New Years Eve



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*Mesa, AZ 85201*

**LA PALABRA**

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