



A Message from Christian

March 2026

“Return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.” (Joel 2:12-13, NRSVUE)

Dear Friends in Christ,

As we continue our journey through this holy season of Lent, I am filled with gratitude for the ways the Spirit is at work among us at First Presbyterian Church of Mesa. Our sermon series, “At the Mercy of the Mercy of Christ,” invites us to confront our sin not through self-reliant efforts, but by throwing ourselves upon the tender mercy of Jesus—the true victor who carries us from ashes to the alleluia of Easter morning. Through reflections on key Scriptures like Romans, Psalms, Ephesians, and Philippians, we’re reminded that true repentance leads to humility, transformation, and a deeper reliance on Christ’s grace.

This Lent, I encourage you to embrace discipleship as an apprenticeship to Jesus, arranging your daily life to walk more closely with Him through prayer, fasting, reflection, and acts of mercy. Consider picking up a copy of our published Lenten Devotional, “A Lenten Journey with Jesus in the Desert,” available in the narthex or online. It offers daily Scriptures, meditations, local echoes from our East Valley landscape, spiritual practices, and prayers to guide your steps toward the cross and resurrection.

In the weeks ahead, join us for midweek Lenten services on Wednesdays, where we’ll deepen our study and fellowship. On March 8th, we’ll celebrate Women’s Sunday, lifting up the gifts of women in our midst. Look for our Moment for Mission on Legacy Giving around March 15th (or 22nd), and on March 22nd, we’ll support Montlure Camp scholarships to nurture young disciples.

May this season draw us nearer to Christ’s merciful heart, transforming us step by step into His likeness. I’m praying for you and look forward to worshipping together.

In His grace,
Pastor Christian



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FROM THE CLERK'S DESK



Session did not meet in February because of the Annual Congregational and Corporation Meeting

SUMMARY OF THE ANNUAL MEETING

- Pastor Christian's Terms of Call as presented by Personnel Elder Jo Wilson were approved.
- A Bylaw change for our Nominating Committee to remove terms for the At-large members of the committee passed. At-large members will now be elected annually.
- Joy Schulz presented the following slate of officers who were all unanimously elected.

Session	Jan Montgomery, Stewardship & Finance Dennis Sitzler, Property Gail Soderquist, Worship Jo Wilson, Personnel One vacancy remains
Deacons	Deb Rosen Barbara Walker Matthew Sweeney volunteered to fill one of the two vacancies One vacancy remains
Trustees	Susan Durand One vacancy remains
Nominating	Dave Jurgensen Miki Newbry Marcy Snitzer One vacancy remains

- There were no questions regarding any of the officer or committee Annual Reports.
- Pastor Christian gave his Annual Report.
- At the Annual Corporation Meeting the following officers were elected:

President	Dennis Sitzler
Treasurer	Jan Montgomery
Secretary	Carol Gerlach

- A motion was made, seconded and carried authorizing Session to approve the Minutes of the Annual Meetings at its next regular Stated Meeting.

2026 Per Capita

\$42.11 per member (based on our 12/31/2024 membership of 182) (\$25.85 to GC Presbytery, \$5.00 to Synod of the Southwest, \$11.26 for General Assembly)

Carol Gerlach, Clerk

Worship

As we move in to the season of Lent, there are many opportunities for you to participate in this special time. Wednesday Lent services will be each week at 2:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall with some hands-on activities to enjoy. We will also have a special opportunity to take part in a Seder Feast, led by Lois Hildebrand. You will be hearing more information about that soon. The Feast will be in Fellowship Hall and followed by the Maundy Thursday service. Then on March 29th, we will celebrate Palm Sunday!



"During Lent, let us find concrete ways to overcome our indifference."
-Pope Francis



Lenten services will happen every Wednesday through March 25th at 2:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Each service is approximately 50 minutes. The theme complements the Sunday sermon series, "At the Mercy of the Mercy of Christ" by focusing on personal journeys through life's "wilderness" to discover God's sustaining mercy. All are welcome!

Mark your calendars! March 8th is Women's Gifts Sunday. Rev. Judith Wellington will lead worship.

Mesa Presbyterian Ministries

It's not too late to claim an Arizona Tax Credit for 2025!

Mesa Presbyterian Ministries is a non-profit organization that qualifies as a dollar-for-dollar tax credit with the state of Arizona. MPM originally named Christ Haven started at our church by Bob Gerlach in 2001. MPM provides rental and utility assistance for Mesa residents in need. The goal of MPM is to keep families in their current homes during financial difficulties. Nearly 100 families have been helped by MPM this year. With your contribution we could do even more in 2026! 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.

Mission

Free Community Dinner



Come for dinner on Wednesday, March 4th, at 5:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Lois Hildenbrand will be serving Chicken Pot Pie! Hope to see you there!



Mesa Mercy Market

food pantry & clothing closet



Mesa Mercy Market is now accepting donations of spring clothing. Men's clothing is needed, especially shirts.

A reminder that we have new shopping bags for your donations. They are hanging on the kiosk and the wagon. Take one and keep it in your car so you have it when you go shopping. For your convenience the items we need are printed right on the bag!

Thank you so much!

Fellowship

Monthly Potluck



Everyone is invited to a potluck lunch after worship March 22! Please bring a dish to share. A good time will be had by all!

Don't forget - **PER CAPITA for 2026** is \$42.11. \$25.85 for GC Presbytery, \$5.00 for the Synod of the Southwest and \$11.26 for GA. The amount we owe, based on our 12/31/22 membership of 240, is \$9,242.40.

Volunteers Wanted for Church Clean Day

Tuesday Crew is looking for volunteers to help clean and organize the church shed on **Tuesday, March 24th, 9:30 a.m. to Noon**. The shed is our maintenance, custodial and storage hub, which gets cluttered at times. Please contact our Director of Operations, Chris McKee if you like to join us: Chris@fpcmesa.org



ANNUAL CHILI COOK-OFF



Congratulations, Anita, on winning 1st Place!



Robert took 2nd!



And Joy took 3rd!



March Birthdays



Joyce Baum	6th
Sean Snitzer	6th
Darlene Sitzler	7th
Ashley Sweeney	7th
Dennis Sitzler	9th
Linda Zeiler	10th
Helen Lents	11th
Pam Robles	16th
Nelly Nobis	19th
Peter Eisenklam	20th
Marilyn Uithoven	20th
Caroline Cline	25th
Bill Lents	31st

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
Damian Martin: musicdirector@fpcmesa.org
Mark Ramsey: music@fpcmesa.org
Chris McKee: chris@fpcmesa.org
Linda Reeves: pubs@fpcmesa.org
Rob Kjar: business@fpcmesa.org



ADDRESS CHANGES/CORRECTIONS

Woods, Dave
Verena at Gilbert
1505 E Willis, #1435
Gilbert. AZ 85297

Calendar Notes

March

Worship every Sunday at 11:00 a.m.
in the Sanctuary or online

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

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.

March 1

Deacons

March 4 & 18

Women's Bible Study

March 4, 11, 18, 25

Midweek Lenten Services

March 4

Community Dinner

March 8

Women's Gifts Sunday

March 10 & 11

Circles meet

March 15

Session

March 22

Potluck Sunday

March 29

Palm Sunday

April 2

Maundy Thursday Seder Feast

April 5

Easter

Easter Egg Hunt

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LA PALABRA

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Closed Friday

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Damian Martin, Music Director
Mark Ramsey, Music Associate
Chris McKee, Director of Operations
Linda Reeves, Office Manager/Publications
Rob Kjar, Bookkeeper**