

La Palabra

October 2024

www.fpcmesa.org

480-964-8606

A Message from Christian

Colossians 2:7 NCV

*Keep your roots deep in him and have your lives built on him.
Be strong in the faith, just as you were taught, and always be thankful.*

Dear Church Family,

As October unfolds and the landscape around us begins to shift, even if it is in small steps at first, I'm reminded of the profound journey we're on as followers of Christ—a journey of discipleship that invites us into a deeper, more transformative relationship with Him.

Discipleship is not just an add-on to our lives; it's the very heart of what it means to follow Jesus. It's about allowing His teachings to permeate our thoughts, actions, and interactions. Think of a plant in the desert, struggling to thrive. It needs deep roots in a creek bed or wash to find nourishment and stability. Similarly, we, too, must dig deep into our relationship with Jesus, drawing from His Word and engaging in prayer, to flourish in our faith.

Consider the story of a man I will call John. He spent years attending church but felt a disconnect in his spiritual life. One day, after he became a deacon, he decided to join a small group, where he began to share his struggles and doubts openly. As he engaged with others, he found that discipleship wasn't just about knowing more; it was about living in community, learning from each other, and growing together to be more like Jesus. Through this experience, John developed a closer walk with Jesus as his apprentice, discovering that vulnerability, transformation and connection were key to his spiritual growth, all of which was helped by the Holy Spirit.

As we enter this season, let's reflect on our own paths. Sometimes they take us through very arid lands. Are we cultivating deep roots in our faith? Are we participating in the community God has placed around us? I encourage you to consider joining a small group, participating in a study, or finding a mentor to walk alongside you. Each of these opportunities can help us move from mere attendance to active discipleship.

This October, let's commit to deepening our relationship with Christ, supporting one another, and being open to the transformative work He desires to do in our hearts. Together, let's be the vibrant community that reflects His love and grace to the world.

In His grace,
Pastor Christian Johnson



Cottonwood next to Sabino Creek

INDEX

<i>A Message from Christian</i>	1
<i>From the Clerk's Desk</i>	2
<i>Discipleship</i>	2
<i>Worship</i>	3
<i>Mission</i>	3
<i>Presbyterian Women</i>	4
<i>Fellowship</i>	4
<i>Mission Statement</i>	5
<i>October Birthdays</i>	6
<i>Address Changes</i>	6
<i>Calendar Notes</i>	6
<i>Calendar</i>	website



News from the **SEPTEMBER** Session meeting

Clerk's Statistics for August

No weddings, births, baptisms or deaths.

Membership: **192**

Average Attendance for August 69 in-person & 52 online = 121

August Income \$24,960; Expense \$40,062

YTD Income \$243,408; Expense \$301,881

Carol Gerlach, Clerk

Reports/Motions

Saturday, September 21, was our Annual Officer/Staff Retreat (elders, deacons, board of trustees and staff) which was devoted to examining the new Vision Statement tenets. The Planning Committee had an audience participation project for us. There was a question at every table having to do with our church and everyone was instructed to go to each table and write down their "solution" to the question. The answers will be categorized, tabulated and prioritized for action. This is NOT a one-and-done kind of thing. It is NOT something that only the Planning Committee or the Church Officers will resolve. This will take EVERYONE'S participation at some point in the project. We will be hearing more updates from the Planning Committee, I'm sure!

After the audience participation project we dove deeper into the first tenet by discussing the book recommended by the Strategic Planning Committee, *Becoming a Welcoming Church*. Everyone had read the book and turned their copy in after the meeting. It will now be available to all members. Ask Brent Gregory for a copy or check with another of the Planning Committee members at the back of the sanctuary following worship.

Session met following the Retreat and approved the Minutes of the August meeting.

Finance Committee members are already meeting with staff regarding the 2025 Budget.

The office is getting a new copy machine (our present machine is 12 years old).

Have you noticed all the updates in the Sanctuary?

Pastor Christian will be on Study Leave October 14 – 17.

Et cetera

Don't forget - **PER CAPITA for 2024** is \$38.51 (unchanged from 2023). \$23.71 for GC Presbytery, \$5.00 for the Synod of the Southwest and \$9.80 for GA. The apportionment payment we owe, based on our 12/31/22 membership of 240, is \$9,242.40.

Worship



The Kick-Off Event for our 2024-25 FPC Artist Series will be presented by Soprano Nicole Larsen. Nicole will offer an afternoon performance in our Sanctuary on Sunday, October 13th (4:00 p.m.). The program will be offered by our Artist Series Patrons. There will be no charge for the concert, but donations for Nicole and our Artist Series will be received at the door. In addition to enjoying a lovely afternoon of song, please consider contributing to the [Artist Series!](#)

Nicole has a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of New Mexico and a Masters in Opera and Musical Theater Performance from Arizona State University. She has developed a music and choir program at a Montessori elementary school, directed and organized music education and outreach programs with the New Mexico Jazz Workshop, performed around the world as the lead singer for Celebrity Enterprises, and toured with Artrageous, including several operatic appearances in Germany. She is currently building her own non-profit to produce music and support artists across multiple disciplines, and is currently an Arizona Opera Ambassador. The FPC Concert will include music by Rachmaninov, Mozart, Brahms, Irving Berlin, and MORE! Plan to join Nicole in concert!

Mission

The next Community Dinner & Game Night will be Wednesday, October 2nd, at 5:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Hamburgers and hot dogs will be served. The activity will be making a fall decoration for your house. An offering box will be available to give a free will offering.

Items for the Silent Auction will be accepted during the month of October. They can be baskets you together, artwork, jewelry, quilts and home-made items, tickets to an event...any item you think someone else would enjoy having! You can bring your donated items during the month of October to church on Sunday or the office during the week.

The Fall Festival/Trunk or Treat is coming!! It will be on Saturday, October 26th, from 3:30-7pm in the church parking lot. We will need lots of volunteers that day and sign up will begin in October after church each week in Fellowship Hall. We are also accepting donations of drinks (water and soda) and prizes for kids. Please see Gretchen Frederick if you have any questions.





PW Circles are off to a great start! Deborah and Rachel Circles met in September and studied the first lesson in our new Bible study for this year, “Let Justice Roll Down, God’s Call to Care for Neighbors and All Creation.” Eve Circle will meet for the first time in October; Eve’s new meeting time is 10:00 a.m. on the second Monday of the month! Our new evening circle, Salome, is still in process and will be ready to roll in November. More information to follow.



We took a few minutes this month to acknowledge the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women recognition during September. Two upcoming events also relate to our Presbytery’s Peace and Justice group. First, on October 1, our visiting Peacemaker from Costa Rica, Mia Umaña and her interpreter Karla Kol, will be speaking at Guadalupe Presbyterian Church at 9:30 a.m. All are welcome! Then on October 4, Mia will be part of the program and worship at the PW Presbytery Fall Get Together at Peoria Presbyterian Church, 10:30-2:00. Highlights from the Churchwide Gathering and other informal conversations will be included. Contact Carol Anderson (480.272.5517) for more information.



Finally, PW is planning to take a volunteer group to Feed My Starving Children at noon on November 19. Let Carol Anderson or any PW know, if you would like to join the group!

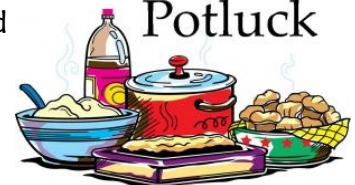
October Circles

Deborah	Tuesday, 10/8, 9:30 a.m. in the Parlor
Rachel	Tuesday, 10/8, 1:00 p.m. in the Parlor
Eve	Monday, 10/14, 10:00 a.m. in the Parlor

Fellowship

Mark your calendars for the return of our Monthly Potlucks on October 27th immediately following worship. A good time will be had by all!

Monthly Potluck





FPC MESA

First Presbyterian Church

Our Mission

Reach up and out in faith and love.

Our Vision

First Presbyterian Church, Mesa, guided by the Holy Spirit, believes God is leading us to be a cornerstone for our community. To that end, our vision is that by 2030 we will be vibrant and flourishing:

- Where all feel welcome as we joyfully embrace the love of Jesus that connects us all to one another.
- Where faith and everyday life come together filling the church campus with energy and purposeful activity throughout the week.
- Where we have thriving ministries for children, youth, and young adults drawing our young people together, encouraging them in their faith journeys and fostering a desire to be a part of the larger community.
- Where we support young families as they disciple their children
- Where we strive to meet the physical, emotional, spiritual and educational needs of all ages through preschool and outreach ministries to our neighbors.
- Where Christ-centered worship is celebrated in new and creative ways while using our talents and gifts with music, and studying God's Word, ever deepening our faith.
- Where we encourage one another to become lifelong learners and followers of Christ, as we offer meaningful opportunities to express our faith, grow in knowledge, and join in fellowship.

Our Values

Worship

We value worship, hearing the Word, enjoying and praising God through music, celebrating what we believe, sharing our walk with Jesus and striving to be a place where all people can belong.

Fellowship

Members of all ages love being together with each other and with our neighbors. Whether worshipping together, praising and celebrating through music, breaking bread, or working together in mission, we strive to be welcoming to all, valuing everyone.

Outreach/Evangelism

We celebrate what we believe by putting our faith into action through activities that care for our neighbors (near and far) while manifesting the gospel. Through these activities we invite them to come into a closer relationship with Christ, ourselves and each other. Current activity examples are the Food Pantry/Clothing Closet, I Help, MPM, community dinners and neighborhood festivals.

Discipleship

We nurture and grow our relationship with Christ in many ways. Those include Bible Study, Bible-centered worship, teaching our youth, sharing with others our faith walk with Jesus, and caring for each other and our neighbors.

October Birthdays



Jennifer Martin	1st
Dylan Hickey	2nd
Carter Buck	3rd
Rita Scriba	5th
Steve Wylie	8th
Connie Chisholm	11th
Brooks Newbry	12th
Bob Mallia	14th
Dale Gibson	15th
David Woods	19th
Philip McGrath	10th
Dan Reeves	23rd
John McNary	25th
George Montgomery	26th
Diane Brause	27th
John Couillard	27th
Kate McMichael	27th
Cary Preston	29th
Janet Verch	29th
Luke McInnelly	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
Mark Ramsey: music@fpcmesa.org
Chris McKee: chris@fpcmesa.org
Linda Reeves: pubs@fpcmesa.org
Rob Kjar: business@fpcmesa.org

ADDRESS CHANGES/CORRECTIONS

Herrera, Kay
602-739-0291
(phone change only)

Calendar Notes

October

Worship every Sunday at 10:00 a.m.
in the Sanctuary or online

Christian Education:

Children's Sunday School begins 9/8 at 11:20 a.m.
Adults at 11:30 a.m.

Food Donations taken every Sunday

Clothing Closet donations taken 1st and 3rd Sunday

October 2

Community Dinner in Fellowship Hall

October 6

World Communion Sunday
Deacons meet

October 8

Deborah Circle meets at 9:30 a.m.
Rachel Circle meets at 1:00 p.m.

October 13

Nicole Larson Concert

October 14

Eve Circle meets at 10:00 a.m. (new time)

October 20

Session meets

October 26

Fall Festival/Trunk or Treat

October 27

Potluck Sunday

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

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A publication for members and friends, published monthly.

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Mesa, AZ 85201**

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**Office Hours: Monday - Thursday 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Closed Friday**

**Christian Johnson, Pastor
Mark Ramsey, Director of Music Ministries
Chris McKee, Director of Operations
Linda Reeves, Office Manager/Publications
Rob Kjar, Bookkeeper**