



A Message from Christian

January 2025

Dear Beloved Congregation,

Wishing you a joyous and prosperous New Year!

I recently captured this photograph of two young turtles at the Riparian Preserve in Gilbert. One striking aspect of their situation caught my attention—their arms hooked over the edge of a steeply inclined log. This begs the question: are they merely surviving, or are they thriving? Are they barely clinging to life, or are they actively making progress?

As we embark on this new year, I am filled with a profound sense of hope and anticipation for the blessings and promises that await us. January presents an opportunity for reflection on the past year's blessings and for looking forward to the future's promises. It is a fresh start, a new chapter, and a chance to rekindle our faith, both individually and collectively. It is an opportunity to thrive.

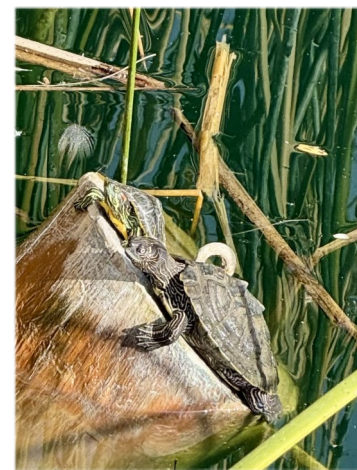
It was a delight that our first worship service of the year was in conjunction with our brothers and sisters in Christ from Gilbert Presbyterian Church. This joint service served as a beautiful reminder of the unity and fellowship that we hold dear in our community. Our gathering not only celebrated the dawn of a new year but also reinforced the bonds that unite us in Christ's love.

In 2025, let us strive to thrive by deepening our connection with Jesus, seeking His wisdom and guidance in every aspect of our lives. We are called to be the salt and light of the world, embodying His love through our words, actions, and deeds. Let us continue to embrace this calling with unwavering fervor and dedication.

As we set out on this journey, I encourage each of you to commit to personal growth and spiritual renewal. Make time for prayer, immerse yourself in scripture, and actively participate in our church activities. We have a series of opportunities and initiatives planned for the coming months, and your involvement will be instrumental in their success.

As we enter 2025, let us approach the year with hearts full of gratitude and expectation, trusting that God will work wonders through us. May our church remain a beacon of hope, love, and faith in our community.

Blessings and Peace,
Pastor Christian



Surviving or Thriving?

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News from the **December** Session meeting

Clerk's Statistics for **November**



No weddings, births, baptisms or deaths.

Membership: **185**

Avg. Attendance November 2024: 79 in-person & 71 online = 150

Avg. Attendance November 2023: 84 in-person & 71 online = 155

NOVEMBER FINANCE REPORT:

Income \$64,580; Expense \$37,797

YTD Income \$367,284; Expense \$421,482

Carol Gerlach, Clerk

Session approved the Minutes of the November meeting.
The Mission Commission set Saturday, March 1 from 1 to 3 p.m. for the Spring Festival. The November auction brought in \$1,400!
Board of Trustees: The Tuesday Crew has put up the temporary church sign on Mesa Drive.
The Personnel Committee is still looking for a part-time Musi Director.
Mark Ramsey will have a jazz piano concert/fundraiser on Saturday, March 29 at 4 p.m.

Et cetera

We have received our NOTICE OF 2025 PER CAPITA APPORTIONMENT . It is \$9,648.00 (\$40.20 per member) and is based on our 12/31/2023 membership which was 240. \$24.36 for the Presbytery, \$5.00 for the Synod and \$10.84 for General Assembly.
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REACH UP AND OUT IN FAITH AND LOVE



IN MEMORIAM — 2024

- Pat Mills — January 14
- Jo Godfrey — February 1
- John “Jack” Goings, Jr. — October 13
- Norma “Kay” Herrera — December 8
- Anne Schafer — December 23
- Frances Kaufmann — December 28



Worship



The Advent Season ended celebrating Christmas Eve with two services. The first service began with For King and Country's rendition of "Little Drummer Boy," and included familiar and newer carols led by our HolyGrounds Praise Band. The second service featured traditional music, as well as Tom Sitzler's moving solo *O Holy Night*. Both services gave us a humorous look at Christmas According to Kids, and both ended sharing *Silent Night* by candlelight.

The New Year began with a combined Communion worship service with Gilbert Presbyterian, where we were gifted with a piano rendition of a Carol-Prelude from Susan Martinez, Pianist/Organist at Gilbert Presbyterian Church, and a vocal solo of *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear* by Amy Johnston, Music Director at Gilbert Presbyterian Church.

Finally, a huge "Thank You" to Susan Durand, Cheryl & Brent Gregory, Christian Johnson, Renita & Dave Jurgensen, Chris McKee, Anita & Mark Ramsey, Todd Ramsey and Joy & Bob Schulz for helping take down and store the Sanctuary Christmas decorations for another year.

2025 continues with ...

The FPC Artist Series will host the Valley Chamber Chorale for a concert on Saturday, February 1st, at 2:00 p.m. The Chorale will perform in our Sanctuary and will be under the direction of former FPC Organist Dr. Christopher Samuel. Freewill donations will be received at the door.



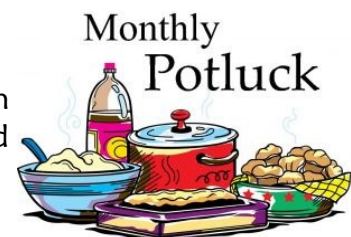
Founded in 1988, the Valley Chamber Chorale is one of the longest running not-for-profit choral organizations in the Valley. The ensemble has performed at state conventions of the Music Educators National Conference,

in 1991 and 1995, the Western Region Convention of the American Guild of Organists in 1995, and the "World's Largest Organ Concert" with guest artist, Joan Lippincott, in 1996. The group's compact disc of Renaissance motets and madrigals, "O Sing Joyfully," was released in 1996, and can be found in bookstores locally and in select cities nationally. For the February 1st concert, the Chorale will be joined by a select group of high school singers!

Your Church needs your help. Join an Usher team and meet your fellow church members every 6th week. Contact the church office 480-964-8606 or Don Wilson 480-962-9001.

Fellowship

Everyone is invited to an Italian-themed potluck lunch after worship January 26th! Please bring a dish to share. A good time will be had by all!





FPC Mesa PW Circles met jointly on Tuesday, December 10th, to share a delicious potluck lunch. Rather than studying a lesson from this year's Bible study, the program was a video of one of the keynote speakers from the Churchwide Gathering in St. Louis last summer. The Reverend Yung Me Morris presented "Did You Eat Yet?" which focused on hospitality, epitomized by a history of hunger and starvation in Korea. Interestingly, it was American soldiers who helped the cause by "sharing" rations, namely discarded hotdogs and Spam, among other foods. To this day, Spam is a delicacy, even given in gift boxes and served in elaborately prepared dishes. Everyone enjoyed this thought-provoking presentation.

During November and December PW celebrates mission by donating to the Thank Offering – an opportunity to demonstrate gratitude for the special blessings in our lives. Thank Offering grants range from \$5,000 to \$50,000. At least 40 percent of the offering funds health ministries. Of the six last year, four grants remained in the U.S., while two were awarded internationally.

Circles will resume their studies this month, either Water Justice or Women of the Bible, Mary. All ladies are invited to any circle; please come join us!

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| Eve | Monday, January 13, 10:00 a.m. in the Parlor |
| Deborah | Tuesday, January 14, 9:30 a.m. in the Parlor |
| Rachel | Tuesday, January 14, 1:00 p.m. in the Parlor |
| Salome | Tuesday, January 14, 7:00 p.m., Linda Zeiler's home, 1233 N Mesa Dr., #1005 |



Mission

The silent auction was very successful!! We raised over \$1400 for mission to be used in our community.

Here are the dates for the upcoming community dinners:

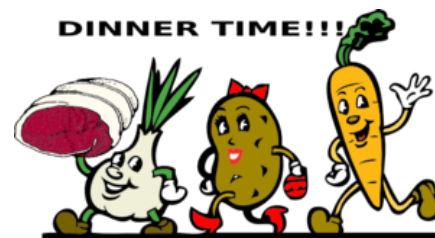
January 8 - spaghetti dinner by Andy Chesko and Anita Ramsey

February 5 - dinner with fried rice by Pan Im Main

March 5 - no one has signed up

April 2 - no one has signed up

May 7 - Mexican dinner by Susan Chesko



If you would like to help with any of these months, please let Susan Chesko know.

Mark your calendars!! The spring festival will be on Saturday, March 1st, from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Watch for sign-ups in February.

Discipleship

Brief Parent Huddle Sunday, January 12th. All parents of elementary children are invited to a brief Parent Huddle to discuss children's Sunday School. We will meet in the sanctuary at the Pray and Play area immediately following worship, Sunday, January 12th.

Just for Laughs...

Two buddies were out for a Saturday stroll. One had a Doberman and the other had a Chihuahua. As they sauntered down the street, the guy with the Doberman said to his friend, "Let's go over to that restaurant and get something to drink." The guy with the Chihuahua said, "We can't go in there. We've got dogs with us." The one with the Doberman said, "Just follow my lead." They walked over to the restaurant and the guy with the Doberman put on a pair of dark glasses and started to walk into the restaurant. The waiter at the door said, "Sorry, Mac, no pets allowed." The man with the Doberman said, "You don't understand. This is my Seeing-Eye dog." The waiter said, "A Doberman?" The man said, "Yes, they're using them now. They're very good." The waiter said, "OK then, come on in." The buddy with the Chihuahua figured he'd try it too, so he put on a pair of dark glasses and started to walk into the restaurant. He knew his story would be a bit more unbelievable. Once again the waiter said, "Sorry, pal, no pets allowed." The man with the Chihuahua said, "You don't understand. This is my Seeing-Eye dog." The waiter said, "A Chihuahua?" The man with the Chihuahua said, "A Chihuahua?!? A Chihuahua?!? They gave me a Chihuahua??"

January Birthdays



Stephanie Gerlach	1st
Reynold Njoku	1st
Ryan Posthumus	2nd
Miron Webster	7th
Lois Boese	13th
Stan Snitzer	15th
Jan Montgomery	16th
Agwu Njoku	17th
Sara McWhorter	18th
Bill Anderson	21st
Shelley Cronenberg	23rd
Bea Towe	23rd
Ashlyn Newbry	25th
Dave 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.

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
 Pearl Blair: preschool@fpcmesa.org
 Rob Kjar: business@fpcmesa.org



ADDRESS CHANGES/CORRECTIONS

Anderson, Bill & Peggy
 11317 E. Meseto Circle
 Mesa, AZ 85205

Anderson, Josh
 1235 N. Sunnyvale, Unit# 101
 Mesa, AZ 85205
 Josh's cell 480-390-3199
 Email: Josh_Ander1@msn.com

Calendar Notes

January

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

Christian Education at 11:20 a.m.:
 Children in Jackson B
 Adults in 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.

January 8

Community Dinner

January 8 & 15

New Member Class

January 13 & 14

Circles meet

January 14, 21, 28

Men's Fellowship

January 15

Women's Bible Study

January 19

Session meets

January 20-31

The January Series, Calvin University

January 26

Potluck Sunday

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

LA PALABRA

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161 North Mesa Drive
Mesa, AZ 85201

Phone: 480-964-8606

E-mail: pubs@fpcmesa.org

Website: www.fpcmesa.org

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
Pearl Blair, Preschool Director
Rob Kjar, Bookkeeper