

# First Presbyterian Church of Alvin



## Press Bytes



To the Saints at First Presbyterian:

Greetings! Driving to the church the other day, I was thinking of what to write for the newsletter. Had lots of options but I heard a song on XM radio in the truck and it led me to this message. I had never heard this song before and it struck a chord. It was a Frank Sinatra song called "Whatever Happened to Christmas?" Let me share the words:

"Whatever happened to Christmas? It's gone and left no traces. Whatever happened to the faces or the glow? Whatever happened to Christmas, to Christmas way of living? Whatever happened to the giving, the magic of the snow?"

Remember the sight and the smell and the sound, and remember hearing the call. Remember how love was all around, whatever happened to it all? Whatever happened to Christmas, bells in the streets were ringing.

Whatever happened to the singing, the songs we use to know. Whatever happened to this Christmas and when did it disappear from view?

Where was I and whatever happened to you? Whatever happened to Christmas and you?"

Such as sad song, sung in a whimsical style. Did something really happen to Christmas? No folks, nothing has happened at all. Maybe with all the chaos in our world it might have gotten a little buried in our doubts or negative feelings, but Christmas comes with all its glory. You remember the first Christmas in that little town of Bethlehem. Mary and Joseph had to do the best they could. Jesus the child was born in a manger, a manger where they kept and where they would feed the animals. It's all they had. Herod the King of Israel tried to kill the child Jesus, afraid he would bring an end to his totally corrupt position as the national leader. It was not a peaceful world Jesus entered. His being in Bethlehem was due to Roman demands that the world be registered, a census type thing. Rome, conqueror of Israel. It was this terrible suffering and chaos that brought Christ to us, so nothing happened to Christmas. It comes no matter what the world is like. It comes each year. Christmas is not our doing, but God's doing. God heard our cries and came to us. Christmas is always in our hearts. Nothing can take that from us. We are Christmas people for we know this mighty act of God that happened in a small insignificant little town on a mystical night with angels singing and shepherds travelling and Mary and Joseph marveling over their Son. God gave us a Son and his name is Jesus. Be at peace, nothing has happened to Christmas, and nothing never will!

Shalom,

C.O.

### December Issue

Message from the Pastor  
CO Magee (on Cover)

Organists Musings **2**

Joy Gift Offering **3**

Remembering &  
Honoring our  
Loved Ones **4**

Remembering &  
Honoring our  
Loved Ones **5**

Bell Ringing **6**  
Christmas Cookies  
Session Highlights  
Youth Fundraiser

Prayer Concerns **7**  
December Birthdays  
Special Thank You

Insert  
December Calendar



“Glory to God  
in the  
highest, and  
on earth  
peace among  
those with  
whom he is  
pleased!”

Luke 2:14

**Love came Down at Christmas, December 2020**

By: Chris Lo

Allegedly, the Swiss Reformed theologian Karl Barth (1886 – 1968) was asked to sum up all of his vast theological treatises, he replied “Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so.”



when



In her poem “Love came down at Christmas,” the English poet Christina Rossetti (1830 – 1894) wrote:

“Love came down at Christmas,  
Love all lovely, Love Divine,  
Love was born at Christmas,  
Star and Angels gave the sign.

Worship we the Godhead,  
Love Incarnate, Love Divine,  
Worship we our Jesus,  
But wherewith for sacred sign?

Love shall be our token,  
Love be yours and love be mine,  
Love to God and all men,  
Love for plea and gift and sign.”

Dr. C. Michael Hawn (b. 1948), the Distinguished Emeritus Professor of Church Music at the Southern Methodist University wrote:

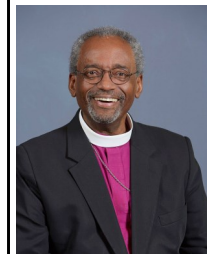


“The poem is based on 1 John 4:7-11, a passage that mentions ‘love’ in some form 11 times: ‘Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God;

everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God’s love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another.’

This poem is the perfect antidote for those who find themselves recovering from the stress of the Christmas season induced by materialism, extensive shopping, travel and multiple gatherings of family and friends – in short, everything except for a moment to reflect on the gift of ‘Love incarnate, Love divine.’”

In his recent book, “Love Is The Way” (2020, Avery [an imprint of Penguin Random House]), Michael Curry, the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church (on May 19, 2018, he preached at the wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle), wrote “Jesus didn’t say ‘like your enemies.’ Because you don’t have to like them – you only have to love them.”



A deacon and a prolific Syriac-language hymnographer and theologian, St. Ephrem the Syrian (306 – 373 A. D.) wrote: “Truth and Love are wings which cannot be separated, For truth cannot fly without Love, Nor can Love soar aloft without Truth; their yoke is one of amity.”



“And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). Merry Christmas to you all.





CHRISTMAS JOY  
SPECIAL OFFERINGS  
CHURCH LEADERS—PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

## “Arms of the Church Around Us”

June 16, 2019 by Special Offerings team

We want to share with you a love story...

...a love story between Ralph and Mary Hamburger that began at a Presbyterian church when Ralph introduced himself to Mary after hearing her play the piano. Today, after 65 years of marriage, the love story continues at a Presbyterian retirement home.

Ralph, a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) minister since 1960, and Mary, his devoted partner, are able to live in dignity because of your gifts to the Christmas Joy Offering. The couple spent several years together in an independent living facility; however, Mary’s deteriorating health demanded that she move to the skilled-nursing unit. That move nearly depleted the couple’s savings.

Fortunately, gifts to the Christmas Joy Offering enable Ralph and Mary to continue living together in the skilled-nursing unit. Ralph says he “feels the arms of the church around us making our lives more comfortable at the end.”

These two people from diverse backgrounds share their love for one another and a devotion to their Christian faith. Ralph, a member of the Dutch resistance during World War II, spent the war years hiding Jews from the Nazi occupiers. At the war’s end, Ralph made his home in California where his U.S. sponsors lived and found his way to Hollywood Presbyterian Church, where he felt a call to ministry.

Mary, a native of Kentucky’s Appalachian region, was part of the large postwar migration to California, where she became involved in the Hollywood church’s thriving young adult



ministries. Ralph and Mary fell in love, married, and served the church at home and abroad, largely behind the Iron Curtain. While supporting Ralph in his ministry, Mary managed their home and cared for their daughter Rachel, who is now a PC (USA) pastor.

“I am just an average, ordinary, C+ person who became a pastor,” Ralph says. However, he adds that “God touched me, tutored me, and opened doors for me.” Ralph still enjoys talking with Mary about their life together, though her dementia makes their conversations different these days. He is grateful that his wife is getting good care, and he is thankful for gifts that are given with love to the Christmas Joy Offering. “It’s wonderful that the church does not forget those who worked in Presbyterian ministries at home and abroad,” he says.

This is a love story. Not just about Ralph and Mary’s love for each other, but also about God’s love and the love we show with our gifts of time, talent, and treasure. Half of the Christmas Joy Offering goes to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions to help current and past church workers and their families who are in financial need. The other half supports future leaders who attend Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.



“A MERRY  
HEART DOES  
GOOD LIKE  
MEDICINE”

PROVERBS

17:22



REMEMBERING AND HONORING OUR LOVED ONES

**The Hoon Family Children**

**In Memory of**  
Jack & Jane Hoon



**Mandi Odom**

**In Memory of**  
William R. Bowers  
William H. Bowers

**In Honor of**  
Dorothy & Ronald  
DeWalt



**Nora Richardson**

**In Memory of**  
E. Floyd Richardson  
Edna Adams  
James P. Adams  
Marie Allen  
G.D. Allen

**Bill & Cindy Waggoner**

**In Memory of**  
Darline & Lee  
Petersen  
Johnnie & William "Dub"  
Waggoner

**In Honor of**  
Our Military who have  
served & are serving.  
Our First Responders



**Carolyn Warych**

**In Memory of**  
SGM. Louis Warych  
John & Elizabeth Warych  
Charles, Sr. & Betty Miller  
Charles Miller, Jr.  
Norman Miller

**Bill Murff**

**In Memory of**  
Dianne Murff  
Mr. & Mrs. L. W. Murff  
Shirley Murff-Selman  
Mr. & Mrs. Wm. Pemberton  
Linda Hand

**Kathy Miller**

**In Memory of**  
Chuck Miller  
Mary & Leno Regotti  
Virginia Kernaghan

**In Honor of**  
Lee Regotti  
Judson Jarboe



**Sheila Follmar**

**In Memory of**  
Rachel Cordova  
Martin Cordova  
Steven Cordova  
Chris Cordova  
Virginia Kernaghan

**Kathryn Wilkerson**

**In Memory of**  
Roy Wilkerson  
Our Parents & Family

**REMEMBERING AND HONORING OUR LOVED ONES**

**Helen & Robert Escobedo**

**In Memory of**  
All of our friends  
and family who have  
gone before us.

**Pat Spiller**

**In Memory of**  
Charles A. Spiller  
Rev. & Mrs. Harper McGuire  
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Spiller, Sr.

**Thana Powledge**

**In Memory of**  
David & Martha Powledge  
Mott & Pop Powledge



**Fay Steckert**

**In Memory of**  
Bill Steckert, Sr.  
Bob Steckert  
Mae & John Steckert  
Olive & Ben Frantz  
Chris & Betty Frantz  
Ann & Wilson Lord  
Bill Lubinsky

**Barbara & Tom Bennett**

**In Memory of**  
Viola & Joe A. Klinkovsky, Jr.  
Georgia, Perry,  
& Chad Marek  
Natalie & Earl Bennett



**In Honor of**

My Children  
Billy, Bobby, & Wendy  
My Grandchildren

**Herb & Jo Myers**

**In Memory of**  
Maryellyn Myers  
John & Miriam Boyd

**JoAnn Froberg**

**In Memory of**  
Katherine Ann Froberg

**Owen Wilson**

**In Memory of**  
Gene Thomas Wilson  
Mark Thomas Wilson  
Evelyn Miller  
Ida & Harry Stone  
Iva & Jesse Wilson

**Joan McNabb**

**In Memory of**  
The Canady & McNabb Families



## Bell Ringing

The bell ringing season starts each November and runs through Christmas Eve, when the red kettles are packed away for the season. Volunteers are the difference between an empty kettle and one that raises about \$30 per hour – enough to provide a family with two bags of groceries, or shelter an individual for a night. We have the opportunity to be a part of this tradition, Saturday, December 19th. A sign up sheet will be in the Narthex.



**VOLUNTEER  
BELL RINGERS  
NEEDED!**

*Ring a bell... Take a Stand Help Others*



## CHRISTMAS COOKIES

Don't you love the smell of fresh cookies baking in the oven? When you are baking your Christmas cookies this season, please bake an extra batch for the special church events happening during Advent. We need cookies for the children's Christmas party and our isolated members. If you are willing to provide 3 dozen cookies for any of these events, please contact Barbara Bennett at 281-703-0445 or [tebeb@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tebeb@sbcglobal.net). There will also be a sign-up sheet in the Narthex of the church. The Christmas goodie trays for our isolated members will be prepared on Sunday, December 13 after the Christmas party in the fellowship hall. If you are able to help, please come. Thank you.



## SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

## NOVEMBER 2020

The session dealt with several important things. The new budget is being put together to be finalized in December. Trying to simplify the budget so it is easier to understand. The Church roll was updated. We are now in double digits membership down from triple digits. Committee moderators were approved. We've organized a Clothing Outlet committee to draw up an updated working relationship that benefits everyone involved, elected a Presbytery Commissioner, joined the Christmas Walk-a-Mile activity, formed a personnel committee, discussed the Hanging of the Greens service and was presented a paper on transgendered children from Presbytery to study and respond. The new class of elders were examined and will be installed on December 13th.

## Custom Made Elf Ornaments



The Youth is making custom elf ornaments to help offset the funds used to purchase items for our Christmas families. To order please click the link below

<https://forms.gle/T3BQC4ef96b4ZhrM6>

Or give Mandi a call @ 281-585-3406.

Available in Red or Green, Choice of Letter.

As pictured: \$4.00

With Angel wings: \$6.00



**Ongoing Prayers** Jill Wheatley, Belinda Busscher, Rachel Grimmatt, Mark Clark, Martha Phipps, Helen Escobedo, Betty Montgomery, Dean Putnam, Tony DeLeon, Wanda Cunningham, Evelyn Robison, Joy Dell DeWitt, Shelli Darnell, Patty Costanzo.

**Immediate Concerns** : .The Family & Friends of Dixie Clark, Shirley Pesak, & LeRoy Castro.

*Please call the church office with updates.*

**December Birthdays**

- 2 **Nicholas Cunningham**
- 11 **Natalie Stinson**
- 12 **Caden Petty**
- 13 **Tony DeLeon**
- 14 **Bryce Pannell**
- 15 **Paul Cunningham**
- 16 **Ron DeWalt**
- 18 **Linda Byrd**
- 20 **Tom Bennett**
- 29 **Jean Vance**
- 29 **John Myers**
- 31 **Megan Rowsey**



Dear FPC family,

Thank you so much for all your prayers, phone calls and cards since I was diagnosed with breast cancer last March! I have now completed chemotherapy. With my recent lumpectomy and subsequent biopsy, no residual cancer was found! Praise the Lord! I'll now have 20 radiation treatments starting December 1 and ending December 30. What a blessing it is to look at 2021 free of cancer treatments. Once my blood counts return to normal, I look forward to seeing everyone again in 2021. Again, thanks for your ongoing prayers—they mean so much!

Love, Rachel Grimmatt

**Elder of the Month - Sheila Follmar**  
**Refreshments - Buildings & Grounds**