



First Press

COME HOME FOR CHRISTMAS

DECEMBER 2015 ISSUE • FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS



DO YOU BELIEVE IN MIRACLES?!

BY REV. DR. RONALD SCATES • INTERIM SENIOR PASTOR

I've never liked my name. "Ronald" has always seemed—well, too prissy to me. Growing up, I was called "Ronnie" (which also I hated—also a little too foo-foo, I thought). I was named after my Mom who was nicknamed "Ronnie" because her maiden name was "Ronemus"—a shortened version of "Hieronymus" (yes, I am a cousin—17th or something removed—of the late FPC organist and choir director Dr. Bess Hieronymus, she of the Kentucky Hieronymus folk, my Mom of the West Virginia Hieronymus clan). By Jr. High I had changed my name to "Ron." I wanted to be called "Rocky"—after baseball player Rocky Colavito—but my parents said, "Rocks are dependable, and

when you start acting dependable, we'll call you "Rocky." So, I've been "Ron" ever since.

In Isaiah 9:6, the Lord God—through the prophet Isaiah—prophecies a coming Messiah and even names Him, with four monikers, yet: "Wonderful Counselor," "Mighty God," "Everlasting Father," "Prince Of Peace." Back in Old Testament times—and right up through the first century AD—one's name often described a lot about who you were. These four Messianic names give you and me a boat-load of information as to just Who Jesus really is, despite starting life in a manger.

During Advent, we'll jump out of our Romans sermon series and instead focus on those four names, with an overarching sermon series title of "What's In A Name?" Each week, at all three services, we'll zero in on one of those names as we build toward our celebration of THE miracle of miracles: the Incarnation of Almighty God in Jesus Christ. We'll be pulling out all the stops musically, with sanctuary decorations, and—most importantly—with you in the pew to worship the One whose name is above every other name. Don't forget your name tag—and have a most blessed Advent and Christmas.

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SAVE THE DATE

GARAGE SALE GRATITUDE

Thank you all for your support of YoungLives, San Antonio! Your awesome donations helped us raise \$4,600 for this ministry to teen moms and at-risk teens from Healy Murphy and Seton Home. Thanks for your time, talents AND treasures that enabled volunteers and teen helpers to share the love of Jesus and this ministry with all who came to shop on November 6th and 7th. To volunteer with YoungLives, contact Nina Jordan or Chris Shipman.

DECEMBER 21 • 7:00 PM • MILAM PARK

SAMINISTRIES HOMELESS MEMORIAL SERVICE

FPC is honored to be a continuing sponsor of the SAMinistries 9th Annual Homeless Persons' Memorial Service. All are invited to attend this solemn ceremony, honoring the lives of friends, family members and neighbors who passed away while homeless in 2015. Our Rev. Dr. Ronald Scates will be a participant in this service to be held at Milam Park, 500 W. Commerce St., in downtown San Antonio. For more information, visit www.samm.org or call 210-340-0302.

DECEMBER 21 • 7:00 PM • MILAM PARK

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

Mark your calendars for the annual Christmas Pageant on Sunday, December 6 at the 11:00 AM Traditional service. Kids of all ages will be able to participate as sheep, angels, shepherds, Magi and the Holy Family! Invite your friends and family and join us as our children tell the beautiful story of the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

DECEMBER 6 • 11:00 AM • FPC SANCTUARY

MIDDAY NOELS CONCERT SERIES

Once again, FPC offers its holiday "gift to the city" through a variety of musical offerings. Each of these 30-40 minute concerts is followed by your choice of either a "Grab and Go" lunch (\$3), or a full hot lunch served in Westminster Hall (\$8).

"SHIMMERING SOUNDS AND SPARKLING SINGING"

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3

Highly skilled singers from our Sanctuary Choir, including our Professional Section Leaders, form a small choral ensemble to present music of the season that will both inspire and entertain.

"A SPARKLING DUO"

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10

Our organist, Dr. Jae Ha, is joined by St. Luke's Episcopal Church organist Russell Jackson, to offer music composed for two pianos. Come hear these two gifted musicians perform pieces such as excerpts from the "Nutcracker Suite" of Tchaikovsky. Jae's musical offerings for Christmas are always a highlight of our series and not to be missed!

"BRILLIANT BRASS"

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17

We are pleased to welcome the Freedom Brass, a brass quintet drawn from the United States Air Force Band of the West stationed at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas. The ensemble is comprised of two trumpets, French horn, trombone, tuba, and percussion, and is dedicated to presenting to its audiences the total spectrum of today's musical literature, including festive sounds of the holidays!

DECEMBER 3, 10, 17 • 12:10-12:45 PM • FPC SANCTUARY

TEAM WORLD VISION ROCK 'N' ROLL MARATHON

The Rock 'n' Roll Marathon is almost here and we need you to help cheer! Several FPC church members will be running in the marathon or half-marathon to raise support for clean water projects in Africa. The race will begin at 7:30 AM and the route will directly pass by the corner of 4th and Alamo. Let's show our support for our FPC family and the thousands of others running past our church by cheering them on. We will be at the corner with some music, a banner and some signs to "spur others on towards the goal." Together let's make Jesus visible in the city of San Antonio to the thousands of people running directly past our church! To join the team or to learn more contact Christy Custer at 210-475-2077.

DECEMBER 6

MALAWI MISSION TRIP

Applications are now being accepted for the 2016 mission trip to Malawi. This will be FPC's 2nd trip to the "Warm Heart of Africa" where we will partner with World Vision. The dates of the trip will be April 22-29, 2016 (with some additional travel time on either end of those dates). The Global Missions Committee welcomes anyone to apply to go, but is seeking applicants that have some sort of sphere of influence at FPC, in hopes that this trip's effects will reach far beyond just the trip participants, and end up truly inspiring and transforming our whole congregation in meaningful and important ways!

If you think you might be interested to participate in this trip, or if you would like to nominate someone who you think might be a good candidate, please email Alyssa Payne at alyssap@fpcsat.org. We are now accepting applications through the end of the year and will then begin our team training. Teresa and Ben McCaleb will be the fearless trip leaders and will be joined by Rev. Dr. Ron Scates. We have an additional seven spots – so please pray and see if God is calling you to join this amazing journey! Please join us in making Jesus visible in Mutendere, Malawi!

APRIL 2016 • HELP US RAISE FUNDS!

LITERATURE CIRCLE

Serenaded by Jae Ha with seasonal piano Christmas music, the First Presbyterian Church Literature Circle will then welcome local author, Carol Coffee Reposa, as she shares readings from her 4th book of poetry, "Underground Musicians." A graduate of U.T. Austin with a Master's degree in English, Ms. Reposa was a faculty member of San Antonio College teaching English literature and creative writing for over 30 years. Her poetry has been published in numerous regional, state and national literary journals and anthologies and has received numerous honors and awards. Her poetry takes you on a trip around the world from San Antonio to Russia, Ireland, Mexico and Peru—to name a few.

Join us for a delightful afternoon on Tuesday, December 8 at 1:00 PM in the McCullough Room for music, refreshments and beautifully written poetry by the talented Carol Reposa.

DECEMBER 8 • 1:00 PM • MCCULLOUGH ROOM

HAITI MISSION TRIP

Sign-ups for Haiti are now available. Deposit is due January 17. Contact Lindsay Selli for more information at lindsays@fpcsat.org

BOOKSTORE SALE

The Bookstore is offering all of its books, art items, music, etc. at significantly reduced prices! Pick out a good read for yourself or someone special!

DECEMBER 6, 13, 20 • GENEVA ROOM



Few memories are more universal in our culture than the ones associated with Christmas: The allure of Christmas is so strong that stores decorate in October. Christmas tree lots appear on vacant corners. Poinsettias appear everywhere. Speakers play non-stop carols. Homes and landscapes sparkle with thousands of lights. Parties are planned. Waistlines expand. For many it is a time of joyous anticipation, while for others it brings a dull ache as they recount loss, grief, and unfulfilled dreams.

The idea of coming home for Christmas is powerful: A return to a place we love and where we are loved. Christmas movies and songs capture this longing to return home for Christmas. “It’s a Wonderful Life,” “(Baby) Please Come Home for Christmas” and countless others, entertain us and play a part in our own traditions.

Each of us has personal memories of Christmas: Lining up to have a photo taken with Santa. Making an advent wreath. Grandmothers fussing over a turkey in the kitchen. The joy of siblings reunited. The smell of hot apple cider. Aunts, uncles, and cousins, shoehorned into a house, celebrating being together. Opening the toy you never thought you’d receive. Giving the perfect gift.

Those are the memories of a cultural Christmas. How much more powerful and mysterious is REAL CHRISTMAS.

Emmanuel: God is With Us. That is the reason we celebrate. Is there a better gift than finding Hope, Joy, Love, and Peace? We invite you to prepare for Christmas and celebrate GOD WITH US this year at First Presbyterian Church, San Antonio. Come home to a place where you are loved.

Come home for Christmas.

COME HOME FOR CHRISTMAS



UNIVERSITY

A few weeks ago, your University staff—Chris Via and Alex Solorio, and your Youth Director, Matt Fricker, got in a car with the love of Jesus to FPC’s the state of Texas. Three and 1500 miles later, the Texas Tour was complete and students from Rice University in Houston to Texas Tech in Lubbock were reminded how much they mean to FPC, and that we are excited that they are making Jesus visible on their own campuses. It truly is amazing to hear what the Lord is doing in these students’ lives, as they call on their lives in their campus ministries, in their classes, and in their friendships. As our college students “Come Home for Christmas” this month, your University Ministry staff encourages you to ask them how they’re seeing God move on their campuses, and how you can pray for them on their important mission fields!

OUTREACH TOUR



TRUNK OR TREAT



Costumes, candy, games, prizes, hot dogs, fun with friends and family...what more could you ask for? This year's Trunk or Treat event was so much fun as kids gathered in their creative costumes to play games and enjoy fellowship with one another. There were princesses, super heroes, minions, and even some fuzzy animals running around the parking lot collecting candy and winning prizes. Thank you to all who made this event so special for our children.

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY



On Sunday, October 18, the children of FPC served beautifully alongside our pastors in all three worship services. This year, we had 5th graders leading liturgy in all three services in addition to the giving of 3rd Grade Bibles and 2-year-old Bibles! The 3rd graders learned about the importance of their new bibles and how to navigate through them in order to grow deeper in God's Word. Many proudly carried their bibles around showing them to friends and family, excited to bring them to church and study them at home. Parents were encouraged to read the new bibles with their children as their kids begin to understand how scripture impacts their own lives, even as young children. Thank you to the congregation of FPC for supporting our children and their parents by committing to raise kids up in faith and providing spiritual nurture throughout their lives.



YUCATAN PENINSULA MISSION TRIP

Mention the words 'sand' and 'Cancun', and you're likely to get a mental image of white sandy beaches and translucent turquoise waters, plenty of sun and a gentle breeze. For the FPC mission trippers who recently served in the inaugural Yucatan construction mission trip, though, the word 'sand' is likely to be associated with rocks, 100-pound bags of cement, water, mixers and buckets. Hosted by our Yucatan Peninsula Mission (YPM) partner, our task for the week was to join with a group from Grace Presbyterian Church in Houston and put a new concrete roof on a building that hosted families whose children had cancer.

On Wednesday, October 28th, eight FPC members—Andres and Rebecca Andujar, Courtney Biggs, Raley and Candy Marek, Mike Munroe, Candy Wagner and Fred Wall—flew to Houston to join with eight members of Grace Presbyterian to begin the five-day mission trip. Our destination was the village of Leona Vicario, about an hour drive from Cancun—a place that is very familiar to other FPC members who have served on the YPM medical mission trips. Leona Vicario looks very different from the tourist mecca of Cancun; older and smaller, it is a main-street village with a town square and tiendas selling fruit and flowers. Our hosts at YPM, William and Erly Cen, made us feel at home at the organization's base, offering the sleeping options of bunk or hammock (which is the Yucatan way).

Our work days, Thursday through Saturday, consisted of rising early, having breakfast together, praying in English and Spanish, and then driving to the worksite for work through mid-afternoon. The first workday involved a lot of preparation for the concrete work – getting materials, preparing the scaffolding, and moving bags of cement and piles of sand and rock to our staging areas. (This is one of the reasons the word 'bucket' is so painful for members of our group).

On Friday, the big push was on to transport some 25,000 pounds of wet concrete through a human bucket-brigade up a two-story scaffold to a team on the roof of our building. In a real demonstration of 'I can do all things through Christ,' the two Texas church groups, working with a handful of Mexican contractors, got the job done. It was an amazing thing to watch this human chain handing off bucket after bucket of wet concrete, up the scaf-

olding, and everyone working together, people of different ages and abilities. The groups from FPC and Grace just 'clicked' in a remarkable way. Truly, it was the body of Christ, lifting, laughing and working together.

Saturday we put a finishing coat on the roof and got to meet families and children of Casa Aitana, the foundation that supports children with cancer. Those families face special challenges because there is no pediatric oncologist in the Cancun area. Children and their families face five-hour bus rides to get to the care that they need, and Casa Aitana is a place of financial and emotional support for them. The families had a Dia De Los Muertos altar to commemorate children who had died, and mothers gave moving testimonies to the love they felt from Casa Aitana.

Our days in the Yucatan showed God's power at work not only in the concrete work and the lives of the Mexican families facing cancer, but also in healing one of our hosts. Erly came down with Dengue fever during our stay, and had to be hospitalized. Her illness was potentially serious, but after several days of rest, and many prayers from the group, her condition improved to the point that she could return home as we were leaving.

On Sunday, our crew attended worship and had lunch on the Isla de Mujeres. We followed the congregational vote by a constant stream of text messages (thanks Alyssa and others), and prayed for the proceedings from afar. On Monday, before leaving for the airport, we took a driving tour of hotel row along miles and miles of coastline in Cancun.

WHAT A WONDERFUL TRIP!

Thanks to Leslie Little, the overall team lead, and Fred Wall, our fearless leader from FPC. Thanks, also to Andres Andujar and Candy Wagner, who did a lot of translating for William, while Erly was in the hospital.

The Yucatan is a very special place, with special needs for its inhabitants. If you would like to join the Medical Mission trip to the Yucatan in February or the next construction trip, please contact the missions department at FPC.

— Mike Munroe

MARKET OF HOPE 2015

This Christmas season, consider making a difference in the world by shopping at the First Presbyterian Market of Hope. Shop for unique, fair-trade gifts that are sure to delight everyone on your Christmas list. In the Geneva room you will find hand-woven textiles, beautifully crafted jewelry and delicious fair-trade coffee and chocolate, all designed by artisans from San Antonio and around the world. The Market of Hope also offers the opportunity to give friends, coworkers, and family a symbolic gift to a variety of wonderful San Antonio ministries who bring the hope of Christmas all year long, including care for the homebound elderly, the enslaved, the incarcerated, pregnant and parenting teenagers, the homeless, and more. This Christmas, shop with a purpose and give the gift of hope.

The Market will be open on Sunday mornings from 9:00 AM - 12:30 PM December 6, 13, 20 in the Geneva Room. Look for signs and banners and come on in!

SOME OF YOUR SHOPPING OPTIONS WILL BE FROM THE FOLLOWING VENDORS:

Noonday Collection

Noonday Collection is a socially-responsible business that uses fashion to create meaningful opportunities around the world.

All's Fair World Gifts

All's Fair sells unique items from around the world where the artisans were fairly paid! Fair Trade is the principle whereby farmers or artisans are fairly compensated for the products they produce. By purchasing fair trade items, you help the future look brighter for many people.

Evan Brook Ethical Clothing

Evan Brooke believes in doing business with social responsibility. Evan is proud to bring to you these beautiful, quality garments made ethically and in effort to FIGHT human trafficking.

Ten Thousand Villages

Ten Thousand Villages' mission is to create opportunities for artisans in developing countries to earn income by bringing their products and stories to our markets through long-term fair trading relationships.

Sus Hijias

More than a dozen years ago, Lee Pressly and Becca Price helped start Sus Hijias or "His Daughters", sewing and

jewelry group to teach men and women marketable skills at the House of Neighborly Service, a non-profit organization that serves the West Side. Starting with six old, discarded sewing machines, the women taught the group how to sew Bible covers, handbags and eyeglass cases. Pressly and Price sell the items at community events with the proceeds going back to the group.

Alternative Gift Market

Your Local and Global Missions Committees invite you to stop by the Alternative Gift Market table to purchase your symbolic gift for a friend or family member that will support both local and global mission partners of FPC. Some items include a pair of new socks for men at CAM, a welcome basket for a single mother living at PCHAS, one year of literacy classes for an adult in India, or a goat in Africa to help feed a family meat and milk. These and other options you will find at the Alternative Gift Market, to both support the mission organization and bring hope and healing to the recipients. Be sure to get your shopping list early so you can put something meaningful under the tree.

WHAT IS FAIR TRADE?

- **Fair trade purchases create a better quality of life**
In communities around the world through God-honoring business practices.
- **Fair trade offers human dignity**
Meaningful, voluntary work for ALL people
- **Fair trade shows mutual respect**
Fair wages, paid regularly and with integrity
- **Fair trade demonstrates human value**
Appropriately healthy and safe working environment
- **Fair trade leads leads to human empowerment**
Sustainable, income-generating endeavors
- **Fair trade creates justice**
Generations benefit from the positive impact of fair trade practices
- **Fair trade blesses the giver and receiver**
Discovering together how we can each make a difference as we live to make Jesus visible in San Antonio and around the world

LOAVES & FISHES

Year 2015 has been another amazing year of serving our homeless friends of San Antonio at FPC, and we are continuing to see much growth in our Loaves and Fishes program here at the church. We serve an average of about 300 people each month, and feed them a quality meal with lots of wonderful choices. In addition, there are often other blessings our guests can receive such as clothing, toiletries, blankets and Bibles. Each month guests are also able to celebrate their birthday with cake, candles and a picture—a privilege that many of them look forward to all year to share with friends and family who would not otherwise receive such a special memento. FPC has truly become a kind of family to many of those that come through the church doors each month.

Loaves & Fishes is a downtown feeding program that was started over 20 years ago in the basement of FPC, and we consider it an honor to continue to serve our city in this way. The original intent of the ministry was to offer friendship, hospitality and food to hungry and homeless downtown neighbors, served inside the walls of our own church. Current leaders of Loaves & Fishes, Robert and Linda O’Nave, continue to run the program with that same focus, knowing that offering a variety of choices to our guests allows them to experience a sense of dignity and self-respect that comes only rarely to many of them. In doing this, the significance of each person that comes through the door is recognized as being God’s son or daughter to whom we are called to love and serve.

We can’t say thank you enough to all of our wonderful Loaves & Fishes volunteers! Without these wonderful servants, we could not run our monthly Loaves & Fishes ministry. Volunteers come from all different church backgrounds, various service groups and even totally random connections, often from outside of San Antonio! The great reputation for this hospitality ministry continues to be shared, and brings in new volunteers each year. In addition to providing food, some of our volunteer jobs include greet-

ing guests at the door, serving food, carrying trays of food to the table, refilling drinks, packing “to-go” bags, handing out clothing, praying for guests or sitting with them to provide some hope and encouragement. However, in an effort to have our volunteers more organized, we have created an online sign-up so that we can be best prepared for our monthly ministry. We welcome anyone from within FPC or outside organizations to come and serve, but we ask that starting in December, please register on the FPC website, so we can anticipate how many people to accommodate as this ministry grows. Also, we would really love someone to serve as our volunteer coordinator to help place and assign volunteer roles, so please let Robert O’Nave or the missions department know if you are interested in this position.

This month, we invite you to join us for Loaves and Fishes on December 27th and celebrate Christmas with our downtown friends and neighbors. Please note, this will be the only Loaves and Fishes for December, so we appreciate you coming and serving with us over the holidays!

Thank you to FPC for all the ongoing support and encouragement for this ministry. Many lives continue to be changed because of Loaves & Fishes and you continue to make Jesus visible in our own city. If you have never served in this capacity, we welcome you to come check it out and we believe you will want to come and serve again. Finally, we offer great thanks to Robert and Linda O’Nave for their selfless and committed hours dedicated to this ministry. If you have any questions or would like to volunteer, please sign-up on line or contact Robert O’Nave, or the missions department at FPC.

Matthew 25:40
And Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS OF FPC!



Kevin Dailey, 1214 Phantom Valley St., (78232), 832-654-5482. He joins by reaffirmation of faith. Kevin is the contemporary worship leader at First Presbyterian Church. He went to high school in England and loves English Premier League Soccer. As a member of FPC, he is looking forward to being a vital part of what God will do in the next season of First Pres! Kevin is married to Kendra and they have two children: Molly (9) and Lilly (7).



Mike and Reiko O’Donnell, P.O. Box 793, (78293), 521-7248. They join by reaffirmation of faith. Mike is employed by the Department of the Air Force in civil service and Reiko is retired. As members of FPC, they are looking forward to attending worship services and adult Sunday school classes and bible studies.



Nancy Rice, 137 Lovera Blvd. (78212), 822-2632. She joins by reaffirmation of faith. Nancy is employed by Abraxas Petroleum as an engineering tech/joint interest admin. As a member of FPC, she is looking forward to rejoining this wonderful part of the body of Christ.



Anne Scates, 211 Hill Country Lane, (78232) 214-681-6042. She joins by transfer of letter. As a member of FPC, she is looking forward to serving along with all members here and growing in her faith.



Michael Scates, 211 Hill Country Lane, (78232). He joins by transfer of letter. Michael is employed by HEB as a checker. As a member of FPC, he is looking forward to serving the church.



Lindsay Selli, 9214 Mountain Field Dr., (78240). She joins by reaffirmation of faith. Lindsay is the administrative assistant for family and student ministries at First Presbyterian Church. She is a member of the sanctuary choir and handbells at FPC and sings with Opera San Antonio and San Antonio Chamber Choir. She also loves to travel and watch soccer. As a member of FPC, she is looking forward to being able to participate in the church body more fully.



PW PRESIDENT "A TIME TO SPEAK" ECCLESIASTES 3:7

Monday, October 26, was truly a day that our Lord had made. Our second annual "Ties that Bind" Legacy Luncheon was a glorious day in all respects. I wrote about the luncheon last month, but, at that time, did not have pictures of the event. Please enjoy the pictures which I know will evoke happy memories to all who attended. If you were unable to join us, we missed you and hope to see you at our spring luncheon on April 5th.

During the month of November, our Invisible Angels, under the capable leadership of Pat Krueger and Candy Wagner, treated the ministers and staff to a Tailgate Appreciation Luncheon. Many thanks to all who made contributions to honor our gracious and capable FPC staff.

Our PW members have busy calendars and many opportunities of service during this season of Advent. We begin the Christmas Season by providing refreshments for the

Advent Festival on Sunday, November 29th. Once again, food is generously provided by the members of Circle 20, chaired by Bunkie Shed.

The Morningside Manor Christmas party will be held Thursday, December 3rd, at 3:00 PM, and the Chandler Home party will be held Thursday, December 10th, at 3:00 PM. Please join us as we spread cheer among the residents, enjoy beautiful music from both the Friday Singers and the children of our own FPC Children's Center, and serve delicious cookies provided by PW circle members. Each resident will be presented with Christmas cards created by the children as well as a colorful "Joy to the World" favor made by our Circle 8 Mom's Group. Many thanks to Pat Johnson and Janet Wernli, our Christmas Party chairs; to Sara Parish, our Christmas Craft chair; and to The Reverend Scott Simpson, for his reading of the Christmas Story.

The Christmas Families Ministry is ongoing during the month of December as circles adopt families and provide the "Gift of Christmas" to those in need. There are still families available for adoption, all of whom have been screened through the House of Neighborly Services. A sincere thank you to Maggie Hardwick and Sue Cunningham for their faithful service and to all the circles and individuals, who will be blessed by making Jesus visible to their adopted families during this Christmas Season.

On December 24th, PW will honor our ministers, choir, and staff by providing a delicious dinner during the busy Christmas Eve schedule. Karin Gabrielson has very generously and graciously chaired this ministry for several years. We thank Karin for her service and wish joyful blessings of Christmas to our ministers, choir, and staff.

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly hosts, praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" Luke 2:13-14

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN CIRCLES

BIBLE CIRCLE 112

Monday, December 21 • 10:30 AM • FPC Geneva Rm
Food: Lunch \$8.00
Chair: Suzanne Thomas, 820-3245
Moderator: Grace Labatt

BIBLE CIRCLE 2/4

Monday, December 21 • 1:30 PM • FPC Rm 226
Chair: Char-An Witten, 341-1856

CIRCLE 5 | SHAWL MINISTRY

Friday, December 4 • 12:00-1:00 PM • FPC Rm 228
Chair: Caryl Gaubatz, 651-0208
Co-Chair: Jane Ann Temple, 414-9956

BIBLE CIRCLE 6

Tuesday, December 15 • 1:30 PM • FPC Geneva Rm
Chair: Mimi Hart, 822-0809

BIBLE CIRCLE 7

Tuesday, December 8 • 11:30 AM • Home of Meredith Park
1802 Cactus Bluff 78258
Food: Bring a "Sack Lunch"
Moderator: Nancy Puckett
Chair: Linda Delano, 614-208-3600

CIRCLE 8 | MOM'S GROUP

Wednesday, December 16 • 9:30-11:30 AM • FPC Rm 108
Food: Snacks Provided
Childcare: RSVP two days prior to Sonya Wright
sonyaw@fpcsat.org
Chair: Sara Parish, 394-0865

BIBLE CIRCLE 9

Tuesday, December 15 • 10:00 AM
Hostess: Margaret Gragg, 4 Inwood Ridge Dr 78248
Chair: BJ Neal, 210-260-9638
Co-Chair: Lucille Lammert, 832-8414

BIBLE CIRCLE 11

Tuesday, December 15, 6:30pm
Hostess: Linda Ruhmann 127 W. Elmview PL 78209
Chair: Suzanne Norton, 287-1392

CIRCLE 13 | LITERATURE CIRCLE

Tuesday, December 8 • 1:00 PM • McCullough Rm
Book Review: Underground Musicians
Author: Carol Reposa
Reviewer: Carol Reposa
Chair: Jeanne Browning, 824-3921

BIBLE CIRCLE 14

Monday, December 21 • 12:00 PM • FPC St. Andrew's Rm
Food: Lunch \$8.00
Chair: Marti Taylor, 210-334-9684

CIRCLE 16 | MARJORIE MCLERNON SEWING CIRCLE

No Meeting in December
Chair: Lee Pressly, 735-0978

CIRCLE 17 | EDNA RALSTON SEWING CIRCLE

No Meeting in December
Chairs: Jeanne Baker, 494-0972; Gigi Duke, 695-4363

CIRCLE 18 | CARE AND CONCERN

(No date)
Chairs: Char-An Witten, 341-1856; Georgia Heath, 695-9511

CIRCLE 19 | WHITE CROSS CIRCLE

Wednesday, December 2 • 9:30 AM • FPC Rm 309
Chair: Janet Beauch, 673-3251

CIRCLE 20 | CIRCLE OF SERVICE

(No date)
Chair: Bunkie Shed, 824-6690

BIBLE CIRCLE 21

Monday, December 21, 6:30pm
For location contact Co-Chairman.
Co-Chair: Francis Warrick, 210-408-1775





KEYS.

GETTING INTO THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS
BY PAT MCCLEARY
DIRECTOR KEYS OLDER ADULT MINISTRY

During this special time of year, my wish for you is a blessed holiday season and a joyous New Year shared with the ones you love. May you enjoy good health, happy memories, and may the true spirit of Christmas bring you peace and happiness. As we are coming to the close of another year, you are invited to join KEYS in our December Christmas festivities! Blessings, Pat

ELF LOUISE CHRISTMAS WRAPPING PARTY

Tuesday, December 1 • Wrap from 10:00-11:00 AM

This will be our 13th year of wrapping toys for children who otherwise might not have a Christmas gift. After wrapping, we will lunch together at Acadiana Restaurant (participants will buy their own lunch). If you have made a reservation, van transportation will be available leaving from the church, with check-in time at 9:15 AM.

Needed: Unwrapped toys for all ages or monetary donations. This is a wonderful opportunity to make Jesus Visible!

KEYS/ABC CHRISTMAS PARTY

Friday, December 4 • 10:30 AM • Westminster Hall

Make plans to join us for our annual Christmas celebration that will fill you with the holiday spirit! We will enjoy a delicious meal, socialize, and be entertained with a holiday musical presentation by the Forest Hills Presbyterian Church Sanctuary Choir and Darrin Newhardt, Director of Music at Forest Hills Presbyterian Church for 15 years. Under his direction the choir has been heard performing around San Antonio, including Sea World New Years Eve Fireworks show and Habitat for Humanity's annual fundraiser Holy Smoke. Darrin will also be featuring some of his voice students and friends from the local theater community. Social time starts at 10:30 AM in Westminster Hall with program and lunch starting at 11:00 AM. We will also celebrate **December Birthdays** on this day—birthday honorees are complimentary. Please make your reservation by calling Phyllis Griffin at 226-0215 by Tuesday, December 1st.

HILL COUNTRY LIGHTS CHRISTMAS TRIP

December 7 • 4:00-11:00 PM

Join us for dinner, charter coach, Starbucks hot chocolate, escorts Susan and Henry Holloway, and spectacular Christmas lights when you take a trip to see the Hill Country

Lights. Cost is \$66 and includes the above as well as driver tip. Although the deadline has past, we have room for more! RSVP with check made payable to FPC with "Trip" noted on memo line to the attention of Pat McCleary or call 210-271-2726 or 210-226-0215

HOUSE OF NEIGHBORLY SERVICE GIFT OF CHRISTMAS

KEYS will once again participate with Presbyterian Women in the Gift of Christmas. We have the opportunity to help a grandmother who has custody of her three young grandchildren and has only requested items for the children and food. If you would like to donate or give them a gift, please stop by Pat's office and select a requested gift off the Christmas tree or contact Geri McCorkindale at 210-822-4348.

The KEYS Mah Jongg group wants to thank Georgia Heath for her recent gift given in honor of her mother, June Khym. June is a member of our KEYS family and enjoys a variety of the programs and experiences designed to keep us all young in spirit and going when we can. Seeing regular mention in First Press that we have an enthusiastic group of Mah Jongg players, Georgia decided to give her set to KEYS. Thank you, Georgia, and thank you, June. You two wonderful women are always contributing to the health and happiness of our FPC community. May the winds be with you!

— Nancy Black, Mah Jongg Chair

BRIDGE AND MAH JONGG

There will be no bridge playing during December. Mah Jongg will be played on Friday, December 11 at 11:00 AM

KEEP MOVING FITNESS CLASS

December 11, 18 • 9:45 AM • Student Center second floor

SAVE THE DATE

Rick Cavender Band on Friday, February 5
Watch for details in the January edition of First Press



KEYS

HARDBURGER PARK PRIVATE TOUR
BY NANCY BLACK
CO-PRESIDENT OF KEYS OLDER ADULT MINISTRY

HARDBURGER PARK — PRIVATE TOUR

The first Tuesday morning in November was a perfect time to explore the east side of Phil Hardberger Park off of Blanco Road. The main drawing point was our personally guided tour of the Voelcker Homestead. Our knowledgeable and friendly park guides strolled the trails with us explaining what we were seeing by way of trail design, native plants, and an on-going project to remove invasive plants from the park. There is a clear awareness of the needs of those who come to the park to exercise, be out with their families, friends and dogs, and to casually stroll or aggressively walk through this "cultivated wild"—a place which will remain at least 75 percent undeveloped.

The Voelcker Homestead itself was a trip down memory lane for several of us as we looked at the farm machinery and the white clapboard home with its dairy barn only steps away. A group of Bexar County naturalists were working on a butterfly habitat, and our guide pointed out that several of the rail and path projects had been done by local scout groups.

We took about two hours to gather our first impressions of this side of the Park and to visit the overlook at Salado Creek. We learned about the plans to keep the two sides of the park connected by a land bridge over Wurzbach Parkway. As planned, this bridge is designed to obscure the sight and sound of the parkway while providing a path for humans to connect with the entire park and for animals to move freely from the west side, which is surrounded by streets, to the east side of the park which abuts a greenway and Salado Creek.

We finished our morning in the best way possible. We sat together, ate our picnic lunches and chatted about the park, the week's plans, and about the joy of being together outside.



FINANCIAL SUMMARY | OCTOBER 2015

OPERATING FUND BUDGET	ACTUAL YTD	BUDGET YTD	OVER/(UNDER)
TOTAL REVENUES	2,899,976	3,427,161	(527,185)
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES	2,503,144	3,016,836	(513,692)
TOTAL BENEVOLENCES	434,013	434,013	0
FUND TFR FROM OPERATING RESERVE	150,000	0	(150,000)
NET INCOME/LOSS	112,819	(23,688)	136,507

Exceptional staff discipline in managing operating expenditures continues to offset some of the shortfall in realized revenues. Equally important, the November 9 data reflects a significant positive upturn in giving after the congregational vote. Thank you! Your continued support is both appreciated and essential to meet our planned commitments to mission and service beyond this congregation.

If you have not already done so, please consider completing this commitment card and either mail or drop off your gift at the church during the week, or place it in the offering plate during Sunday worship.

"Rediscovering Our Future!" YOUR 2016 COMMITMENT CARD

IN RESPONSE TO GOD'S GENEROUS GIFT AND BY FAITH, I/WE INTEND TO SUPPORT THE MINISTRY AND MISSION OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SAN ANTONIO WITH THE FOLLOWING GIFT TO ITS 2016 OPERATING BUDGET:

\$ _____ PER (PLEASE CHECK ONE)
 WEEK MONTH YEAR
 OTHER _____

FOR ANNUAL TOTAL OF: \$ _____

PLEASE PRINT:
 NAME(S) _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY/STATE/ZIP _____
 EMAIL _____
 PHONE _____

MOMENTS TO HOLD CLOSE | WHICH DENOMINATION IS BEST? | BY MANNY RODRIGUEZ



The other day my daughter asked me which church denomination is best. Loaded question! I told her that each denomination is worshipping and wishing to serve the same God, but I view it as my relationship with my own

children. Although I love each of them equally, some of my children understand me better and as a result I have a closer relationship with them. This does not mean that I favor one child over another or that the love is any different, it does mean that I have a particular closeness through the increased understanding of what I am really like which allows

me to share certain experiences that some of my other children do not have the capacity to comprehend. So to summarize, I think the denomination that works to fully understand the Father and His wishes, and desires the closeness of the relationship is the one that I would recommend.

Order your Poinsettias for Christmas

Each year during the Advent season the congregation has an opportunity to remember a loved one, honor an individual or recognize an occasion by purchasing a poinsettia to be placed in the Chancel by the Sanctuary Flower Committee. If you would like to participate, the cost is \$15 per poinsettia, the revenues of which have enabled the Sanctuary Flower Committee to make many special gifts to beautify the church over the years. No checks will be accepted after Friday, December 11. Your check should be made payable to the Sanctuary Flower Committee, Mail to First Presbyterian Church, c/o Sanctuary Flower Committee, 404 North Alamo, San Antonio, 78205-1918, or placed in the Sanctuary Flower mailbox in the workroom.

In honor of _____
 On the occasion of _____
 In memory of _____
 Donor name _____
 Donor address _____
 City/State/Zip _____
 Daytime phone _____
 Preferred email _____



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