



First Press

Living to Make Jesus Visible

Celebrate the Gift of



Jesus Christ This Christmas

December 2013

Your monthly connection to First Presbyterian Church of San Antonio

Taking Time in Advent

By Rev. Trey Little, Senior Pastor



Someone once said this of time: "Time is significant because it is so rare. It is completely irretrievable. You can never repeat it or relive it. There is no such thing as a literal instant replay. That appears only on film. It travels alongside us every day, yet it has eternity wrapped up in it. Although this is true, time often seems relative, doesn't it? For example, two weeks on a vacation is not at all like two weeks on a diet. Also, some people can stay longer in an hour than others can in a week! Ben Franklin said of time, '... that is the stuff life is made of.' Time forms life's building blocks. The philosopher William James once said, 'The great use of life is to spend it for something that will outlast it.' (Lloyd Cory, Quote Unquote).

As I write this First Press column, I am amazed at how time flies. How can it already be December? How can we possibly be on the brink of a New Year? Time, indeed, is irretrievable. And yet, I am so excited about this time of year—it is the Advent season in the life of the church—a time when we patiently anticipate the coming of Jesus Christ.

I liken this season to the great anticipation we feel as we sit in a movie theatre waiting for the feature presentation. There we sit, popcorn and Coke in hand; cell phone turned off; and a box of butterfingers readily available for our enjoyment. As the lights dim our heart begins to beat with great excitement. It is almost time—the time we have been waiting for, the feature presentation is surely about to begin. But wait, instead of the feature presentation we begin to watch previews. Now, I don't know about you, but I love the previews—those brief trailers that have a way of stirring our appetite for what's to come.

During this Advent season we are going to take the time, as we anticipate The Feature Presentation, to hear the "silent preview" of Zechariah; the "unsettling preview" of Joseph; the "awe-filled" preview of Elizabeth; and the "Magnificent preview" of Mary. All of these previews, in their own unique way, prepare us for The Feature Presentation—the arrival of Jesus Christ.

So get your tickets, grab some popcorn, bring a friend—this will be the time of your life!

In the meantime, keep smilin' and keep lovin' and keep anticipatin'.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Trey".

Market of Hope Returns December 2013

During the month of December, look for banners in the hallways guiding you to the FPC Market of Hope. The room will be filled with a variety of handmade treasures sure to delight everyone on your shopping list for Christmas.

- Purchase Gifts that Offer Hope
- Support Fair-Trade
- Encourage Local and Global Ministries

In December, our FPC Market of Hope will be open for you in the Geneva Room. Enjoy the opportunity to shop for Fair-Trade items that will not only bless the gift recipient, but also bless the artisans and producers of each product. Trade is a model rooted in people-to-people connections, justice, and sustainability. Your purchase provides hope and encouragement for Christian ministries in San Antonio and around the world. Market will be held on all Sunday mornings before Christmas. In addition, the Market of Hope will be available during certain FPC Christmas events, such as Midday Noels. We're also bringing back the extremely popular free Fair-Trade coffee catered by Starbucks for our shoppers! For more information, or to find out how you can serve as a volunteer with this great event, please contact Claire Plantenga at 210-271-2724 or clairep@fpcsat.org.



Sunday Morning Schedule Changes

By Rev. Trey Little, Senior Pastor



starting January 5th, 2014

Time is a funny thing. Sometimes it flies. Other times it stops! And almost inevitably, time changes. In this case, we're talking about the times of our Sunday morning worship services and Sunday School. I know that many of you have been frustrated with the schedule; you have felt rushed between Sunday school and worship; you have longed for more time to simply stop and fellowship with your First family; you have hoped to be able to bring your children to Sunday school while you have the opportunity to worship the Lord. The truth is, the current schedule has simply made our hoped for experience for you at First very difficult to accomplish.

Therefore, I want to say THANK YOU for those of you who have been patient over the past twelve months. But I also want to let you know that the Session, along with the Sunday Morning Schedule Task Force, have recognized the need for some adjustment to the Sunday morning schedule as well. Collectively, and unanimously, they have voted to make the needed changes to the Sunday morning schedule in order to better facilitate what we believe will be a more accessible schedule.

However, be assured that there will remain three different worship services from which you can choose (two traditional services and one contemporary service). There will also continue to be Sunday School for all ages.

Additionally, we believe there is power in fellowship. Therefore, there will be a half-hour for us to gather in between worship and Sunday School and to get connected. During this fellowship time, you will be able to enjoy a variety of tasty snacks, have a cup of coffee, and engage in conversation with your friends and family at First.

Finally, we believe this new schedule will give us the greatest opportunity to continue to grow here at First. With a

simple, clear time schedule we have opportunities, as we grow, to add services and or Sunday school schedules in the future without having to again adjust the overall schedule—something I know we all will appreciate.

Therefore, I am very excited to report that BEGINNING JANUARY 5, 2014, there will be a new schedule for Sunday morning. The NEW schedule is as follows:

- 9:30 traditional worship service
- 9:30 Sunday School for all ages
- 10:30-11:00 fellowship time
- 11:00 traditional worship service
- 11:00 contemporary worship service

There are many benefits to this new schedule as I have mentioned already. However, let me summarize a few of them here: in the 9:30 hour there will be a traditional service and Sunday school running simultaneously; there is a dedicated half-hour time in between services where we can enjoy fellowship with one another, potentially hold congregational meetings together, and potentially have a time when we can gather together for various times of celebration; and finally, at 11:00 a.m., there will be two worship services running simultaneously—a traditional service in the Sanctuary and a contemporary service in the Westminster Hall. The same Scripture will be preached at all worship services, and pastors and the congregation will worship together for the duration of each service.

We really believe this new schedule offers something for everyone. Quite simply, I think this will be a wonderful way for us to begin the New Year. Again, thank you for your patience and thank you for choosing to be a part of the First family. I look forward to seeing you soon.

Peace,

Music Ministry

Merry Melodies and Holiday Harmony

By Kay Kutchins

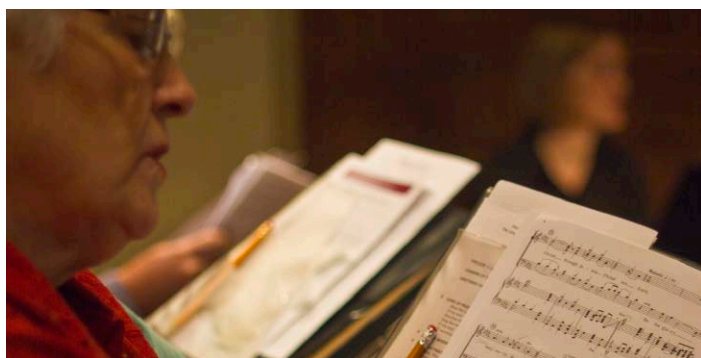


There's music in the air at FPC . . . a good indicator that Advent and Christmas will soon be upon us.

And music there will be . . . throughout the church . . . of all genres and styles . . . with voices and instruments . . . and with church members (singers or not) joining in full voice as we sing familiar Christmas carols heralding the birth of our Savior.

Wednesday night Sanctuary Choir rehearsals include preparing Sunday morning anthems, offertory music, and responses AND readying a 15-minute concert preceding the 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. Christmas Eve services. That includes rehearsals with special instrumentalists (violins, oboes, brass) who come prepared to play, but must collaborate with singers who are often hearing the instrument parts for the first time.

Between Sunday morning services, our Chamber Singers are preparing a concert program for the Midday Noels series AND special music for Christmas Eve Communion Worship at 3:00 p.m.



The Contemporary Worship music team will offer musical interpretations of favorite carols, as well as recently-composed Christmas music. And our Children's Choirs will sing at the Advent Festival on December 1, the Children's Christmas Pageant on December 8 and at the Family Christmas Eve service at 5:00 pm.



As we said at the outset, there's music in the air . . .

FPC will again present its holiday gift to the City of San Antonio: Midday Noels begin on Thursday, December 5, at 12:10 p.m. in the Sanctuary and will continue on December 12 and 19. This year's theme -Merry Melodies/Holiday Harmony- reflects our Music Ministry's focus on quality music and on showcasing musical groups within San Antonio and in the greater music environment.

Last year you heard Dr. Jae Ha lead the series off with organ and piano offerings. And you may have wondered "How's he doing that?" when the organ was playing and Jae began walking down the center aisle ringing handbells. (NOTE: More than one person turned around and looked towards the choir loft to see who was playing and saw that the organ bench was empty.)

This year, Jae has invited Andrew Gignac (a frequent instrumentalist with our choir) and his wife, Lauren Eberhart, who is a member of the San Antonio Symphony's trumpet section. They'll play a variety of pieces scored for two trumpets and organ.

The second concert, December 12, will feature San Antonio's Olmos Ensemble, comprised of the Symphony's finest wind players. The ensemble, now in its 19th season, was

Merry Melodies and Holiday Harmony continued...

founded by Mark Ackerman, principal oboist, and includes Ilya Shterenberg (clarinet), Sharon Kuster (bassoon), Martha Long (flute) and Jeff Garza (French horn). Mark will be oboe soloist with the St. Paul (Minnesota) Chamber Orchestra that weekend, and Jennifer Berg (oboe/English horn with the Symphony) will join the ensemble for this concert.

The December 19 concert will feature the Sanctuary Choir Chamber Singers in a choral program of sacred Christmas compositions, as well as popular classics including "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" a jazzy "Jingle Bells" arrangement, and a wonderful medley from "A Charlie Brown Christmas." Our Chamber Singers, all professional vocal musicians, include Heather Cole and Lindsay Blackmon (sopranos), Rebekah Bulen and Alexa Nichols (altos), Ed Crump, Keith Martinez, and David Knight (tenors), and Bob Giles, Anthony Garant, and Adrian Kirtley (baritone/bass). Each Sunday they join with our choir members to offer our congregation musical leadership in our Traditional worship services, singing the great music of the church as it is known throughout Christianity.

Indeed, there's music in the air. And it's a time of the year when that music is familiar and sing-able. For our Music Ministry, it is a joyful time to make music, and doubly joyful to hear a Sanctuary full of people joining in with Musical Melodies and Holiday Harmony. There's something about carols and worshipful Christmas music that resonates. So sing, friends, sing. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord as we anticipate the birth of the Christ child.

Attend a Christmas Celebration with Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services

Saturday, December 7, 2013, 2:00-4:00 p.m.
Northwood Presbyterian Church, 518 Pike Place

Start the holiday season with a celebration of giving. We'll make Christmas cards for the Fisher House and troops. Come enjoy refreshments, live music, games, and a special surprise for the kids. Contact Nancy Puckett at 210-492-4183 for more information.

Shop Till You Drop & Make Christmas Bright

First Pres Book Store Has Deals for You

Check out the First Pres Book Store between Sunday morning services. We have:

- Advent calendars; so popular last year
- Inspirational books for gift-giving
- Sus Hijas bags made by the women at House of Neighborly Service

There's a lot more for you to choose. Also, we have a rack of free books!

The Book Store is located down the second floor hallway past the workroom and before the Library. See you there!

Your Book Store Volunteers:

Suzanne West, Suzanne Norton, Lucille Lammert
Mary Reininger, Pat Brodeen, Mary Bell
Jane Cobb, Linda Ruhmann



Midday Noels

A seasonal celebration of
merry melodies and holiday harmony

1

Thursday, Dec. 5 • 12:10 p.m.

**Herald the Season:
Festive Organ and Trumpets**
Music for Two Trumpets and Organ

Dr. Jae Ha, *organ*
Andrew Gignac & Lauren Eberhart
trumpets

2

Thursday, Dec. 12 • 12:10 p.m.

**The Winds Waft Heavenward:
Wonderful Woodwinds**
Olmos Ensemble

Jennifer Berg, *oboe*; Jeff Garza, *French horn*;
Sharon Kuster, *bassoon*; Martha Long, *flute*;
Ilya Shterenberg, *clarinet*

3

Thursday, Dec. 19 • 12:10 p.m.

**Shimmering Sounds:
Sparkling Singing**
The FPC Chamber Singers

Featuring a program of seasonal
anthems and holiday songs to
inspire your Christmas celebration

Lunch available after concert!

Seated lunch: \$7; Grab 'n Go lunch: \$3

Limited reserved parking is available in the church lot
on Avenue E between 4th and McCullough Streets



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH SAN ANTONIO

404 North Alamo Street
between McCullough & Fourth Street

210.226.0215 | Fpcsanantonio.org

Musical Highlights of the Advent & Christmas Season

- ★ Sunday, December 1:
The Sanctuary choir sings a beautiful composition of Dan Forrest with text by R.C. Sproul.
- ★ Wednesday, December 4, 6:30 p.m.:
FPC becomes your “Home for the Holidays” as we enjoy a Christmas carol sing-a-long and musical offerings as a part of our 1st Wednesday @ First Pres programs.
- ★ Thursday, December 5, 12:10 p.m.: Join us for the first Midday Noel concert featuring Dr. Jae Ha and music for two trumpets and organ.
- ★ Sunday, December 8: The choir offers the familiar anthem “Do You Hear What I Hear,” along with music for trumpet and organ.
- ★ Thursday, December 12, 12:10 p.m.: Enjoy the sounds of “The Olmos Ensemble” as they interpret Christmas classics on symphonic wind instruments.
- ★ Sunday, December 15: Music for worship includes the classic “E’en So, Lord Jesus, Quickly Come” by the late Paul Manz.
- ★ Thursday, December 19, 12:10 p.m.: Our own Chamber Singers conclude the Midday Noel concert series with stunning choral arrangements of sacred and popular Christmas classics.
- ★ Sunday, December 22: Oboe and violin accompany the choir as they offer Mary’s song (the Magnificat) from Luke 1:46-56.
- ★ Tuesday, December 24: Wonderful musical offerings will accompany each Christmas Eve Service. Highlights include our Chamber Singers at the 3:00 p.m. service, a trumpeter at 5 p.m., full brass and Sanctuary Choir at 7:00 and 9:00 p.m. with a 15-minute musical prelude, and our Contemporary Worship music team at the 11 p.m. service.

First Pres Staff Recognized

On Tuesday, November 19, 2013, at the monthly staff luncheon, FPC Staff were publicly recognized and thanked for diligently serving the congregation and the larger Body of Christ.

The Personnel Committee proudly recognizes all staff members—both full- and part-time—on significant anniversaries of their service to the church. Recognition begins on the fifth anniversary, and additional

recognition takes place on each five-year anniversary following. We invite you to express your own appreciation to these individuals:

The following staff member’s name was missing from the November article: Celebrating 15 years: Elizabeth Ramirez, Children’s Center Lead Teacher



Be a Part of Bringing Hope to San Antonio this Christmas

Are you looking for a fun way to serve others either as an individual, as a family, or as a group of friends?

Here are a few ideas for serving through our local mission partners.

Especially during the Christmas season, let's live to make Jesus visible!

Prepare a Favorite Recipe



Do you have a favorite dish you could prepare and bring to church on a Sunday afternoon? We will have our community hunger outreach called "Loaves and Fishes" every Sunday in December, and we need your help!

Sign up online to prepare food or to be a volunteer server:
<http://vols.pt/eAvxwH>

Shop for Families in Need



Would you like to be a "Secret Santa" for a family with limited financial resources? Each year, FPC partners with the House of Neighborly Service on San Antonio's West Side to offer the gift of a very special Christmas.

Call Willie Wilming (210-495-2209) or Ruth Chapman (830-981-8450) to find out how you can be involved.

Donate Christmas Supplies



Ribbons and wrapping and bows, oh my! Would you be able to share these supplies with organizations that distribute Christmas gifts to clients? SAMMinistries welcomes donations of wrapping paper, gift tags, tape, bows, tissue paper, and gift bags.

For more details, call (210) 321-5678 or email: Santa@samm.org

Buy Gifts with Eternal Impact



We have fantastic gift options available in this year's Market of Hope! Visit the Geneva Room to choose from a beautiful variety of fair trade handcrafts from artisans and farmers around the world, or offer gifts to local ministries and have a direct positive impact on our community this Christmas.

Open Sunday mornings (December 1, 8, 15, 22) and Thursdays following Midday Noels (December 5, 12, 19). For details, contact Claire Plantenga, clairep@fpcsat.org

Share the Gospel with Others



If you've always wanted to go on a short-term mission trip, or if you haven't been in a long time but are feeling a renewed calling to share the Gospel outside of the US, sign up now to attend our annual FPC Medical Mission Trip. Apply today to serve in the community of Leona Vicario, Mexico this coming March.

For more information, contact our Medical Mission Trip Leader, Cynthia Robinson, ccrobin@swbell.net or call Alyssa Payne at 226-0215, ext. 242

Offer a Clean Start to 2014



There's nothing like the feeling of freshly laundered clothing! Our local mission partner organization, Haven for Hope, offers many services within their facilities that mean a lot to the homeless of our community, including the use of a washing machine. Would you be able to help fulfill the Haven for Hope "Wish List" request of LIQUID laundry detergent for the use of their guests?

For donation warehouse hours and driving directions, call Haven for Hope at (210) 220-2413

News of Hope from Mutendere, Malawi

from Dana Fay, World Vision National Church Advisor for Church Engagement



First Presbyterian Church of San Antonio, thank you for your steadfast commitment to helping children and families in Malawi enjoy life in all its fullness. Your generous giving is transforming lives and strengthening communities, in Christ's name.

This report celebrates the achievements made possible through your partnership with the Mutendere community development area, where members of your congregation currently sponsor more than 200 children. Please join us in thanking God for the work He is doing in Malawi, and for the role we get to play in helping His children rise out of poverty.



Your support is helping to improve access to essentials such as nutritious food, healthcare, clean water, and spiritual nurture, all of which bring a community closer to reaching their God-given potential. **To illustrate the impact of giving, we are pleased to share with you a few accomplishments during Spring 2013:**



SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

- World Vision works hand-in-hand with local churches to facilitate after-school programs that nurture children spiritually and help develop their skills for life. More than 90 youth are members of a Bible Club in Mutendere. The students participate in activities including Bible studies, academic quiz teams, and volunteer work.

HEALTH

- 18 community health workers and 44 volunteers were trained in child nutrition and nutritional recovery programs.
- 100 care group leaders were trained in essential health practices that protect the health of children and mothers.
- 17 community health workers were trained in the management of childhood illnesses.
- 200 families with children younger than 5 years old learned about the importance of recognizing fevers.
- 3 village health committees and 2 school health clubs were trained in prevention and treatment of diarrhea.
- 581 people learned about the importance of prenatal care and participated in discussions about cultural practices that prevent mothers from receiving the care they and their babies need to stay healthy.

WATER, SANITATION, and HYGIENE

- World Vision helped to rehabilitate a borehole well that had been broken for 10 months, leading to poor health in the community. Meetings were held on the importance of healthy hygiene and sanitation practices, followed by the construction of 26 latrines at 3 elementary schools.
- In 2013, World Vision determined that open defecation, diarrhea, and cholera had all decreased significantly among children.

FOOD AND INCOME SECURITY

- Community members started more than 37 savings and loan groups, which offer savings accounts and small loans for people who don't have access to traditional banking services. These groups help families get ahead financially.
- 400 farmers were supplied with farm materials (such as seeds) to increase yields.
- 200 people learned crop preservation techniques so the food supply will last longer.

Thank you FPC for your continued partnership with World Vision and the people of Mutendere, Malawi. It is inspiring to witness what God can accomplish through the willing hearts and hands of His church!

TRUNK O



Thank you to all who came to Trunk o
inside due to rain we still had a w
Children visited several different table
was such fun to see all of the differe
families having fun together. We want
a "trunk". We had some delightfully
variety of games and decorations f
enjoy. Thank you to the Music Depa
Youth Group, University Ministries, M
The Jowers, and The McCaleb Small
fantastic time and is excited for next y
Christmas Pageant on December
Parent's Day Out on December 14

suzannaf@fpcsat.org for m



OR TREAT

or Treat 2013! Even though we moved
wonderful turnout and a great time!
es to play games and collect treats. It
nt costumes and watch children and
t to thank all who volunteered to host
y creative volunteers who provided a
for the children and their families to
rtment, the Sanctuary Choir, the FPC
rs. Ruthie, The Shutes, The DeLeons,
Group. We hope that everyone had a
year! We also hope to see you at our
8, and families, don't forget about
4. Feel free to contact Suzanna at
more information on those events.



Presbyterian Women News for December

By Susan DeKoch, President



Oh my goodness!!!!!! For those of us who were at the Fall Luncheon, we were blessed beyond measure. Sharon Glasgow shared her passionate love for Jesus and His Word and gave us humorous, yet insightful ways to keep Christ in the middle of our preparations and family get togethers, which can be messy and difficult. Here is a little snippet from her message to us:

“Son, what’s your name?”

*“Well, on my mother’s side my name is Jesus,
but on my Father’s side my name
is Emmanuel, God with us.”*

“Son, how old are you?”

*“Well, on my mother’s side I’m 12 years old,
but on my Father’s side I’m from
eternity to eternity.”*

“Son, where are you from?”

*“Well, on my mother’s side I’m from Bethlehem,
but on my Father’s side I’m from
the portals of glory.”*

“Son, what are your future plans?”

*“Well, on my mother’s side, I will die between two
thieves on a cross, but on my Father’s side
I rise again on the third day.” Amen!*

“Thank you” are inadequate words to use for those wonderful people who worked so hard to make this luncheon the great and beautiful success that it was. Cheri Stith, Robin Hudnall and Blair Perry put together 29 individual and creative Christmas centerpieces. They were sold out in short order and we doubled the attendance at the luncheon. Candy Wagner worked miracles with our reservations and Suzanne Thomas organized our precious waitresses. Maurillio

Garza, “Jr.”, gave us a gourmet meal, complete with peppermint ice cream and Tracy Hinchcliff and Janie Jimenez took care of our table setups and all the logistics involved with such a large crowd (and they ALL worked tirelessly to keep adding tables!) To God be the Glory!!!!!!

December is a joyful and busy month for PW. Our Annual Christmas parties for Morningside Manor and Chandler Home are Thursday, December 5 and Thursday, December 12 from 3-5:00 p.m. Please join us as we sing, visit and share the Christmas spirit. Our Friday Singers and the sweet children from our own FPC Children’s Center will be there, too. For more information, please call Pat Johnson (490-1047) and Janet Wernli (828-1043).

The Gift of Christmas Project is an ongoing event during the month of December as we adopt families in need through the House of Neighborly Service. Ruth Chapman (830-981-8450) and Willie Willming (495-2209) will be happy to give you a list of families or to help you with any questions. Please consider adopting a family--you will be blessed!

On December 24th, Presbyterian Women will again host our Christmas Eve Dinner honoring our Pastors, choir and staff. Volunteers provide snacks and a delicious meal as well as a time of rest and relaxation during the demanding and busy Christmas Eve schedule. Karin Gabrielson (333-4239) is the Chair for this event and would be glad to answer any questions if you are interested in helping her.

Thank you for all you do in the name of Jesus. My prayer for you is a joy-filled Christmas.



Circle Meetings in December

Circle 2/4-Monday, Dec. 9, 12:00pm
Home of Edith McAllister,
203 Terrell,
Chair: Char-An Witten, 341-1856

Circle 5-Shawl Ministry
Friday, Dec. 6, 12pm
FPC Rm 228, Chair: Caryl Gaubatz,
651-0208, Co-Chair: Jane Ann
Temple, 828-7542

Circle 6-Tuesday, Dec. 17, 12pm
Home of Joan Stratton, 41 Bristol
Green, Chairs: Martha Pigeon, 828-
8993, Betty Anderson, 828-8838
Jane Warren, 493-5187

Circle 7
Tuesday, Dec. 10, 11:30am
Home of Cynthia Robinson,
7902 Woodridge Drive
Chair: Meredith Park, 373-8180

Circle 8-Mom's Group
Wednesday, Dec. 4, 11
(mom's brunch, place TBA), and 18
(bring your own craft day or Christ-
mas project) -11:30am , FPC Rm 108
Chair: Brenda Leonard, 910-578-
7104, Co-Chair: Sara Parish,
394-0865

Circle 9-Tuesday, Dec. 17, 10am
Home of Margaret Gragg,
4 Inwood Ridge
Chair: Pat Brannen, 735-4415

Circle 11-Monday, Dec. 16, 6:30pm
Home of Jean Swanson, 122 Medford
Drive, Chair: Jean Swanson, 826-0766

Circle 13-Literature Circle
Tuesday, Dec. 10 1:30pm
FPC McCullough Rm
"The Outliers" by
Malcolm Gladwell
Reviewed by Joe Carroll Rust
Chair: Becca Price, 824-2603

Circle 14-Monday, Dec. 16, 12pm
FPC St. Andrew's Rm
Chair: Suzie Simpson, 455-7410

Circle 16 - Marjorie McLernon
Sewing Circle
Wednesday, Dec. 18, 9:30am
FPC Rm 228
Chairs: Lee Pressly, 735-0978
Corie Barlow, 481-1337

Circle 17-Edna Ralston Sewing
Circle - No meeting in December
FPC Rm 309, Chairs: Jeanne Baker,
494-0972, Gigi Duke, 695-4363

Circle 18-Care and Concern
(No date)
Chairs: Char-An Witten,
341-1856, Paula Bondurant, 736-
6632, Georgia Heath, 695-9511

Circle 19-White Cross Circle
Wednesday, Dec. 4, 9:30am
FPC Rm 309, Chair: Janet Beauch,
673-3251

Circle 20-Circle of Service (no date)
Chair: Shannon McKelvey,
455-4520

Circle 21
Monday, Dec. 16, 6:30pm
Home of Andrea Taylor,
2543 Rim Oak
Chair: Andrea Taylor, 403-9442

Circle 112
Monday, Dec. 16, 10:30am
FPC Geneva Rm
Chair: Ann Nelson, 824-5182
Co-Chair: Suzanne Thomas,

Youth Ministry

High School Retreat in January 2014

Join First Pres high school youth for a fun-filled retreat at Forest Glen Camp in Rosebud, Texas January 17-19, 2014. There will be worship, team-building activities, meals, free time, a great night game, and opportunities to bond with one another. Pick up a registration form at the church or contact Matt Fricker at mattf@fpsat.org or 210-271-2794. Deadline to register is December 15, 2013.

Middle School Blowout Happens Dec. 20

All middle school students are invited to a great overnight event with worship, games, and fun at amazing Jump! Join us at the FPC Student Center December 20, 2013, starting at 8:00 p.m. We'll finish up December 21 at 8:00 a.m. Contact Suzanna Frey at suzannaf@fpsat.org or Matt Fricker at mattf@fpsat.org for more details.



My Stephen Ministry Experience

By Robert Ober

Join First Pres high school youth for a fun-filled retreat at There are many things that are fairly easy to put into words and then those, which are not. My experience with Stephen Ministry has become such a part of my life over the past year that it is hard to explain where it begins and where it might end. Giving seems to be one of the most selfish things I do—as blessings continue to return to me for anything I seem to give! It seems the gift is truly in the giving; and my experience with Stephen Ministry is a great example of that adage. For me the example of Jesus' enduring compassion, empathy and guidance really comes down to the friendship he extended to all. In my Stephen Ministry experience it has come down to that: a friendship centered in Christ.

In my Stephen Ministry experience the person I was helping was dealing with personal issues concerning job, family and relationship—pretty much things that most all of us can relate to—but within the framework of Stephens Ministry, the conversations over lunch or coffee, mostly on weekends, became a time set aside to deal with these normal issues we all struggle with in a very different frame of reference. This is what the Stephen Ministry does: it allows us to deal with issues through Christ—one-on-one.

My experience can only be summed up as enriching. God has provided me with many opportunities over the years to assist others, but within the organized methodology of the Stephens Ministry network, the training I received first, helped me, and then helped me to help others. Proper training to keep from trying to “fix” problems, but rather to empathize and encourage has paid big dividends for both my care receiver and me.

I cannot tell you who my care receiver is. In fact other Stephen Ministers only know him as “My Care Receiver”. The confidentiality afforded those who volunteer and are trained in caregiving, and the confidentiality afforded the care receiver, allows for the utmost trust and leads in most if not all cases, to a new friendship centered in Christ! I am a much better man for volunteering to minister to others in my church body as a Stephens Minister. If you need a one-on-one relationship with a confidant, or if you are moved by the Spirit to lend an ear and share through prayer with someone in need—contact Pastor Scott Simpson or Stephen Leaders Joe Rust or Karin Gabrielson.

KEYS (Keeping Everyone Young in Spirit) Older Adult Ministry

Getting Into the Spirit of Christmas

By Pat McCleary, Director, Older Adult Programs



The KEYS Leadership Team and I wish each of you and your families love, peace, and joy during this holy season, and may you prepare room in your heart for Him, who is the reason for the season!

DECEMBER PROGRAMS

Elf Louise Christmas Wrapping Party **Monday, December 2, 2013**

Noon-1:00 p.m. at 1401 S.W. Loop 410, Ste. 111. Lunch together afterwards at Acadiana Restaurant (participants will buy their own lunches). Van leaves the church at 11:30 a.m. RSVP by calling Nancy Berger at 210-271-2726. You may bring an unwrapped toy or make a donation. Limit of 12 people.

Annual KEYS Christmas Party **Friday, December 6, 2013**

Fellowship at 11:15 a.m. in McCullough Room; refreshments and music. A cappella Gospel singing at noon by The Cox Family Singers. The family singers consist of father, mother, and eight children. They began singing grace at mealtimes and have enjoyed ministering throughout San Antonio and the surrounding area for more than 15 years. Luncheon follows (\$7). RSVP by calling Nancy Berger at 210-271-2726 by noon Tuesday, December 3. No exercise class this day.

House of Neighborly Service Gift of Christmas

KEYS will once again participate in the House of Neighborly Service "Gift of Christmas" so please watch for details on our family and their needs.

Salado Christmas Stroll Trip **Friday, December 12, 2013, 8:00 a.m.**

Some spaces are still available for this visit to one of Texas' artiest and craftiest villages! Take your time on the stroll while listening to Christmas Carolers. Salado's Main Street and vicinity is a lively marketplace with over 60 shops and artists' galleries. You'll find a lot of treasures! Our coach will cruise the street offering a lift when you need it. Lunch is at the Range Restaurant in the historic Barton House.

Cost is \$70 for members and \$75 for guests and includes Regent Coach transportation, morning coffee, lunch, driver tip and escorts Susan & Henry Holloway. Your check is your reservation. Please make check payable to FPC and mark Salado Trip in the memo line and send to the attention of Pat McCleary.

Step & Stretch Exercise Class

Friday mornings December 13 and 20 at 9:45 a.m.

Now being held on the second floor of the new Student Center with instructor Linda Osborne leading the class. She is a certified Jazzercise Instructor and has taught the class for FPC for many years. Linda is doing a special exercise class for our members including cardio, strength and stretch! Come give it a try on Friday mornings December 13 and 20 at 9:45 a.m.

Bridge and Mah Jongg: There will be no bridge playing during December. Mah Jongg will be played on Friday, December 27, 2013, 1:00-3:30 p.m.

Mark Calendars for January

January 3	No program. KEYS Leadership Meeting
January 10	Danny Thompson, SKY 4 Pilot
January 17	Birthday Lunch Out – restaurant TBA
January 31	Rick Cavender & Band



KEYS (Keeping Everyone Young in Spirit) Older Adult Ministry

99 and 44/100 % Pure

By Bud Davenport

As Forrest Gump said, "Life is like a box of chocolates."
As Bud Davenport said, "KEYS is like a bar of Ivory soap!"

Many of you know each month for the past several years, I have been taking books and magazines to the Audie Murphy Veteran's Hospital. The magazines are distributed to the waiting rooms and clinic offices to give patients and visitors something to help take their minds off their medical problems and long waits to see a doctor. The books are given to patients up on the wards to help relieve their boredom and anxiety.

In the past two years, I have taken more than 3000 books and magazines to Audie Murphy. The Veterans and their families have been very appreciative of receiving the reading matter.

Now back to my opening statement. As I'm sure all of you can remember, Ivory soap's slogan has always been, "Ivory Soap: 99 and 44/100 % pure. It floats." Well, the members of KEYS have donated 99 and 44/100 % of the reading material I have taken to the hospital! That is why I say that KEYS is like a bar of Ivory Soap. Thanks y'all and keep those books and magazines coming, please!



Moments to Hold Close

Transformers

By Manuel Rodriguez

Many years ago, when my daughter was only preschool age, I volunteered to arrive as Santa Claus for a children's Christmas party. The party was in the middle of the work week during lunchtime. An office co-worker was nice enough to stuff me so that I could become Kris Kringle. I had to walk several blocks from the office to get to my car. As I approached my car, I could hear panting behind me. I turned to see a grown man running towards me. "Santa, Santa!"

I stopped and realized he had my hat. "Santa, you lost your hat several blocks back. I ran as fast as I could, I was afraid I wouldn't catch you." How many times had I passed this man and we never even exchanged glances, yet now that he saw me as something different, he was willing to run blocks out of his way to provide me my hat. I immediately responded, "Ho Ho Ho, thank you, my son. Merry Christmas!" The man responded, Merry Christmas Santa.

As I proceeded to the party, I encountered the same reaction throughout the city. People rushed to hold the door for me, salutations from strangers, and pure excitement just to get a glimpse of me.

Once I arrived, the kids were overcome. I used my best Santa voice, sang songs, provided gifts and hugged everyone. I dropped to one knee, my daughter walked up and squeezed my neck, even she did not recognize me. Now here is the best part of the story, as amazing as this was, my transformation was only superficial. I had only changed on the outside. As Christians, we have the opportunity, the privilege, to have a more meaningful transformation from the inside out. Welcome Christ into your heart today, be amazed how differently people see you, and this magical feeling that we encounter every December, it will remain with you throughout the year and throughout your life. Merry Christmas.

First Cup Readings — December, 2012

Dear Family in Christ,

First Cup is designed to assist you in the habit of daily Bible reading and prayer. The name is to remind you that as you reach for your first cup of morning coffee or tea, reach also for your Bible and prayer list. The prayers at the beginning of each week are taken from hymns, sometimes found in obscure hymnals in my library. They are intended to be read as your beginning prayer, to focus your mind on the daily readings that follow. May this spiritual discipline strengthen you as you face each day.



Blessings and love in Christ,
Sandy Sturch & Claire Averyt

Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul.—Psalm 143:8

ADVENT means *coming; arrival*. The early church did not celebrate Jesus' birth but looked forward to his *second coming*. As we celebrate Jesus' *first coming (past)*, we eagerly await his *second coming*. Our focus is to know the signs and be prepared.

Jesus is coming to earth again, What if it were today? Coming in power and love to reign, What if it were today? Coming to claim His chosen bride, all the redeemed and purified, over this whole earth scattered wide, What if it were today? Faithful and true would He find us here if He should come today? Watching in gladness and not in fear, if He should come today? Signs of His coming multiply; morning light breaks in eastern sky. Watch, for the time is drawing nigh, What if it were today? (Worship in Song, No. 189)

- 1 Isaiah 59:1-20; Ezekiel 18:30-32; Romans 11:25-27
- 2 Isaiah 40; Matthew 3:1-3; Mark 1:4; Luke 3:2-6
- 3 Matthew 24; Revelation 16:15; Luke 12:35-48
- 4 1 Thessalonians 4; 1 Corinthians 15:35-58
- 5 1 Thessalonians 5; Ephesians 6:10-20; 1 Corinthians 1:8
- 6 Isaiah 5:18-19; 2 Peter 3; Ezekiel 12:21-28; Isaiah 14:24; 45:18-25
- 7 2 Thessalonians 1; 2

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee." When the shadows come and darkness falls, He giveth inward peace. O He is the only perfect resting place, He giveth perfect peace! "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee." 'Tis the promise of the Holy One, "My peace I give to thee." Tho' the storms of life in fury rage, Thy Refuge sure is He. Oh, He is the only perfect resting place! He giveth perfect peace. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee." (Worship in Song, No. 418)

- 8 Isaiah 9:6; 11; Romans 15:1-13
- 9 Psalm 62; 4
- 10 Luke 12:13-34; Philippians 4:4-9
- 11 Psalm 46; 9:7-10; 100:3; 4:8; John 14:15-27
- 12 Psalm 143; 27:11; Romans 5:1-11; 8:6; 12:9-21; 14:19; Galatians 5:13-21
- 13 Proverbs 29:17; Hebrews 12:1-14; James 3:17-18; Ephesians 4:3; 6:14-15
- 14 Matthew 10; Ephesians 2:14-22; Romans 5:1-11

Love divine, all loves excelling, Joy of heaven, to earth come down. Fix in us Thy humble dwelling, all Thy faithful mercies crown! Jesus, Thou art all compassion, pure, unbounded love Thou art. Visit us with Thy salvation, enter every trembling heart. Come, Almighty, to deliver; let us all thy life receive. Suddenly return, and never, never more Thy temples leave.

Thee we would be always blessing, serve Thee as Thy hosts above. Pray, and praise Thee without ceasing, Glory in Thy perfect love. (Worship in Song, No. 16)

- 15 Psalm 25; Jeremiah 3:25; Ephesians 2:1-10; Psalm 32
- 16 Psalm 86; Exodus 34:6; Joel 2:13; John 15:8-17
- 17 John 13:1-17; 1 John 1; 2
- 18 1 John 3; John 13:34-35
- 19 John 3:16-18; Romans 5:6-8; 1 John 4:7-21
- 20 1 John 5; Psalm 36; 106:1
- 21 1 Corinthians 13; Psalm 118:1; 1 Corinthians 10:24; Romans 15:1-2

How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given! So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heaven. No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin, where meek souls will receive Him, still the dear Christ enters in. O Holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray; Cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today. We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell; O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Emmanuel. (Worship in Song, No. 174)

- 22 Psalm 2; 24; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Psalm 89:35-36
- 23 Isaiah 7:14; 8:5-10; 9:2-6; 11:1-5; 53
- 24 Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-56; Genesis 17:19; Psalm 132:11-18; Galatians 3:16
- 25 Luke 2:1-20; Colossians 1:15-23; Isaiah 43:1-3; 45:22
- 26 John 1:1-34; 3:14-21, 36; 6:35-51; 12:44-45
- 27 Leviticus 12; Luke 2:21-40; Isaiah 42:1-9; 8:13-17; 40:1-11; John 10:11; Psalm 23
- 28 Micah 5:1-5a; Matthew 2

Tell me the story of Jesus, write on my heart every word. Tell me the story most precious, sweetest that ever was heard. Tell how the angels, in chorus, sang as they welcomed His birth; "Glory to God in the highest! Peace and good tidings to earth." Fasting alone in the desert, tell of the days that are past: How for our sins He was tempted, yet was triumphant at last. Tell of the years of His labor; Tell of the sorrow He bore. He was despised and afflicted, homeless, rejected, and poor. Tell me the story of Jesus; tell me the story most precious, sweetest that ever was heard. (Worship in Song, No. 493)

- 29 Luke 2:41-52; Isaiah 11; Proverbs 3:1-6
- 30 Matthew 3; Mark 1:1-11; Acts 2:38; Romans 6
- 31 Luke 4:1-14; Hebrews 2:14-18; 4:14-16; 1 Corinthians 10:13; James 1:12-15

Merry Christmas!



First Cup Prayer List



In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. (Romans 8:26).

[illegible]

Church Register Changes

ACTIVE MEMBERS

(Public profession of faith; Certificate of transfer; Reaffirmation of faith)

Discover First Class, 10/13/13:

- William Jeffrey Landers
- Ashley Ann Molton
- Norton A. Stuart, Jr.

MARRIAGES

- Patrick Edward Sullivan* & Elizabeth Rust Oliver
October 19, 2013
- Michael Adams Wadsworth* & Zahra Jerren Alat Jafarbay*
October 20, 2013

DEATHS

- Flora M. Garza
October 23, 2013
- Walter Bates "Tex" Barnett
October 29, 2013

*denotes non-member

FINANCIAL SUMMARY OCTOBER 2013

OPERATING FUND BUDGET	ACTUAL YTD	BUDGET YTD	OVER/ (UNDER)
TOTAL REVENUES	\$3,308,379	\$3,577,459	(\$269,080)
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES	\$2,903,262	\$3,018,124	(\$114,862)
TOTAL BENEVOLENCES	\$531,126	\$647,513	(\$116,387)
FUND TRANSFER FROM OPERATING RESERVE	(300,000)	0	300,000
NET INCOME/LOSS	\$173,991	(\$88,179)	\$262,169

We've had two good months in a row but still have a long way to go. The ministries and benevolences of FPC depend on your gifts so that we can fulfill our obligations to our mission partners. If you have questions or concerns, please contact Janet Slayden, Church Business Manager, at 210-271-2751, or Butch Gerfers, Church Treasurer, at 210-862-9998.

Stewardship Commitment Campaign Update

As of November 11, 2013, we have received a total of 419 commitments in excess of \$2.869 million.

Adult Commitments	379	2,867,074
Youth Commitments	27	2,027
Children's Commitments	13	817
TOTALS	419	2,869,918

In addition, over 21% of the adult commitments received have increased over last year. We have also received 123 new commitments. We are grateful for God's faithfulness. If you have not returned your commitment card to us, please do so at your earliest convenience. The cards are available in the friendship pads, Narthex, and in the Mauze lobby. If you have any questions, please contact Carolyn Tuley (carolynt@fpcsat.org / 271-2755).

Session Minutes in Seconds

Session at its regularly Stated Meeting on 11/11

- Approved the Consent Agenda (approval of minutes from previous session meetings, received the Deacon's minutes, approved changes to the Church Register, approved April's financial statements, and received committee minutes).
- Broke into small groups to respond to questions 7 & 8 on the Narrative on the Health and Mission and Ministry (The Fellowship of Presbyterians).
- Received the Clerk's Report.
- Received a report from Stewardship and Finance noting that Benevolences for second quarter will be paid. Also discussed initial budget issues for 2014.
- Received and approved a report from Benevolence Oversight Committee which designated certain responsibilities to other standing committees.
- Received a report from Personnel regarding staffing.

UNDER UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- Decided to pay General Assembly per capita as billed
- Received a report and approved a recommendation from the Sunday Morning Task Force
- Discussed a letter from the Church Relations Committee

UNDER NEW BUSINESS

- Approved a membership and baptism class for Seton Home (date to be determined)
- Adopted a Corporate Resolution for signing documents
- Approved a request for communion at the Diakonia Emmaus Women's Team meeting hosted at FPC on 2/22/14
- Adjourned with prayer



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH SAN ANTONIO

Living to Make Jesus Visible

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San Antonio, Texas 78205-1918
210-226-0215 www.fpconline.org



Pastor Trey Little's Twitter Handle: @treyhlittle



First Presbyterian Church's Twitter Handle: @FPCSanAntonio

Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/FirstPresbyterianChurchSanAntonio

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RETURN SERVICE
REQUESTED



Christmas Eve at First

December 24, 2013

Service of the Lord's Supper | 3:00 p.m.

Family Worship Service | 5:00 p.m.

Traditional Candlelight Worship Service | 7:00 and 9:00 p.m.

Contemporary Candlelight Worship Service | 11:00 p.m.

Childcare available